HOME AWAY FROM HOME: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE
TAIWANESE CANADIANS IN VANCOUVER, WITH A FOCUS ON THE EARLY
STAGE FROM THE 1960s TO THE 1980s

by

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M.A., National Tsing Hua University (Taiwan), 2002

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Sociology)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

August 2012

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Abstract

This dissertation looks into the lives and experiences of early Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver (1960s-1980s). The focus is particularly placed on how transnational migration experience has impacts on their self-image, national identity, and behaviours in the public sphere. An ethnographic research approach is taken to collect data of life histories through interviews, group interviews, and participatory observations in the community. It is found that early Taiwanese immigrants underwent enormous political pressure from their sending country. And this has in turn made Taiwanese immigrant community show a high degree of group solidarity and signs of radicalization over issues of identity politics. It is argued that the transnational social setting in the host society has engendered the chance for a reflexive examination of one’s national identity through interaction with the host society, the sending society, and other ethnic groups. And in particular it is also argued that the experience and the responding actions have led Taiwanese immigrants to proactively participate in public affairs. Theoretically the research broadens the understanding of conditions of nationalism by proposing a perspective giving transnational factors more weight in providing a framework for analysing complex phenomena of nation and nationhood in a rapidly transforming world.
Preface

The ethics review for this research was approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board. The certificate number is: H11-03214.
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Acknowledgements

I am indebted to a number of friends, colleagues, and folks in the community who helped me through the years of studying, researching, and writing this dissertation, especially Dr. Graham E. Johnson who has done for me so much more than a graduate student can ever expect from a supervisor. His restless passion for the research and his wisdom and vast amount of knowledge of what interests him have set a role model of academic dedication and diligence for a newbie like me. And I am grateful to Dr. Renisa Mawani and Dr. Jennifer Chun who have helped me clarify my thoughts and are always willing to push me forward to make this thesis better. I would also like to thank Dr. Neil Guppy, Dr. Thomas Kemple, Dr. Amy Hanser and Dr. Sean Lauer for their unconditional and timely support at various stages of my program, without which this journey would have been bumpy and less enjoyable. Last but not least, Dr. James Wilkerson’s (Institute of Anthropology, Tsing Hua University, Taiwan) friendship and help have given me the strength to endure the hardship and doubts on the way. I could not have gone this far without his unreserved support.

My friends on and off campus, in Canada or in Taiwan, have always been there for me whenever I need them. And the friendship I have received from the fieldwork, although some concerns for “conflict of academic ethics” did occur to me from time to time, makes me realize there is something more important than a project or a research—the human touch which has slipped away from some social scientists’ minds. Most sociologists believe that one individual’s achievement and capability are made possible only socially and cooperatively. Taking the ride of a doctoral program and staying on board all the way to the
end has taught me the most valuable lesson of how much we receive from others and how little we have to offer and repay the debt. Maybe this realization is what makes a sociology student a sociologist and brings him or her back from the ivory tower to the ever fascinating social world.


Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother.
1 Introduction

Wu Zhuo Liu (1900-1976) was a modern Taiwanese novelist who experienced both the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945) and the Nationalist Government takeover of Taiwan after the Second World War. His novel *The Orphan of Asia*, first published in 1946, described the confusion of national identity most Taiwanese experienced during his time. The main character Hu Tai Ming is a Taiwanese living in Taiwan under Japanese colonization. Hu Tai Ming considered himself to be Japanese and only later realized that he had always been and always would be treated as a second-class citizen in Japan, as he was Taiwanese, not Japanese, even though Taiwanese were legal citizens of the Japanese Empire. When Hu realized that he could never be considered Japanese, he left Taiwan and went to China for comfort. Since Taiwanese were culturally Chinese he assumed that the Chinese would treat him as their brethren. This longing for brotherly love was soon shattered, as Hu found that the Chinese did not trust him and saw him as a spy from Japan. After some tragic conflicts Hu lost his mind and eventually threw himself into a river to end his torturous search for national identity. The most dramatic scene of the novel is when Hu peered into the river before he committed suicide, and the blurry reflection of his face in the river prompted him to ask himself a question that had never been answered in his entire life: Who am I really?

Leo T. S. Ching, in his studies of Wu’s novels, interpreted their significance in relation to what he called “triple consciousness,” referring to how Taiwanese experience their national identity as Chinese, Japanese, and Taiwanese (Ching, 2001, pp. 174-211). His argument borrows W. E. B. Du Bois’ famous phrase “double consciousness” which describes the status of black people in the United States: they are Americans indeed, but they are black Americans. The seemingly redundant article “black” before “American” fully symbolizes
the social status of the black people, who suffer from social discrimination and the lack of identity integrity. “Blackness” is more of a stigma than a mere category. The use of “double consciousness” indicates how segregation, enslavement, and institutional discrimination against black Americans interplay with the formation of the identity of black people in terms of the discrepancy between the rhetoric of a liberal society and the crude reality of social stratification by skin color. Du Bois pointed out that “it is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.”

There is a somatic aspect to the self-identity of the black people determined by a value system that despises blackness. Just as the black American has the “longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self” (Du Bois, 1994, p. 5), Ching argues that Taiwanese people, due to historical complexity, are destined to encounter the confusing triple consciousness of identity before they can answer the question posed by Hu in Wu’s novel: Who am I really?

The reference to Du Bois’ lexicon and analysis takes a cultural turn in Ching’s study of the Taiwanese, as the linguistic/cultural divide plays a more important role than skin color in drawing the ethnic borderlines. In addition, as opposed to the institutional and other discriminative practices Du Bois emphasizes, Ching extracts the identity formation process from Du Bois’ work and stays focused on how a view of oneself is produced through social interaction. This is what we will focus on by examining the case of Taiwanese immigrants’ life stories. The emphasis on cultural aspects is particularly what makes Ching’s analysis relevant and intriguing, since race does not appear to be an issue for the Taiwanese at first when faced with the Chinese after the Second World War. The unexpected conflicts that
happened between the people of Taiwan and the inflow of Chinese government and the mainlanders problematized the taken-for-granted expectation of brotherly love and opened a door to the examination of identity for the people in Taiwan.

After the writings of Du Bois, the term “double consciousness” gained currency in cultural and social criticism in various forms. Ching uses “triple consciousness” to refer to the three major constituent elements of the contemporary Taiwanese identity, similar to the way the term has been used by other analysts in relation to black Muslim Americans, people of combined Latin American and African descent, female African Americans, and so on.

What we will examine in this dissertation, through the testimony of the overseas Taiwanese in Vancouver, is how the experience of migration and inter-ethnic interaction has impacted on Taiwanese Canadians by bringing them to conscious reflection on the three working labels of Taiwanese, Chinese, and Canadian in their self-positioning in the host society. This reflection also, in effect, guides their choice of action and preference in their social participation in the host society. The focus of this dissertation will be on a socio-political struggle in identity re-construction in the context of transnational migration.

In this vein, what this dissertation is trying to answer is “who are the Taiwanese?” And to be more exact who are the “Taiwanese Canadians” in our society? Is the term “Taiwanese” in this phrase as redundant as “black” used in front of “American,” which seems to insinuate some complex social processes of identity clarification and re-formation.

The character Hu in Wu Zhou-liu’s novel ends his life in despair and loss of hope. What then happens to contemporary Taiwanese immigrants in their search for identity in the Canadian context, and what have they been through to come to their own answer to the question?
1.1 Context of the Study

In a sunny August afternoon in 2010, just as warm as any summer day in Vancouver, I sat in the living room of Dr. A35’s place in Victoria and listened to him playing piano. Looking at the back of this gentleman who had retired from the teaching position at the University of Victoria, I could not help but imagining the hardship he and his friends were facing forty years ago when they realized they were put on a blacklist and never allowed to return to their hometown in Taiwan. Another interview scene came across my mind: another gentle and polite interviewee, at the age of 67, became emotional so the interview had to pause as he talked about how he stood there in an airport in Taiwan and was told that he would be deported immediately—and that was the last chance he had to see his ill mother one last time. These are the moments that strike me the most when listening to storytelling from people talking about their lives and memories. And sadly, most early Taiwanese Canadians who came to Canada from the 1960s to the 1980s have more sad stories to tell than exhilarating ones. This is the real impact the larger structure of society has on average people, and together with these people’s reactions it has created a history which is macro and micro at the same time, depending on how you narrate it. In this dissertation, with a little sociological imagination, it is my intention to present how the outside world has given opportunities and brought difficulties to the Taiwanese immigrants in Vancouver, how they cope with what they have to face, and what effects this journey of adaptation has engendered to them, the host society, and their sending country.
1.1.1 Demographic Facts and a Historical Sketch

According to the 2006 Census (Statistics Canada, 2006), there were 10,565 people in the province of British Columbia reporting their ethnic origin to be Taiwanese. At the same time, 432,435 people identified themselves as Chinese. These numbers need to be contextualized to show their significance since the categories Taiwanese and Chinese are both overly simplified. For one thing, the word “Chinese” includes people from China and those from Hong Kong, which was retrieved by China from the British government in 1997 after one hundred years of colonization. And there has been difference and even social distance between immigrants from Hong Kong and those from China, the latter being the latecomers to Canada in the twentieth century. In a sense these are two distinct social groups.

This intra-ethnic group tension also exists for the category “Taiwanese”: Taiwanese immigrants are in fact composed of several sub-groups with rather different perspectives of identity carried into Canadian society. What we see here in terms of social interaction between ethnic groups in Vancouver, therefore, is not a simple picture of Taiwanese interacting with Chinese and other Canadians, but more of various groups from Taiwan interacting with groups from different parts of China. This is worth emphasizing as the lack of trust or even the grudges between sub-groups from the same politically defined source of origin may be too severe to ignore its social consequences and threats to these immigrants’ integration to Canadian society. In the case of Taiwanese immigrants, there exists social distance between four major ethnically distinctive groups. And in the case of Chinese immigrants, there is self-conscious distinction between those from Hong Kong and the others from provinces of mainland China. Even between the newcomers from mainland China after the economic take-off in the late 1990s the sense of difference exists as well. It is, therefore,
crucial to see the diverged entities under the same label to give a better account of what has been going on between these groups in terms of the subtle processes of ethnic identity formation through interaction on daily basis. We will briefly summarize the historical backgrounds of the Taiwanese immigrants now.

1.1.1.1 Socio-Historical Background of the Ethnic Homeland

After the Second World War, Taiwan, which was under Japanese colonization from 1895 to 1945, was handed over to the KMT government (Kuomintang, or the Chinese Nationalist Party) by the United States on behalf of the Allies in Asia. A civil war broke out in China shortly after the end of the war against Japan in 1945. The KMT government was defeated by the Chinese Communist Party and driven out of China, Taiwan and its adjacent islands became the haven for the KMT government and an estimated 1.2 million people who followed it to Taiwan. The people that came to Taiwan between 1945 and 1949 were called the “mainlanders,” in contrast to Taiwanese residents who had officially been subjects of the Japanese Empire before the assumption of government by the KMT in 1945.¹ This is not to say that the reality of post-war co-habitation of the “mainlanders” and the “Taiwanese residents” was the relationship of only two groups of people. It was much more complex. What it meant to be “Taiwanese” was as vague and there was little consensus among the residents of Taiwan in the mid-1940s which extends to contemporary Taiwan. One contribution of my research may be to offer a better understanding of the formation of Taiwanese ethnicity through the study of the immigrants in Canada.

¹ It is estimated that there were six million Taiwanese people when the Chinese came to Taiwan in 1945.
Historians and anthropologists have pointed out that since the early days of Chinese settlement in Taiwan in the seventeenth century the conflicts between settlers from different provinces of China had continued, and guidance from the imperial authorities of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) was sought to settle disputes and armed confrontations over issues of land, property, water resources, and so on (Chen, 1987). Although hostility or fights might occur between villagers that came from the same part of the Chinese hinterland and spoke the same dialect, as time went by the linguistic/cultural divide became one of the most important principles in distinguishing between allies and enemies. The “Hokkien” speakers and the “Hakka” speakers formed the two main groups of Chinese settlers in the exploration and reclamation of Taiwan. The long history of fights and distrust between them continues even to this day. Although both the Hokkien and the Hakka had been Japanese subjects for fifty years, by the time the KMT government gained control over Taiwan after the Second World War a social distance existed between them and affected their patterns of social activities (marriage, trade, etc.). In addition, the aboriginal tribes were diverse (with different myths and spoken languages) and some of them had been in constant conflict. Their distrust of the cunning Chinese settlers (be they Hokkien or Hakka) was even stronger than the hostility between the Hokkien and the Hakka—after all, the latter were all Chinese settlers. Taiwan, accordingly, was an island of residents of complicated backgrounds by the time the KMT takeover took place in 1945. For the sake of discussion, it is safe to say that at least three categories of people co-existed in the 1940s: the Hokkien (the majority in number), the Hakka, and the aboriginals.

The in-flow of the post-war “mainlanders” made the social world of Taiwan even more complex and brought in some new elements of social distrust that have haunted Taiwan
ever since. And “mainlanders” was also a misleading label for those who came to Taiwan after the Second World War, as people from different provinces of China (also with linguistic and cultural divisions between them) might not share the same sentiment of fellowship. At the beginning part of Chapter 3 we will have a more detailed discussion on how the retreating KMT government and the civilians that came from mainland China in the second half of the 1940s planted the seeds for the future re-examination of self-identity for the people in Taiwan (especially for the overseas Taiwanese immigrants that led the charge on this issue). It may be sufficient to say that from the moment of migration after the war from China to Taiwan, the social fabric of Taiwan was made up of four categories of people: the Hokkien, the Hakka, the aboriginals, and the newcomer “mainlanders.”

Given the fact that Taiwan was under harsh Japanese colonization for fifty years, people in Taiwan, although with various sorts of social distrust between them, at first welcomed the new KMT government with the hope that their Chinese brethren would treat them much better than the Japanese colonial government. The reality was otherwise. After the turmoil of the takeover, which involved military oppression and ethnic cleansing, a cleavage emerged between the mainlanders and the other three groups of people in Taiwan and laid out the basic socio-political structure of a quasi-colonial order, with an upper stratum of mainlanders and a lower rank of Taiwanese, which remained until the democratization movements in the late 1980s.

Although efforts were made by both the government and the civil society to repair the cleavage and social distrust between the mainlanders and the Taiwanese, the dual socio-political structure of inequality and the consequent social distrust continues to exist. This

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2 The Japanese government changed its policy and gave the Taiwanese Japanese citizenship in 1937 and incorporated Taiwan as an administrative region (not colony) in 1945 when the Pacific War escalated.
fact is very important in understanding the patterns and experiences of the Taiwanese immigrants in host societies including Canada and the United States, which are two primary receivers of Taiwanese emigrants. We will return to the issue of the cleavage between these two groups being “carried” abroad and affecting their interaction with other social groups in Chapters 4 and 5. Although it is a commonly used categorization to discern four historically formed ethnic groups in contemporary Taiwan\(^3\), it suffices to say for the moment that there are at least two major sub-groups of “Taiwanese” immigrants under the Canadian Census categorization system: the “mainlanders” and the “Taiwanese.”\(^4\) They are both from Taiwan, yet they have different (sometimes contradictory) perspectives of their cultural and national identity before coming to Canada due to the historical reasons just discussed. This precondition will prove to be significant in regard to how they adapt to the new life in Canada and how the transnational networks between Taiwan and Canada are to be established and function after their settlement.

1.1.1.2 Socio-Historical Background of the Host Society

There has been a long history of Chinese immigrants moving to North America since the 19\(^{th}\) century; and abundant researches have been conducted on the processes, adaptation issues, and other social effects of the introduction of Chinese immigrants. What kind of a country did Canada appear to the newcomers from China and later in time from Taiwan? Or

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\(^3\) The Hokkien, the Hakka, the “mainlanders”, and the aboriginals. Note that each of these four groups can be divided into even smaller groups—particularly the “mainlanders” and the aboriginals. Although the “four ethnic group” distinction is widely used in the media and academic studies in Taiwan, some scholars argue that these “labels” oversimplify the hidden difference in each of them. For example, there are 14 aboriginal groups officially recognized by the Taiwan government according to their linguistic and cultural differences. The classification system is used for policy purposes.

\(^4\) It is almost impossible to determine the breakdown of the numbers of Taiwanese immigrants in Canada or in the U.S. due to the statistic measures that do not take domestic ethnic division of the sending country into consideration. See Williams’ study on Taiwanese Americans in the U.S. (Williams, 2003: 178).
more specifically for this study, what was Vancouver like in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century?

Canada has a long history of discriminative immigration policies against non-European immigrants. For the Chinese immigrants, the most well-known policy to limit the number of Chinese influx is the head-tax regulations starting from 1885 to 1922. It was a policy in response to the racist social sentiments against Asians at the turn of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. The unreasonable tax for getting into Canada raised several times in the first decades of 19\textsuperscript{th} century and eventually led to a shut down of Chinese immigrants after the 1923 legislation which allowed diplomats, students, and businessmen to enter Canada and placed strict restrictions on Chinese Canadians regarding their status of permanent residency. It is estimated that between 1923 and 1946 there were only eight Chinese people legally allowed to immigrate to Canada. After the Second World War, as China had been an ally to the United States and Canada during the war, regulations against Chinese immigrants started to loosen up with the increasing support from the society. Yet the abolishment of the 1923 legislation in 1947 did not bring equal terms for Chinese immigrant to move to Canada as Europeans. It was after the new immigration legislations in 1962 and 1967 (point system) that Chinese immigrants were given equal opportunity of immigration. This is one of what Edgar Wickberg calls the “dualities” of the Chinese population of Canada: those who came to Canada as labourer with low education and the Chinese that came after 1967 with diverse backgrounds and higher level of education (Wickberg, 1982, p. 250).

The year 1967 is worth emphasizing not just for its own right (being the starting year of the implementation of a fair system of immigration policy), but also for the fact that the policies and the social change happening in the late 1960s and early 1970s set the social
environment for the incoming immigrants from Taiwan studied in this dissertation. The Canadian society was becoming more and more friendly to Chinese immigrants, new job positions and opportunities were open to them, and chances of inter-ethnic group interaction became available. Chinese immigrants running laundromats and restaurants were no longer the only image of the Chinese Canadians. As Wickberg said, “Chinese in Canada in the post-1967 period were no longer homogenous.” (Ibid, pp. 247-8) In Vancouver, “[t]he mosaic has become more complex and there have been some important shifts in its vertical character. The Chinese ‘tile’ in the mosaic in the Vancouver region is larger than it was and is now internally more differentiated.” (Johnson, 1994, p. 135) Although the Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong remained the majority sub-group of the Chinese immigrants in Vancouver up until 1998 (Li, 2007; Lai, 2003), immigrants of Chinese descent from various countries started to flood in after 1967. This was not only due to the policy change of Canada, but also to the unstable socio-political situation in Asia during the Cold War period (Wickberg, 1982; Wang, 2003).

The changing social attitude and the rapidly diversified Chinese community created a vibrant and challenging environment for the Taiwanese immigrants that came between the 1960s and 1980s.

1.1.2 The Postwar Great Exodus and Population Mobilization in East Asia

The political turmoil in Asia in the 1960s and 1970s not only brought Canada and other immigrant-accepting countries sources of migration influx, it also imported the tension and hostility between immigrant groups into Canada which calls for careful decision making in social and political policies. Why does it matter to understand and devise policies
accordingly to the differences, grievances, conflicts, and emotional baggage immigrants might have brought to Canada? Why does it matter for Canadians to observe carefully the events in Asia, which is across the ocean from Canada? As Canada has been one of the most proactive and friendly immigrant receiving countries in the developed world after the Second World War, what happens in other parts of the world also concerns Canada. Immigrants are not merely labour power and financial investment in the economy; they are new members to the host society with their likes and dislikes, with their prejudices and with all other psychological and cultural traits. They, together with the current residents (who might be descendants of immigrants only several generations ago), make the faces of Canada. To make Canada an authentic and sustainable multi-cultural society, it is not enough to encourage keeping and promoting cultural heritage in the form of festivals and celebrations as some heritages might have been in warring positions before they come to Canada. The downsides or even the dark sides of this nature in transnational migration raise a lot of issues for Canadian society. This is why what happens in Asia or in Europe is also important for Canadian society, as in a rapidly globalizing world the new immigrants travel back and forth between their sending countries and Canada. The example of the Avian Influenza imported from Asia several years ago shows how different parts of the world are connected. This understanding applies to immigrants from any sending country. To give the study of Taiwanese immigrants in this dissertation a broader and general background, we need to give a rough sketch of the post-war social and political conditions that constituted an important factor of social condition for the Taiwanese immigrants in terms of social participation and political activism in Vancouver.
After the defeat and collapse of the Japanese Empire in 1945, an enormous population relocation plan was devised and executed under the lead of the American occupation government. It is estimated that over 3,340,000 civilians and 3,110,000 military servants (including soldiers and non-combatant officers) were repatriated to Japan or to their origin countries (Asano, 2011b). Population repatriation and processing of the confiscated properties of the Japanese armies and businesses in occupied territories such as China, Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria was a huge mission, and the social impacts on Japan as well as on occupied countries were enormous and often underestimated. It is safe to say that the post-war repatriation and the related economic and political arrangement by the Allies built the framework of the post-war history of most East and Southern Asian countries in terms of their international relations and to a lesser extent their relations with the Western world (Asano, 2011a).

Out of the six million people evacuated from the occupied countries, the majority were those settled in Manchuria and China, Korea, and Taiwan. But this was not the only massive population relocation affecting the post-war history of China and Taiwan. The subsequent Chinese Civil war between the KMT and the insurgent Chinese Communist Party later led to another large-scale migration of people, in which a total population of 1.2 million (270,000 military servants and 900,000 civilians) was relocated to Taiwan after the KMT lost the civil war against China in 1949.

The People’s Republic of China (P.R.C.) established by the Chinese Communist Party was recognized and introduced into the United Nations in 1971 while the KMT “Chinese” government lost its seat in the U.N. The KMT continued to claim itself the sovereign government of China even though its effective control of land and people was
limited to Taiwan and the adjacent islands. The Chinese government in Taiwan gradually lost its international support after being driven out of the U.N. On January 1, 1979, eight years after Canada, the United States established diplomatic relations with Communist China and further isolated the “Chinese” government in Taiwan, which is now more commonly referred to as the Taiwanese government instead of the “Chinese” government (Republic of China or R.O.C.).

What is more important here, sociologically, is the grouping of people and the relevant social effects. Excluding Hong Kong and Macau residents who were still under colonial administration of the British government and the Portuguese government in the 1970s respectively, we see roughly three groups of ethnic Chinese in China proper and Taiwan: (1) the Chinese in China under the Communist government; (2) the exiled Chinese who came to Taiwan with the KMT government from 1945 to the early 1950s; and (3) the Taiwanese whose ancestors were originally from China before the late nineteenth century. This is the starting point of the post-war development of society and international relations for Taiwan as well as for China and other neighbouring Asian countries. The impacts of this framework continue to affect immigrant-accepting countries such as Canada and the United States as long as they still take immigrants from Taiwan and China.

Although the construction of national identity involves the life experience of the people, the manipulation of the state often plays the most important role in facilitating the forming of national awareness and identification through official propaganda. This is even more obvious for authoritarian states such as China or Taiwan before the democratization in

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5 After the cultural transformation the Chinese Communist Party brought to China, the Chinese in Taiwan became the keepers of the Chinese culture, which was used by the KMT government to justify its role as the true protector of the Chinese heritage and the legitimate government of China. Weiming Tu (1996) refers to Taiwan as a “cultural China.”
the 1990s. For the Chinese in China and those who came to Taiwan in the 1940s and 1950s, identifying oneself as Chinese, simply following a political classification, seemed natural. The only difference lies in the legitimacy of the state: which Chinese government represents China—the one in Beijing, China (P.R.C.) or the one in Taipei, Taiwan (R.O.C.)?

For the Taiwanese that lived through the 50-year Japanese colonization, however, it has always been a serious and socially dividing issue whether or not Taiwanese count as Chinese. This is so partly because the KMT government implemented social policies in favour of their followers from China while leaving the Taiwanese with unequal distribution of social resources, political and civil rights, and economic opportunities. The Taiwanese were deemed somehow a different, if not inferior, type of Chinese under the KMT. This is exactly the historical and social background of the grudges and grievances Taiwanese (both domestic and overseas) hold and which are reflected later on in their political actions and public affair participation to be documented in the following chapters.

While the post-war reality presented itself with three groups of people that were all culturally Chinese, the consequent social and political arrangements and state actions helped create divided imagination of national identities in China, Taiwan, and overseas immigrant communities. This dissertation will focus on how the conception of a Taiwanese identity was formed, promoted, and mobilized by Taiwanese immigrants in host societies such as Canada to distinguish itself from a culturally defined Chinese identity. It will be contended that the overseas Taiwanese, particularly those in Canada and the U.S., play a key role in shaping the Taiwanese identity in contrast to the Chinese identity the KMT government has been promoting in education, entertainment, and other spheres of social life.
1.1.3 The Relevance to Canadian Society

As previously discussed, in a rapidly globalizing world, it is more and more difficult for any country to stay isolated from international society. This is especially true for immigrant receiving countries like Canada. The experience of national identity re-examination and reconstruction for Taiwanese Canadians is not their problem alone. It is a Canadian question, as this is an issue that faces many ethnic groups in Canada. To make a sustainable multicultural society viable, it is important for the host society to move beyond passively respecting people with different ethnic origins and heritages and to incorporate immigrants into the fabric of Canadian society, which is constantly changing as more immigrants move in. This can be elaborated from two points.

(1) Through the introduction of immigrants, Canada has developed to become a different country in regard to the ethnic composition of its population or the faces of the Canadian people. In the case of Vancouver, one of the most multicultural cities in Canada, it has been a common experience to hear people speaking in different languages or different accents of English in the streets or on a bus. Three different and perhaps somewhat contrasting examples may shed a little light on what social reality Canadians are facing nowadays.

Once I went to a notable chain supermarket in Vancouver selling imported Asian goods and heard a Caucasian woman complaining to an employee that some of the signs were only written in Chinese, and she therefore felt discriminated against. This example seems to suggest that the Chinese customers alone would yield enough profit for the store to survive in market competition. Another time when I was on a bus downtown, I overheard two women discussing language policies in Canada, and one of them commented: “maybe
Canada should make Chinese as its third official language.” I do not recall sensing any bit of sarcasm from her comments. It was in the same city, Vancouver, with its arms open to new immigrants, that I once heard a Caucasian man who was driving past me and two female friends yell “Go back to your own country!” This is the social reality Vancouver or more generally Canada is growing into: a society with multiple ethnic groups united under the same identification with the Canadian nationality while remaining some degree of loyalty and concern for their origin countries.

(2) On an international level the re-positioning and re-defining of the Canadian identity is also an urgent mission, as Canada is involved more significantly in international affairs compared to the first half of twentieth century or even earlier. When sociologist John Porter argued that Canadian society in the 1960s was organized on the basis of unequal economic and social opportunity, Asian Canadians were not given much attention in his discussion (Porter, 1965). Today, any discussion of social and economic issues without referring to the roles Canadians with Asian origins play would be somewhat insufficient. This is to say, the “mosaic” of Canadian society has changed since then and it keeps changing. What happens in the international society would affect Canadian policies and decisions accordingly. For example, when the Chinese Canadian population is constantly growing, the issue of human rights violation in China is a Canadian issue since it affects many Chinese Canadians’ families and relatives in China.

In the following chapters, we will have more detailed discussion of how Taiwanese immigrants’ settling processes in Canada have had significant impacts on themselves, their sending country, and the host society as well. What has been discussed so far gives a preliminary sketch of how the issues facing the relatively small Taiwanese Canadian
community are contextualized, and why they are meaningful not merely for themselves but also for the Canadian society.

1.2 Theories and Literature Review

The migration of Chinese to North America has a long history dating back to the 19th century, and the study of it has resulted in a large amount of literature on various topics from socio-geographical issues, labour conditions, community and voluntary associations, to cultural traits such as culinary habits. The study of Chinese immigrants’ settlement and adaptation in Canada, particularly in major cities such as Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto, has also become an important field in Asian studies (Tan and Zimmerman, 2007, p. vii).

Under the somewhat oversimplified category of “Chinese,” however, it is easy to lose sight of the variety and complex processes different types of Chinese migrants have gone through in their immigration experience (Ma, 2003, p. 21; Chow, 2009). What do we really know about the Chinese Canadians and their past? We have extensive knowledge of Chinese-speaking immigrants that came from Hong Kong, especially the influx after the change of immigration policies in the 1970s (Lai, 2003). We also know much about Pacific Railroad workers and their history under discriminatory regulations. How do “Chinese” from other points of origin fit into this picture while the “Chinese diaspora” has its long “tradition” in the Asian context before it flows into North America? The post-war mobility of population discussed earlier made this diversity even more extensive in the second half of the 20th century. Self-identified Chinese population came not merely from China and Hong Kong, though the latter was the most important point of origin for early Chinese immigrants
to Canada, but also from Taiwan, Southeast Asian countries, and South American countries due to various historical and economic reasons. As Wickberg (1982) points out,

The most important point of origin for Chinese migration became Hong Kong, although a few Chinese came to Canada from a variety of overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia (e.g. Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines), southern Africa, Latin America (especially Peru), and the Caribbean. (p. 245)

In fact, not just the changing patterns of Hong Kong migration make the understanding of Chinese population in Canada more difficult; immigration from Taiwan and other Chinese-speaking regions makes it even more complicated. The existence of these types of Chinese immigrants has been long under-represented in statistic studies due to various reasons; and their trajectories of transnational or even triangular migrations have not yet been duly studied either. This dissertation, in this vein, is an attempt to give an ethnographic account of the Taiwanese immigrants to show how this “internally differentiated” (Johnson, 1994, p. 135) nature of the (culturally and ethnically) Chinese immigrant community in Vancouver has impacts on immigrants’ lives as much as on their sending countries.

1.2.1 National Identity in a Transnational Context

The story of Taiwanese Canadians is to a larger extent a story of national identity. The word “national” here might appear to be somewhat confusing as normally national identity is conceptualized under the framework of nation-state imagination of the world.
Since the Taiwanese Canadians are no longer Taiwanese nationals but rather Canadian nationals, it seems irrelevant to discuss their connection with Taiwan using the concept of national identity in Canada unless to claim they merely stay here for protection until they are safe and wealthy enough to return (which is often called the “sojourn” type of immigrants). But this is not the case. Most early Taiwanese immigrants studied here, who came to Canada between the 1960s and the 1980s, are permanent residents in the fullest sense while at the same time retaining close emotional ties and concern for Taiwan. In this sense, in an ongoing globalizing world, it seems appropriate to go beyond the narrower definition of a “national” identity and to examine how (multiple- or multi-layered) national identity formation process works in people’s real lives.

The origin of national identity or the sense of bonding of a nation is commonly discussed in modern scholarship with the assumption of a framework that sees the nation-state as an agent or an actor while the international community is deemed an arena wherein agents of nation-states strive for survival and best national interests. Be it the study of what binds people together (Gellner, 1983; Renan, 1996), what social and technical conditions make the forming of a nation possible (Anderson, 1994; Barth, 1998), or what is mobilized and utilized to arouse national sentiments and to set the boundary of a nation against outsiders (Fanon, 2005; Hobsbawm, 1983; Smith, 1993), a frequently found (and sometimes taken-for-granted) theme is that a nation arises or forms with the forming of a politically and geographically definite unit of political practice, a state (Anderson, 1994). Whether it is true that, as Benedict Anderson argued, the United States is the prototype of modern nation-states or the European nation-states have different trajectories of nation building distinctive from the path of the United States, it seems that a geographically definite and politically unitary
nation-state is largely recognized as a starting point of discussion when discussing the phenomenon of nationalist movements in modern times. Even when globalization and its substantial impacts on local society have been realized and studied by scholars of nationalism, this is still the case (Castells, 1997; Smith, 1995).

Indeed, modern states and nations often synchronize in time and contribute to each other’s formation. But is this paradigm universal and does it apply to other countries in the world (for example in Asia) even when they take the form of a nation-state? If we take the post-war re-shuffle of political powers and massive relocation of populations as discussed earlier into consideration, the trajectories of post-war nation building may well take various forms under different social and political circumstances. Along these lines, in a somewhat different yet relevant context, British sociologist Stephen Castles talks about why globalization has called for fresh thinking on social issues, particularly transnational migration:

Some years ago one might have started the task of the sociology of forced migration as the study of people forced to flee from one society and becoming part of another one. Globalization and transnationalism make this conceptualization anachronistic, since the boundaries of national societies are becoming increasingly blurred. (Castles, 2003, p. 23)

What Castles argues here is actually the need to re-examine our understanding of borders between nations and between peoples. Although the international regulation of identity on an administrative level is still based on a rigid distinction of nationhood in the form of passports,
for more and more people, it becomes an increasingly common experience of travelling and feeling “at home” in several places, not just one. In a broader sense this is a development of a mixed national identity with multiple constituent elements. By definition, “transnationalism” refers to:

the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated “transmigrants.” Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders. *Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously.* (Schiller, Basch, and Balnc-Szanton, 1992, pp. 1-2. Italics added)

This is why this study of Taiwanese Canadians may yield some new ways of thinking about how complex national identity may burgeon in a transnational and migrant context and be a collaboration of parties physically separated across the Pacific Ocean. More precisely, it will be argued here that the Taiwanese identity is constructed not by one group of people in a geographically definite location (Taiwan) but rather by people cooperatively in Taiwan and in multiple locations of North America. And this may contribute to the study of nationalism with a more comprehensive understanding of how nation building works in different scenarios in a globalizing world in contrast to the pattern discussed in classical studies such as Benedict Anderson’s.
1.2.2 Overseas Taiwanese Studies

Studies about Taiwan’s history and relations with China and Japan have prospered only in the past twenty years after democratization brought fresh thinking and reflection on dominating political narrative offered to the people in Taiwan and to the international society by the KMT government serving its political interests and protecting its legitimacy. The growing diversity of historical perspectives employed and the enriching topics of research, especially now that studying Taiwan is no longer a taboo under the authoritarian rule of the KMT, have made Taiwan Studies one of the most popular disciplines in Taiwan. Interest in contemporary Taiwan and its complicated issues of identity politics have also developed in the past two decades in Taiwan and elsewhere (Brown, 2004; Keating, 2006, 2008; Manthorpe, 2010; Roy, 2003). The study of overseas Taiwanese, however, and their interaction with Taiwan and their host countries has not yet been well advanced. As the study of overseas Taiwanese is the specific theoretical ground for this dissertation on the Taiwanese in Canada, we will focus more on related research.

1.2.2.1 Political Movements of the Overseas Taiwanese

Studies on how transnational networks have impacts on the host society and more importantly the ethnic homeland of the immigrants have flourished in the past two decades. Among the impacts a transnational network (of an immigrant group and so on) may bring to the sending country, political action has been one of the most important topics other than the economic roles immigrants may play transnationally (Al-Alli & Koser, 2002). One of the earliest studies of this sort by Schiller et al. (1992) argues that to understand the political processes in the Philippines and Haiti it is crucial to take into consideration of the activities
of the Filipinos and the Haitians in the United States. Other studies, primarily but not exclusively on South American immigrant communities in North America, examine the complex relations between the immigrants and the political processes in their ethnic homelands (Glick-Schiller, 2001; Guarnizo, 1998; Guarnizo et al., 1999; Levitt, 2001; Roberts et al., 1999; Sheffer, 2003). The “social fields” (Schiller, 1992) created by the activities of the “transmigrants” become nodes in the international society and conduits of resources to flow back and forth between the ethnic homeland and the host society. This is especially relevant to the situation of Taiwan after Taiwan was driven out of the U.N. and lost most official connections between nation states in the international community. This is because the “nodes” or “conduits” can be invisible, less formal, yet are capable enough to help achieve things beyond formal diplomatic constraints.

In the same vein, several studies show how overseas Taiwanese communities created this sort of “social fields” for their own political causes and purposes.

As briefly mentioned earlier and as will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5, it is argued that early overseas Taiwanese might be properly understood as “forced migration” or “political (self-) exiles.” The most common reason for leaving Taiwan and settling in North America was to escape from political pressure or because one was simply deprived of the right to return to Taiwan after being suspected for involving in anti-Taiwanese government activities in North America—the latter is often referred to as being on the blacklist. This may explain why most studies of contemporary overseas Taiwanese tend to take an “independence” perspective in analyzing the status and social experience of the overseas Taiwanese community in North America (J. H. Chen, 1998; M. C. Chen, 1992; Zhang, Zeng, & Chen, 2005). Certainly Taiwan independence has always been one of the
main concerns for overseas Taiwanese communities particularly for the highly educated elite, but for the reasons to be discussed later in this dissertation, it might be an overstated argument to deem all political actions of overseas Taiwanese as aimed specifically at promoting Taiwan independence.

Jia-hong Chen’s concise yet thorough study of the independence movement in the United States from the mid-1950s to the mid-1990s may still be the most complete study of the political actions taken by Taiwanese Americans so far (J. H. Chen, 1998; also refer to Bush, 2004; Lien, 2007). Through an analysis of how overseas Taiwanese managed to lobby the U.S. Congress for the interests of Taiwan Chen gave a detailed depiction of the difficulties, conflicts, and success overseas Taiwanese experienced. Although the book is a study of the Taiwanese community in the United States (and in particular the political groups in it), it points to an important lead for the study of the Taiwanese Canadian community: that what immigrants may and may not do, and may and may not accomplish in the host society are contingent on the structural conditions as much as human agency. And to what extent the host society would support immigrants’ call for helping their sending countries depends on how these immigrants make a convincing appeal to the host society based on their social experience in the new society—their home. Through the study of political organizations such as FAPA (the Formosan Association for Public Affairs) and their lobbying campaigns for Taiwan, Chen demonstrates that it is crucial to situate the analysis of immigrant political movements in their interaction with the host society, which determines the prospects of the movements and the social effects in the host society, as well as in the sending countries. In Pei-te Lien’s (2007) discussion on the same key organizations such as FAPA and WUFI (World United Formosans for Independence), she emphasized that: “It makes the case that a
systemic understanding of the relationship between overseas Chinese and the ethnic homeland cannot be assessed without regarding the forces within and transcending national boundaries” (p. 117).

Compared to Jia-hong Chen’s focused study of a handful of political groups orchestrated towards helping the cause of Taiwan, Ming-cheng Chen’s book is more of a compilation of significant happenings, anecdotes, and events concerning Taiwan independence movements around the world. The period M.C. Chen’s book discusses is about the same as the J. H. Chen book just discussed. From the 1950s to the 1990s before the democratization, due to the political oppression in Taiwan, the only possible venues for Taiwanese people to actively participate in public affairs were in foreign countries. North America and Japan were the most important sites for the overseas Taiwanese to build up anti-KMT government supporters and resources. M. C. Chen shows with carefully documented evidence how overseas Taiwanese organized and mobilized to fight for their ideals and cause. The importance of this book lies in its emphasis on the connection and interactive process that helped the Taiwanese immigrants to justify their cause and to mobilize for political purposes with the ultimate goal of Taiwan independence. This is, however, also the main problem with the book as all major movements initiated by overseas Taiwanese were categorized as “independence movements.” The book may prove to be too hasty in coming to a conclusion on the nature and complex impacts of political actions taken by overseas Taiwanese communities. In the following chapters of this dissertation we will see why this perspective may not be plausible and may ignore the non-political aspects of Taiwanese immigrant participation in the civil society of the host society, which might prove to be even more effective in shaping the political identity of the overseas Taiwanese.
1.2.2.2 International Migration Studies

In addition to the studies narrowly limited to the political life of overseas Taiwanese, some other researchers have placed more emphasis on migration process and related consequences and problems (Chiang & Huang, 2009; Tsai, 2001; Xu & Chen, 2005; Xu & Zi, 2004). The pioneering study conducted by Tsai (2001) and the more up-to-date, comparative studies by Xu and Zi (2004) and Xu and Chen (2005) give a demographic and social analysis of Taiwanese immigrants in Canada and other developed countries. The focuses include the motives for migration, the problems of adjustment, social welfare issues, and generational problems facing Taiwanese immigrants in the host society. Most of these studies take the human geographical approach and utilize census data and other statistical sources to verify or test hypotheses respectively. Their studies show clearly that after the late 1980s several waves of Taiwanese immigrants rushed into Canada, Australia, and the United States for political and more importantly economical purposes.

Although the targeted groups or cohorts of migration in these researches are different from those discussed in this dissertation, who came to Canada primarily in the 1970s and 1980s, their studies offer various clues for us to understand early Taiwanese immigrants in Canada. For example, Xu and Chen (2005) find a tight connection between Taiwanese immigrants even when they settle in a scattered manner with difficulty gathering together on regular basis. This is not fully explained in Xu and Chen’s article because of the lack of a closer look at the community structure and services offered by community organizations. In this dissertation we will follow the lead and examine how this bonding is established in the Taiwanese community through the cases of Taiwanese in Vancouver.
Lan-hung Chiang and Li-qiang Huang’s study, on the other hand, gives a rather detailed and ethnographic sketch of the lives and self-reflections of early Taiwanese immigrants in Vancouver. This article is much more relevant to our discussion. Two interesting points will be discussed in the following chapters in greater detail. The first is the concept of “home” for Taiwanese immigrants. Chiang and Huang found that the immigrants exhibit a strong and clear dual identification with Canadian values and their Taiwanese roots. And there is no conflict in identity for these people, according to Chiang and Huang (Chiang & Huang, 2009, p. 37).

Another important conclusion of the Chiang and Huang study points to the reluctance of some Taiwanese Canadians to migrate, as contrasted with the research findings of Xu and Chen previously discussed. It also shows in the title of Chiang and Huang’s article “Reluctant exiles…” and echoes what Stephen Castles calls “forced migration” (Castles, 2003, p. 14). In this dissertation (especially in Chapter 3) we will argue that early Taiwanese immigrants were indeed reluctant exiles who were deprived of the right to return home most likely because of their participation in public affairs in the host society. According to some interviewees’ personal experiences, it was made clear by visa-issuing officials that the main reason for the rejection of visa applications to Taiwan from the Taiwanese Canadians was a suspected or confirmed role in community organizations—particularly the Taiwanese Canadian Association which had been the foremost and most active organization of its kind in overseas Taiwanese communities around the world. In several cases, the interviewees talked about how their Taiwan passports were made void and they had to apply for temporary status to stay in Canada or in the United States, which later led to their only option of becoming an immigrant. Others mentioned how they obtained a tourist visa, which was later
cancelled upon arrival in Taiwan with no explanation given. Some were even held in
custody and expelled from Taiwan for alleged involvement in anti-government activities.
We will have more details in Chapter 3 on how these conditions and difficulties made some
of them lose their legal identity and become reluctant immigrants.

In addition to the troubles the loss of legal identity brought to these Taiwanese
citizens in Canada, the experience of losing one’s way back home and having to settle down
in a foreign land gave them an opportunity to reflect upon their taken-for-granted national
identity and the concept of home. It is important to note, however, that not all of the
Taiwanese Canadians that became immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s went through
harassment and difficulties. Still, for most of the interviewees, the urge to leave Taiwan to
avoid political pressure and to pursue a fair and promising future was a common experience.

So far we have seen from past studies on Taiwanese immigrants in North America
and particularly in Canada the difference between early immigrants and new immigrants after
the 1990s. We also notice the political pressure that Taiwanese immigrants have to deal with.
These studies, however, have not looked into the real life interactions in the community
accounting for the shaping of these Taiwanese immigrants’ national identity, in which the
significance of “Chinese” heritage is downplayed while the Taiwan element is given a clearer
shape and the Canadian experience is also incorporated. The studies of the “independence”
movements reflect only one angle of the complex lives Taiwanese immigrants experienced.
We will examine life histories of common people as well as community leaders to present a
panorama of the Taiwanese immigrant community and its social history in Vancouver.
1.3 Puzzles and Explanations

Following the previous discussion on how Chinese immigration is a complex process with multiple constituent cultural and geographical origins, and on the deficit in studying early Taiwanese immigrants’ daily life experience, it is important to point out that this dissertation is devoted to filling the gap in attention to the early history of Taiwanese immigrants, who constitute a numerically small yet distinctive part of the Chinese population in Vancouver. They are not all political activists, as some studies would simplistically suggest, and they are not primarily economic class or investment immigrants as are the latecomers that flowed into Canada after the late 1980s. Then who are they? What makes their story different from that of other minority groups from Asia? How do they see themselves: Chinese? Taiwanese? Canadians? Or a mixture of all these identities as in Ching’s (2001) metaphorical use of the phrase “triple consciousness?” What impacts do they bring to Canadian society as well as to their sending country Taiwan?

The key research questions of this dissertation are as follows:

1. Who are the Taiwanese Canadians?

2. What socio-historical processes define the distinctiveness of this sub-group of immigrants of Chinese descent?

3. What mechanisms do this group of people utilize (responsively or proactively) to create an imagined community?

After the massive post-war mobility of population and the normalization of political institutions and powers, primarily under the dominance of the United States, Asian countries experienced various paths to democratization, state-making, and nation-building (Asano, 2011b). For the three “Chinese” populations after the 1950s (Communist China, Taiwan, and
the KMT government in exile), the quest for a stable political identity of their own faced various forms of challenge and interference. The Communist government had to prove its legitimacy in leading the revolution overthrowing the “old China” represented by the KMT, which fled to Taiwan. After losing the majority of land under its control in the civil war, the KMT government needed to convince both the people of the newly annexed haven Taiwan and international society that the KMT represented China. As for the Taiwanese who were forced into a quasi-colonization social system after getting out of the Japanese colonization, they were harshly suppressed by the KMT government. The interaction of these three groups of people and the involvement of the Western world not only shaped the post-war history of China and Taiwan but also impacted to a significant extent on the entire East Asian region. This is the background of the so-called “Third Wave Democratization” in Asia (Huntington, 1991). The democratization process of Asian countries was intertwined with the nation-building agenda. In Taiwan, under the authoritarian rule of the KMT, the only official propaganda promoted a singular Chinese identity and suppressed any conception of Taiwanese as a nation distinctive from Chinese. The latter idea became a political taboo and in fact a criminal offence.

After 38 years of Martial Law (1949-1987) and over 50 years of authoritarian rule (1945-1998), however, nation building has not been as successful as the KMT wanted it to be. Why does persuasion from the state through cultural and political means not prevail? Why do democratization movements in the late 1980s converge with a locally initiated nation-building movement and eventually lead to a successful transformation of a single-party authoritarian government?
1.3.1 Explanations for Taiwan’s Democratization and Identity Formation

The democratization of Taiwan from the 1980s forward was intertwined with a grass-roots project of nation building, counteracting the state propaganda that dominated in cultural and political realms. For a succinct discussion here, we will only refer to this complex process with the more commonly used term “democratization.” Several explanations have been proposed to account for the democratization of Taiwan.

Some political scientists argued that a state-driven reform from top down opened up political opportunities for the anti-KMT forces in the civil society to build up and mobilize (Chu, 1998, 2001, 2004; or for a general discussion see Huntington, 1991). Political “opportunity structure,” according to this argument, made the government itself and the political system as a whole more open to civic participation in politics while the KMT managed to retain control over political process, which later proved unsatisfying.

Another argument focuses more on the interaction between the state elite and the rising middle class after the economic take-off in the 1970s (Wang, 1997; Zhang, 2011). This argument follows “modernization theory,” using economic factors to explain political movements and pressure from the civil society (Huntington, 1991; Moore, 1966; Sorensen, 1998). In the case of Taiwan, it is argued that the middle class supported political movements financially and in elections for the non-KMT candidates. They did this often in a low-profile manner to avoid harassment from the state.

Some scholars point out the significance of the cooperation between political movements and social movements, including civil rights movements and environmental movements (Chang, 1994; Fan, 2004). The synergy of these two types of movement expanded the scope of the support base and increased chances of mobilizing enough
resources from the civil society. Grass-roots insurgence and inter-group alliance in this argument is given more emphasis in the explanation of Taiwan’s rapid democratization.

Although these perspectives have different emphases on what element plays the most important role in pushing Taiwan’s democracy forward, it seems that all three factors (state action, class structure change, and civil society alliance) are considered by most scholars to be plausible explanations for Taiwan’s democratization in the 1980s and 1990s. Then what else is missed out in these scenarios of democratization?

1.3.2 A Supplementary Explanation: Exogenous Democratization Thesis

This dissertation will propose a supplementary argument claiming that it is through the support and actions taken by overseas Taiwanese that the democratization of Taiwan and nation building were made possible. Top-down reform by the state, middle-class participation, or the socio-political movement synergy thesis cannot alone account for the case of Taiwan democratization without taking into consideration the necessary (yet not sufficient) condition of overseas Taiwanese involvement. The forced migration of Taiwanese from the 1960s to the 1980s to Vancouver, as well as to other cities in North America, makes a rarely studied yet highly important linkage of political reform and identity reconstruction from remote locations overseas. It will be contended that the overseas Taiwanese community did not merely play a passive and auxiliary role in facilitating the local movements happening in Taiwan. On the contrary, overseas Taiwanese provided counter-narratives against KMT state propaganda and stimulated and helped maintain the momentum in confronting the authoritarian state in Taiwan. In the process, the intertwined issues of political rights, civil rights, and national identity unfolded at different stages in
different forms causing splits, new alliances, and compromises in the overseas Taiwanese communities as well as in Taiwan. We have no intention to go as far as to claim that without overseas Taiwanese community the democratization of Taiwan would not have happened, but it is argued here that the contemporary Taiwanese identity is made possible in a diasporic and transnational context with the efforts of overseas Taiwanese without which any theorization would be flawed in its relevance to historical facts and capacity of explanation.

On the other hand, it is through the cooperation with the people in Taiwan that overseas Taiwanese learn to clarify what their status is and who they are in the nexus of this boundary crossing social existence. At first it was not always a conscious choice for most of them, as they were forbidden to return to Taiwan by their government. But the life in overseas locales with all sorts of interactive experiences with the locals and the other “Chinese” groups, in addition to the experience of living in a society where freedom of speech is protected, changed the way they saw themselves and in effect created the category of Taiwanese Canadian through their active participation in both community and Taiwan affairs. This is something significant only to them, not to their cooperative comrades in Taiwan. In fact, it might be argued that they have become a new genre of citizens: they care for Taiwan, but they are not any more used to it, even though they have been part of what makes the democratization happen. This is why the democratization of Taiwan is better viewed as only one side of the coin—the other side being the change that happened to the overseas Taiwanese.
1.4 Methodology and Research Design

In an afternoon of a sunny day in winter of 2009 when I was sitting in the study of a senior Taiwanese immigrant, sipping my tea and listening to his passionate comments on politics of Canada and Taiwan, I asked him if I could interview him. He seemed to be terrified by the invitation and waved his hands saying that he was nobody and it was absolutely a waste of time to interview him. This was not a surprise to me, as I had had quite a few “no’s” before I made the request to him. It turned out that even though I had known him for over a year there was still something that kept him from being willing to talk openly about his own stories. It might be his temperament, or that he simply didn’t find me trustworthy—in this latter sense maybe the unpleasant past had cast a shadow over him. And the unspeakable was what interests me the most. What he then proposed as a token of compensation steered my fieldwork away from my plan in the Taiwanese Canadian community in Vancouver. He suggested that I contact and work with an oral history group in Vancouver who had been interviewing senior immigrants and collecting related documents and artefacts for years. He made a phone call to Mr. A40 right away and handed over the phone to me after he introduced me to Lin. I set up a meeting with Mr. A40 and his team members a few days later.

Mr. A40 and a small group of community friends, who were early Taiwanese immigrants themselves who came to Canada in the 1960s and 1970s, organized a voluntary group called the “Work Team for Oral History of Taiwanese Immigrants” over ten years ago. The idea was simple: they wanted to collect the memories of early Taiwanese Canadians before it was too late, as the seniors were fading away. But the project had been dormant for a while before I met with them. They kindly invited me to join the team, even though I was
neither an immigrant nor a senior. They assumed, and I hope they were right, that my participation as a graduate student might give them a boost in morale and a helping hand in getting their data computerized and maybe helping out with some chores. So I was in. With unbelievable enthusiasm and devotion of Mr. A40 and his team members and with my help to a lesser extent, the loosely organized oral history team turned into an officially incorporated non-profit organization under the name of the “Society of Taiwanese Canadian History in B.C (STCHBC),” which was registered in May 2010. Two months later it was made public to the community. In May 2011, the first General Meeting was held and the first Board of Directors, which included me, was elected.

The involvement of these experienced and well-connected people in the project has been extremely educational as much as it is beneficial to my own research. From the very beginning I gave full attention to maintaining my objective view as an observer when attending their meetings and events. This was because that I wanted to remain a researcher while participating in their activities. Therefore I never talked about what I really do for my research, and I tried not to make too much comment during regular meetings or at interviews they set up and allowed me to be present at. I attended almost every activity and every interview they set up with senior members of the Taiwanese Canadian community. They were kind enough to give me access to all of their early interview data dating back to 2001 in exchange for the chores I was definitely more than happy to do, such as turning old recording cassettes of interviews into CDs and making them more organized. In addition to that, I was invited to participate in every action they took to secure and preserve artefacts of senior Taiwanese Canadians when they were willing to donate or when the unexpected happened.
The most significant case happened in 2010. Shortly after one of the most prominent opinion leaders in the community passed away, his children decided to sell his house in Vancouver. At least ten garbage bags of documents and artefacts were thrown away before the STCHBC was called in to help out with the cleaning of the house in exchange for keeping artefacts we hoped to take over and preserve in memory of this community leader. It was a bittersweet experience for me and other co-workers at the STCHBC to try to “save” the invaluable documents and artefacts. This was because the deceased person was a key player and a “veteran” in most of the groups and organizations in the Taiwanese Canadian community in the 1970s and the 1980s, and he was a distinguished and highly revered scholar with international reputation in his expertise. From the manuscripts, photographs, and other types of documents we managed to save, we could not even start to imagine what kinds of important artefacts had been put in the ten garbage bags and thrown out.

In addition to unexpected tasks like this, the day-to-day “interaction” with the oral history team may be the most time-consuming “participant observation” I have ever engaged in. But the result is worth the effort because I was always there whenever something (scheduled or unexpected) happened, and my role as a member made it easier for me to approach organizations and senior people in the community. The interview data used in this thesis come partly from the interviews and events I participated in as an observer (28 sessions), and partly from the audio recordings of interviews the work team (the former body of the current STCHBC) conducted between 2001 and 2009 (29 sessions).
1.4.1 An Interactionist Ethnography of Immigrant Communities

If a serious effort is made to construct theories that will even begin to explain social phenomena, it turns out that their general propositions are not about the equilibrium of societies but about the behavior of men.... They (functionalists) keep psychological explanations under the table and bring them out like a bottle of whisky, for use when they really need help. (Homans, 1964, p. 818)

Historian Paul Cohen, in his influential critique of conventional research methods of Sinologists before the 1980s, listed a few things that need to be dealt with when conducting research on human behavior (Cohen, 1984). These pointers are inspiring for sociologists as well as for historians. Cohen argued that an “internal approach” and the use of “empathy” can effectively lead a researcher to a grasp of the real lives of the people studied—in history or at the present time. The “internal approach” requires taking the perspective of the social actors being studied and avoiding the researcher’s inconspicuous prejudice and presumptions. This approach falls in line with sociologist Max Weber’s concept of “verstehen” in the humanities and the methodological concept of “thick description” proposed by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973). “Empathy” is how one approaches the actual motives, feelings, and attitudes of social actors. As Weber noted, to empathize is to infiltrate one’s “self” into the studied object (Weber, 1964, p. 104). Weber’s classic work on the origin of capitalism (2002) is in essence a psychoanalytic guidebook to the innermost world of Calvinist Protestants.

Certainly an empathetic understanding of the motives, feelings, and attitudes of people we study is by no means a replacement for the analysis of socio-economic conditions.
A careful use of this “bottle of whisky” (Homans, 1964, p. 818) will lead to a better understanding of human behaviours and their social consequences. Since the major concern of this dissertation is how interactions at various levels of social cohabitation may contribute to a re-construction of one’s national identity, which may be questioned after an encounter with an “alien” group (presumably friendly or hostile according to the taken-for-granted inter-ethnic frame), this “bottle of whisky” becomes crucial in understanding the effects an immigration social setting may have on its newcomers and on the dynamics inside the immigrant community. In a general sense, the Taiwanese immigrants had to make sense of the social world they were in. This new social world, with all its different definitions of ethnicity, behaviour codes, rules, and moral order, casts a mission for the newcomers not just to survive but also to reconstruct their understanding of the world and their roles in it. As shown in many people’s testimonies, they act differently, they think differently, and they have different expectations for themselves and for their children.

When social theorist Jurgen Habermas discussed the research by Erving Goffman, he defined the social world one carries in human encounters a “totality of subjective experience” (Habermas, 2004, p. 91). That is to say, when faced with scenes of interaction in daily life, one has to be able to make sense of what the settings, roles, lines at each stage and possible scenarios are, and then act accordingly. The subjectivity of the social actor is defined in this sense by their understanding of the world around them—which includes the understanding of their identity and how it is situated in the world. For immigrants from Taiwan, this is the odyssey from being a Taiwanese immigrant to becoming a “Taiwanese Canadian.” Or, to be more precise, from being an immigrant from Taiwan (who took his/her identity as a “Chinese,” as taught in school and never reflected upon) to a “Taiwanese Canadian”—and
each of the two nouns in this term contains profound and meaningful settlement experience and reflection on it. The richness of a name like this can be disclosed mainly through examining the immigrant’s actions and their own account of their actions. In light of this, participant observation and interviews are employed in this dissertation to reconstruct the life histories of the Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver.

1.4.2 Research Methods

The collection of Taiwanese immigrants’ biographic data (e.g., interview, oral history, archival documents, etc.) and the observation of their participation in community organizations have been the primary measures of study. However, historical and institutional conditions within which people in Taiwan formed their ethnic identity before the outflow group migrated are also important in terms of substantiating the assumption that the state-driven propaganda and educational system worked in inducing the official “Chinese” national identity among the Taiwanese. And the migration experience re-places not just immigrants’ physical existence but also their mental map (psychological borders and distinctions between peoples) in terms of who they really are. To examine how that comes into effect, I will also use documents and observations to verify what the interviewees reported in the interviews.

1.4.2.1 Interview

Location: Vancouver is the primary location for the interviews conducted in this study because it is one of the two cities with the largest clusters of Taiwanese immigrants (Xu & Chen, 2005; Xu & Zi, 2004). It is also a major destination for Hong Kong and
Chinese immigrants, which makes interaction of Taiwanese immigrants with these groups possible and more frequent on daily basis.

Samples: Interview data have been collected from 62 interviewees in 58 individual sessions and from 4 group sessions. Some of the interviews were done by local researchers of the Society of Taiwanese Canadian History in B.C (STCHBC) and incorporated in my data with permission. The target group for interview is limited, but not exclusively so, to the early cohorts of immigrants from 1961 to the mid-1980s, as immigrants from this period show consistent patterns of immigration motives and experience compared to the cohorts after the mid-1980s, who exhibit different patterns of transnational migration (they are commonly referred to as “economic class” or “investment class” immigrants). Group interviews were normally composed of four or more attendees not including the researcher. These sessions were arranged to recruit people who were the key members or participants of significant events in the Taiwanese immigrant community. Through the conversation and cross-checking of facts remembered by different individuals, what happened in the past may be reconstructed in a more complete and valid fashion. For example, two sessions were conducted on the theme of the experience of interacting with the mainstream society or the public sector of Vancouver. All participants (including some of the STCHBC members who facilitated the group sessions) were to certain extent the most active members and opinion leaders in the community who constantly participate in local and national public affairs such as elections, policy debates, and so on. Refer to Appendix 1 for the detail of interviews.⁶

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⁶ All names of interviewees are coded in alphanumeric order and listed on Appendix 1 for a better protection of their identity and privacy although they have given permission to be mentioned in the dissertation with their real names. Only the names of a limited number of public figures are used in this dissertation as in the case of Dr. A-Sin Tsai. Discussions on these public figures are based on information accessible in the public domain instead of on interviews. A contrast table of code names and real names is submitted to the supervisor of this research in accordance with the research proposal submitted to and approved by the Behaviour Research Ethics Board.
Table 1 List of Fieldwork Data

<table>
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<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Session</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group Interview</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Observation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4.2.2 Participant Observation

In addition to participating in the activities of the “Society of Taiwanese Canadian History in B.C.” as reported at the beginning of this section, the following are some conditions and details of the participation in the community.

Groups: Activities of both political and non-political groups my informers participate in are observed. The local groups the Greater Vancouver Taiwanese Canadian Association (TCA) and the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society (with no obvious political stance, most activities are cultural and community-oriented) are the two most important groups in the community; other smaller groups such as the Vancouver Taiwan Hakka Association and Sung Ling Hui (Society for Senior Citizens) were also observed.

Situation: Regular meetings, the General Meeting, and special events were observed. Issues brought up in these meetings and events vary from community affairs to political incidents happening in Taiwan or in Canada (the 2011 parliamentary election for example). Discussions and activities (e.g., protests, parades, fund-raising or mobilization for election
campaigns, etc.) pertaining to identity issues are especially frequent in groups with political inclinations such as the TCA.

Focus of Action: Although cultural events and activities will also be carefully documented, identity-related discussions, forums, casual chatting, and activities will be the focus of observation. This is what Geertz meant by “thick description”—attention to details of daily life encounters to construct the broader context within which people define who they are and how they interact with the others.
1.4.3 Notes on Sampling Limitations

As discussed earlier in section 1.1, the ethnic composition of Taiwan is complex due to various reasons: waves of Chinese settlers of different linguistic/cultural backgrounds that emigrated to Taiwan between the 17th and the 19th centuries; conflicts between these Chinese settler groups, and between the settlers and the aboriginals of Taiwan; and the post-war power shift and flow of population from China of which mandarin was the official language. Four major linguistic/cultural group categories are used by scholars to identify the difference between these groups: the Hokkien (the majority in number), the Hakka, the aboriginals (minority in number), and the mainlanders (a group with its own complexity).

Linguistic/cultural groups: the interviewees approached for this research are mainly Hokkien-speaking immigrants from Taiwan. Out of the 62 interviewees only four Hakka-speakers, one aboriginal, and one mainlander were included. In contrast to the actual population composition of Taiwan (Hokkien: 70%; Hakka: 15%; aboriginals: 5%; mainlanders: 10% as of 2004), the sampling structure of this research does not reflect the ethnic complexity of the Taiwanese immigrants’ sending society. In addition to the deficiency of time, resources, and connections needed for improving the representativeness of the pool of samples, some other factors make it difficult to locate interviewees of the three minor groups. These factors include different systems of social support which might explain the low visibility of the mainlanders and to a lesser degree of the aboriginals. The former receive assistance from the Taiwan government and the latter from the Christian churches. And the Hakka formed their own social support system and community organizations, although most of them remain friendly with the Hokkien and participate in activities and events held by them. Although attempts have been made to approach mainlanders and the
Hakka for this research, it appears that given these constraints the problem of low representation of the minor groups of Taiwanese immigrants will have to be dealt with in future studies. In this vein, although a more comprehensive study is intended, it is important to note that this research is mainly a study of the Hokkien-speaking Taiwanese immigrants in Vancouver, Canada.

Gender: Out of the 62 interviewees only 20 are female. The voice of the female immigrants from Taiwan is less heard than it should have been. This is due to some limitations: firstly, the migration regulations of Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s forbade married couples to leave Taiwan for the purpose of study. And a certain amount of deposit was asked for by the Taiwan government to ensure the return of those who applied to study abroad. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, most of the Taiwanese immigrants who studied here came to Canada as international students and later became immigrants. They either married non-Taiwanese women or went back to Taiwan to marry after they obtained Canadian citizenship. A few of them remain single for other reasons.

A second reason for the underrepresentation of the female perspective in this research is that female immigrants or spouses of male interviewees tended to refuse to be interviewed, as traditionally the Taiwanese women were taught to take a supportive role at home for their husbands. Even on occasions when wives are present at the interviews the males often take the leading role in remembering and narrating the past experience and their (men’s) involvement in the community affairs. The experience of female Taiwanese immigrants is unheard in this research, even though efforts were made to encourage their participation. It is expected that future studies will give a more thorough account of the missing (if not suppressed) voice of the female Taiwanese immigrants.
2 The Four Passports of a Woman from Taiwan—the Story of Dr. A-Sin Sena Gibson Tsai as a Metaphor

This chapter explores the life story of Dr. A-Sin Sena Gibson Tsai, the first female physician in Taiwan. Her story will serve as a metaphor or an introduction to the subsequent chapters by exemplifying the difficult situation that Taiwanese people have been faced with: the quest for a national identity in modern history. This is summarized in three points:

(1) As the complicated identification issues in the life of Dr. Tsai indicates, Taiwanese identity has been defined and determined by external forces. The last time Taiwanese were given the choice to decide who they are was when Japan took over Taiwan after a war against China in 1895. The Japanese government gave the Taiwanese two years to consider and whoever wished to leave Taiwan for China was allowed to leave freely with their property. Taiwan was incorporated and hence Taiwanese were deemed as Japanese. This changed after the Second World War when the KMT government from China seized control over Taiwan. Taiwanese were told to be “Chinese” again. Only this time they were neither given the permission to leave freely nor they freedom to claim them Taiwanese in contrast to the nationhood imposed on them.

(2) The second point of interest is that the fact Dr. Tsai traveled to Japan, North America, and China gave her a chance to ponder who she really was. This is related to the Taiwanese immigrants studied here as this thesis would argue that Taiwanese reluctant immigrants in Canada had the chance to reflect upon the “Chinese” identity they were taught by the KMT government exactly because they lived in a democratic society with abundant
chances to interact with other ethnic groups including the Chinese from China and Hong Kong. This interaction experience has a tremendous impact on their self-identity.

(3) The third point that is worth mentioning is the human geographic factor that affects people’s identity. For Dr. Tsai, it is the life experience she spent in Taiwan that determined her dominant identity as a Taiwanese. The fact that she had four passports in her life did not shake this belief of hers. The same thing seems to apply to the Taiwanese Canadians in a different vein. For Taiwanese Canadians, it is the life experience in Taiwan and that in Canada that constitute two main parts of their identity formation. This tangible and real life experience apparently affects people more than an imaginary identity especially when it is instilled through education with no reference to real life.

Although the trajectory of Dr. Tsai’s life and career is too rich and complex to stand as an archetype for all Taiwanese Canadians to be discussed in this dissertation, some key events, cultural shocks, and sudden realizations of ambiguous identity that Dr. Tsai experienced in her life will yield important clues for us to investigate how confusion and frustration of identity issues affect Taiwanese Canadians in their settlement experience.

2.1 The Japanese Passport (1896-1945)

Japan took over Taiwan after the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) as one of the retributive conditions requested by the victorious Japanese Empire. The subsequent political turmoil (military suppression from 1895-1905 of the newly incorporated colonial subjects in Taiwan) and colonial governance prompted the Taiwanese to adjust and re-construct their own national identity.
2.1.1  Childhood and the Early Years (1896-1921)

A girl named A-Sin was born in 1896, the second year after the Japanese troops landed in Taiwan (and Japan’s fifty years of colonial governance commenced), in a landlord family of Hsing Chu, a town in the northern part of Taiwan. Later when she was five, her mother was remarried to the wealthy Tsai family and A-Sin became known as A-Sin Tsai thereafter. The advantage of a rich and well-connected family soon gave the young A-Sin the chance to enter an elementary school, a rare occurrence at the time. An even more important turning point in A-Sin’s life was when she was transferred to a girl’s boarding school founded by Presbyterian Church missionaries in Tam Sui, another northern town in Taiwan. The school only covered grade four to grade nine, but the years A-Sin spent there (1907-1914) were critical, as the young A-Sin turned out to be the only student who insisted on learning English from the Canadian teachers in the school. Her interest in learning English would later in her life prove rewarding in broadening her vision and creating opportunities to pursue her dreams.

Since there were neither high schools nor higher education facilities in Taiwan for female grade nine graduates, A-Sin and her supportive family took the advice of one of her teachers and left for Japan to further her education. In 1915, after two years of preparatory schooling in the St. Margaret’s School (Tokyo) established by the Episcopal Mission, A-Sin passed an entrance examination and was enrolled in the Tokyo Women’s Medical School (founded in 1912), her first choice for professional training.

A-Sin’s experiences at St. Margaret’s School were in every way a cultural shock, and that was the first point in her life when she realized she was not genuine Japanese—she was something else. During her stay at the YWCA in the first two years in Tokyo, A-Sin was
alienated, mocked, and despised by her roommates, acquaintances, and classmates from St. Margaret’s School. In her late eighties when a writer went to visit her in Vancouver, A-Sin could still remember the harsh things the Japanese said to her, such as “I wonder if this girl knows how to use chopsticks,” “Do you people still do head-hunting?” “Are you not a daughter of barbarians?” and “Chink!” The unfriendly environment in the first two years in Japan was not all bad for A-Sin. It became the stimulus to push her to study harder to prove herself to her classmates and whoever looked down upon her. When A-Sin graduated in 1921 from the Tokyo Women’s Medical School, she ranked twenty-fifth in the class of 78 graduates out of an original 127 students. Her ranking resulted in her being awarded the Medal of the Minister of Home Ministry, and she was the only non-Japanese student from the occupied territories of the Japanese Empire.⁸

2.1.2 Becoming Dr. A-Sin Tsai (1921-24)

After returning to Taiwan in 1921, A-Sin was hired as an intern and later a resident at the Hospital of the Japanese Red Cross in Taipei (established in 1905). Her years in Taipei were important in establishing connections that would pay off later in her life. The fact that she was the only person who spoke English out of the 65 physicians and interns in the hospital made her the designated interpreter whenever foreigners came to visit. The most important connection built during that time was with an American woman from Boston, Mrs. Foster, who funded her to go to the United States for further medical research and studies. In

⁷ A few years later the writer turned the two-day interviews into an epic novel based on Dr. Tsai’s life stories. See Dong Fang Bai (2005, [1990]) Lang Tao Sha. Taipei: Qian Wei Publishing Co.
⁸ The Home Ministry was an old government agency which was in charge of domestic affairs from 1873 to 1947 under the Meiji Constitution in the Japanese Empire.
addition, the Canadians A-Sin became friends with in the early 1920s were a key factor in her later choice to visit Toronto and eventually became an immigrant to Vancouver, Canada.

In 1924, A-Sin married Hua-ying Peng (1893-1978), allegedly the first socialist activist in Taiwan. Peng was an active socialist in the Taiwan’s nationalist movement in the 1920s. His involvement in nationalist and civil right movements caused A-Sin much trouble due to frequent visits from and constant surveillance by the police. This was one of the main reasons that A-Sin decided to leave Taiwan for North America.

Another impact of A-Sin’s marriage to Peng was a trip to China right after their marriage. In 1924, A-Sin accompanied Peng on a visit to Shanghai and practised obstetrics there while her husband was busy with his socialist activism. In addition to the work experience she gained, A-Sin saw a city tortured by civil war between warlords. This was the second cultural shock in her life after her uncomfortable medical school years in Tokyo. She described one incident she found unbelievable in her husband’s “motherland” China:

At a fire of a building where a dozen of firefighter had long arrived, they all just stood there watching as if they were watching a show. When the owner came to beg for their help, the chief firefighter said: “How do we get to work without a price offered?” After the owner finally budged and made his offer, the chief agreed to start doing their work and said: “Okay, I’ll just do you a favor…” But by the time water came out of the water hose towards the flame, the fire was too fierce to be stopped and burned down the whole place into ashes in a short while. (Dong-Fang, 2005, p. 698)
Corruption was not the only problem in Shanghai that bewildered A-Sin. While she frequently saw luxurious cruise boats cruising on the Huangpu River, the biggest river in Shanghai, the number of dead bodies from the freezing weather conditions in the streets of Shanghai “was so frightening that there were trucks dispatched by the city government to collect them every morning” (Dong-Fang, 2005, p. 741). And it was not uncommon to see young girls from rich families in concession territories come to the streets shopping with forty to fifty bodyguards surrounding them (Dong-Fang, 2005, p. 733). The social reality of the China beloved by her socialist husband soon made A-Sin realize that this was not the homeland she would turn to from Taiwan, where she was treated as a second-class Japanese citizen and refused equal treatment.

2.1.3 Dr. A-Sin Tsai the Physician and the Principal (1924-40)

The trip to China was merely a short stay. After returning to Taiwan, Dr. A-Sin Tsai founded a clinic in Taipei in the March of 1924 and opened another, the Qing Xin Clinic, in Tai-Chung in 1926. The Qing Xin Clinic gave A-Sin her most important medical experience and was also important in the history of medicine in Taiwan. It specialized in obstetrics and gynaecology and its subsidiary, the Qing Xin Midwifery School (established in 1928), served as the very first professional midwifery training institution in Taiwan. Both the clinic and the midwifery school were successful in providing the locals, especially the poor, with affordable medical care and obstetric services.

Before the midwifery school was closed in 1938 due to the escalating war in the Pacific, in which Taiwanese society was mobilized for the war initiated by Japan, over five hundred women were trained to become midwives. The contribution the clinic and the
midwifery school made to Tai-Chung was immense, not just because of the medical services provided but also because of the shaping of a midwifery profession, which A-Sin single-handedly established, that significantly increased the newborn survival rate of Tai-Chung and its adjacent area. It was said by the locals that half of the population in Tai-Chung were delivered either by Dr. Tsai or her students before the closure of the school in 1938.9

The prosperity of Dr. Tsai’s career and the advancement of Taiwan’s public health brought by her modern medical expertise did not last long. Before the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941, Dr. Tsai sensed the tense social atmosphere in Taiwan. The colonial government was ordered by the Japanese government to tighten control over the Taiwanese as they might conspire with the Chinese in attempting to overthrow the colonial government. This was why surveillance by the police became even more intense. Various forms of harassment against Dr. Tsai and her family increased to the extent that she finally decided to leave Taiwan to continue her studies and find a better life for herself and her children, and this was when her old connection with the American couple Mr. and Mrs. Foster became helpful.10

Mrs. Yu Xie Liu Mei, one of Dr. Tsai’s students who graduated in 1934 from Qing Xin Midwifery School and was accredited as a midwife afterwards by the health department, stated that in her career of midwifery for forty years (1934-1974), she delivered over ten thousand babies. This is just one of Dr. Tsai’s five hundred graduates.10 Dr. Tsai divorced Peng in 1938, and Peng went to China to continue promoting his socialist ideals. He took several government positions, firstly in Manchuria and later in Beijing from the 1930s to the 1940s. After the surrender of Japan to the Allies in 1945, the Chinese government (KMT) arrested him and indicted him for assisting the Japanese army. His case was later dismissed for lack of proof for the charge of “direct assistance to Japan” during the war (December 27th, 1947). He returned to Taiwan and worked for a government-funded corporation until he retired in 1965. See Zhang Zi-wen (2003) Tai wan li shi ren wu xiao zhu—ming qing ji ri ju shi qi (Concise Biographies of Taiwan’s Historical Figures—Min and Qing Dynasties and the Japanese Colonial Era). Taipei: National Library of Taiwan.
2.1.4 The First Encounter with the Western World (1940-41)

Dr. Tsai successfully applied for and obtained her Japanese passport and a U.S. visa in 1940 while she was still in Taiwan. Her daughter Mrs. Emy Chung claimed that Dr. Tsai was the very first Taiwanese whom was issued a Japanese passport:

(Emy Chung:) She (pointing to her daughter) keeps all the passports for me. She (Dr. Tsai) was the first Japanese passport carrier from Taiwan (to Canada).

(Interviewer: Do you still keep the passport?) Yes, they (pointing to her daughter) keep all the documents. (Emy Chung, informal meeting, Jan., 25, 2011)

The colonial government soon enough revoked her passport and forbade her from visiting the United States, but Dr. Tsai was persistent in her plan to travel to North America (Yi, 2005, p. 32). She went to Japan with her two children (at the ages of 15 and 16 respectively) and then, with luck on her side, she was able to pull some strings and get the issues with the passport and the U.S. visa resolved. This was made possible because of the help from the Fosters who managed to fund Dr. Tsai’s trip to the United States. They introduced her to the Director of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Harvard University so she could get the chance to observe and learn about the new advancements in medical knowledge and new equipment. As it was very difficult to bring her two children to North America at that time, Dr. Tsai asked her friends in Japan to take care of them. She left for the United States on September 18th, 1940. It was the fall of 1940 when Dr. Tsai finally arrived in Boston and stayed at the Fosters. The third cultural shock in her life happened as soon as she visited the Medical School of Harvard University, where
male doctors not only showed great respect for Dr. Tsai, but also would make gestures with their hands to invite her to walk ahead of them whenever they met her in the hallway. Moreover, when in the cafeteria having a coffee or lunch, male doctors always remembered to pass dishes to Dr. Tsai first. (Dong-Fang, 2005, p. 1091)

Dr. Tsai’s daughter Emy remembered exactly what her mother said to her.

The best thing about coming to the United States for her was that men would walk behind her and she could walk in front of them. She felt great about it. How great was that? She said: “kiimochi ga ii desu yo!” (A Japanese sentence meaning ‘I feel excellent!’) (Emy Chung, informal meeting, Jan., 25, 2011)

Coming from a society where women were treated as inferior to men, little details like these made Dr. Tsai think to herself that “[I] only realized that being a woman is of great worth after I came to America. This [experience] is worth dying for!” (Ibid, p. 1091) At this point Dr. Tsai had experienced three types of cultural practice (Japanese, Chinese, and American) to compare to her own as a Taiwanese woman. During her study in Tokyo and her short stay in Shanghai, she was denied the possibility of truly feeling she was part of the societies she was taught to believe in; the worth-dying-for experience in America in 1940 sowed the seed in her mind that a society like this could be a home for her.
After staying in Boston for a few months, Dr. Tsai went to Toronto and was enrolled at the School of Hygiene in the University of Toronto in the September of 1941. The happy days in the United States and Canada would soon be interrupted by new incidents that brought Dr. Tsai down to earth and to the realization of the discrimination and distrust that still haunted North American societies. That discrimination was worsened by Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the year Dr. Tsai went to Vancouver after her visit to the United States. She became an unwilling resident and physician in Canada for about five years due to the outbreak of the Pacific War, which stopped her from returning to Taiwan. Dr. Tsai was anxious to return home because she left her children at her friend’s home in Japan. As war between Japan and the United States seemed right around the corner, Dr. Tsai decided to discontinue her studies at the University of Toronto and went to Vancouver to board the ocean liner to return home.

2.1.5 A Female Doctor Behind Enemy Lines (1941-45)

December 7th, 1941 was a Sunday, and Dr. Tsai went to a local church in Vancouver for worship. Before the worship was over, someone passed a note over to the reverend, and he read the note out loud and informed the crowd what had just happened at Pearl Harbor. This shocking yet expected news forced Dr. Tsai to stay in Vancouver for almost five years, as all liner schedules were suspended indefinitely since the Pacific Ocean had become a war zone.

Although Dr. Tsai was from Taiwan originally and she was ethnically Taiwanese, she was still considered Japanese since Taiwan was a colony of Japan up until 1945, when the Pacific War came to an end and Taiwan was handed over to the Nationalist Government of
Nanjing, China. After the outbreak of the war, Dr. Tsai gradually noticed a change in social atmosphere around her in Vancouver. People started to treat her as a suspicious enemy. The family she knew from the church, which took her in while she waited for the ship to Taiwan, even began to ask her to do chores as a maid. Other brothers and sisters from the church also gave her a hard time after Canada declared war on Japan.

Dr. Tsai had to look for a job to survive the long wait, as she had spent all the money she had, but it was not easy. The human resource officer at the Vancouver General Hospital rejected her job application as soon as he saw from her resume that Dr. Tsai was trained and certified as a physician in Japan—the enemy country. Feeling despairing of landing any job in a hospital, she tried to apply for housekeeping positions but again she was turned down.

After a while, someone suggested that she obtain a recommendation from the Medical Association for a better chance to get a job as a physician. She did and succeeded. Later she accepted a demoted position as a residential doctor at St. Vincent Hospital and the Vancouver General Hospital, but it did not last long. She was asked to take the 24-hour shift at the hospital for a pathetic monthly salary of $75, which was no solution to her difficulties staying in Canada. This was when her background as an “enemy” who spoke fluent Japanese paid off. Although Dr. Tsai was not forced to relocate to one of the several Japanese Canadian Internment Camps in British Columbia, her days in Vancouver were not easy for a woman who could not find a job and was deemed a possible threat to the Canadian society.\(^{11}\)

When a representative approached her and invited her to work for the internment camp in the Slocan Valley, for a reasonable salary, she accepted the job offer. She then spent six months

\(^{11}\) The camps started taking families of Japanese Canadians into custody from December, 1941.
at the camp as a resident physician. Dr. Tsai’s daughter described how it was not an easy task:

While she was in B.C., the Canadian government hired her to work at the Japanese (internment) camp. This was because she could speak Japanese and was not deemed Japanese but Taiwanese. She delivered a lot of babies. And she actually provided all kinds of medical service there. (Emy Chung, informal meeting, Jan. 25, 2011)

After returning from the temporary job at the camp to Vancouver in 1942, Dr. Tsai made up her mind to open a clinic of her own. This was not just what she did best but also where her passion or calling lay. She went to the British Columbia Medical Association and successfully obtained a permit, then applied for a license from the city hall to practice and was approved. Afterwards she rented a place in Chinatown and started her practice in Vancouver.

Dr. Tsai did not open the clinic to pursue financial success. She took care of the poor and the old at her clinic, and she asked her patients to pay whatever they could afford and no more than that. Sometimes her patients would take advantage of her generosity and refused to pay for the medical care received, and Dr. Tsai simply just let it slide. Her philanthropic way of running a clinic and her language skills (being able to communicate to patients speaking English, Japanese, and Mandarin) soon made her one of the most popular physicians in the neighbourhood. Other Canadian physicians decided not to “tolerate” this competitor any more.
On January 13, 1944, a subpoena was delivered to her with the charge of practising without a licence. It was an “anonymous informer” who urged the BC Medical Association to take action against her, which they did. This was not the first difficulty Dr. Tsai had to deal with during the stay in Vancouver. Before the accusation of practising without a licence, someone told the police that Dr. Tsai was a Japanese spy. Although this proved to be a groundless accusation, it was evident that some people were trying to denigrate her reputation. Yet Dr. Tsai was not ready to go down without a fight. Regarding the charge against her practice, it was reported that:

**Physicians Charge Woman Under Act.** An information charging breach of the Medical Act has been laid against Mrs. A. S. Tsai, whose address is given as 193 East Hastings, (Dawson Building), by Dr. A. J. MacLachlan, registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. It charges that “being a person not registered under the Medical Act she did, between November 22 and December 31, 1943, advertise herself under the title of physician as an occupational designation relating to the treatment of human ailments.” The case appeared Wednesday on the police court docket and was adjourned for one week. (“Physicians Charge Woman Under Act,” 1944)

Apparently the Association forgot that Dr. Tsai did apply for the permit and the licence from both the Association and City Hall. The accusation became even more ludicrous when the representative of the BC Medical Association Dr. A. J. MacLachlan stated in the court that he thought Mrs. Tsai (he did not admit her title of “Dr” to be valid and certified) was a graduate of the Tokyo University, an entirely different university from the
Tokyo Women’s Medical School where Dr. Tsai received her professional training as a physician and was certified afterwards. It seemed that Dr. MacLachlan and his colleagues walked into the courtroom unprepared.

Without giving Dr. Tsai any chance to defend herself, the Magistrate made his edict of “suspended sentence” given the condition that “a bond of $100 were signed.” Dr. Tsai refused to back down and said, “I will not sign the bond. These Canadian doctors give me so much trouble. I will go to your Canadian jail” (“Physicians Charge Woman Under Act, 1944). The Consul General of China in Vancouver, Mr. Zhao Li, refused to get involved and help her in the case. The reason he gave was that Dr. Tsai served at the internment camp for the Japanese patients and therefore should be deemed an enemy to China, even though the government of China claimed that Taiwan was a territory of China unjustly occupied by the Japanese Empire and all Taiwanese should be considered Chinese, not Japanese. The Chinese community in Chinatown considered this philanthropic physician to be one of their own due to her deeds for the poor in the community and the fact that Dr. Tsai was ethnically Chinese, even though she was Japanese in terms of citizenship. They suggested to Dr. Tsai that she bribe Mr. Li to get herself off the hook. Dr. Tsai responded: “Even if I had $500 dollars, I would not ‘feed’ him with it” (Dong-Fang, 2005, p. 1779). And she was willing to go to jail, which she did later on, saying:

If I made any mistake in medical practice, I will take any punishment applicable.

Now with the recommendation letter from the Medical Association and a license from the Department of Public Health, this [medical practice] is anything but a breach of the law.” (Dong-Fang, 2005, p. 1787)
The drama of a woman doctor’s civil disobedience soon became a *cause célèbre* in the city of Vancouver. A young lawyer volunteered to represent Dr. Tsai at the court, and a retired Judge went to the City Hall and copied all related documents proving that the court had made a wrongful edict. It was all over the news and radio shows. The court finally decided to budge and acquitted her of all charges.

First the officer at the jail said that if Dr. Tsai confessed she would be freed, and she refused to do it. Then the officer decided to let her out without a confession, and she refused the second offer as it was late at night and she did not want to return home this way. The prison sent someone to escort her out and safely back to her hotel where all her friends were waiting to welcome her back. Some of Dr. Tsai’s friends suggested that she sue the BC Medical Association for bringing a false charge against her, but she replied that a good Christian should not do so and decided to let it go. Besides, Dr. Tsai felt rewarded by the chance to make friends with many decent Canadians who spoke against the unjust treatment towards her. They included Reverend J. George Gibson (1885-1967), a British Canadian, who later became Dr. Tsai’s second husband and companion. Rev. Gibson was the reason Dr. Tsai obtained the third passport in her life.

### 2.2 The Chinese Passport (1945-1950)

During the period of the Pacific War between 1941 and 1945 while staying in Canada unwillingly, Dr. Tsai experienced a rather confusing identity crisis. For Dr. Tsai herself, she saw herself as a Taiwanese under Japanese governance. However, for the brothers and sisters at the church in Canada she became an enemy—a Japanese national; in the eyes of the
Chinese government she was also deemed more of a Japanese than a Taiwanese or Chinese. Politics continued to affect her life course in the following years after the war ended.

2.2.1 A Fifty-Year-Old Medical School Student

As the Pacific War finally came to an end, Dr. Tsai started preparing to return to Taiwan but the Consul General in Vancouver, Zhao Li, still refused to help her with the passport. This was rather bewildering to Dr. Tsai as the Allies had defeated Japan and Taiwan was handed over to the Nationalist Government in China in 1945. It appeared that Zhao Li still saw Dr. Tsai, a Taiwanese physician who treated many Japanese Canadian patients at the internment camp, as an enemy—as Japanese. As it had now become necessary to acquire a Chinese passport to go back to Taiwan, she decided to go the Chinese Embassy in New York.

The trip to the east coast was satisfying not only in terms of successfully obtaining her Chinese passport but also intellectually, as she had the opportunity to spend several months catching up with new medical knowledge and observing many operations, up to three per day. At the Chinese Embassy in New York she explained her situation to Ambassador Chun Chang (1889-1990) and was immediately issued a Chinese passport. Dr. Tsai found out that there was an ongoing labour strike in San Francisco, which was affecting transportation. San Francisco was the only port with scheduled liners to Taiwan, and there was a three-month strike of the sailors working for liner companies. Dr. Tsai had to wait for the strike to end before any liner was open for ticketing, and she decided to make the best out of the wait before the next available liner back home. She visited some friends in Boston,
and she spent three months staying with her friends the Warners in an apartment next to Central Park.

Dr. Tsai also registered for training courses on anaesthesiology at the Presbyterian College of Columbia University. The course was not completely unfamiliar to her, as she had taken a training course on anaesthesiology when she was a resident at Vancouver General Hospital. This fifty-year-old student then became the first professional anaesthesiologist on record in Taiwan. Except for taking courses, she spent most of her time observing surgeries in hospitals. Every night at 8:00 pm, the Academy of Medicine in New York would post the schedules of operations collected from all major hospitals or medical care centres for the next day. It soon became Dr. Tsai’s habit to check out the schedules and observe all the operations she was interested in learning. She always thought that “watch and learn” was a better way to learn the skills than reading books. Later in her life when she visited New York in her eighties, Dr. Tsai did the same thing again: running from one hospital to another to see with her own eyes how new surgical technologies and skills were used.

After a short visit at Johns Hopkins Hospital and then the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, Dr. Tsai went to San Francisco to see if the strike was still going on. Once informed that the strike would be extended, the first thing she did was to pay a city hospital a visit and request permission to observe operations. The wait soon came to an end and she finally got the ticket to board a liner to return to Taiwan. It was March 1946.
2.2.2 Political Turmoil in Taiwan

Shortly after Dr. Tsai returned to Taiwan, she found out the situation there was chaotic and unbearable. The Japanese left after the war, and the Chinese came and took over not just the government at all levels, but also the property of civilians. The Chinese troops sent to Taiwan to maintain order after the takeover were undisciplined and lacked self-restraint. Conflicts between the Chinese and the Taiwanese were everywhere and increasing. The Chinese did not trust the Taiwanese and regarded them as Japanese, because after fifty years of Japanese rule the Taiwanese spoke only Taiwanese and Japanese; few of them were capable of communicating in Mandarin. The Chinese-delegated government did not seem to have the capability to handle the distrust between the Chinese newcomers and the Taiwanese locals. A tragic incident happened on February 28, 1947 when conflict between a Chinese officer and a female peddler of cigarettes ended with the death of the peddler, and a violent revolt against the allegedly corrupt Chinese government soon swept the entire island. More troops were dispatched from Mainland China to Taiwan to suppress the revolt. The measures taken were severe and relentless, which this was why some scholars and those who experienced the Incident called it the February 28th Massacre instead of the February 28th “Incident.”

Luckily Dr. Tsai survived the terror of the military oppression over the Taiwanese starting in 1947 and the authoritarian control after the revolt was suppressed. She felt the need to leave Taiwan when she was informed that some relatives of hers were involved in the revolt. It was not at all uncommon for the police or intelligence service to come to one’s house to arrest someone and their family would never hear from them again nor receive an official explanation. Dr. Tsai considered fleeing from the chaos.
Reverend J. George Gibson came to visit Dr. Tsai in 1948. It was supposed to be a short visit, but Gibson got malaria and had to stay in Taiwan for medical care. Dr. Tsai attended to Gibson during his stay. In the meantime, friends and students of Dr. Tsai had nominated her to run for the provincial assembly. A friend of Dr. Tsai’s suggested that she marry Rev. Gibson to avoid the trouble being a candidate in the provincial assembly election might cause her. It was very dangerous to get involved in politics when Taiwanese were not fully trusted by a government that came from China and had fought the Japanese during World War II. Gibson had a conversation with Dr. Tsai:

Gibson: The takeover of Taiwan by the Nationalist Government has made everyone live in fear. The February 28th Incident is an example. Now they are losing the conflict against the communist party, and mainland China has fallen into the hands of the communists. The Nationalist Government was forced to retreat to Taiwan. Still the threat of the communist is still out there. Who knows what would happen in the future?

Dr. Tsai: These are all tragedy of our time. It is hard to tell who’s right and who’s wrong.

Gibson: You are a physician. It is your duty to save lives. In the time of a world in turmoil, you can even guarantee your own safety. In that case, you would lose the chance to serve the others. Isn’t that a pity? So we should get out of here, and wait for the situation to turn peaceful and come back then. (Cao, 2005, pp. 235-236)
Dr. Tsai took her friend’s advice after serious consideration and married Rev. Gibson. Shortly afterwards, she and Gibson left Taiwan.

2.3 **The British Passport (1950-1990)**

The marriage with Rev. Gibson brought Dr. Tsai’s life course to the next stage which altered her legal identity once again.

2.3.1 **Mrs. Gibson, You Are a Foreigner to Us! (1950-1953)**

In 1950, after Dr. Tsai married Rev. Gibson, her nationality became an issue for her once again. It was the same year that the United Kingdom officially recognized the People’s Republic of China as the legitimate government of China. That was after the Nationalist Government lost the Chinese Civil war against the Chinese Communist Party and was forced to flee China and settle in Taiwan, while the communists declared their sovereignty over China and requested world recognition. Although the British government was hesitant to create a full recognition and diplomatic relationship with communist China as it still considered the relationship with the Nationalist Government in Taiwan to be important, it decided to play it slow and started with the recognition of the establishment of the “People’s Republic of China” by the Communist Party. This was infuriating and humiliating for the “Chinese Government” in Taiwan because the Nationalist Government still claimed to represent China—it was only temporarily driven out of the mainland.

Political and social upheavals affect personal lives as always. After the British government made the announcement in January of 1950, the Taiwanese government gave Dr. Tsai an official notice regarding her status in Taiwan. Since she was married to a British
citizen, making her a British citizen as well, she would have to leave Taiwan in three months. She was also given an ultimatum that she had to dispose of her properties within one year as foreigners were not entitled to own any property in Taiwan. All properties would be confiscated if they were not dealt with promptly. Therefore Dr. Tsai became Mrs. Gibson, the spouse of Reverend J. George Gibson, in the eyes of the (Nationalist) Chinese Government in Taiwan. Dr. Tsai sold her equipment, the hospital building and every piece of furniture, and left Taiwan with Rev. Gibson.

2.3.2 Becoming a Canadian Resident (1953-1990)

In 1953, after disposing of all her properties in Taiwan, Dr. Tsai went to North America with Rev. Gibson. They arrived in Quebec together but Gibson left for Vancouver, where his home was. Dr. Tsai wanted to stay and learn more medical knowledge on the east coast. She went to New York and was enrolled again in the Medical School of Columbia University for a one-year Public Health program. This time she was almost sixty years of age. She did not have the fortune to finish the program as Gibson soon became very ill and she had to go to Vancouver and take care of her husband.

Dr. Tsai then settled down and lived in Vancouver until she passed away in 1990. She visited Taiwan several times between 1953 and 1990. After Gibson’s death in 1967, Dr. Tsai became more concerned about the hardship widowed women had to cope with. She noticed that there was not much help offered by the government or charities, so she donated her savings and founded a non-profit organization in Taiwan to support widowed women, especially the poor and seniors, for their financial as well as emotional needs. The foundation was established in 1978 and is still functioning today.
Information about Dr. Tsai’s retired life was hard to gather. She kept low profile especially after her husband passed away, yet she participated actively in the social life of the community. She registered for an algebra course at a community college at the age of 78 simply because “she said she never got the chance to learn it,” said a friend of hers. She also registered for photo shooting classes for the same reason. All through her life she had been enthusiastic in learning and helping out people. It was said that when she visited the Medical School in Harvard again later in her life, she rushed to register to attend the first surgical procedures open for students and colleagues to observe, and that was when she was in her eighties. She never wanted to become a role model or achieve something big. What had driven her forward was the desire to become herself and to pursue her own dreams. By just being herself, she set an example for many Taiwanese and Canadians of her time, and became a precious asset to the Taiwanese immigrant community in Vancouver as well as to the Canadian society.
3 Taiwanese Immigrants as Reluctant Exiles

Political refugees or asylum-seekers typically have to conceal their identity for the security of themselves and their families left behind. Starting with a recent example of a refugee status claimant to show how people manage to escape from their home country without jeopardizing the lives of others, we will then discuss why and how Taiwanese immigrants should be analogous to political refugees. This status could well explain why the Taiwanese immigrant community tended to become more politicized than other immigrant groups. This also helps to explain the dynamics of the Taiwanese immigrant community with regard to their life experience and how they interact with the host society. We will use a recently reported news story about how a Chinese man tried to enter Canada in disguise and later claimed to be a political victim hence in need of asylum in Canada. Part of the story involves why a mask and remaining anonymous in court are important for the safety of the asylum seeker and his family left in China. It gives us some clues of the social atmosphere the Taiwanese immigrants experienced (in terms of the omnipresence of the Taiwanese government even on the soil of Canada) in the 1960s and 1970s.

On October 29, 2010, a Chinese national in his early twenties boarded an Air Canada flight in Hong Kong while wearing a mask that made him appear to be an elderly Caucasian. After arriving at Vancouver Airport, the “masked man” requested asylum as soon as he met a Border Service agent. The issue of flight security was brought to the attention of Canadians immediately as it is believed that the masked man somehow swapped boarding cards with a Caucasian man born in 1955 and boarded the flight to Canada successfully. The man even
took off the mask during the flight, which did not seem to have caused any suspicion among
the crew and the flight attendants.

In addition to the issue of this potential security loophole, a demand the young man
made to the court also triggered heated debates in the hearing as well as in the public. Dan
McLeod, acting as duty counsel for the man, had asked that three Chinese-language media
outlets be barred from the detention hearing and the subsequent legal procedures: *Ming Pao Daily News* and *Sing Tao Daily*, Canadian Chinese-language newspapers; and *World Journal*, a U.S.-based Chinese-language newspaper. He said the outlets were under heavy influence
from the Chinese government: “We are dealing with the safety, liberty and security of a
human being, a refugee” (“Masked Man on HK-Vancouver Flight Ordered Detained,” 2010).
The request was rejected by Daphne Shaw-Dyck, an Immigration and Refugee Board
adjudicator, as there was no proof that the newspapers in question were “taking marching
orders from Beijing” (“Masked Man on HK-Vancouver Flight Ordered Detained,” 2010).

It may appear that the request to bar the three newspapers from attending the hearings
was based on groundless speculation on the relationship between them and the Chinese
government from which the man fled and asked for asylum. Yet this is exactly the tricky part
of proving the “black and white” of the politics this chapter will discuss: the white terror and
the blacklist going transnational. It was the belief of the man who managed to obtain a
quality mask, swap boarding cards, and land in Canada that these media outlets are somehow
linked to the Chinese government, either financially or ideologically. It was also his belief
that the leakage and disclosure of his identity to the public might very likely put himself or
his family back in China in danger. This brings us to the definition of the “refugee” category
of immigration. To what extent do we still rely on hard evidence for admitting an asylum
seeker’s request, such as documents or execution orders the Holocaust survivors had brought with them when fleeing Nazi Germany, when the implementation of power has not always relied on brutal violence or any form of violence that would leave a trace? How do we reach the balance between legal regulations, national security, and the trust in people’s belief that they are under significant threat to their lives and freedom?

In the case of this masked man, if the Chinese government found out his true identity, he might be prosecuted and jailed once his request for asylum was rejected and he was repatriated to China. An even worse scenario would involve surveillance of his close family and relatives in China and the accompanying social discrimination. Pure speculation may not be sufficient grounds for adjudicator Shaw-Dyck to grant the request of the masked man to bar the Chinese-language media, but the (perceived) possible consequences were as real as a fact given the man’s life experience in a country where human rights and civil rights are in deficit and the checks and balances to the power of the government are still developing.

The fear the masked man is facing is what has haunted early Taiwanese immigrants before and after they migrated to Canada. Although the democratization in the late 1980s in Taiwan has chased away most of the pressure and fear new generations of Taiwanese immigrants have to deal with, the threat of a Big Brother was real for early Taiwanese immigrants to Canada.

3.1 Politics of White Terror and Motives to Leave

After being driven out of mainland China by the Chinese Communist Party after the Chinese Civil war, the Nationalist government (KMT) of China retreated to Taiwan (1945-49) and waited for a chance to fight their way back to China. The political and social upheaval in
Taiwan, however, was not kind to the KMT’s intention and military project. After the notorious February 28th Incident in 1947\textsuperscript{12}, the KMT decided to tighten its control over the Taiwanese. This was because the fragile mutual trust was shattered after the military oppression and killings during the Incident, and reconciliation between the KMT, the armed forces, the “mainlanders” and the local Taiwanese population was not high on the agenda of the KMT compared to regaining political power over China.

Soon after the troops of the KMT retreated to Taiwan, the longest period of martial law in modern history was implemented (1949-1987) and an era of “white terror” following blatant military suppression during the early 1950s came into the lives and minds of the Taiwanese people, later to be applied to both Taiwanese and mainlanders under the KMT administration. Orders were given to override the Constitution, elections for parliament members or local legislative bodies were suspended, freedom to form political parties and freedom of press were revoked, and an authoritarian police state was established to replace the republic in the name of civil war emergency. This was the social and political atmosphere from the 1950s until the 1980s when grassroots social movements and political movements joined force to promote democratization, which eventually led to the revocation of the Martial Law in 1987 and the freedom for the people.

\textsuperscript{12} The February 28 Incident, sometimes called the February 28 Massacre, started with the conflict between a cigarette peddler and a Chinese soldier on February 27th, 1947 which caused the death of a bystander. Soon enough the call for revenge turned into an uprising against the KMT government on Taiwan which had been ordered by the Allies to take over Taiwan after the end of Pacific War in 1945. A reinforcement troop from China landed shortly after the incident and initiated a military crackdown island-wide from March to May, 1947. The exact number of killings is still difficult to determine as the death toll of the incident and the following persecution and execution of people has been a taboo subject in Taiwan. It was estimated, however, that between 10,000 to 30,000 might have been killed. February also marks the beginning of the white terror period of Taiwan’s contemporary history. See Durdin (1947) “Formosa killings are put at 10,000: Foreigners say the Chinese slaughtered demonstrators without provocation.” \textit{New York Times}. March 29th, 1947. Cf. George Kerr (1965) for a detailed discussion based partly on what he witnessed in Taiwan while he was stationed there as a US official when the Incident happened.
“White terror” has existed in different societies in various periods of history when a political group is considered by those in office or in power to be threatening the survival and interests of the ruling group, often expressed in the name of the interest of the general public or the nation. White terror is a means to suppress anti-government forces, be they a real political group or anonymous people deemed hazardous to the status quo. And this is where the slope becomes slippery. The threat does not need to be visible; it can merely be a foreseeable threat used to justify a crackdown or even a massacre with sometimes barely any regard for due process of law.

It has already been seen in the introduction that the Taiwanese that came to North America from the 1960s to the mid-1980s were primarily international students enrolled in higher education who later became immigrants for various reasons, being marked down on the blacklist being the most common one. Most of these people fall in the age cohorts born from the 1940s to the 1960s.

The democratization of Taiwan took place in the late 1980s. Understanding the social and political atmosphere of Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s (the high tide of white terror) is crucial in terms of framing the mindset, the expectations, and the motives for action that will later play important roles in Taiwanese immigrant lives.13 The fear of police violence, plain discrimination against families of “enemies of the nation,” and the insecure feeling of losing lives and properties overnight—these can be traumatic for a very long time for those who suffer from them.

13 Or the ‘mentalité’ in a broad sense as discussed by the Annales historians in France.
3.1.1 Here Comes the Chinese Government

While most of the early Taiwanese Canadians were born in the 1940s and 1950s and have no memory of the take-over of Taiwan by the KMT government from China between 1945 and the early 1950s, some seniors can still recall their first impression of the Chinese. Dr. A04 recalls how Taiwanese in the 1940s still deemed themselves Chinese instead of Japanese nationals:

Although the Japanese educated Taiwanese for fifty years, none of the Taiwanese thought of himself as Japanese When Taiwan was “restored” by KMT (in 1945), we were all very excited with the expectation that the government of the motherland is coming. When they actually came, it was a disappointment. Especially the February 28th Incident.... I would never forget the scar of the February 28th Incident.... When they just arrived, I was so disappointed to see them. We went to the airport to welcome the soldiers (from China). And we saw them came with carrying-poles, umbrellas, and so on. We thought to ourselves that “So this is how people from the motherland look like!” (A34, interview, Aug. 24, 2010)

It might be an overstatement to say that “none of the Taiwanese thought of himself as Japanese,” especially as the Japanese government legally gave the Taiwanese subjects the status of Japanese nationals at a later stage of colonization to increase the public support in colonial Taiwan for Japan’s warfare in the Asian Pacific Rim. However it is commonly reported that when Taiwan was handed to the KMT government in China by the Allies, the majority of the Taiwanese population did not seem to be extremely upset and resistant to the
idea that the government that came from their ancestors’ homeland would come to Taiwan replacing the Japanese colonial government. Yet the first impression was not a pleasant one—as in the case of Dr. A04’s recollection.

3.1.2 The Killing and the Imprisonment

The troops sent to Taiwan to take over from the Japanese colonial government were not the most disciplined, nor was their conduct moderate. Conflicts due to linguistic barriers and misconduct between Chinese soldiers and the Taiwanese aggravated into violent fights, which eventually led to a total suppression of the Taiwanese by the KMT government with the help of augmentation forces from China in 1947, later called the February 28th Incident. This is often deemed as the starting point of the KMT government’s severe measures against the Taiwanese. Following the military crackdown was the enforcement of the Martial Law (May 20, 1949 - July 19, 1987), which authorized government agencies to practise white terror on people.

Dr. Tsung-yi Lin (1920-2010), the first Taiwanese psychiatrist and a Professor Emeritus of the University of British Columbia, was the son of Dr. Mosei Lin (1887-1947), a well-known scholar in Taiwan who was arrested on March 11th, 1947, only a few days after the February 28th Incident, and presumably executed.14 Several months before the tragic incident happened, the young Dr. Lin returned from Japan after years of medical school education and had a long talk with his father:

14 Dr. Mosei Lin was the first Taiwanese awarded with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the United States. He graduated from the Faculty of Education at Columbia University in 1929 with a dissertation on the educational system in Taiwan during Japanese colonization.
Three major things that happened in this historic night affected profoundly on my late life and career. A) The warmth of affectionate family reunion. B) A special “father-son” relationship between my father and me. He explained to me about his viewpoints regarding Taiwan’s future, Chiang Kai-shek and his army, and their illegal take-over and brutality. They were the new barbarian intruders who were engaged in cruel actions against innocent Taiwanese people with no sovereignty. (Lin, 2004: 6)

The February 28th Incident and the following suppression cost Dr. Lin a father who was also a mentor to him. Dr. Lin recalled the impact the death of his father had on him:

Almost everything that happened in the days of the incident, with unbearable pain, would come back to my mind. Sometimes, even without the slightest stimulus, I come to remember these things. The political and social events after 1947, on top of my own life experiences, deepened my reflection on the February 28th tragedy.  

In addition to being a son of the wrongfully executed intellectual, Dr. Lin himself was a victim of white terror and the blacklist. Even after taking the internationally prestigious positions of Director of Mental Health at the World Health Organization (1964-69) and President of the World Federation for Mental Health (1974-79), he was still blocked from re-entering Taiwan until 1987 after martial law was lifted and democratization advanced. What happened to Dr. Lin’s father and himself motivated him to devote himself to the democratization of Taiwan and to raise the “self-determination movement” of the Taiwanese people.

people. The quote here shows how political and social turmoil and particularly tragic events
can serve to frame one’s understanding and perception of politics and society, and what
happens later in one’s life may well affect and sometimes significantly re-frame the
worldview one has.

What happened to the father of Dr. Lin was by no means an isolated incident. Some
of the Taiwanese Canadians actually witnessed the killings while they were young. One
interviewee mentioned that he saw a revered Taiwanese intellectual and official executed in
public in 1947 during the Incident: “I was from Tainan. Do you know Tang De-zhang? I saw
him being executed. I saw it.” (A32, interview, June 01, 2010) Another interviewee has a
detailed memory of what happened:

When the February 28th Incident happened I was at the train station, and I saw they
executing people. I was thinking that how can they be so cruel. (A soldier) dragged
someone to the back (of the station) and ordered him to kneel down. The man refused,
and he (the soldier) kicked him in the back and then shot him in the back of his head.
They would not allow people to bring back the corpses. Only some rickshaw riders
would bring some flowers and offering to mourn the deceased. (A33, interview, Aug.
17, 2010)

Participating in the confrontation between the people and the suppressing army from
China was not the only possible cause people were arrested, court-martialled, or even
executed on sight. A slightest suspicion about one’s thoughts would make the military and
intelligence agencies arrest people needless of due process:
There was a Doctor Lu, female, who lived in the village next to mine. She was in her twenties at the time when she was arrested. And she was imprisoned for over thirty years before they finally released her. They said: ‘There are problems with her mind.’ (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)

The testimony of another Taiwanese Canadian who was also victim to white terror described graphically how injustice to her father was devastating to her childhood:

A25 was a daughter of a physician in Erlun Township [a small town in the Yunlin county of Taiwan] and had a happy childhood. At the age of five, her father was arrested for the charge of being a communist spy. And the entire family lived in the shadow of worry and discrimination ever after. She said that her father “was very compassionate. Seeing that the townspeople would not go to the doctors when sick due to a widespread poverty in the rural areas, he discussed with the chair of farmer’s association of the Erlun Township and devised a health mutual care system in which every household only had to pay twenty dollars annually and was entitled for free doctor visits and free medication. This was equivalent to the Health Care system now. But the (Taiwanese) government got suspicious and arrested everyone involved for the charge of being communist spies.” It was 1951, the time of the white terror. A25 continued: “My father was sentenced for seven years in prison after the first trial. The townspeople were infuriated and appealed to the authorities. Then the term was changed to ten years in prison in the verdict of the second trial. The townspeople
were even angrier about it and appealed again. And my father was sentenced for twelve years in prison...It was a cruel shock to the victims and their families”...“When I was an elementary school student, my father served his time in the prison in Jingmei. It was an exhausting trip to visit him from Erlun to Jingmei. My mother had to prepare a lot of food whenever she brought us five kids to visit our father...When we arrived at the prison, my mother would give the food to prison guards as bribe. And by the time we saw my father, there was not much left for my father to eat. Until now, whenever I remember the scene my father, in his prisoner shorts, was allowed to pick up the food we brought with a wash basin, I can’t stop my tears from falling.”

Whether or not the mutual aid system in health care that Liao’s father put into experiment in a small town carries a scent of communism was not the only issue that brought him the tragic outcome. The role of an “organic intellectual,” in Antonio Gramsci’s terms, which A25’s father played, and the possible effects of social mobilization may have been the more dangerous threat to the KMT government. This was said by some researchers to be the main reason that the KMT government targeted intellectuals as a threat to national security—or to the legitimacy and security of the government in exile to be exact (Li, 1990).

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3.1.3 The Social Atmosphere of Fear

The military suppression, although targeting primarily on the learned class, local opinion leaders, and whoever dared to resist, brought a fearsome social atmosphere to Taiwanese society. The fear of the authorities was everywhere, even at a remote elementary school:

I was a flag raiser when I was at elementary school. We raised the flag every morning. And my co-flag raiser was the daughter of a February 28th Incident victim. Her father was shot to death.... There was one day when we were raising the flag the school (teachers) suddenly noticed that the flag was upside down. The flag-raising was immediately called to an end, and we were both called in and questioned. I was off the hook right away as my family had nothing related to the February 28th Incident. But my co-flag raiser was in big trouble as her father was executed during the Incident for translating Lu Xun’s book. No relative would come to her house after that. The school managed to keep everyone quiet about what happened at the flag-raising. But we were scolded hard.... (Interviewer: Did you know about the Incident at that time) No, I did not know anything about it.... And later on whenever I underlined articles in the textbook, my father would ask me to be highly cautious not to draw the line across the name of Chiang Kai-shek.

Raising an upside-down flag was not merely a careless mistake—it could lead to an arrest of school faculty, the student, and many others. This was the reason it frightened the teachers, and that was why the student with “background” in the February 28th Incident
experienced much scrutiny over this accident. For the adults it was a real threat they had heard of or they had experienced the consequences. One interviewee talked about how people disappeared at night and no one knew where they were taken. In the worst scenario, the person taken away might never come back.

Several neighbours of mine disappeared at midnight.... The father of a classmate of mine disappeared. And the neighbours across the street from my home, the lady ran an alteration shop and her husband was a government employee. He disappeared in the middle of night as well.... He was released after ten years.... It was after the KMT came (to Taiwan).... It was said that when he was interrogated he would pretend that he did not understand Mandarin. That gave him some time to think about how to answer the questions. That might be why he was able to return after ten years. (A51, interview, Aug. 23, 2011)

Another indicator of the terror the government enacted on people was the common fear of the possibility of someone knocking on your door at night, which would almost always lead to the disappearance of someone you knew. One interviewee recalled:

We were so terrified by the KMT. In the countryside village wherein my family lived, everyone would be scared and shivered to hear the sound of engine of a jeep in the middle of night. They would come and knock on your door, and arrest several people and these people would disappear for good. The village people were very scared of it.... And my older brother almost got arrested then. He was a student of Taiwan
University. It was fortunate that one mainlander professor of his, who was very influential, came up and vouched for him. (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)

Another interviewee talked about his motive to participate in public affairs related to the promotion of Taiwan’s democratization:

The reason that drove me to participate in (public affairs) was that in Canada you can say whatever you would like to say—whether or not other people would agree with you. You won’t get into any trouble. You don’t have to worry that someone might come and knock on your door at night. Why this works in Canada and not in Taiwan? This was the political atmosphere in Taiwan at that time. (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

3.1.4 Terror Which Justifies Terror

In addition to the fear of the KMT government implementing policies that were used to intimidate anti-government voice and action, a different form of fear was instilled in the minds of the public through education and the media monopolized by the state until the 1990s. This is the fear of China under communist control, which became the rationale for the KMT government’s extended implementation of the Martial Law and other lawful or unlawful measures of governance. An interviewee explained about his motive for leaving Taiwan to avoid war:
It was 1971...when Taiwan withdrew from the United Nations. Everyone was panicking and worried if the communists would come. And the government had been telling us how vicious the communists were. And I had three sons. I was worried they would eventually be drafted for serving in the army. (A15, interview, Apr 08, 2008)

The antagonism between the KMT government and communist China had a huge impact on people’s lives as the communists had been, allegedly, trying to infiltrate Taiwan. It made the government take a more stern control of the media, sometimes to a paranoid extent:

(Interviewer) It is hard to imagine to what extent the control over thought can go. I worked for a publisher in Taiwan in 1981 or 1982. My company published a series of books called “fashionable sports” including windsurfing, hot air balloon, and so on. And the company posted an ad in the newspaper. The title of the ad goes like this: “Fashionable Sports Landing Taiwan.” The Taiwan Garrison Command called in and asked: “What landing? What do you want to land on? What does this advertisement mean? Who is landing Taiwan?” The ad was for the “Outdoor Life Magazine!” (A43, interview, Apr. 23, 2011)

Censorship of the media has always been one of the main aspects of social life an authoritarian state would want to have close control over. In this case, even the word “landing” which looked like a military term was considered some sort of secret code passing
on messages for the communist government. The terror of the state and the sense of uncertainty of Taiwan’s future, with a hostile government lurking to invade, created a highly depressing social atmosphere and thus forced the Taiwanese people to consider a way out. Some of them managed to have a taste of freedom and would never want to return to such a society.

I was in Viet Nam. I was free, in thought and other aspects. Freedom of speech too. But it’s different when I returned to Taiwan. You have to be cautious when talking. I’m not saying the KMT did anything. But you see, I worked and never got promotion for ten years, why is that? Was I incapable? They would have fired me if I was not capable. (A28, interview, Apr. 10, 2009)

This interviewee talked about two main reasons for his later decision to apply for immigration to Canada: the freedom he enjoyed outside of Taiwan, and the discrimination against him by the mainlanders at the workplace. The following interviewee, who used to work for the CAT (Civil Air Transport, one of the few airlines companies in Asia in the 1960s) station in Laos, had a similar experience of freedom and the same desire to leave Taiwan:

Viang Chan (a border city in Laos) had the most densely populated embassies in the world as all intelligence agencies were sent to that neutral city. It was festival day and night there when the Viet Nam War was going on.... You can get anything there: perfume, cognac, you name it. It was quite comfortable living in that city. Taiwan
was still under Martial Law then. I felt like a bird being released from the cage. Certainly there was no way I would go back to Taiwan, the cage.... I went to the Consulate of Canada and asked about immigration.... When the airplane flew over the Taiwan Straits, I was scared and worried if I would get caught and sent back to be drafted into the army. (A54, interview, Aug 05, 2011)

This is what it was like living in Taiwan under the strictly enforced Martial Law, when one had to worry not just about the security and wellbeing of oneself and one’s family, but also about the risk of the breakout of military confrontation between Taiwan and China. This explains to a certain extent the motives of the emigrants to North America: to avoid white terror and the danger of war.

The social effect of the oppression of the intellectuals and common people was in fact to force the entire society to subordinate to the authoritarian order the KMT intended to bring to Taiwanese society. It was similar to the colonial order a settler’s regime would try to establish on a newly acquired territory, when the indigenous people may not recognize the legitimacy of the new ruler of their land.

The analogy of the KMT government in Taiwan in the 1950s to a settler or a colonial government can be further supported if the discriminative policies between the “mainlanders” and the locals (Taiwanese) in social, political, and economic realms, which made Taiwan looked like an apartheid society, are taken into consideration. In this sense, what the Taiwanese people were experiencing was a government that came from China, was allegedly democratic but in fact authoritarian, and treated its people as a potential threat to the survival of the government. The government was exogenous to the Taiwanese society,
which had not yet developed a national identity after the Japanese colonial government left after the Second World War. This was the social background for most of the Taiwanese immigrants that came to Vancouver from the 1960s to the 1980s, and it set the basic political mentality these people had towards politics and their own ethnic group identity. All that would soon be adjusted or even re-formed after their involvement in activities in the host society in Canada. Before that, though, they had to face the state of Taiwan once again on the soil of Canada.

3.2 The Practice of Blacklist

In contrast to white terror, which refers mostly to domestic political control, the “blacklist” can denote potential enemies of the state—domestic or overseas, citizens or alien nationals. Domestically, a name on the blacklist can be that of a fanatical environmentalist, a radical journalist, a (potential) rebel, or anyone who might cause or is perceived as having caused a threat to the status quo or those in power. Being a name on the blacklist is something different to being named on a subpoena or an arrest warrant, in that those on a blacklist are often people who are not criminals yet need to be barred from some privileges as they might cause trouble to the authorities. Accordingly, a blacklist sometimes includes names of foreign nationals as well as those who were previously citizens of the country and later are naturalized in another and hence become foreigners. The latter case applies to overseas Taiwanese immigrants. As for the reasons for one’s name being put into the system, in the case of Taiwan they include: supporting the political activists demanding political reform in Taiwan; supporting Taiwan independence (which defies the sovereignty of the KMT government); sympathizing with communist China, or any reason the authorities find threatening to the security of its power. Suspicion alone would suffice for the KMT
government to categorize a person as being among these three major threats to the state. No solid evidence is needed as long as one has been reported by intelligence agencies—domestic or overseas—to be active in these three hazardous activities against the government.

As it is a controversial and sometimes unconstitutional means to control administratively the in- and out-flow of population for the purposes of national security, a blacklist in most cases is not known either to the public or to governmental agencies other than the national security departments such as the National Security Council or the end office at Customs. It is also something that is rarely disclosed to the public even after democratization, since too much administrative discretion is left to the offices controlled by the authoritarian government and the exposure of it could have political consequences. Nevertheless there have been traces of the implementation of the blacklist as experienced and observed by Taiwanese Canadians.

3.2.1 The Blacklist

The actual blacklist has been under tight regulation as this practice of border control violates constitutional rights of the people to live and travel freely. Even years after the revocation of the Martial Law and the democratization, the administrative agencies still manage to keep it secret from the public. This is primarily because the bureaucratic system has been in the control of the KMT government for over forty years. Not even the shift of power in year 2000 when the oppositional party won the presidential election can change the fact that the bureaucrats are either reluctant or too frightened to disclose the list. After a long time of persuasion, a former official who has a copy of the blacklist agreed to allow one colleague of mine to make a copy of several pages from the blacklist. According to the
colleague, it is a three-volume set of list with names, passport numbers, and key information needed for processing visa application on it, which comes to the total of roughly one thousand names. This may well be the last circulated version in limited government agencies. The government announced the abolition of the blacklist system in 1992 (five years after the Martial Law had been repealed), which seems to be accurate as many interviewees claiming to have been on the blacklist remember that they were firstly given a visa around the early 1990s.

3.2.1.1 The Cover Page

On the cover page of an alleged blacklist, it says:

“Secret
Manual of the Class B Information
Printed in September, 1992
Serial number: (covered)”

There is a serial number on every copy of the blacklist for the purpose of regulating the use of the list to prevent it from being exposed to the public. According to the official who owns this copy of it, the blacklist was renewed biannually. When a new version of the list was issued to an office, the old version would be retrieved by the government. This is how this official managed to keep this copy: the government officially terminated the blacklist system and this copy was the very last and most updated (in 1992) version he has in his possession.
The title “Class B” is a term for “intelligence.” It came from an office widely set up in all government departments called “The Second Office of Human Resource.” It was an office in the white terror period stationed in government and educational bodies to monitor the loyalty of the bureaucrats and officials to the central government. They collected the speech and activities of officials and anyone related to these people. This policing agency continued to exist until the early 2000s.

3.2.1.2 The Classification of Names

The blacklist is composed of the user manual, the list of offices with a copy (or copies) of it, the list of managing offices, and the list of names. The following discusses how a blacklist works.

In the page of user manual, two points are particularly worth discussing.

First is the definition of list of names (point four). People that fall into any of the following categories would be marked down on the list:

(a) Taiwan independence supporters and those who commit treason.
(b) Those that work for or are friendly to the CCP (the Chinese Communist Party).
(c) Those that make inappropriate or unfriendly comments on the government.
(d) The international leftists.
(e) The terrorists.
(f) Those that have committed or are involved in criminal activities in Taiwan.
(g) Those that are involved in illegal brokerage or activities against social customs.

In practice (a), (b) and (c) are the most common reasons for banning people from entering Taiwan, both foreigners and Taiwanese Canadians.
The other point (point five) that needs clarification is the “control level” in the manual. Three types of management are specifically instructed on this page:

“Class A”: Denial of entrance. Contact the government only under special circumstances.

“Class B”: No visa should be issued without permission from the controlling office of the person.

“Class C”: Visa may be issued if no security concern is found. Report to the relevant domestic offices immediately after issuing the visa.

Class A applies to those on top of the list, ones of the most serious security concern to the Taiwanese government and hence overseas offices are authorized to reject visa applications without reporting to the domestic office. For Class B applicants, the overseas offices should report and confirm with the government whether or not a visa may be issued. Class C seems to be the less serious threat to the country and therefore officials are authorized to issue these people visa with the condition that the domestic offices “managing” the file of the applicant must be informed right after the visa is issued.

3.2.1.3 The List of Offices Holding Copies of the Blacklist

The page following the instruction on the use of the list shows the names of twelve government offices that keep a copy (or copies) of the blacklist. The number of copies is limited and numbered to a total of 173 copies.
Table 2 List of Offices Holding Copies of the Blacklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distinction</th>
<th>Office Name</th>
<th>Number of Copy</th>
<th>Serial Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Original</td>
<td>Bureau of Consular Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>001-130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy</td>
<td>National Security Bureau</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy</td>
<td>Investigation Bureau, the Ministry of Justice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy</td>
<td>National Immigration Agency</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>133-162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first four offices listed on this page give a sense of what government departments were given the information and the responsibility to assist with the border control policy. Out of the twelve offices two are the most important agencies: the Bureau of Consular Affairs, which directly handles applications for visas and passports in foreign countries, and the National Immigration Agency which guards the entry to Taiwan at ports and airports as the second gate. The Taiwanese Canadians studied in this dissertation had experiences interacting with these two agencies.

3.2.1.4 List of Managing Offices

In contrast to the offices in charge of processing day-to-day cases of visa application, as shown in the above-mentioned page, a separate page specifies the exact managing offices where one's detailed file and records are kept. This is exactly what is instructed on the “user
manual” page regarding which government office should be informed when a visa is issued to “Class B” names on the blacklist. Here is the translation of the list:

Table 3 List of Managing Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Office</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Security Bureau</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigation Bureau</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Police Agency</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Immigration Agency</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aviation Police Office</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Departments</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martial Law Departments</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigation and Management Office (Changed to Reserve Command)</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Command (the old Security Office)</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Investigation Office (Changed to Reserve Command)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martial Law Office</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center of Cooperation (Changed to Aviation Police Office)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan Garrison Command (Changed to Reserve Command)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of National Defence</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Information Office</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Foreign Trade</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of the Interior</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Judging from the diverse offices keeping files of those deemed dangerous to the Taiwanese government, the blacklist is not solely targeted at the dissidents to the government. This being said, political dissidents might very likely fall under the National Security Bureau or the National Immigration Agency.

3.2.1.5 A Sample Page of the Blacklist

The following is an explanation of how the information of blacklist items are listed on the pages of the book. The layout is rather straightforward with only the key information of the people listed. The fourth name from top down on the list is a good example to see how this system works.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Office</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Tax Administration</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 A Sample Item on the Blacklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name in Foreign Language</th>
<th>Name in Chinese Character</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Passport Number</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>……</td>
<td>……</td>
<td>……</td>
<td>……</td>
<td>……</td>
<td>……</td>
<td>……</td>
<td>……</td>
<td>……</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L---- G--- A-----</td>
<td>艾 XX</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1949X XXX</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The uses of the name, the birth date, nationality, and passport number are plain to see for border control. What is interesting is the last three columns of “note” on the list which make it a “black” list, as the reasons for not granting application for visa are often of the nature of concern for national security, giving related government agencies ample discretion to decide who is a threat to the state. Sometimes the reasons can be rather arbitrary and lack of evidence hence unconstitutional.

In this case, Miss Linda Gail Arrigo, a well-known dissident known to the KMT government and a supporter of Taiwan’s democratization in the 1970s and 1980s, was marked down on the list and therefore forbidden to enter Taiwan. In the last three notes she was marked “1”, “A”, and “03.” The number “1”, according to the “user manual” page, signifies that she fits into this profile: “(a) Taiwan independence supporters and those who commit treason.” The “A” means that she is classified as the Class A type, meaning that overseas consular agencies may directly decline her application for a visa to Taiwan without checking with the office in Taiwan. As for the “03,” as shown on the page of “managing offices,” her complete file may be kept in the National Police Agency, which is in charge of her detailed records. Combining these “notes” we may come to the conclusion that Ms. Arrigo was a Class A, therefore the most dangerous, unwelcome person to the Taiwanese government, and the relevant agencies were authorized to forbid her from entering Taiwan.

3.2.2 The Causes for Being Listed

As we have seen in the previous discussion on how names on the blacklist are categorized and managed by various government departments, political concerns and non-political concerns are all possible factors deciding whether or not someone may be deemed a threat to the government and therefore needs to be blocked from entering Taiwan. Then how
does the government in Taiwan know about who says what and who does things that may jeopardize the interests of Taiwan, since the blacklist is primarily for people with foreign nationality (including Taiwanese Canadians holding Canadian passports) and live on foreign soil? This is in fact one of the openly stated missions of overseas diplomatic agencies: to collect the information of the people of the stationed countries. Although it still remains a mystery as to how those twenty “managing offices” of the government cooperate and exchange their information, some principles can be found to play important roles in collecting intelligence of the potential threats to the nation.

For those who ever chaired organizations in the Taiwanese Canadian community or participated in activities in the community, it is a common experience especially in the 1970s and 1980s that their visa application to Taiwan was rejected for no reason. A41, a mathematician who participated in numerous events related to local and Taiwanese public interests, once reflected upon why he was declined the application for visa to Taiwan three times with no reason ever given:

It is hard to estimate how many people’s names were put down on the black list. But my guess is that if you were an opinion leader, head, or active member of community organizations, there was great chance your name would be on the list. (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

A41 made the point more specifically in another group interview, which called forth the response from another interviewee who had the same “guess”—both of them were highly active in community organizations:
A41: They counted on snitches to make the black list. If you were active in groups like “tong xiang hui,” “FAPA,” “WUFI,” or if they found that you were an opinion leader in the Taiwanese community, you would be reported and black-listed. There were no specific rules to determine…they counted on their informers…and there were many people on the list in Vancouver. It’s hard to say how many. We will have to wait until the day it is declassified before we can really figure it out.

A40: I would like to respond to it. In 1979 right before the United States was to (establish official relationship with China)…that was after Canada terminated diplomatic relationship with Taiwan. The number of people black-listed was the highest between 1970 and 1979. Anyone who acted as a chairman to an organization was blacklisted. The reason I know about this is that one of my neighbours used to work for the Taiwan Garrison Command. He told me that my name was on it, with over three hundred other names. And I was the chairman of the Taiwanese Canadian Association here in 1977. (A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011)

The details that A41 and A40 talked about may not be accurate nor are they verified by the authorities, yet their observation based on personal experience may well explain why they were declined visa application to Taiwan while the other Taiwanese Canadians less interested in public life participation were approved with no difficulty.

What public affairs, then, does one need to get involved in or what organization does one need to chair to be on the blacklist, which in essence is a list of whoever is against, hostile, or dangerous to the nation? Other than the most conspicuous target group, the
Taiwanese Canadian Association to be discussed in the next chapter, attending any event that was deemed a hostile gathering against Taiwan was very likely an important reason. A41 tried to figure out what the intolerable action was for the Taiwanese authorities, as the Taiwanese Canadian Association was not really a political organization:

To trace the reason (why I was not allowed to enter Taiwan)...Chen-yang Wu was the chair of the Association in 1972, and I helped him out.... Most activities of the Taiwanese Canadian Association were barbecues, banquets, and other gatherings. (Interviewer: Any other events other than this sort of activities?) Protests I remember. (A42, interview, Apr. 22, 2011)

Dr. A04, who had always been the leader and spokesperson of protests in Seattle and in Vancouver, had an account of what they did in Seattle that resulted in almost twenty years of blockade preventing him from visiting his relatives and acquaintances in Taiwan:

We went to Seattle to protest. It was after Yi-Hsiung Lin’s daughters were murdered. There was no consular office (of Taiwan) here, so we went to Seattle for it. We took the bus...it was 1982, no, 1980. We were afraid to show our faces...but after the protest the media wanted to interview us. You can’t really be interviewed with your face covered up. We were nervous, and I was scared myself. But I took off the mask and let them interview me. It was already on the 6 o’clock news while we were still on the way back home. (A04, interview, Jan. 08, 2011)
According to a local newspaper *The Seattle Times*:

About 75 Taiwanese living in Seattle and Vancouver sang and carried signs reading:
“Give Taiwan Back to the Taiwanese,” “Stop Political Repression in Taiwan,” and
“Free Hundreds of Dissidents and Clergymen in Taiwan.” They burned the
Nationalist Chinese flag (the KMT government’s flag) and a cardboard drawing of
President Chiang Ching-kuo in front of the Seattle Public Safety Building across the
street. (*The Seattle Times*, January 27, 1980, p. A3)

Just as he remembered in his testimony, Dr. A04 had to remove the mask and respond to
reporters’ questions. He became the spokesperson from this protest forward. Dr. A04 told
the reporters: “We came to demonstrate against a totalitarian and dictatorial regime.... We
mourn the death of democracy on Taiwan” (*The Seattle Times*, January 27, 1980, p. A3). Dr.
A04 and his comrades were not, however, the only “active” participants in this drama:

After the flag-burning, several demonstrators charged the car parked on James Street
between Second and Third Avenues after its occupants were seen taking pictures.
The white-masked demonstrators rushed the car, beating on its truck and sides with
pickets as it raced from the curb. (*The Seattle Times*, January 27, 1980, p. A3)

It is understandable (for the reasons to be elaborated in the following sections) why Dr. A04
and his Vancouver team were so infuriated by the picture-taking men in the car. This was
one of the main reasons some of them had been marked down on the blacklist and forbidden
to return to their home country for over ten years by then: “Yang said demonstrators wore paper masks because they feared being identified by police informers. ‘Our relatives are still in Taiwan,’ said one masked man. ‘We’re scared.’” (The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, January 27, 1980. P. A16).

One spokesman for the CCNAA, however, rebutted what the demonstrators had to say about the KMT government and political situation in Taiwan:

The spokesman, who declined to identify himself, said Taiwan’s opposition leaders were detained because they “caused a riot in which 133 policemen were injured.” Denying the demonstrators’ charge of political oppression, the spokesman said, “The Republic of China (Taiwan) is an open, democratic society just like the United States. We have elections just as yours.” (The Seattle Post-Intelligencer, January 27, 1980. P. A16)

And this “spokesman” for the CCNAA, who represented the government of an “open, democratic society,” made this response anonymously.

In the testimonies made by the Taiwanese Canadians who claim to have the experience of blacklist we see that generally those who participate in public affairs, especially those organized by a handful of organizations in the local community, or those who chaired any of these organizations were faced with higher risks of being on the blacklist, and their testimonies seem to coincide with the rules laid out on the “user manual” page of
the blacklist. We will now examine some more examples that seem to explain how the blacklist is established and updated and how it affects Taiwanese Canadians’ lives.

3.2.3 The First Gate: Visa Screening

Although about twenty government agencies were involved in the practice of blacklisting, only two main portals were the ones faced the applicants directly: the overseas consular office and the immigration desk at customs. Most interviewees experienced the blacklist effect from interaction with these agencies. The first gate to return to their sending country was the visa office in Seattle. The TECO (Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, which also plays the role as a consulate) in Vancouver was not established until 1991, and prior to that date any application for the visa to Taiwan needed to be submitted to the consular office in Seattle.

3.2.3.1 The Statement

One of the most common “first impressions” for those who start to suspect that they have been marked down on the blacklist is the hassle to obtain a visa to visit Taiwan after they become a Canadian citizen. One type of the hassle is the requirement to sign a statement:

\begin{quote}
A25: It was 1983…
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
A24: I wanted to go back. I wanted to return to Taiwan, so I needed the visa. But they wouldn’t give it to me.
\end{quote}
A25: They asked him to sign on a statement which stated “I hereby withdraw from organizations supporting Taiwan independence.” (A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011)

A milder form of statement required is the promise not to get involved in any political activities:

At the airport, I remember that I told them: “I have the visa.” I took the time to get it in Seattle, and I signed a statement which promised not to participate in any political activities during my stay in Taiwan. They asked for it. (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

The “user manual” page of the blacklist suggests that an enemy of the state might be either pro-Taiwan independence or pro-communist China, therefore people the consular office suspected were connected to any of these groups would be asked to sign different statements. In another interviewee’s testimony, it was about his connection with the Chinese government:

They asked me if I ever went to China. I said no. They said: “If you refuse to sign the statement, we cannot close the case.” So I signed on the form stating that I never went to mainland China... I can sign on it since I never went to China as a matter of fact. (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)
### 3.2.3.2 The Standard Operational Procedure: Seattle and Lunch

In 1970, Canada established a diplomatic relationship with Beijing, which later replaced the KMT government at the seat in the United Nations. Since the end of the diplomatic relationship with the KMT government in Taiwan, Canadians who would like to visit Taiwan have had to submit their applications to an office in Vancouver under the authority of CCNAA (Coordination Council of North American Affairs in Seattle). This office is an equivalent to a consulate and is authorized to issue visa and travel documents. Only after the TECO was opened in 1991 could Canadians obtain their visa to Taiwan in Vancouver.

For many Taiwanese Canadians who participated in public affairs, “an invitation to Seattle in person” and “a lunch meeting” became a common procedure before they were issued the visa to Taiwan. In a sense those who were considered opinion leaders in the community would need to be interviewed by field agents in the consular office (in Seattle before 1991 and in Vancouver after 1991) to get the visa. The invitation to visit the office in Seattle, which was accompanied by a lunch offer, became a standard operational procedure. A hydraulic science specialist, who was also once the chair of a Taiwanese organization in Vancouver, talked about his experience:

The first time there was a problem getting the visa to go back (to Taiwan) was when I was invited back by the National Science Council. I did not know what the problem was that they refused to issue me the visa. Then the director of National Science Council wrote a letter to the Taiwan Garrison Command and told them I was invited back as a visiting scholar.... After a while there was still no response from the
Consulate (Seattle). So I called them and asked about it. I asked them to mail it to me. But they said someone in the Consulate would like to invite me over and have a lunch with me. I went there and the officials were polite and gave me the visa after the meeting. (A32, interview, June 01, 2010)

Certainly not all agents were as polite as in the meeting with this hydraulic science expert. Some would manage to lure out the information they wanted from the “suspects” whom they considered to be up to something. Skills of police or intelligence interrogation were used in the following case:

And they said I joined some group for Taiwan independence movement and signed on it (the document). I laughed and replied: ‘Show it to me then. Who would sign his name if he’s up to some guerrilla business? This is ridiculous!’ (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)

Psychological warfare also came into play in the “Seattle interview”:

When I was in Seattle, just like now (the scene of interview), they called me in. And there were 6 to 7 people there within which some played the bad cop and the rest played the good cop. One said: ‘he must be up to something,’ and the other one said ‘no, no, he looks like a nice person.’ It’s like a converging attack from sides, good cop and bad cop. I was so infuriated and said ‘I am from Taiwan, why don’t you let me go back!’ (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)
It appears that, judging from the limited cases collected here, the agents at the consular office would play interrogation tricks on applicants who were less educated while acting nicely with those who were highly educated and sophisticated enough to understand what the agents were trying to do. Mr. A06, who in the 1960s received a master’s degree in business management from a Japanese university, recalled in great detail his “Seattle interview” which happened almost thirty years ago:

In September, 1983, I wanted to go to Taiwan, so I applied again. They called me and talked in a very polite way. The man said: ‘Mr. A06, can you come down to Seattle?’ I said: ‘Why?’ He said: ‘I’ve heard a lot about you…And I was told that your father passed away. I feel so sorry for you.’ I said: ‘Don’t say you are sorry. If you people didn’t make things difficult for me, this would not have happened.’…He said: ‘I promise that meeting with me would only do go to you, no downsides whatsoever.’ I thought to myself ‘okay, I’ll see what you people are up to.’ So one day my wife and I drove to Seattle to meet them…Three people came and met with me at the cafeteria. One is named ‘Ma’, another is ‘Yu’, and there was another one. But I don’t remember the name. At the cafeteria, they reiterated how they felt sorry that I did not get to see my father before he passed away. Then he started beating about the bush. (I think) He actually wanted to know what we are up to here (in Vancouver). He asked: ‘Do you know Professor A35?’ I said I do. ‘Do you know Professor Lin then?’ And I said yes. Then he said: ‘You must be very close.’ I replied: ‘Not really. We are all Taiwanese, and we meet up at some public occasions.
That is all.’ ‘What do Taiwanese do together recently?’ he asked. I said: ‘Bar-be-cue gatherings for the Moon Festival and so on, things like that.’ He said the following: ‘Mr. A06, you are an influential man, so please help us.’ …After dinner when they finally handed me back the passport with the visa, he added: ‘Mr. A06, after you go back to Taiwan, would you go and see the authorities?’ I said: ‘I am not in the mood. I was straightforward enough to say this: it was exactly because of your making things difficult so I failed to see my father the very last time…I’m just not feeling like going to talk to anybody with the authorities or whatever else.’ (A06, interview, June 03, 2011)

A polite yet skilful interrogation was applied in this “meeting.” Key men of the Taiwanese Canadian community Professor A35 and Professor A02 were mentioned in the conversation, which seemed to imply that they knew everything about their active engagement in public affairs and Mr. A06 was considered to be on their side. Mr. A06, however, was calm enough to face all the questions insinuating the connection between himself and the opinion leaders in the community. He did not fall for it even when he was enraged about his traumatic experience of being declined the visa application, which happened shortly before the “Seattle meeting” and cost him the last chance to see his father alive in Taiwan.

Another technique the CCNAA would allegedly use on applicants in addition to interrogation skills is the “stamping signal”—a phrase used by an interviewee. Before a computerized visa information system was invented and put into use, there was a loophole allowing attempts to infringe the blacklisting system. This was quite simple: if you were
rejected by an office in one city, applying to another consular office in another city or even in another country might actually work. A way for the Taiwanese consular offices to counter this strategy was to stamp the “cancelled” mark over the visa stamp. One interviewee talked about this based on her experience: “When we applied for visa in 1983, they issued the visa and stamped the mark ‘cancelled’ on it on purpose. It prevents you from getting the visa from other posts (A25).”

This interviewee claimed to still keep the old passport with this “double stamp” on it but she could not find it at the time of being interviewed. Another interviewee, however, brought his old passport to a group interview and explained how it worked:

Regarding the issue of visa: In April or May of 1980, as I was (an expert in) hydraulic engineering, and there was an international conference on water resource to be held in Taiwan, my paper was accepted hence I was invited to attend the meeting organized by the International Water Resources Association. They sent me an invitation letter with which I applied for the visa to Taiwan. ...When I got the passport back, there was the visa stamp on one of the inner pages. And there was another “cancelled” stamp on top of it. It was the time when computer was not available and the circulation of information was not efficient. Some people may be rejected here and re-submit the application to other posts…so this was a mark of alert for other posts. (A41, etc., group interview, Apr. 12, 2011)
This interviewee was an active chair of the TCA and possibly he was categorized as Class A applicant on the blacklist which, according to the manual, authorized the consular office to decline his visa application up front without consulting Taiwan first.

Figure 1 Mr. A21’s Expired Canadian Passport with the “Double Stamp” on it (© Ren-Hung Wu)

3.2.3.3 National Security Over Humane Considerations

Out of the examples of those who suffered from the effects of blacklist, the most sorrowful stories are about how people were not allowed to return to Taiwan even at the time
when their parents were dying at the hospital. Mr. A06 remembered vividly what he experienced and how he felt when his application for the visa was declined:

After 1979 I was not allowed to go back.... In 1981, around May, I had a feeling that I might not have much chance to see my father ever again. He was very ill then. So I applied for the visa through normal procedure at Seattle. After about one and a half months there was neither notice nor returning the passport to me. I called and asked them what had happened to my Taiwan visa application. The man said: “It’s been rejected.” I said: “You never told me why I had been rejected. At the very least you should send me back my passport.” He did not answer the question. And there was once I was so angry that I went to Eileen Dailly, the then member of Provincial Legislative Assembly. She made a phone call to the consulate office and then she told me to contact them again. And I did. The official (at the consulate office) said: “You wanted the passport back (while it was still in processing). It’s not our fault.” This is like…as we put it in Hakka dialect that they “slap you in the mouth with a bat.” After that I submitted the application over and over again, and they wrote me back a letter saying “you have to report in detail about your anti-government activities and talks.” But this is what they said over the phone call. They did not put it this way in the letter.... And then on January 1st of 1982, the next year from the rejection, my father passed away. And I was so mad. (A06, interview, June 03, 2011)

Another active member of the Taiwanese Canadian community talked about the similar experience that he was not allowed to see his mother one last time even after he had
set foot on the soil of Taiwan. He was issued the visa yet not granted entrance to Taiwan and was deported back to Vancouver.

My mother was very ill in 1979, so I applied for the visa to go to Taiwan with my older sister, my wife, and my son. And I was the only person who could not get in.... When I returned, I asked the Consulate office why I was not allowed to enter Taiwan, and they said they did not know.... I was repatriated on the same plane…only my sister and my son were allowed entrance.... A few years later when I applied for the visa again, it was rejected as well. (A42, interview, Apr. 22, 2011)

Twice, while remembering and talking about this devastating experience that happened over thirty years ago, this interviewee, a sixty-seven-year-old gentleman, became too emotional to speak for ten seconds.

3.2.4 The Second Gate: Border Control

If the first gate failed to keep unwanted guests from obtaining a visa, the second front at the customs would play the role of blocking off those on the blacklist even if they were issued the visa. According to the three-class categorizing scheme we see in the “user manual” of the blacklist, Class B and Class C people might have a chance to break through the visa screening process and get to the customs in Taiwan. This is because back in the 1970s when immigration data were not computerized for circulation between government agencies, mistakes could be made as cases were processed solely by agents. One interviewee
knew for a fact that he was on the blacklist as he had tried to apply for the visa without success. He took a detour:

(In Hong Kong) I wanted to apply for the visa to Taiwan but was not successful. So I “smuggled” in. There was a travel agent in Los Angeles who was about to send all the passports of a tour group for the travel visa application. I asked him to put my passport in the pile as I assumed they might be easy on tour group visa application.... I arrived at the Song Shan Airport (Taipei) and they immediately found out. The officer told me: “You stand right there and wait.” And he went into the office and talked to the other officer who was a Taiwanese. The officer came out and asked me to write down the address of my stay in Taiwan, and then he told the officer of lower rank: “Let him in.” (A35, interview, Aug. 25, 2010)

Whether the interviewee was a Class B or Class C is not clear. What went wrong in the communication between the customs and the “managing office” that let the senior officer allow him to enter is a mystery as well. We will follow up with more detail in the next section on how this interviewee was under tight surveillance once he got into Taiwan. Maybe that would suffice to explain why a blacklisted person was allowed to get in even when his “smuggling” scheme had been detected.

The expression that the customs officer “went into the office” to check with another (seemingly) senior officer is common among those Taiwanese Canadians who obtained the visa yet had to wait for a longer time than other regular tourists. Two other interviewees reported a similar encounter:
Every time when I arrived at the customs (in Taiwan) the Airport Police would take my passport to the office for further check for about ten to twenty minutes before giving it back to me and letting me in. (A06, interview, June 03, 2011, Italics added)

Afterwards when I applied again (the third time) and they finally issued the visa before my flight left. When I arrived at the airport (in Taiwan), the officer said: “Sorry, our computer is out of order now.” And he went in and asked someone else. I overheard that the one in the office said: “There is no situation on this one. It’s okay to let him pass.” (A45, interview, June 15, 2011, Italics added)

Although the customs officers might have discretion to a certain extent, the government office which had the call was never the National Immigration Agency nor the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (and their consular office overseas). Under the Martial Law (1949-1987) it was the intelligence agencies, sometimes unconstitutionally established, in charge of national security that had the final decision. The notorious “Taiwan Garrison Command” which was the main domestic intelligence agency under Martial Law played the most significant role in the practice of blacklist. An example is Dr. A41’s story of being placed under custody at the airport, which explains how powerful the Garrison Command was at the time:

I was officially rejected for three or four times. Of all those blacklisted, the scenario of my case was never heard of by then. There was a newly built airport hotel which
had not been made accessible to travellers. I was one of the earliest “special guests” there. They placed me under custody there for one night. The rooms on both sides of mine were occupied by an Airport Police officer and a Civil Aeronautics Administration official respectively. And they told me: “Mr. A41, please inform us if you’d like to go out.” That was when my father had an accident and was in coma and I returned to Taiwan to visit him. They even sent a telegram beforehand to confirm the situation. My sister went with me and was granted entrance. But she insisted on staying in the same hotel with me to make sure I would not be “Chen wen-cheng-ized.”¹⁷ …That was the trip I went back and arranged for my father’s funeral. It was 1985. That was the first time I went back to Taiwan after seventeen years in Canada. And after that, I remember I was rejected for a visa application for two or three times.

(A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

This is the third case we have seen so far of the blacklist which deprived Taiwanese Canadians of the right to return to their birthplace even at the moment when their parents were about to pass away. In this case, Dr. A41 was allowed through the help of Canadian politicians (hence the visa was issued) to return to Taiwan to see his father in a coma and to arrange for his father’s funeral. Before and after that, he was rejected five or seven times in

¹⁷ Dr. Chen Wen-cheng (1950-1981), a Taiwanese American, former assistant professor at the Department of Statistics at Carnegie Mellon University, U.S.A. He returned to Taiwan in early July of 1981 and was immediately questioned by the Taiwan Garrison Command for his financial support and participation in the activities of overseas Taiwanese organizations in the U.S. One day after he had been interrogated by the Taiwan Garrison Command his body was found on campus of his Alma Mater the Taiwan University. The police claimed that he committed suicide to avoid the consequences of his “crime,” but it was generally believed that he was murdered by the authorities as people like Dr. Chen were always under close and undisguised surveillance when they were visiting Taiwan. A former American coroner Cyril Wecht, M.D. in Pathology, examined the corpse of Chen and supported that Dr. Chen was murdered. See Wecht (1985). The “Chen Wen-cheng Murder” triggered waves of criticism and protest against the KMT government and its secret police agencies in Taiwan.
total, which seems to suggest that he was a Class A on the list. Even when a compromise had been made and he was granted a visa, a decision from the Garrison Command could easily make it invalid. This was out of the mouth of an official at the airport:

My sister told them frankly that she was concerned that I might be “Chen wen-cheng-ized.”… (It was) in Tao Yuan International Airport. I arrived at 9:00pm, and they did not allow me to leave until 12:00am…. At 12:00am after the lights [of the airport] were switched off, only my sister and I were at the customs, they forced me, to put it in a straightforward manner, or you may say “brought me,” to put in a euphemistic manner, to the airport hotel for one night. The next day I told them that I have the visa. But they said: “It’s useless.” Without the permission from the Taiwan Garrison Command, they could not let me go. This is to say, the visa issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was useless. That was the environment at that time. And the next day, they brought me back to the airport and led me to go through the customs all over again. They had contacted the Garrison Command and got the permission for my entrance…. The name of Chen wen-cheng had become a verb by then…. After 1995 or 1997, it was alright to go back. (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

Dr. A41 was very likely to be deported as happened to the interviewee mentioned earlier. It was after they sent a telegram and checked out that his father was really in coma at the hospital that the Garrison Command agreed to give him one exception—under the condition that he had to sign a statement that he would not engage in any political activities during his stay in Taiwan.
Any authoritarian state machine is composed of a variety of intelligence agencies that can be seen as nodal points in a web that sets the perimeters of the power centre. As soon as the KMT government settled in Taiwan and waited for the right chance to attack the communists, Taiwan became a military fortress covered with nets of national security blocking out external forces from changing or challenging its dominance and keeping those inside behaving appropriately. This explains the rejection of the applications by common people to leave the country without due cause. It also explains why the review process for Taiwanese Canadians who intended to return to Taiwan could be a hassle for reasons unknown even to the applicants themselves. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, when systemic and efficient communication between these “nodal points” of governmental agencies was absent, sometimes an applicant (a Taiwanese Canadian) could obtain a visa to visit Taiwan but would later be refused entrance at Customs in Taiwan unless the situation was really urgent enough as in Dr. A41’s case to force the authorities to give one a break.

Sometimes, the inhumane treatment of the blacklist can cause collateral damage to one’s family. Dr. A03, an expert in neurochemistry and Professor Emeritus of the University of British Columbia, was hired by UBC to teach at the medical school in 1966. Before moving to Vancouver for this job offer, he was a professor at McGill University (1961-66) and helped establish the first Taiwanese Canadian Association in Canada. The “Formosan Association of Canada” (later renamed “Taiwanese Canadian Association”) was founded in Montreal in 1963. After moving to Vancouver in 1963, Dr. A03 and his friends established a local branch of the association, the “Formosan Association of Canada, Vancouver Chapter,” which on 19 November 1966 became the “Greater Vancouver Taiwanese Canadian Association,” or TCA.
According to Dr. A03, this was when KMT overseas intelligence started to pay close attention to the activities of the TCA. It was believed that at least three “professional” students at UBC, who were given orders to monitor activities of Taiwanese Canadians, would need to fly back to Taiwan for activity reports from time to time. After an unsuccessful attempt in New York on 24 April 1970 to assassinate Chiang Ching-kuo, son of President Chiang Kai-shek, who later succeeded to his father’s office, the overseas intelligence agencies were under more pressure to expand their infiltration to all Taiwanese organizations worldwide, including those in Vancouver. The atmosphere was so tense that members of TCA or similar groups would not be allowed to take pictures or record conversations at events, as whoever did this or even intended to do this would be considered a possible mole in the Taiwanese Canadian community. From 1970 to 1971, Dr. A03 chaired the TCA and he knew that his name might be put on the blacklist simply for taking the position. He agreed to accept the position anyway as he had believed that his name was already on the blacklist even earlier when he was at McGill University and was active in the Taiwanese student circle.

In 1972, an international conference on neuroscience was held in Tokyo, Japan. Dr. A03 was nominated by his department to attend the conference on behalf of the medical school of UBC. When Dr. A03 and his wife arrived in Tokyo, they were informed that Dr. A03’s father-in-law was in critical condition at a hospital in Taiwan. Mrs. Sung applied at the Taiwanese embassy in Tokyo for a visa to visit Taiwan and was denied because she was a “Taiwan independence activist.” Dr. A03 noted that this was a preposterous and groundless accusation, as his wife had nothing to do with the Taiwanese Canadian groups in Vancouver and was not even concerned about public affairs. The only explanation that seemed to make
sense, according to Dr. A03, was that she was married to Dr. A03. Moreover, as the Sung family was the only family in their Taiwanese community in Vancouver that had a car, Mrs. Sung was kind enough to drive people around whenever needed, which might have been recorded and reported to the KMT government. Although the Sungs were able to pull some strings and eventually went back to Taiwan to pay their last visit to Dr. A03’s father-in-law, the experience was unpleasant and in a sense traumatizing to the extent that Dr. A03 started to be very cautious at events held by the local Taiwanese Canadian community.

3.2.5 Surveillance and Monitoring

For people like Dr. A41 who was allowed to enter Taiwan as an exception due to his father’s serious health condition or Dr. A35 who managed to sneak in by applying for the visa with other tourist group applications, entrance into Taiwan marked the beginning of close surveillance by intelligence agencies. And that has always been an active part of white terror—it makes people afraid, and afraid of something unknown.

3.2.5.1 Under Surveillance

Before Dr. A41 returned to Taiwan, his family members there were visited by the local police department. During his stay in Taiwan, a different agency kept contacting him and invited him for a lunch date.

There were several times whenever I planned on going back to Taiwan, the police would come to my parents’ house and say: “Your son is coming back soon.” Especially the first time I went back after being held [in] custody at the airport hotel
for one day, my families were worried about my security and would not allow me to go out by myself. My brother would follow me everywhere I went. And the Chang-hwa branch of the Investigation Bureau invited me for lunch several times and I never accepted. I was from Chang-hwa city. (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

As for Dr. A35, who managed to be “smuggled” in, an even more frightening experience made him believe that he was going to be taken into custody by the intelligence agencies:

The time I felt being watched was the year on sabbatical. I went to Hong Kong for six months. And then I was invited by Tamkang University to go to Taiwan and deliver a series of lectures over a few weeks. During the period of time several people from the Taiwan Garrison Command and other intelligence agencies came and took note of the talks. I knew this because there was one time this senior mainlander attended the speeches and asked a lot of questions that were irrelevant. He would take the bus to come to the talks all the way from Taipei to Tam Shui. By then I was only feeling suspicious. On the day after the last session, he followed me to the guesthouse where guests of the university stayed. I was to pick up my luggage and leave for Taipei. He followed me there and said his wife left him and his father-in-law was interested in history. He wanted me to go and talk to his father-in-law and maybe to persuade the latter to help him get his wife back. I told him I was not a marriage counsellor. I tried to get into my place for my luggage with the thought that I might be able to get off from the back door, but he insisted on following me in.... I
went to the professor who lived next door to me and asked him to send for my younger brother who was the Head of the Department of Mathematics. My brother asked the campus drillmaster to come over and talk to the man. And the drillmaster asked me to take a taxi instead of taking any public transportation to return to Taipei.... Not long after that the “Chen wen-cheng Incident” happened. If I were taken by the man that day to the Taiwan Garrison Command, I might have been “Chen wen-cheng-ized.” After that I often found that there were people following me around in Taipei. (Interviewee: When did it happen?) It was before the Formosa Incident happened [1979]. (A35, interview, Aug. 25, 2010)

One may argue that the mainlander who harassed Dr. A35 was simply a lunatic who was not working for the intelligence agencies. Yet the suspicious actions of irregular speech attendants (middle-aged adults who didn’t look like university students) and the harassment made him believe that he was really under surveillance. His doubts were later proven indirectly:

The most obvious example about people following around was that: I went to Tainan Theological College to see the president Ching-fen Hsiao. He said to me that there will be a small group discussion of “dang-wai” (literally “out of the KMT,” referring to whoever holds opinions against the KMT government) people, are you coming

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18 A drillmaster refers to one of the many middle-ranked military officers assigned by the Ministry of Defense to high schools and higher education facilities in Taiwan from 1951 to the present day. The ratio of drillmaster to student is roughly 1:240. Their work includes teaching the basic military training courses on campus, which are mandatory, helping the students to behave properly, and monitoring any possible anti-government activities. After the democratization in the 1990s, the political aspects of their work have been eliminated and their role is now limited to keeping the campus a safe environment for students.
along? I said “of course yes.” …I went to Kaohsiung for it. I don’t quite remember what topics were discussed. (It is) probably something to do with how to organize a protest against the government. I do not know how secret agents followed me to the venue. But a while after that when I was invited to deliver a speech at Tunghai University, the Dean of the College of Arts told the students that: “Don’t attend the speech. A35 is a Taiwan independence activist! He went to Kaohsiung for a Taiwan independence meeting.” But the discussion I attended was of only twelve people. No one else should have known about it. The Dean Jiang was a palaeography scholar who studied ancient scripts…he was the chairperson of the party branch (KMT) on campus at that time. He threatened the students by saying that, yet they came to me and told me about what Dean said to them. The students that came for the speech were even more than expected. I then realized that they were spying on me and they knew about the small group discussion in Kaohsiung. (A35, interview, Aug. 25, 2010)

3.2.5.2 Interrogation in Taiwan

In the previous sections we see that some Taiwanese Canadians were required to go to Seattle for an interview for the visa application. During the interviews (the Seattle/ lunch invitation Standard Operational Procedure as discussed earlier) some applicants were bold enough to confront the officials with straightforward questions challenging their grounds for not allowing these applicants to visit their birth country. Apparently for interview sessions like these the doubts of the officials could not be possibly chased away. If for some reason they had to issue the visa (in Mr. A06’s case, a Canadian Member of Parliament stepped in and made it happen), they would normally ask the applicants to “report” to the counterpart
agencies in Taiwan after they successfully returned. Mr. A06 has a tremendous memory and he gave a detailed account of how meetings like this happened:

Before the lunar New Year of 1984, again, I wanted to go back the second time. So I applied for the visa. And they asked me to talk to them again when issuing me the visa…. They asked me to visit the authorities after I go back. I said: “Whom do you want me to see?” They said: “Dial this number when you arrive.” … I remember it was someone with the Intelligence Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Someone named Ang-guo Lai…. They wanted me to contact Lai as soon as I arrived. But I didn’t want to cooperate. So I told them I will contact them after the lunar New Year holidays…. We met at a restaurant for lunch in front of the Taipei Railway Station. There were two people. Lai told me the other person was his “classmate” named “Ai-hwa Lee.” It was not a common name for a guy. More like a woman’s name. And it means “I love China” literally. Probably that’s an alias. I didn’t really care…. He kept circling around the topic of Taiwan independence, and he wanted to obtain information from me. I knew what his intention was, and I kept talking about democracy and liberty. There was no common topic between us. He himself became impatient as we talked and talked until 3:30pm. Then he said: “Mr. A06, now I think I understand your situation. I think you should be alright.” One day after the meeting, he called me at my older brother’s house where I stayed in (and how did he know where I live?) and said he wanted to meet me again. “What else do you need to know?” I said. He said: “We still need to clarify a few things.”…So we met at the Hotel Miramar for a coffee. This time though, he started talking right after we met.
And he was almost like describing the history of Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver by memory! All the details were mentioned. I reckoned he did that to send me the message that he knew it all and I had better be honest. My guess was that what he knew was all from the newsletters published by the Taiwanese Canadian Association. That was no secret to anyone. So I responded to him and said: “From the start till now, Mr. Lai, you’ve shown that you know well of the history of Taiwanese Canadian Association inside out. What is your real purpose? Are you asking me if I am pro Taiwan independence?” Lai said: “I found it awkward to just ask you directly, since you have asked, I will say yes. Are you Taiwan independence activist?” I said no. He then asked: “Mr. A06, would you believe what you just said if you were me?” I said: “Of course I do.... The Lin family murder was just a few years ago. Who doesn’t know what’s going to happen to you and your family if you do such things? I have a mother and other families. The reason I dared to come back in the first place was that I have nothing to hide. I did not do anything against the government. The government has a military force of 800,000 soldiers and I am just an unarmed person.” He became speechless and did not know how to respond.... I thought to myself that I was just a small potato and they had wasted so much time and energy on me alone. How much more resource they must have used on other people! How terrible! (A06, interview, June 03, 2011)

Both Mr. A06 here and Dr. A41 (who was placed under custody at the airport hotel for one night before the Garrison Command agreed to let him in) were invited for lunch. While Dr. A41 refused to “clarify” a few things with them, Mr. A06 did and fought back.
Afterwards on two or three occasions Dr. A41 applied again for the visa and was rejected. This might be due to his insistence on not having a “lunch” with the officials. He was allowed to return to Taiwan after 1995, three years after the blacklist was officially abolished in 1992.

3.2.5.3 Reasons for Surveillance

There were many reasons for the Taiwanese authorities to be afraid of the overseas Taiwanese Canadian organizations and their leaders. Often it was out of the suspicion that these headmen were somehow connected either to the Taiwan independence activists in Taiwan (who were regarded as rebels against the government) or to the communist government in Beijing (which was to blame for the KMT government’s loss of control over China). During the period of Martial Law these were the primary challenges to the authoritarian government’s hold on Taiwan and its people. The concern for national security can go “beyond reasonable doubt” as seen in the example of the intelligence agencies questioning the advertisement of “fashionable sports landing in Taiwan” on a magazine quoted earlier, as for the government “landing” seemed to carry a military connotation (A43, interview, Apr. 23, 2011). Another example the interviewees talked about was very threatening for the Taiwanese government as it was more directly related to a possible insurgency scheme the overseas Taiwanese might had been involved in: the forming of a hunting club by members of the Taiwanese Canadian Association in 1980. The following is a partial translation of the contents of the advertisement in the Vancouver Tong Xun (Vancouver Newsletter), April 1980, p. 3. See Appendix 2 for the scan of the original advertisement.
Figure 2 An Advertisement for the Shooting Club (© Ren-Hung Wu)

One of the members described how his participation in the shooting club was brought up in the visa application interview he had with the officials at the consular office in Seattle:

Huang was running the Taiwanese Canadian Association and he posted an ad (on the newsletter) calling for participants to form a shooting sport organization. They probably knew the information from there. And they dealt it as I was to form a guerrilla. (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)
The interviewee believed that this was the main reason he was marked down on the blacklist, as he was not very active in other events and activities at the TCA:

I love outdoors sports and hunting very much, and for this reason the KMT put me on the blacklist and accused me of organizing a guerrilla team to fight Taiwan government.... I’m not that great.... Someone snitched on me, they got paid for doing so.... So when I wanted to return to Taiwan and went to Seattle for visa application [there was no consulate office here at that time] they rejected my application twice. They didn’t allow me go back to Taiwan.... They said I must want to go back and assassinate someone, and I told them I’m not that great, and I have a wife and a child here. (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)

Apparently the explanation was not convincing enough at first for the officials to issue him the visa to Taiwan. After signing the statement promising not to be involved in any activity against the government, the interviewee eventually got his visa. As soon as he arrived in Taiwan, however, he realized that he was in the jurisdiction of the KMT government and the police came for a visit:

As soon as I arrived at my home, I got this phone call from “the division of foreign affairs of the Police Department” and they said they wanted to come visit me. I said “why not? You are welcome to visit me.” When the policeman came, the first sentence he said was: “Why do you own a rifle?” I replied: “I was licensed by the Canadian government to possess a rifle. I own it legally.”... And he said: “It’s very
dangerous to have a rifle. You can get people killed with it.” I said: “It’s not
dangerous. It makes loud noise, if you are a bad shot, the one you’re shooting at may
defend himself and kill you with a brick.” He probably thought that makes sense so
he did not visit me afterwards. (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)

Another member of this hunting club also reported how the organizer told him about
being under surveillance during his trip back to Taiwan:

(Mr. A43) They [the surveillance agency] followed A45 everywhere, because he
organized a shooting association here. And we all signed up for the club. They said:
“What do you organize this association for? To shoot President Ching-kuo
Chang?”… Huang had six or seven rifles at home. He loved hunting very much….  
(Mrs. A43) Before he went back to Taiwan, the police had arrived in advance and
asked [his families] when he was coming back. And they would follow him
anywhere he went. This is what he told us after he returned [to Vancouver]…
(Mr. A43) It was 1982. February of 1982. (A43, interview, Apr. 23, 2011)

3.2.5.4 Harassment of Families

In addition to the surveillance of suspected Taiwanese Canadians themselves, visiting
and harassment of their family members were also commonly used to obtain information
about their whereabouts and activities. These were also the means used to intimidate the
Taiwanese Canadians and their families. Dr. A04 has been one of the most important
opinion leaders in the community. He talked about how his mother was approached by the
police after he became the spokesperson for most of the protests the Taiwanese Canadians did in Seattle and in Vancouver:

We went to Seattle to protest....

(Interviewer) Did that cause any harassment to your family in Taiwan?

Not really any big problems. But my mother lived in Taiwan then, and the police went to “interview” my mother and asked about me. This is why in early years not many people would want to be elected as the chair of the Taiwanese Canadian Association. (A04, interview, Jan. 08, 2011)

Some police officers were even more aggressive and gave warnings to the families of these Taiwanese Canadians: “Someone came to my parents’ (in Taiwan) and said: ‘Tell your daughter to focus on study over there and don’t get involved in funny business.’… My parents told me about this afterwards (A47, interview, June 28, 2011).

Another interviewee who was on the blacklist possibly because he was a member of a shooting club in Vancouver and hence owned a few rifles reported how the authorities created a fear in his father’s mind to the extent that his father asked his brother to fly all the way to Vancouver just to warn him:

I forgot to mention something. The police came to talk to my father quite often and made him so frightened. They told my father that I was with a gang or something here. My father replied that he would write me a letter and asked me not to do things like that. And they said: “No, other people might see it.” So my father had my
younger brother fly all the way to Vancouver and told me just this one thing: do not go hunting.... That’s after the shooting sport club was formed.... My father then had to go and report to [the police]. (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)

Another rather common experience for Taiwanese Canadians who were actively involved in public affairs in the community was that their families in Taiwan were always informed about their itinerary to Taiwan and were visited by the local police department or secret police even before they arrived. One interviewee mentioned that “before I went back to Taiwan, without even telling my family that I was about to go back, they had made a visit to my family. They knew when I planned to go back” (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011). The police would visit even when the Taiwanese Canadians did not tell their families in Taiwan about their travel plans:

The police always came to my house (in Taiwan) for a visit before I came back every single time. But they never managed to find me directly.... As I said earlier that in the September of 1984, three years after my father died, I went back to my parents’ house. I did not tell anybody in advance. That includes my mother. I never told anybody about my plan to return to Taiwan. Yet one week before I arrived, an uncle of mine who worked for the government called the son of my other uncle whose room was just next to mine…and asked if I had arrived.... After a week after I finally arrived, my mother asked me: “Why other people know you’re coming back and I am the last one to know?”
For most people this sort of harassment would definitely be intimidating in terms of one keeping in line and being cautious not to do anything against the government, which might bring unwanted trouble to one’s family. Still, some others had the courage to fight back. Mr. A06 recalled how he played “spy games” with an agent who sniffed around:

There was this relative of mine. We were not close. His son was a policeman, and he always came to my parents’ and talked to my mother asking if I was back. My mother was a lady of incredible hospitality, but she did not know much about geography. She asked [the policeman] if there was anything he needed to talk to me [about]. The policeman said he had a relative living in the United States and he would like to ask me to do him a favour and bring a pair of shoes to his relative in the States. My mother certainly promised that this would definitely be out of [the] question.... He took advantage of my mom’s lack of geographic common sense. She was an old lady living in the countryside.... He called my mother and my uncle’s wife rather often and snooped around. It lasted for years. ... It was the April of 1991. A few friends of mine and I ran an immigration counselling company then. Normally I would go to Taipei for business and return to Miao-li County (where my parents’ house was) over weekends. They always called precisely when I was not home.... There was one Thursday a man came and wanted to talk to me (and of course they knew I was not there) and he said his name was Chiu.... I decided to lure Chiu out and confront him. So I called my mom that night and called him names with the worst terms I can think of with the guess that if they were tapping me they would hear how I cursed them. Six o’clock in the next morning the phone rang. It was unusual, as no
one would make a phone call anyone else this early in a countryside village. I supposed it must be Chiu so I said: “Are you Mr. Chiu?” He did not answer and then stammered and admitted that he was Chiu. ... I said: “Why do you always come or call when I am not around? What is your purpose anyway?” He replied: “Sorry Mr. A06. That is an order from my superior.” I said: “Mr. Chiu, I am a son and you are a son. Try and stand in my shoes and think about this: what would you respond if your mother is ill and needs rest but someone keeps bothering her?” Chiu said: “Sorry Mr. A06. We will improve our skills.”... Then I said: “you are a Miao-li local, and I am a Miao-li local; you are Taiwanese and I am Taiwanese too. Try and be more considerate for the others.”... They never called back after that.... This proves that the night when I called my mother and called them names they must had put a tap on my phone number. (A06, interview, June 03, 2011, emphasis added)

As Mr. A06 was not under any kind of criminal or civil investigation, it is reasonable to conclude that the surveillance, phone tapping, visits to his family, and anything else used to collect information about him were based on the interviews done by the overseas consular officials and the domestic investigators. It is safe to say that what has happened to his family is collateral damage because Mr. A06’s name was on the blacklist.

3.3 Police State Crossing Borders: Some Evidence of Blacklist

All the actions taken by the Taiwanese authorities discussed in the preceding sections bring us to a question: why did the related agencies investigate some “suspects” with less effort while focusing more on others? Even after Mr. A06 went to Seattle for the visa application interview and met with the government officials when he returned to Taiwan, he
and his family were still under tight surveillance including possibly illegal phone tapping. On what basis did they determine who fell in Class A, B, or C? In addition to direct investigation by trained intelligence agents who exist in all authoritarian countries, some frequently used methods by the Taiwan government on foreign soil include buying information from informers, asking the Taiwanese consular officials to collect information about targeted organizations, and so on.

### 3.3.1 Intelligence Work and the Loss of Social Trust

To make sure the blacklist used for political purposes was complete and accurate, surveillance and monitoring of the activities of overseas Taiwanese became critical. Surveillance of anti-government activists was a constant practice in Taiwan during the 1960s and the 1970s, sometimes in a conspicuous fashion just to lay pressure on those who might engage in any activities against the KMT government. As intelligence agencies did not have any jurisdiction in Canada, however, monitoring Taiwanese Canadians was carried out secretly by international students on the payroll, or “Taiwanese spies” according to some local members of the TCA and affiliated associations. They were sent to major universities in North America including several in Vancouver.

Shortly after the “Chen Wen-cheng Murder” (a Taiwanese American professor murdered upon his travel to Taiwan in 1981) as discussed earlier, a U.S. Congress subcommittee hearing was held to discuss the issue of Taiwan campus spies in the U.S and their influence on American society. According to a news report, it aroused congressional concern:

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19 See note 15.
Said Iowa Republican Jim Leach: “Without question, agents of the Taiwan government have engaged in harassment, intimidation and monitoring of U.S. residents.” He called on the U.S. Government to investigate Chen’s death and to determine whether campus spies are violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act. There is growing evidence that other governments intimidate their nationals in the U.S. Last year a Libyan student in Colorado, critical of the Gaddafi regime, was wounded by an assassin. In Utah two weeks ago, a Libyan student was killed. (Time, August 10, 1981)

Although there was no absolute and undeniable evidence proving the KMT government or the Taiwan Garrison Command was behind Chen’s death, the suspicious death of Chen right after his release from an interrogation by the Taiwan Garrison Command about his involvement in overseas Taiwanese activities did attract the attention of and criticism from Taiwanese in Taiwan and those in overseas communities, especially in North America.

The very basic rule of engagement for blacklisting is secrecy. Whether it is the visa screening process, refusal of entry at arrival in Taiwan, or more actively the monitoring and surveillance of potential “perpetrators,” it must be kept secret. None of the cases we have discussed so far are confirmed directly by the Taiwanese authorities. Yet these experiences have significantly affected the lives and thoughts of the overseas Taiwanese in terms of national identity. Before moving on to the discussion of how this works, we will look at a few examples of how the police state of the KMT government in the 1960s and 1970s extended their web of national security across the border and into the overseas Taiwanese community.
It happened quite often, according to the interviewees, that they were confronted by the overseas consular office with sharp questions regarding the activities they were involved in. And in the case of Mr. A06’s meeting with the government official who seemed to know bits and pieces of the history of Taiwanese Canadian Association in Vancouver, the only reasonable explanation for his knowledge of these organizations and activities was that he had sources of information. Consular offices and informers on campus were two promising candidates. One interviewee remembered that the official asked him about what the Taiwanese Canadians were up to in Vancouver:

They asked me to give them the contact list of the Taiwanese Canadian Association, and I replied: “Sorry I only have one copy, and I need it as I own a contractor business and need the phone numbers to contact people. If you want a copy, why don’t you make an official request to the Association? I am sure they will mail it to you immediately.” (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)

Certainly this interviewee was smart enough to realize what they were trying to do: to get the contact list, and to determine whether he could be recruited on the payroll. The officials asked other questions in a casual manner:

One person with the last name “Ma” played the bad cop, and he’s a mainlander; another one named “Hsiao” played the good cop, and he’s Taiwanese. In every Sunday morning the phone would definitely ring, and it must be Hsiao calling and asking the same question “what the Taiwanese Canadian Association and the
Taiwanese folks there are up to recently?” I always asked my wife to answer the phone. I was terrified to answer the calls. I (thought to myself and) said: “You fools! If you treat me nice and invite me to a feast, I might, just might, help you with it. But you screwed me so hard and now you want me to help you? No way!” I was so angry! (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)

It was not only the consular office in Seattle that would ask about what the Taiwanese Canadians were up to. After the establishment of the TECO (Taipei Economic and Cultural Office) in Vancouver, the officials stationed in Vancouver were also responsible for collecting information. The following testimony proves how they saw the Taiwanese Canadian Association:

Margaret said this. Margaret said that the Taipei Office in Vancouver warned the new students of UBC not to participate in the Taiwanese Canadian Association, as it was a Taiwan independence organization.... [They said this] about less than twenty years ago. (Interviewer Mrs. Chang, group interview, April 23, 2011)

The TECO in Vancouver was set up in 1991 and had obviously classified the TCA as a “pro-independence” organization. It makes perfect sense then that most interviewees who complained that they were on the blacklist were active members of the TCA. A widely accepted consensus amongst Taiwanese Canadians has been that if you chair any local organization which does not maintain a close relationship with the consular office you will definitely be marked down on the blacklist.
The other source of information for creating the blacklist is the informers. It is rarely doubted that the KMT government either sent students to cities with a certain number of Taiwanese immigrants or bought off some students to work for them. This created a social distrust between Taiwanese Canadians.

My guess on why I was not able to return to Taiwan was that in early years there were Taiwanese who took the pay check from the KMT. And those who helped with the affairs of the Association were all targets of their report. We often gathered at one of our people’s houses and did the fund-raising. Maybe if he (the snitch) was also there, he would know who participated in the fund-raising.... We did suspect someone, but there was no proof. (A42, interview, Apr. 22, 2011)

This was the main concern whenever the Taiwanese gathered for their activities—especially events about promoting democracy in Taiwan such as organizing a protest in Seattle—and it was an unspoken code not to bring a camera.

_A40:_ It was November 1966 when the Taiwanese Canadian Association was established. Only 28 people participated.... The atmosphere then prevented anyone from taking photos of any event. [It was because of] the psychological fear and the worries that there might be a snitch in our group. It was a naturally formed consensus up until 1970s.
Participant: There was one time when K. C. Lai organized an event against Chiang Chin-kuo. I brought a camera over to the gathering and someone pulled me aside and told me not to take pictures. (A32, interview, June 01, 2010)

In fact, the consensus about not bringing any recording devices became not just a code in the community but also a way to discern who might be the “spy.” The rumour about the Taiwanese government’s infiltration in the TCA gatherings was known to almost everyone who regularly participated in those gatherings:

Whenever a meeting was held at the Taiwanese Canadian Association there were always some people came and reported.... [Interviewer: to the Canadian government?] No, it was said that the KMT would come and write down a list of participants and report back. That was true. Rumour has it that they were paid [to do so]. But no one really knows who worked for them. (A47, interview, June 28, 2011)

The effect on the community was huge. It became difficult to open one’s heart to newcomers as one would never know if a newcomer had been sent to make friends with you for some reason:

There were not many Taiwanese in early days. And they were scared. There’s once I met a couple in Chinatown who spoke Taiwanese and seemed to be from the United States, I approached them and started talking to them. They just avoided me and walked away immediately.... Everyone is afraid. People were afraid of one
another…afraid of being snitched on or something like that. (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)

### 3.3.2 A Mis-Delivered Mail

Although Dr. A03 chaired the TCA for only two terms (1966-67 and 1970-71), the fact that he helped organize this very association moved his name and the co-founders’ names to the top of the blacklist. On 4 December 1967, a few months after the TCA was established, Dr. A03 received a letter by mail. It was from one of the intelligence agencies set up by the Taiwanese government to monitor overseas Taiwanese. The letter was supposed to be sent to a field agent disguised as a UBC student but it was sent accidentally to Dr. A03 instead. It disclosed the fact that the Taiwanese government did manage to monitor activities that might be threatening the national security of Taiwan. Information and intelligence like that contained in the letter was one of the primary sources for the KMT government to construct the blacklist, in addition to the direct activity reports from field agents in person, as mentioned earlier. The letter translates as follows:

To my respected XXXX,  
December 4th, 1967

It was reported that (1) XXXX organized a Taiwanese Canadian Association at the University of British Columbia by which he instilled anti-government thoughts into the minds of Taiwanese students and denigrated the authority and reputation of the government; (2) XXXX left Taiwan to study abroad at the University of British Columbia in Canada. His anti-government comments have become more aggravated.

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*20 The name of the field agent who was the designated receiver of this letter.*

*21 This person is one of the main founders of the Greater Vancouver Taiwanese Canadian Association.*
These pieces of information have not yet been verified. Please investigate these matters and report back.22

Regards,

XXXX23 (sealed, equivalent to a signature)

(Date and file number stamps in blue ink)

(Mailing address of the office, hand-written)24

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22 This is a newly enrolled Taiwanese student at UBC.
23 The name of the official who had this letter written and gave the instructions.
24 The office was named “Overseas News Service” and was set up by the KMT in 1950 in charge of collecting information about overseas Taiwanese and influencing their opinions towards Taiwan.
Figure 3 The Letter Accidentally Sent to Dr. A03. (© Sam Lin, by permission)
There are several points in this letter worth a closer look:

1. As the “Overseas News Service” was well known for serving the intelligence needs of the Taiwanese government, this letter verifies that there were spy students deployed on campus, the University of British Columbia in this case.

2. Not just the current students abroad, but also any students who left the country (Taiwan) might be put on some sort of watch list for further investigation.

3. The phrasing in the letter that “his anti-government comments have become more aggravated” suggests that the person in question was already being monitored before he left for Canada.

4. The letter starts with “it was reported” and ends with the instruction for further investigation. It seems to suggest that there were multiple sources of information for student activities in Vancouver, that is to say that the office was trying to cross-check the validity and credibility of another field agent(s).

5. The letter was stamped (the red ink part) with the real name of the officer who had been an important figure in the KMT government in charge of intelligence-related affairs. This is different from the common practice of intelligence communications that come with only the last name of the officer or sometimes just a code name. It seems to suggest that monitoring overseas Taiwanese students was neither deemed inappropriate nor unlawful.

One of main concerns in this letter was that Dr. XXX, who was one of the main founders of the TCA, was allegedly engaged in anti-government activities including sabotaging the reputation of the Taiwanese government. Juxtaposing this letter with Dr. XXX’s suspicion that the reason the Taiwanese government would not allow his father to
visit him in Canada was because he was one of the initiators of the organization and acted as the chairperson for one term (succeeding Dr. A03), it is reasonable to argue that there was a blacklist and Dr. XXX was on it.

### 3.3.3 A Call From the Superintendent

Dr. A35, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Victoria, received his MA and PhD degrees from Harvard University (1964-70). After graduating from Harvard, he took a job offer at the University of Victoria in 1970 and stayed there until his retirement in 2001. While living in Boston during the second half of the 1960s, Dr. A35 and some of his fellow Taiwanese students organized the Boston Association of Formosans (an organization equivalent to the TCA in Vancouver). The purpose was rather simple: fellow students from Taiwan needed to take care of each other as international students in a foreign society. The activities held were barely related to politics, yet the intelligence agencies of the Taiwanese government thought otherwise. As mentioned earlier, any organization that carried terms such as “Taiwan,” “Formosa,” or “Taiwanese” would be classified as affiliated or potentially affiliated political groups of the anti-government cliques (be they communist or pro-independence). Therefore Dr. A35 and his friends were always cautious to keep the Boston Association of Formosans free from political involvement. Still, there was always suspicion about several students who would act in a rather unconventional fashion and snoop around for information. They could be snitches.

One of the persons suspected by the students in Boston was Q. Q. Huang, who was a PhD candidate then at the Northeastern University in Boston. The first alert that got Dr. A35’s attention was a suggestion Huang made to Dr. A35. It was 24 April 1970, when
United States Secretary of State William Rogers invited Chiang Ching-kuo, President of Taiwan (1978-88), to visit New York. Right before Chiang entered the Plaza Hotel, Taiwan independence activists Wen-xiong Huang and Zi-cai Zheng approached and fired a shot at Chiang.\textsuperscript{25} The policemen guarding Chiang pushed Huang (who was holding the pistol) aside and saved Chiang’s life. Huang and Zheng were arrested immediately and later indicted for attempted murder and unlawful possession of firearms.

Although it was a radical move and a criminal action to try to kill the son of the authoritarian ruler of Taiwan, the cause behind it was widely sympathized with in the Taiwanese immigrant communities in the United States as well as in Canada. A bail bonds fund-raising campaign was initiated. Being a key member of the Boston Association of Formosans, Dr. A35 helped to raise money for bailing out Huang and Zheng. That was when Dr. A35 started to suspect Q. Q. Huang to be an informer for the Taiwanese government, because Huang came to Harvard and talked to Dr. A35 after the assassination attempt. During the conversation, Huang suggested that Dr. A35 should render to the authorities the list of donors who chipped in for the bail bonds. It was a rather unusual suggestion, as it was a common understanding that whoever supported those two “perpetrators” would definitely end up on the blacklist. But suspicion was not enough to determine if Huang was a snitch—not until an unexpected event happened which later became one of the major reasons Dr. A35’s name was put down on the blacklist:

\footnote{\textsuperscript{25} Huang was a PhD student in the Sociology Department at Cornell University at the time. Zheng was awarded an MA degree in Urban Studies at the Carnegie-Mellon University and worked as an architect in New York City before the assassination attempt.}
I collected the money (for the bail bonds) since no one was willing to do that. Huang called me one day and said “Hey, A35, you should make public the list of donors and the amounts they donated respectively. Otherwise people might say that you took the money for yourself.” His purpose was to know who supported the assassins so he could report to his superiors.... And I thought to myself that how should I play a trick on him. Phone calls might be a good idea.

Dr. A35 decided to call Huang to test his theory. He recalled their conversation:

A35: “Q. Q. Huang, I will transfer you to another post.”
Huang: “Who are you?”
A35: “I am a special agent. I’m reviewing cases in your city, and I was told that your identity has been exposed. So I have to transfer you away.”
Huang: “Are you Mr. Oh-Yang?”
A35: “Bull shit! A kid like Oh-Yang has no power to give such an important personnel assignment order.”
Huang: “Are you saying I should not have attended the activities of the Taiwanese?
A35: Bull shit! What ‘Taiwanese’? You guys are ‘Ben Sheng Ren’! How do you collect information if you didn’t attend their activities? Just like the saying goes:

26 With the accent of mainlander officials, which was different from that of a Taiwanese when speaking Mandarin.
27 Note by Dr. A35: Mr. Oh-Yang was the Consul General of New York back then, and all intelligence went to him. And he reported to the Taiwanese embassy in Washington D.C.
28 As “Taiwanese” may semantically suggest a independent Taiwan in contrast to China, most officials back then (those who followed the defeated KMT government to Taiwan during 1945 and 1949) talked about indigenous people as “Ben Sheng Ren” which literally means people who live in the province. It suggests that Taiwan is just another province of China and the KMT government is still the sovereign government of the entirety of China including Taiwan. A contrasting term to “Ben Sheng Ren” is “Wai Sheng Ren” which means people from other provinces. The term is used to refer to the mainlanders who came to Taiwan after the Chinese Civil war. Almost all high ranked officials back in the 1960s and 1970s were “Wai Sheng Ren”—those from the Chinese
‘How can you snatch a baby tiger if you don’t barge into a tiger’s den?’ [A Chinese proverb similar to “No Pain, No Gain” in meaning].”

Huang: “What do you want me to do then? If I stop attending their activities, I will not get information; if I keep attending, I would expose my identity and the secrets of our organization as you said. What should I do?”

A35: “That’s why. That’s why I’m transferring you to Texas for training.”

Huang (panicking): “I’m sorry! Please forgive me! I can’t leave now. I haven’t finished my PhD program yet. I have to stay in Boston until next year. I can’t collect data [for my dissertation] in other places. I really can’t leave.”

A35 (in lecturing tone): “Huang, you are a selfish guy! The longer you stay the more secrets you would leak to them. You just go and get good training. Once you’re done, if you do it well, I will transfer you to a good station. I can even let you choose a city to be assigned to.”

Dr. A35 commented,

That was about the conversation between Huang and me that day. I can’t say my recollection is absolutely accurate. But that was the main things we talked about over the phone.... The words spread fast [in the Taiwanese community in Boston] and later Huang probably knew I was the one messing with him. (A35, interview, Aug. 25, 2010)
Both the letter accidentally mailed to Dr. A03 and the faux field director’s phone call made by Dr. A35 to the suspected informer show that the KMT government deployed a net of intelligence over major universities and Taiwanese immigrant communities in North America. The effects of the blacklist (and the related white terror the home country could do to one’s family left behind in Taiwan) cut both ways. For some people, the very knowledge of the possibility of a snitch in every social occasion made people reluctant to express their true feelings and opinions, even between fellow Taiwanese friends. This is termed “the Garrison Command in your mind” by some analysts of Taiwanese politics. Ironically, the fear could be transformed into hatred and sometimes into paranoid suspicion against all “mainlanders” in Taiwan or in overseas immigrant communities. It was frequently reported that Taiwanese Canadians felt more comfortable talking to and socializing with immigrants from Japan, Hong Kong, or even local Canadians compared to the mainlanders from Taiwan or the Chinese immigrants from China after the open door policy in the early 1980s.

3.4 The “Taiwan” Consciousness Unbound

The effects of white terror and the blacklist on Taiwanese immigrants overseas have been rather significant. Even though Taiwan has gone through democratization since the mid-1980s, there is still an aftermath of the authoritarian rule of the 1960s and the 1970s. For the early immigrants to Canada before democratization, the memory of an unjust society in the sending country was carried along to the host society. Once the fear was sensed through rumours, experiences such as rejected entrance to Taiwan, and sometimes the shocking realization that what one had done in Canada was known to the authorities in Taiwan, the shadow of the authoritarian state was felt to the extent that it discouraged people
from participating in the public affairs of the community, even those irrelevant to Taiwan. Meanwhile, for some people it was exactly the fear and the accompanying shame and grievance that pushed them over the edge and radicalized their thinking on the future of Taiwan. In this sense, most early Taiwanese immigrants should be regarded as victims of political oppression, as they were still haunted by the past and the government that still managed to secretly monitor their lives in free societies such as Canada and the United States.

Before moving on to discussion of how Taiwanese Canadians reacted to the memory of terror back home and the existing surveillance in the host society, we may summarize several of the most commonly observed developments of solidarity in Taiwanese immigrant communities, using the case of Vancouver.

3.4.1 The Mainlanders (“Wai Sheng Ren”)

Most mainlanders who were able to immigrate to North America were in either the army or government departments, or had connections to people in the KMT or the government. This is because overseas immigration in Taiwan before the 1980s was highly controlled due to the intense confrontation between Taiwan and China. All resources were built up guarding against potential military invasion from China. For this reason and other considerations to be discussed in greater detail later on, most mainlanders kept a low profile once they moved to Canada and settled down for good. Some who were in trades or those with closer connections to the overseas KMT agencies (such as Veterans Service offices overseas) were mobilized to participate in activities or events showing support for the KMT government in Taiwan. However, some descendants of mainlanders preferred to participate in the activities of the Taiwanese Canadian community in Vancouver, despite the fact that
some Taiwanese still held grudges against the mainlanders and could not trust the latter wholeheartedly.

3.4.2 The Taiwanese (“Ben Sheng Ren”)

The most common reason for early Taiwanese immigrants to leave Taiwan was to study in a Canadian or American higher educational institution. This explains the high percentage of postgraduate degree holders in the Taiwanese Canadian community. One senior Taiwanese Canadian recalled that when they started organizing the Taiwanese Canadian Association back in the late 1960s, over eighty percent of the participants were either doctoral students or held a PhD degree received from a Canadian or American university. This intelligence factor played an important role in the split of the Taiwanese Canadian community when identity politics was concerned.

As mentioned earlier, the effects of white terror and the blacklist were invisible yet real in consequence for Taiwanese immigrants from the 1960s to the early 1980s. Worries for the safety and freedom of the family left behind forced a large number of Taiwanese Canadians out of activities in the public realm. Keeping to oneself and staying away from politics was the wisest way of life for the majority of those who left Taiwan in the harshest period of the extended Chinese Civil War between the KMT (in Taiwan) and the communists, who had taken control of Mainland China. The experience of fear also gave most Taiwanese Canadians a keen sense of politics with which they set up a firewall between themselves and the “activists.” It is easily observed and well documented in Vancouver and Victoria that there have been co-existing Taiwanese organizations and that some are more into political causes and issues while the others are reluctant to be part of, let alone to host any event or
campaign related to Taiwanese politics. This is not to say that whoever attended the activities of the “mild” and “non-political” organizations would never cross the line and participate in organizations on the other side. Some people belonged to organizations from both sides. It was the pressure and concerns people felt to different extents that kept some of them from directly addressing political issues such as reforming the authoritarian government of Taiwan or—even more radical—pursuing the establishment of an independent republic of Taiwan. In the 1960s and 1970s, and at the dawn of democratization in the first half of the 1980s, thoughts and actions of this nature were deemed treason by the government and were red flags for the “snitches” deployed in Vancouver as well as in most North American cities where there was a Taiwanese community.

Some, however small in number, were more willing to speak out and to initiate political organizations or activities. As seen in many people’s recollections, the radicalization of political attitude and opinions about the ruling KMT government in Taiwan may to some extent be in response to political oppression and an ethnic boundary re-drawing experience in an overseas location. The KMT government’s far-reaching authoritarian control over mind and action, even on foreign soil, on top of the suffocating social atmosphere and fear these people had already felt before moving to Canada, created the possibility of a reflexive thinking about one’s own identity beyond the censored content taught in schools. In this sense, the consciousness of being a “Taiwanese” national instead of a “Chinese” national from Taiwan began to flourish even more because of the experiences gained through fighting the blacklist, which denied them the free will to even talk about the term “Taiwanese.”
In the following chapters, we will enter into more detail regarding how dealing with the threat of blacklisting and interacting with other ethnic groups in the host society contributed to the shaping of the other constituent part of the idea of Taiwanese Canadians—being a “Canadian.”
4 Organization and Community Life of Taiwanese Immigrants

The reconfiguration of a previously unquestioned (or unquestionable) national identity occurs in various stages. It is conditioned by the political and societal context from which the need to replace an official narrative with a new one emerges. In the case of Taiwan’s changing self-identity, it is important to note its transnational context. In this chapter, we will start with the efforts made by Taiwanese immigrants towards surviving in the host society and retaining their connection with and care for Taiwan. The significance of their endeavours, especially in the social and political sense, will be summarized at the end of this chapter. It is argued that the image of Taiwan’s “community” changes from a “stateless nation” to a rather transformed imagination of a “pseudo-nation state” as shown in the narratives and manifestos of the overseas Taiwanese. This transformation of self-image became possible through the interaction of four players with political activists in Taiwan: the KMT government in Taiwan, the Canadian government, the United States government, and the Taiwanese Canadians. In this sense, the immigrant community of the Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver shows a relatively strong devotion to political cause and action. Certainly any immigrant community may encounter a variety of issues and challenges in the host society. In this chapter, we will take the political and cultural themes as the defining element of the Taiwanese community (particularly for the early immigrants) and focus on how these themes shape the outlook of the community.
4.1 TCA as the Centre of the Mobilization Nexus

Immigrant communities have various functions helping newcomers adjust to a new environment quicker and smoother, as much as serving the host society economically (Portes & Manning, 1986; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). Although a tighter cohesion in an immigrant community can be suffocating in terms of overemphasizing the loyalty of its members to their “roots” and expectations (Waldinger, 1995), for the newly landed immigrant, organizations of immigrant communities play an important role in making the transition and settling easier.

The important role of community organizations applies in the Taiwanese Canadian community in the Greater Vancouver Area as well. More than a dozen community-based organizations were established in all sorts of forms and with different levels of cohesion. Some organizations were replaced in function by new ones and later ceased to function themselves, while others were established by people who were not satisfied with the missions and nature of the existing groups. Examples of these forms of group dynamics can easily be found in the Taiwanese Canadian community in Vancouver. Two organizations are of most importance and are most representative of the Taiwanese Canadian community: the Greater Vancouver Taiwanese Canadian Association or TCA, established in 1966, and the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society or TCCS, established in 1991. We will discuss the TCCS in more detail and its relation to the TCA in a later section. In the following discussion we will focus on the TCA and the many roles it has played since the mid-1960s.
4.1.1 An Elite Mobilizing Structure

During one of the longest periods of martial law in modern history (1949-1987), when the in- and out-flow of Taiwan’s population was under intense control, those Taiwanese civilians who were able to travel abroad were either students accepted by foreign educational institutions or those connected to the government (veterans or retired officials and their relatives, for example). The so-called “loyalty examination” to the government based on police reports and government records was made part of the standardized operation procedure. This kind of border control for “outbound” flow of people was accompanied by “inbound” measures for the purpose of national security, such as visa screening and overseas surveillance. The sole intent was to neutralize anti-government movements and hence to maintain the stability of the society and the legitimacy of the government. Even students granted entrance to, say, a North American university could be denied the right to leave Taiwan if there had been reports of their involvement in anti-government activities. For those who got out and stayed in the free world, the sharp contrast between the military rule over Taiwan and a democratic way of life made becoming an immigrant after graduation a highly tempting option. This was the background of the early Taiwanese immigrants in Vancouver as well as those in other North American cities. And it is precisely because of the limited possibilities for Taiwanese people to travel abroad that there has been a relatively high percentage of people with postgraduate education in the Taiwanese Canadian community (see Appendix 1) compared to other immigrant groups in Canada, which directly affects how the Taiwanese Canadian community was organized and mobilized on various occasions. Before giving examples of the activities organized by the TCA, which was the
centrepiece of the elite mobilizing structure to be discussed here, we will describe the structure in a few diagrams.

In the earliest stage of Taiwanese immigration from the 1960s to the mid-1980s, which will be the focus of this chapter, the pattern of societal organization and mobilization (for political and non-political issues) was elite-centred. In the diagram in Figure 4, each circle represents one person while double circles indicate persons with families (the outer circle being the family). Squares in this and the following diagrams represent organizations; in this diagram the organization is the TCA.

The TCA was the earliest immigrant organization in the Taiwanese community. Newly graduated students who found jobs in academia or companies relevant to their professional training initiated it. Dr. A04, one of the founders of TCA who was a practising physician of Obstetrics & Gynecology at that time, described how it began:

It may be hard to believe now, but it was a serious matter to form an organization like the Taiwanese Canadian Association. It was terrifying. It was 1966, one year after I
arrived in Vancouver in 1965. Professor Sung moved to Vancouver from McGill University. And we had a meeting in my house in the name of a welcome party for him. No one dared to name it a ‘tong xiang hui’ [literally ‘the fellow townspeople society’] as it would be treason. It would be deemed as a rebellious group. Only groups like ‘the clansmen society of Shan Dong Province’ were allowed. We told everyone that Professor Sung was a senior professor so we would like to welcome his arrival. We gathered about 6 UBC students over at my house. At the end of the party I said: ‘we ought to organize a ‘tong xiang hui.’ This is how it got started…. The branch of Montreal had already been established three years earlier. When Professor Sung decided to move to Vancouver, his main mission was to ‘appoint’ me as the deputy chairman of the Taiwanese Canadian Association (national) in charge of west coast Canada and the preparation for the branches in the prairies provinces. (A04, interview, Aug. 13, 2010)

As the early Taiwanese immigrants were still worried about being under surveillance by the overseas intelligence network set up by the KMT government of Taiwan, which would not directly jeopardize their own security yet would have implicated their family in Taiwan, the organizing of any group was a highly sensitive matter.

We use A, B, and C in the diagram to show how these immigrants were closely connected and were able to start organizations such as TCA from scratch. Most of the other immigrants, such as D, E, F, and G, were also professionals in their respective areas. They may not have been interested in or willing to participate in community-based organizations as the risk was high, due to the overseas monitoring and surveillance networks discussed in
Chapter Three. The distance between D and E and the core members of the TCA indicates that some non-core members could be as highly active as the core members while other members might only passively participate in the activities organized by the TCA. At least four types of participants in TCA can be identified:

1. Elite core-members: mostly scholars and professionals.
2. Families of the core members.
3. Active participants: may or may not be professionals.
4. Non-active members of TCA: they may have supported the cause of TCA in general but were reluctant to be mobilized for action.

As for the division of labour in action, the core members were the brain of the organization. They managed to reflexively “write back” the official narratives of the KMT government regarding history, identity, political legitimacy, and so on. This laid the theoretical and ethical grounds for actions aimed at democratizing Taiwan. The families of the core members and active participants offered support when an action was called for. The active participants may not have been as knowledgeable as the core-members, but their enthusiastic participation often helped the organization to “spread the word” and recruit supporters for the TCA.
During the 1980s and 1990s, due to political and social changes in Taiwan and in the international society as well, the pattern of elite mobilizing structure was no longer the dominant model in the group dynamics of the Taiwanese Canadian community. Some family members of the core elites may have stayed aloof from their parents’ cause and actions because the second generation Taiwanese Canadians were born and raised in Canada. What happened in Taiwan did not necessarily concern them. There were also people leaving the TCA who joined later organizations focused on non-political issues or organizations that took the opposite stance to the TCA. This is shown in E in Figure 5. F represents another direction of “conversion” from a different position to identifying themselves more with the cause of the TCA. During this process, new organizations were established for varied purposes serving the Taiwanese Canadians.
Figure 6 shows that after the 1990s, several key changes occurred in the Taiwanese community:

(1) It is observed that in the TCA the cooperation between (a) core elites, (b) active participants, and (3) non-devoted participants was still the common pattern of action.

(2) Other groups in the community sustained and offered some functions that the TCA used to cover. For example, the TCCS became the primary registered organization that communicated with the Canadian government and the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office in Vancouver (TECO), which was newly set up in 1991. We will discuss the benefits and downsides of this ‘division of labour’ in the community section of this chapter.

(3) After the mid-1980s, when Taiwan gradually became successful economically and Canada took a more open immigration policy approach, new immigrants from all over the world flooded into Canada. Some newcomers would have been attracted to the TCA’s cause and history of caring for Taiwan while the others may simply have wanted to relocate to North America for their children’s education or for their
own retirement. For the latter, avoiding the TCA, in which members were mostly concerned about the politics in Taiwan or related issues, was a common choice. They might just mind their own business as J in Figure 6 did. Or they might form their own organizations (like H and I) or join existing organizations without much political influence, such as TCCS.

(4) There was always a portion of Taiwanese immigrants like G in the diagram that kept away from participating in any public affairs, be they Taiwan-related or Canada-related.

Although the roles the TCA played in the Taiwanese Canadian community were lessened and its significance was reduced to some extent at the second and the third stages, the elite structure of the TCA remained and its influence in the community stayed strong. This was due to its long-term devotion to connecting Taiwanese immigrants in Vancouver and its leading role in making sense out of events in Taiwan as well as events in Canada that affected immigrants, and devising and leading actions accordingly.

4.1.2 Everyday Life Support

Except for the momentum the TCA had to offer leading the charge against the authoritarian KMT government in Taiwan, what made them well respected in the community was more than the involvement in political issues. After all, surviving in a foreign land for most people, especially the new immigrants, was more of a top priority than protesting against the government of one’s sending country several thousand miles away from the new home in Canada. One of the earliest members of TCA remembered:
I remember that (I came here in 1974) in early days there was no other community organizations, and we were very close. We were not just of the same origin, nor just friends, we were like a family. The destiny and the sentiment for the homeland were in common. On top of the time spent to make a living, one most important thing was to get together for comfort with a common wish that our homeland would become better. (A47, interview, June 28, 2011)

As the interviewee said, it was not just the familiarity that brought them together; the common sentiment and the wish to help out their sending country also made them feel closer, “like a family.” Yet TCA did not simply function as a place for psychological comfort. It changed over time. One of the active members sketched the stages of change:

At the beginning the Taiwanese Canadian Association is a social gathering. Then it started gradually to serve the community and to do some things for the people. And we interacted with the members of city councils…. (A04, interview, Jan. 08, 2011)

As some studies on the Palestinian intifada (Barghouthi & Giacaman, 1990; Hilterman, 1993) have pointed out, an important factor for the intifada to be sustainable was the “infrastructure” behind the scenes. The systems of social support in health, education, food, and other basic services formed an infrastructure supporting the confrontation in the streets. In Vancouver, the TCA played such a role in providing economic, social, and emotional support the newcomers desperately needed. This was made possible particularly because it was led by a group of professionals—physicians, engineers, and political scientists.
The *Vancouver Tong Xun (Vancouver Newsletter)* is an official newsletter issued by the TCA for its members since 1977. *Vancouver Tong Xun* comprised three main parts: local and Canadian news; Taiwan related issues; and services and miscellaneous news. We will take a look at a few issues as examples of the multiple services the newsletter provided to the community.
1. Contents

2. Notice:
   - Meeting dates and locations announcement.
   - Sports clubs and “sports day” call for participation
   - News from other TCA chapters in Canada

3. Celebration (for newborns, weddings, etc.)

4. Services:
   - Churches preached in Taiwanese
   - Call for lottery purchase pool

5. Articles
   - Introduction to life insurance
   - A few things about cooking turkey

6. Editorial

Figure 7 Vancouver Tong Xun (Vancouver Newsletter) Issue No. 2 (May, 1977) (© Ren-Hung Wu)
## Contents

1. Words from the chairperson
2. Fees and Donation to the Association
3. Book donation needed
4. 1978 annual Sports Day call for participation
5. Women’s forum to be held in June
6. Notice from the Taiwanese Canadian Association (national)
7. Excerpts from the national TCA newsletter
8. Summary of Taiwan news
9. Announcing the organization of Women’s Association
10. Updates of our fellow Taiwanese in Vancouver
11. Notice for the choir gathering
12. Softball and soccer practice

Figure 8 *Vancouver Tong Xun (Vancouver Newsletter)* Issue No. 7 (May, 1978). See Appendix 5 for a scan of this cover page (© Ren-Hung Wu)
Making announcements of the latest community news, including regarding members having newborns and offering help, especially for newly landed Taiwanese immigrants, became an important function of the Vancouver Tong Xun:
Welcome Baby tong xian (fellow Taiwanese)

We would like to introduce the newly born tong xian, and let’s send our best wishes!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Parents Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XXXXX Lee</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXXXXX Hsiao</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXXXXX Chang</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXXX Chen</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXXX Chen</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. XXX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Service

A letter from the Taiwanese Christian Church to our tong xian

Dear fellow townspeople,

- Do you feel lost because you are away from home?
- Would you like to know about the Christian Gospel in Taiwanese language?
- Do you feel lonely and depressed and want to “chat” with tong xian in Taiwanese? Do you want to make friends, exchange information, help with each other, and to resolve all sorts of problems?

----------> Please join us for the Taiwanese Friday worship.

The organizing of this church has been discussed in two meetings. The first meeting was held at the home of chairperson Lin; and the second at Dr. A04’s home. All tong xian’s agreed that there is a need for the establishment of a Taiwanese-speaking church. The first gathering will be held on Friday, June 3rd. Welcome to join us.

Figure 10 Vancouver Tong Xun (Vancouver Newsletter). Issue No. 2 (May, 1983) (© Ren-Hung Wu)
On the next page of the same issue, an interesting advertisement calling for participants to start a lottery pool shows how TCA was the centre of community activities, not only in making people feel “at home” and connected (as in the announcement of who recently had a newborn) but also for building a mutual-aid platform for community members. According to Mr. A40, a former chairman of the TCA, the “lotto pool” was a big thing in late 1970s as most immigrants were not well off. Playing the lottery as a team not only gave them hope but also created something that brought people closer together.

Figure 11 Vancouver Tong Xun (Vancouver Newsletter). Issue No. 2 (May, 1983), p. 6 (© Taiwanese Canadian Association, by permission)

It is fair to say that although the Taiwanese government (and some Taiwanese Canadians) saw overseas Taiwanese organizations, particularly the TCA, as over-politicized
and hostile to the Taiwanese government, the TCA also offered community members various forms of service from income tax consultation, sports, and travel tips, to reporting local and Taiwan news. The multiple functions of the TCA (especially between the 1960s and the 1980s before other organizations such as the TCCS were formed) served to offer a social infrastructure for new immigrants on top of the TCA’s mobilizing capability whenever needed.

4.1.3 TCA and Taiwan Politics Internationalized

Normally the TCA in Vancouver was very cautious in the role it played in the Taiwanese Canadian community. It was the consensus between the core members to make the TCA a centre of the community without feeding too much “heavy” political news through its official publication Vancouver Newsletter and forcing its members to take a stand on the political and social issues that happened in Taiwan. After all, TCA was meant to be a society for Taiwanese “Canadians,” not for Taiwanese that temporarily resided in Canada. Judging from the contents of the Vancouver Newsletter, related publications\(^29\), and the events it called for community members to take part in, the TCA did insist on maintaining non-partisan and avoid overemphasizing politics—Taiwan politics as well as Canadian politics relevant to Taiwanese immigrants. Even at some critical historical moments in the democratization of Taiwan, the news reports in the Vancouver Newsletter would rarely cross the line and become political propaganda for the anti-government groups or parties in the community. That being said, the TCA and its core members did two things to help promoting the

\(^{29}\) See Appendix 7 for a list of main publications in the Taiwanese Canadian community from the 1970s to the 2000s. These publications were collected and preserved by the Society of Taiwanese Canadian History in B.C.—a community-based non-profit organization devoted to the preservation of the history of Taiwanese Canadians in the province of British Columbia.
democratization of Taiwan from this side of the Pacific Ocean: (1) organizing rallies and protests to make a stir in the host society; and (2) explaining and interpreting events in Taiwan to present alternative narratives for those who did not have the analytic capability to make sense of those events and their effects.

Table 5 shows a contrast between several important social or political events that happened in Taiwan from the early 1970s to the mid-2000s on the left and the responses made by TCA in Vancouver on the right.
Table 5 Events in Taiwan and Corresponding Actions in Vancouver and Seattle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Important Events in Taiwan</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Actions in Vancouver or Seattle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) The legitimacy issue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Canada recognized the communist government and established diplomatic relations with China</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Taiwan was excluded from the U.N. and the seat was taken by China</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>The Zhongli Incident in which cheating in local elections triggered violent popular protest</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Detailed news quotes in the TCA <em>Vancouver Newsletter</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>The U.S. established diplomatic relations with communist China and terminated them with Taiwan’s KMT government</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Detailed news quotes of the progress of negotiation (from Taiwan, Canadian and U.S. press) in the TCA <em>Vancouver Newsletter</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>The Kaohsiung Incident in which a rally for democracy and human rights escalated to massive conflict between the authorities and the people</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Detailed news quotes in the TCA <em>Vancouver Newsletter</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) The rise of socio-political movements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>The Lin Family massacre: major human rights activist Yi-hsiung Lin’s family was murdered</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Protest with three caskets at the Taiwanese Consulate in Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>The Death of Dr. Wen-chen Chen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>The first oppositional party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) formed</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Anti-KMT politician Hsin-liang Hsu’s visit and fund-raising dinner in Vancouver (approx. 170 attendees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Martial law lifted (after 38 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Important Events in Taiwan</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Actions in Vancouver or Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>The May 20\textsuperscript{th} Movement: one of the earliest large-scale, well-organized peasants’ movements</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>TCCS in Vancouver incorporated. The Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Death of president Chiang Ching-kuo. The first Taiwanese born vice president succeeded to the presidency</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Qiandao Island Incident in which 24 Taiwanese tourists were robbed and brutally murdered in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Qiandao Island Incident in which 24 Taiwanese tourists were robbed and brutally murdered in China</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>The Missile Crisis over the Taiwan Strait: China fired missiles in 1995 and 1996 to warn Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1996</td>
<td>The Missile Crisis over the Taiwan Strait: China fired missiles in 1995 and 1996 to warn Taiwan</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Public statement denouncing China’s military threat to Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>First non-KMT president Shui-bian Chen (DPP) elected</td>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>The SARS Outbreak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>The SARS Outbreak</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Protest at the Chinese Consulate in Vancouver (350 people) denouncing China’s cover-up of the outbreak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Shui-bian Chen re-elected</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Anti-president rally requesting president Chen to resign because of corruption under investigation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The different stages in Table 5 indicate phases that contributed to chances for the overseas Taiwanese to re-think Taiwanese identity.

4.1.3.1 1960-1979: The “Legitimacy” Phase

The 1950s to the early 1980s was the period when white terror and police state measures reached their peak. Until the end of 1978 when the United States finally decided to stop recognizing the KMT government in Taiwan as the legitimate government of China and to establish diplomatic relations with the Communist government in Beijing, the most urgent issue for the KMT government in Taiwan had been to build its legitimacy and to find an opportunity to militarily crack down on the communist force occupying the majority territory of Taiwan. The fierce measures taken against the Taiwanese people made this mission rather difficult to achieve. For those who studied abroad and stayed in North America afterwards this was even more the case as most of them were directly or indirectly under oppression to some extent. For the early Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver who came between the 1960s and the early 1980s, one thing was clear: the KMT government was an exogenous government that did not represent the Taiwanese people. At this stage, however, it is doubtful that these people had developed a full-blown conception of an “imagined community” taking Taiwan as its subjectivity. In the writings and comments in the TCA Vancouver Newsletter commenting on events in Taiwan in this period, the target was always the KMT government and its authoritarian rule over Taiwan. The establishment of a diplomatic relationship between Washington and Beijing was a significant event that cut off the alleged political legitimacy of the KMT government of China and hence allowed a new imagination to emerge.
4.1.3.2  1979-1988: The “Movement” Phase

From 1979 to 1988 the KMT government in Taiwan had to compete with two rivals: Communist China and those Taiwanese people who had started to step up and fight for human rights and political rights. It is said that the KMT government started to democratize and “indigenize” into the societal structure of Taiwan by allowing more Taiwanese people into the government and by allowing people to elect their own officials and legislators. This is also the phase when indigenously formed political parties were to challenge the oligarchic rule of the KMT government in possession of political, economic, and social resources. The overseas Taiwanese communities played a key role in this period by financially supporting political leaders who led the charge against the KMT government and by helping these people to be seen in international society (through press conferences or public hearings held in various North American cities, including Washington) and thus to make sure their security was ensured after they returned to Taiwan. Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver formed a foundation named the “Taiwan Foundation” in support of political refugees or politicians from Taiwan working towards making the indigenous political force grow and hopefully replacing the KMT government with a democratic one. Although the idea of “self-determination” had been part of the previous stage, it might be argued that this decade of social and political movements was the time when political rights and civil rights were deemed born rights of the people. The concept of Taiwan as a unit of nation-state imagination emerged in this phase.
4.1.3.3 1988-2005: The “Taiwan/China” Phase

Between 1988, when the Taiwanese vice-president Lee Teng-hui (KMT) succeeded to the presidency on the death of President Chiang Ching-kuo, and the middle of the second term (2004-2008) of the succeeding president Shui-bian Chen, another player stepped in and altered the dynamics between the government and the people yearning for more rights. The rising visibility and the ever-strengthening influence of indigenous Taiwanese politicians, together with the open door policy of China and its increasing interest in solving the “Taiwan problem,” made the political agendas more complicated and led to a duel between a potentially burgeoning Taiwanese nation-state (not unanimously agreed upon in the civil society) and China. The idea of the KMT being the legitimate “Chinese” government was weakened to a historical low point that forced the KMT to reform to adjust to the new social and political atmosphere.

The role that the TCA played vigorously during this period was to attack the narrative proposed by the Chinese government regarding Taiwan’s history and identity in the form of demonstrations at the Chinese Consulate in Vancouver over issues concerning Taiwan or cross-strait relations. This can be seen in the rallies organized by TCA in 1994 and 2002 respectively against China’s violation of internationally accepted human rights standards; or in the 1995 demonstration directly denouncing China’s military exercises between 1995 and 1996, which were intended to intimidate Taiwanese people from electing a candidate who was allegedly pro-Taiwan independence. These protests were important also because they were meant to appeal to mainstream Canadian society for an understanding of Taiwan’s difficult situation in the international society. The “voice” strategy (Hirschman, 1970) was not new for Taiwanese Canadians, but the primary “big bad wolf” of the KMT authoritarian
government had been replaced by the Chinese government. This was the phase when Taiwan and China became a competing pair in which “Taiwan” became a “brand” of a nation (McCrone, 1998), not a forbidden and dangerous term (Manthorpe, 2005) as in the first and second phases.

### 4.1.3.4 2006-Present: The “Pendulum” Phase

As seemingly convincing pieces of evidence of corruption started to turn up during the investigations over Taiwanese president Shui-bian Chen and his family’s legal cases, the political landscape in Taiwan became rather complicated. The KMT government took back the presidency in 2008 while the indigenous political force was severely discredited. This is an on-going stage in Taiwan’s history. The Taiwanese Canadian community also suffered from disappointment and a sense of betrayal by the once highly supported Taiwanese politicians. It may be too early to predict what direction Taiwanese Canadians are headed in but one thing is for sure: their passion for the future of Taiwan would not fade away easily after all these years of fighting for it.

### 4.1.4 TCA’s Affiliated Organizations and Their Activities

Although TCA and its leaders tried to avoid being overly politicized, the status of Taiwanese under the KMT government in the 1960s and 1970s made it hard to avoid getting involved in the affairs of Taiwan. For some people, especially those with memories of white terror or even direct violence to their family, getting involved in TCA political events cast fear in their minds. For this reason there were several organizations established to take the charge on political issues while leaving TCA to play a more neutral and bonding role in the
community. Due to the elite leadership pattern and the overlapping of membership in TCA and its affiliated groups, however, the line has never been clear-cut. This planted the seed for future dispute and the establishment of TCCS in 1991, to be discussed in the next section. Before 1991, TCA and the rather radical wing played by the affiliated organizations contributed significantly to making Taiwan’s problems public in the international world and forwarding Taiwan’s democratization. We will now look at some testimonies about what was done in the 1970s and 1980s.

4.1.4.1 Response to Incidents in Taiwan

On February 28th, 1980, political dissenter Yi-hsiung Lin’s house was broke into and three of his family were murdered brutally, including his twin daughters aged seven. This was eight days after the Taiwan Garrison Command, the most powerful intelligence agency in Taiwan at that time, had indicted Lin for treason. This seemingly criminal case immediately triggered overwhelming criticism of and doubts about the KMT government, which was deemed responsible for this cruel murder, because the Lin family was under twenty-four hour tight surveillance by the government, with reportedly at least six to seven intelligence agents “guarding” all possible entrances to the Lin residence. It is widely believed, even to this day, that this was an “exemplary” case to intimidate the opposition activists who dared to promote democratization in Taiwan. It remains a cold case and the incident has become one of the most traumatic tragedies for the Lin family and Taiwanese society.

The response of Taiwanese Canadians to this incident, with joint action by the Taiwanese Americans occurring in Seattle and adjacent areas, was immediate. The TCA
organized a protest at the Consular office in Seattle because it represented the Taiwanese government or, to be exact, the KMT government. It was deemed the main intelligence post under control of the KMT government on the west coast of North America for monitoring the Taiwanese overseas. One couple that moved to Canada reported what they did in Seattle:

A24: I came here in the December of 1979. Not long after I arrived I was informed that they were going for a protest. They said they were going to Seattle. There was an office of the Taiwanese government then…. We all put on a shopping bag when we went for a protest except Dr. A04. He was the spokesperson of us….  
A25: We brought three caskets to the protest. It was strange that we were so saddened with masks on; and the counter-protesters on the other side (of the street) mobilized by the KMT seemed joyful and they were holding coke in their hands. 

(A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011)

Although the protests and several others like this in the following years in Seattle and Vancouver did not directly jeopardize the legitimacy of the KMT government in Taiwan, actions like this did create pressure on the Taiwanese government. Issues such as these countered the propaganda of the KMT, which claimed Taiwan as the “Free China” in contrast to the “Tyranny of the Communists,” and secured the attention of the U.S. and Canada. The Taiwanese Canadians knew it well:

After all it has to be done by Taiwanese themselves. What overseas Taiwanese can do was to speak out for those in Taiwan who were not allow expressing their opinions.
This is because the KMT was a fraud gentleman pretending that it was a democratic
government to the outside world. This is why whenever foreign countries showed
their concern for the affairs in Taiwan, the KMT would budge and tolerate to a certain
degree. This was the condition under which that overseas Taiwanese could make a
contribution when speaking out (for the people in Taiwan)…. As Taiwan started
democratization in the 1970s, the role that overseas Taiwanese played became less
significant. (A35, interview, Aug. 25, 2010)

“Making it public” was the most effective strategy the overseas Taiwanese could
think of at that time. This was made possible due to the freedom they had never enjoyed
before they moved to North America. In this sense their actions were extremely important to
breaking the monopoly of discourse and control over the media regarding what really
happened in Taiwan in the 1970s and 1980s:

After 1970 when Canada ceased the diplomatic relations with Taiwan, it was the early
immigrants who worked hard to maintain the Taiwanese consciousness…. It was
after the Ming-hui Wu and Ching-tse Chang case that our community realized the
importance of the media. I remember that after that whenever there were issue
concerning Taiwan or the KMT we would appeal to the media…. From 1970 to 1991
there was no contact between Taiwan and the Canadian government. The
oppositional and democratic movements were counting on us to fight… (A04, etc.,
group interview, March 08, 2011)
What else could they do to “fight” for the oppositional and democratic movements in Taiwan in addition to organizing rallies and protests in response to the incidents in Taiwan?

4.1.4.2 Fund-Raising and Publicity

The early Taiwanese Canadians, as discussed earlier, were mostly students or scholars who chose to stay in North America and become immigrants. They were not well off enough to fund the democratization in Taiwan. Even though this was the case they still managed to help out whoever came to North America seeking for assistance. One of the interviewees remembered, “all politicians that went to the United States would come to Vancouver.” (A04, interview, Jan. 08, 2011; also in A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011). And several interviewees are still proud of how effective the TCA was in raising the biggest amount of money in North America for the political dissidents that came for help:

I don’t know if you have heard about this, but in early years whenever there was a fund-raising campaign for Taiwan, the amount raised in Vancouver was always larger than that in California such as the Taiwanese Canadian Association in L.A. And they had more Taiwanese immigrants than we did. (A42, interview, Apr. 22, 2011)

Another interviewee has an even more accurate account of one of the fund-raisings:

The first large-scale and open fund-raising party was in 1986. It was for the visit of Hsing-liang Hsu to Vancouver. It had some impact on North American Taiwanese communities…. It was at a hotel on Kingsway…. The money we raised that night, I
still remember clearly, was over $38,000 dollars. In all North American Taiwanese communities Vancouver raised the largest amount of money. It was surpassed by north California [Taiwanese community] some years later. (A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011)

And another female interviewee was still excited when she recalled how she was part of the campaigns:

We collected more money than did L.A…. There were not many people (in Vancouver), but we were very close. And whenever there was a ‘dang-wai’ (politically oppositional activist) visiting from Taiwan, we welcomed all of them.

Vancouver was really friendly to Taiwanese activists. (A43, interview, Apr. 23, 2011)

The constant need of the Taiwanese oppositional politicians that came to North America and the generosity of the Taiwanese Canadians here led to the establishment of the so-called “Taiwan Foundation” which was one of the most important organizations affiliated to the TCA. The main function of the Taiwan Foundation was to financially assist the visitors from Taiwan and to help them go public for their cause through arranging events of public speech, fund-raising campaign, exposure to the media, and so forth:

A41: The Taiwan Foundation was not an officially incorporated organization. You can see it as the “political wing” of the Taiwanese Canadian Association. It was more political especially when it was not appropriate for the TCA to come forward. But the
being “political” then was simply caring for Taiwan and participating in (issues related to) Taiwan, and the support for politicians of Taiwan. The oppositional movement was still weak at that time. Therefore every summer the oppositional activists would come and “recharge” to seek for international visibility so the KMT would not dare to touch them. It was rather different from the situation now. The politicians nowadays would say they are too busy to come over. But at that time in addition to being invited to come, they would even ask that “will you invite me over?” The Taiwan Foundation was in charge of these events… The function was later replaced by the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society. (A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011, Italics added)

Increasing the publicity of the leading political dissidents during the 1970s and 1980s was an important contribution the overseas Taiwanese community could make to help with the democratization of Taiwan. Since the KMT government had established its legitimacy over China and Taiwan after 1949 on the basis of its (propagandized) nature as a democratic government, it was less inclined to crack down on movements led by dissidents who were known to the outside world. TCA and other organizations in North America knew this and managed to shelter those who sought help in North America. To increase the basis for support and to spread the word about actions to be taken, the Taiwan Foundation set up a Vancouver post of the “Voice of Taiwan” which was a low-cost broadcast system. One of the people in charge of the “Voice of Taiwan” noted:
There was a “Voice of Taiwan” which is as a sister to the Taiwan Foundation.
Running the Voice of Taiwan was easy and it did not cost much. We used a recorder and recorded information from New York. Whoever wanted to know things may simply call and listen to the recordings… these are all forgotten memories…. I don’t remember how long it existed…but it was still functioning in the first half of [the] 1980s. (A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011)

The information to be recorded and spread over the “network” came mainly from the Taiwanese Americans in New York where more media would report news related to Taiwan:

One of the main functions of Taiwan Foundation was to set up the Voice of Taiwan. It was connected to the headquarters of the Voice of Taiwan in New York, and also connected to California and Edmonton…. It started on May 17th, 1979 and lasted for about ten years. I don’t quite remember how it ended…. The source was primarily from New York. The contents would be updated every three days. We recorded from the NY recordings and made it available here (in Vancouver). (A41, etc., group interview, Apr. 12, 2011)

The idea was that anyone who wanted to know the most updated news about Taiwan could simply make a local phone call to hear the messages. It was low-cost, easy, and effective. The “Voice of Taiwan” was a good means to conquer the problem of networking between Taiwanese communities in North America before the Internet was invented.
4.1.4.3 Pressure to Form a Political Party

The Taiwanese Canadians were not satisfied with supporting the visitors from Taiwan in a passive manner. They urged the activists in Taiwan to do their job more actively. They “threatened” to organize an oppositional party in North America and import it to Taiwan if the activists in Taiwan remained dormant in the fight against the authoritarian government:

It was called “the Overseas Organization of Democratic Progressive Party.”… Hsing-liang Hsu got such huge support from Canada, you can say his confidence was established by [the people of] Vancouver. The donation was generous… (A43, interview, Apr. 23, 2011)

The Taiwan Foundation played the leading role in this. Some members even travelled to other cities in North America to show support for fund-raising events in American cities as well as to give more pressure to those that came to North America for support (C. R. Liao, informal conversation, Nov. 17, 2011). One of the main organizers of the events in Vancouver reported:

Member fees were small in amount. The money for the Foundation mainly came from members’ donation. We would do fund-raising for specific events…. There was another organization named “The Overseas Organization for Taiwan’s Democratic Movements.” Hsin-liang Hsu was the chair and I was the secretary general of it…. It was 1986 when we organized a large campaign and fund-raising in Vancouver to form a party named “The Taiwan Democratic Party.” It created certain pressure for
the activists in Taiwan. I can’t say how much pressure it created. But I think it did affect…the establishment of the Democratic Progressive Party at Yuan-shang Restaurant in 1986. (A41, etc., group interview, Apr. 12, 2011)

The names mentioned in these two quotes are different as the campaign was not really to form this party per se. The motives had always been to force the opposition movement in Taiwan to move forward in establishing an oppositional party as the centre for promoting democratization, which was not allowed under the Martial Law.

It is not difficult to imagine that some people would be frighten to see TCA and its affiliated organizations doing all these works specifically targeted against the KMT government in Taiwan. That led to the bifurcation of standpoint regarding where the TCA should be headed: a brotherhood society, or a politically oriented group.

4.2 A Divided Community

We have been discussing the Taiwanese Canadian community and the TCA in a rather singular fashion while the fact is that it was far from monolithic. Active TCA members, non-members, and immigrants who belong to none of the community organizations may have very different visions of the community. Even among the active participants of the TCA, differences and disagreements on specific issues continue to exist and affect the mobilization structure and action agendas of the community. For example, the linguistic/cultural divide between the majority Hokkien speakers and the (small in number) Hakka and Mandarin speakers has always been a debated issue yet never really reaches a satisfying solution. It was also mentioned in the previous section that some people were
never interested in public affairs, and there were also people who came to Canada later in
time and cared only about their own success in life or their children’s future. Lack of interest
may be due to natural temperament or to the psychological aftermath of white terror
experienced in Taiwan, which immigrants carried along to the host society of Vancouver.
Those that were simply self-interested can also be understood when we consider that the
economic performance of Taiwan, which was one of the most prosperous nations in East
Asia, made these people want a second passport to make sure they would not be deprived by
an authoritarian state of the fortunes they had earned. In this sense these people were still
making their political statement by voting with their feet to a better place, to “exit,” to use
Hirschman’s term (Hirschman, 1970). It is impressive that elites in the Taiwanese
community, knowing that their names were put down on the blacklist and they might never
have the chance to return to Taiwan, were bold enough to make their contribution to the
community by building the bridge between Taiwan and Canada through helping the late-
comers to better adjust to the Canadian society and urging them to pay due attention to their
roots. In this section, we will briefly discuss two other “cracks” between Taiwanese
immigrants that TCA tried to mend for sentimental reasons as much as for practical concerns.

4.2.1 Ethnic Issues Brought to the Overseas Community

Researchers of Taiwan’s ethnic relations have debated over proper categorizing
systems for the study of ethnic groups in Taiwan. According to some of them, four primary
groups or “ethnic” groups can be identified: the Hokkien, who were the descendants of the
Chinese immigrants that came from the Hokkien dialect speaking areas of southern China
between 17th century and the late 19th century (mainly the Province of Hokkien and some
parts in the Province of Guangdong) to Taiwan; the Hakka, who came from China at about
the same time but from Hakka dialect speaking areas (mainly the Province of Guangdong);
the aboriginal tribes that came to Taiwan even earlier than the Hokkien and the Hakka; and
the after-war in-flow of Chinese immigrants (the “mainlanders”), who moved to Taiwan with
the KMT in 1949 when the KMT lost the civil war. Due to various historical and
institutional reasons, the boundaries between these groups had been discernible until the last
two decades of the last century.

There are other scholars who argue that most of these tags are politically constructed
and they have never been precise categories for the complex ethnic relations in Taiwan. For
one thing, there were over 14 aboriginal tribes in Taiwan and they deem themselves to be
different groups of people (with different myths and origins). In the “four-group” system
these tribes are all lumped together and given only one tag: the aboriginals. As a
scientifically convincing categorizing system is not the purpose of our discussion here, we
will simply assume for discussion’s sake the plausibility of this system. Moreover, the “four-
group” system has been so commonly used by people in their daily lives that it has become
part of the mental map people use to distinguish “we-group” from “they-group” in Taiwan.
This is an important background note, because what affected people in their daily grouping
behaviour would naturally be brought to their new homeland, as can be seen in the case of
Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver.

There have not been any statistical data on the ethnic composition of the Taiwanese
immigrant community in Vancouver, but the Hokkien seems to be the dominant group
judging from the scale of its community organizations. The Hakka established their own
organization as early as 1971, only a few years later than TCA, which was established in
1967. Historically the Hakka population in China as well as in Taiwan was a highly cohesive ethnic group with their own spoken language, culture, and customs. The Hakka in Vancouver followed this same pattern of behaviour and formed their own community. This is far from saying that the Hakka refused to cooperate with TCA or any other organizations that were run predominantly by the Hokkien, but the fact is that Hakka were rather inclined to support the authorities, which made mobilization of them especially for political issues against the KMT government in Taiwan difficult. Language is another issue making the Hakka Taiwanese less motivated to participate in gatherings. The most-commonly spoken language in Taiwan is Hokkien. And Hokkien has been used as the ‘natural’ and common communicative tool, which makes it especially hard for the Hakka to feel treated as equal members of the Taiwanese community since they have strong pride in their language and profound cultural heritage.

You have to be open-minded. There is one example. There was one year when the annual meeting of Taiwanese Canadian Association (national) was held in Kingston. Professor Sung attended on behalf of the Vancouver branch and spoke in Mandarin. He did not speak Hokkien, and after he stepped down from the podium, Xiao-hua Jiang questioned him severely: “How come you didn’t speak Taiwanese?” This is not right. It’s too bigoted. (A04, interview, Jan. 08, 2011, Italics added)

Professor A03 is actually one of the founding members of the Taiwanese Canadian Association in Vancouver. He is a Hakka and he can barely speak Hokkien. Although he was a very enthusiastic member in the Taiwanese Canadian community in Vancouver, the
fact that he didn’t speak Hokkien has always put him in a difficult position and he complained about it to many people in the community. This is not to say that all Hokkien Taiwanese were prejudiced against other ethnically different Taiwanese in Vancouver. It was rather a natural and taken-for-granted habit amongst them, which drove many Hakka Taiwanese away from co-operation on various issues.

While the Hakka were cohesive and hard to reach for political mobilization, the aboriginal people and the “mainlanders” from Taiwan kept an even lower profile in public affairs. The reasons for this may be both structural and political. The aboriginal people in Taiwan have always been at the lower strata in social and economic spheres, and this disadvantaged condition limited their chance of travelling abroad even when the control over people’s freedom of residence was lessened in the 1980s. Still, there are a few small aboriginal groups in Vancouver, mostly linked to Christian churches. Although further investigation is needed to explain why they had the resource to move to Canada, a preliminary explanation might be related to church-related assistance.

As for the “mainlanders” in the Taiwanese Canadian community in Vancouver, networks did exist. They tended to avoid the gatherings of the other Taiwanese groups unless the events were organized by the overseas government agencies of Taiwan or their subsidiary and cooperating organizations. As mentioned earlier, the term “mainlanders” refers to the Chinese population that retreated to Taiwan in the late 1940s and early 1950s. There were civilians, military and civil servants, bureaucrats, and families of the latter two groups. As the degree of stratification among the mainlanders was high—which is to say that the lower strata of them such as low-ranked veterans could barely survive in Taiwan—a tentative explanation of who got out and moved to North America may well point to the
connections and resources these people had. Certainly it is still too hasty to jump to a conclusion on this matter.

The case of an interviewee of mine may offer some hints for further consideration. She was a daughter of a veteran colonel from the army in Taiwan. By the time the colonel was discharged in the 1960s, he had saved just enough money to immigrate with his family to Alberta, Canada. A few years later they relocated to Vancouver. According to the interviewee, they continue to receive pension cheques from the veterans’ service office even though her father died about four years ago. “They probably knew that my father had passed away,” she said. This example, although granted it may not be representative, shows that the support system has been offering financial and other sorts of infrastructural assistance to the mainlanders that were able to move out of Taiwan.

In terms of the lack of mutual trust between different ethnic groups in the Taiwanese Canadian community, the suspicion between the Hokkien and the mainlanders might be of the most significance. This was mainly due to the military oppression of the Taiwanese people after 1945. For the victims or families of the victims of white terror, the grudges and even hatred would not go away easily. Several years ago when I attended a social event in which the newly elected chairwoman gave a talk to the senior members of the Taiwanese Canadian community, I overheard two senior ladies commenting on the chairwoman’s trustworthiness based simply on her being from a mainlander’s family. One lady complained to the other: “How can she be a good leader of TCA when she doesn’t even speak fluent Taiwanese?” In this comment, two points should be addressed: the first is that the Hokkien have the tendency to equate “Hokkien language” with “Taiwanese,” and the other point
worth noting is the disgust and suspicion shown in the comments against the chairwoman purely on the basis of her social background rather than her performance at work.

An incident regarding whether or not mainlanders should be allowed to join TCA stirred up a serious argument lasting for weeks. When the chairman suggested modifying the bylaws of TCA to accept the mainlanders into the organization, several veteran chairmen made a public statement accusing the chairman of abusing his power to twist the bylaws without the green light from the board of supervisors. The hostility and suspicion against the mainlanders, although rarely shown in an undisguised fashion, may help to explain to some extent why cooperation or even simple friendly interaction between the Hokkien and the mainlanders in the community could be so hard. The distrust, however, was sometimes mutual:

There is a book club at the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society. Normally we read literary works. There’s once Ming-min Peng’s book ‘A Taste of Freedom’ was chosen for the next reading, some people protested against it immediately. Over one half of the club members were mainlanders. But the decision was made. Later only one mainlander came for the discussion (with harsh criticism), and the rest simply refused to attend that session…. This is just ideology. I think the book is great. A lot of points made in the book still make sense today. (A04, interview, Jan. 08, 2011)

Peng was one of the most revered leaders of the oppositional movement against the KMT government in Taiwan, and his book is a memoir which describes how the KMT government put Peng in prison and how he managed to escape with the help of Taiwanese
Canadians and Taiwanese Americans. Since most mainlander Taiwanese were connected to the KMT government to various extents, and they had been educated that those who were against the government were independence activists and traitors to the nation, it is understandable that they were not ready to read a book written by a “Class A” enemy of the state. Although this incident at the book club happened only recently in the community, the distrust between the mainlanders and the other groups has always been a problem of integration to the Taiwanese Canadian community in Vancouver.

4.2.2 The Establishment of TCCS

Another “crack” in the Taiwanese Canadian community, or a “division of labour” to look at it from a different angle, was between TCA and the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society (TCCS). TCA had long been taking care of various needs of the Taiwanese immigrants on top of its concern for the political democratization of Taiwan. Yet the rapidly growing population of new immigrants from Taiwan after the 1980s made it a heavy burden for a small organization like TCA to cover all the infrastructure aspects of new immigrants’ lives. This was the background when Dr. Tsung-yi Lin and several TCA core members proposed to the community that they establish an organization that would handle cultural and other non-political affairs in the Taiwanese community. The proposal was widely supported and in 1991 the TCCS was established. Some of the main missions of TCCS include hosting an annual Taiwanese Cultural Festival; organizing hearings and coordinating the exchange of opinions between local Taiwanese Canadian leaders and the provincial and federal governments; designing and organizing youth- and child-oriented summer camps; and mediating issues that concerned the Canadian governments such as establishing an overseas
assets reporting mechanism with the help of members of parliament to ensure fairness on taxation. In short, TCCS has been a medium between the mainstream society and the Taiwanese immigrants while TCA has stepped down from playing the role as the single and all-encompassing portal to the Canadian society for Taiwanese immigrants.

4.2.2.1 Civil Diplomacy

One of the key functions that TCA or its individual members used to offer to the community and which has now passed over to TCCS is being the bridge between Canada and the Taiwanese society. TCCS serves both the local needs of Taiwanese immigrants and sometimes the interests of Taiwan. After the termination of diplomatic relationship between Canada and Taiwan in 1971, this has become more and more important. However, after the take-off of Taiwan’s democratization in the late 1980s (which was partly due to Taiwanese Canadians’ pushing and various forms of aid), in addition to the changing patterns of immigration from Taiwan, the balance needed to lean towards the Canadian end. One of the founders of both the Taiwan Foundation (under TCA) and TCCS commented:

After 1990s when Taiwan’s democratization had been on the way, the overseas Taiwanese communities needed to change. If you don’t change and participate in issues of local society, eventually your group will become a social club. To be influential you will have to adapt to the local society. (A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011)
The suggestion of establishing TCCS to take over the role of interacting with the mainstream society was widely accepted. The same interviewee noted:

It is natural for minority immigrant groups to care for their “mother nation” in this way. At the beginning it was because we cared about Taiwan’s situation so we sought support from Canadian politicians of the mainstream society. The idea was if we could find someone who would speak out for us at the parliament, we would vote for him. If a fund-raising party was organized, we would take out the wallet and pay for the ticket… it changed over time as the politics in Taiwan also changed. Other than the care for Taiwan, the place where we were from, we participated in the public issues of the mainstream society. Once the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society was established, it took over this function… from the Taiwan Foundation. (A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011)

It was a common pattern for overseas Taiwanese to build connections in their respective communities in North America for the affairs of the community as much as in the hope that one day these politicians might be on their side to speak out for Taiwan. One interviewee talked about how they saw the Taiwanese Americans in the U.S.

The FAPA, or Formosan Association for Public Affairs, had a close relationship with some U.S. congressmen. They helped the candidates during campaigns by fundraising and so on. Some Taiwanese who made big money in the U.S were very generous and they helped out candidates from preparatory election forward. Once
these congressmen got elected, they would appreciate what they (FAPA) did for them and helped Taiwan in legislation or in making public talks calling for their government’s support for Taiwan’s democratization or self-determination. (A35, interview, Aug. 25, 2010)

The friendship and interaction between TCCS (especially some highly active members of it) and local government and politicians has lasted since the 1970s until today. Dr. A41, one of the most active TCCS members, used an example of another active member to show how local politicians appreciated:

There was a special guest at the fund-raising party…who had huge influence on the Taiwanese in Vancouver later on. That was Glen Clark, who was elected Premier of British Columbia years later. He was only 28 of age, the youngest MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) of BC ever. Before he ran for the MLA office, C. L. Hsu started volunteering for him…. He would ask me about Hsu every time he came across me. I think he was grateful for those who helped him before he became successful. Even after he had become the Premier, he always asked me that: “How is Hsu doing lately?” every single time he saw me…. When he was elected the Premier of BC, I received this fax one day inviting me, the chairperson of Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society at that time, to the inauguration ceremony. Only two (ethnically) Chinese organizations were invited, the SUCCESS and the TCCS…. It was 1996. I was the chairperson from 1995 to 1997. (A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011)
The civil diplomacy between Dr. A41 or Hsu and local politicians took the pattern of volunteering, support in campaigns, and establishment of long-term friendship. According to Dr. A41, it was never entirely utilitarian out of the concern for the interest of Taiwan. Practically, the friendship made it much easier when the Taiwanese Canadian community needed a voice in the Parliament or at the Provincial Assembly and City Council.

4.2.2.2 Taiwan Cultural Festival

One of the most important and fruitful products of the convergence of the declining need to support Taiwan politically after the late 1980s and the non-political interests of the new immigrants from Taiwan after the immigration boom in early 1990s was the organizing of the “Taiwan Cultural Festival.” It is festive, non-political, and fun. For some early immigrants, this is a softer yet much more powerful means to retain and boost the visibility of the Taiwanese Canadian community, especially after the flood of new immigrants from China. S.U.C.C.E.S.S.(short for the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society), one of the most prominent organizations serving primarily Chinese-origin immigrants, became a competitor when it expanded, offering a Mandarin service sector in addition to its Cantonese service for the Chinese Canadian population in Vancouver. Several active members of TCCS had the following conversation:

_A41:_ In 1993 the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society tried to apply for grants from the provincial government. The provincial government replied and asked us to apply to SUCCESS if we need the money. It was a big shock for me personally…. They
were originally all-Cantonese organization. It was the TCCS that forced them to institute a ‘Mandarin sector.’

_Interviewer T:_ The Canadian government sees the Taiwanese and the Taiwanese groups as of the same category as Chinese groups. So it is really up to us….

_A04:_ Under these circumstances Taiwan has become invisible. To maintain visibility is a tough job. So the Taiwan Cultural Festival plays an extremely important role.

(A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011)

At the beginning some people doubted whether organizing a carnival styled fair would do any good for the “visibility” of Taiwan and the Taiwanese Canadian community. Yet the leading figures of the community decided to give it a try and hand it to the younger generations. One of them reflected upon his change of vision:

It comes to my mind many times that we always use our thinking to guide our actions and use it to put a frame over the youngsters asking them to do it accordingly as if they are not capable of taking over things if they don’t follow the instructions. (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

The Taiwan Cultural Festival organization committee is currently led by Charlie Wu, a so-called “1.5 generation” Taiwanese immigrant brought to Canada when he was only a child:
He was born in Taiwan and brought to Canada when young...attended Taiwan Cultural Festival before, discovered and learned a lot of things about Taiwan: cultural, daily-life related, and political. (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

Born in Taiwan and raised a Canadian, Wu learned to cooperate with different ethnic groups and to find financial and media support of all sorts to make the Festival one of the most successful annual events in Vancouver. Dr. A41, who has always been an active participant of the organization of the Taiwan Cultural Festival, talked about how it became popular and how it serves the Taiwanese Canadian community:

The Taiwan Cultural Festival was just an indoor concert in 1990 with an audience of only one thousand people. It expands gradually. Since C. Y. Wu took over the preparation committee in 2001...it became an outdoors event. And in 2006 it was expanded to be held in Toronto as well. So it’s a Canadian event now covering both east and west coast.... Normally cultural festivals like this would be held only two years consecutively, but the Taiwan Cultural Festival has been held annually there for six years.... The amount of people participating in the festival in Vancouver is also growing. It was estimated that 140,000 people visited the festival (Toronto and Vancouver venues all together). (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

The benefits of Taiwan Cultural Festival for Taiwan and Taiwanese community here are enormous.... In the Winter Olympics last year, 2010, only one Taiwanese player came for the games. Yet groups from Taiwan participated in over six hundred
cultural events. Four groups from Taiwan organized over ten events. And based on a survey over people attending non-sports events, out of ten most popular events three were organized by groups from Taiwan…. It made people (Taiwanese Canadians) here feel proud although they were not part of the performances. (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

One of the secrets of the success of the Taiwan Cultural Festival that the Chinese Canadian community finds hard to duplicate, which they did try to do, is the image of a single community. China itself is a multi-ethnic country with a tremendous variety of local cultures, which makes it difficult to create a festival with a singular image of China. Certainly the success of the Taiwan Cultural Festival also comes primarily from the creativity and entrepreneurship of Wu and his team.

While TCCS devotes itself to emphasizing the participation and services the Taiwanese community could offer to Canadian society, it does not ignore activities and events related to Taiwanese society. However, the primary mission of TCCS was in support of culture and arts, and some community members have started to complain about its intentionally maintained indifference to the social and political developments in Taiwan. Although there has not been any serious conflict between TCCS and TCA, people with more interest in Taiwan-related issues participate more frequently in TCA’s events while others (particularly the newcomers after 1980s) who would rather attend cultural events or Canada-related activities tend to be more active at TCCS.

The division of labour between TCA and TCCS could be beneficial for the entire Taiwanese Canadian community as it now cares not just for where its members came from
but also for the new home they plan to stay for good. Still it appears to be harmful for the cohesion of community when people are more enthusiastic about one side and might in fact find fewer and fewer common topics in conversation. The issues of lack of trust between ethnic groups in the Taiwanese Canadian community and the dichotomization between cultural activities and political issues, for our purpose in this chapter, culminate in the changing idea of Taiwan’s identity politics in the host society.

4.3 The Transformation

After describing how organizations such as the prominent TCA and later the successful TCCS worked from the 1960s until today assisting old and new immigrants to settle in Vancouver, we noticed a dilemma for Taiwanese in choosing whether to care more for the sending country or to throw oneself into the Canadian social fabric. How do we make sense of these changes?

4.3.1 From a “Stateless Nation” to a “Nation State”

In David McCrone’s discussions of Scotland (McCrone, 2001), the concept of the “stateless nation” refers to a nation (defined by its distinctive cultural heritage) without its own political power such as a parliament. In the case of Taiwanese Canadians who stayed abroad and fought for the cause of Taiwan, the understanding of Taiwan experienced several stages of change. As shown in Table 5, in the first “legitimacy” stage, the KMT government built its rule upon state violence and a discriminative social system. For the Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver, the state was an exogenous power that became attached to Taiwanese society due to a post-war international reality dominated by the Allies. This stage
can be said to be a “stateless” stage for the Taiwanese people as the sovereignty over Taiwan was not yet clearly determined by the international society, let alone by the common will of the Taiwanese people. In the meantime, the shape of a Taiwanese nation was not yet conceivable. At the second stage, the “movement” stage, the KMT government was forced to face the fact that it was not likely to return to China, as the communist government had set its foot firmly in China after driving the KMT government over to Taiwan. The democratization process was set in motion in Taiwan and one-government/one land began to be something imaginable. This is to say, a replacement government of and for the people it represents became something tangible. In the third stage, the threatening China replaced the authoritarian role that the KMT government used to play and the rising democratic grassroots forces was assisted by overseas Taiwanese communities. In this context, the main concern for the Taiwanese people was gradually replaced by the Taiwan/China antagonism. A better self-understanding of Taiwan as a nation state came to existence. But what does this have to do with overseas Taiwanese communities?

The overseas Taiwanese communities and the Taiwanese democratic movements formed the first duality in which each was dependent on the other. As shown in the examples of the financial support and publicity campaign that overseas Taiwanese communities offered to activists from Taiwan, had it not been for the overseas communities the reality of the situation in Taiwan would not have been exposed to the world and the ideological control would have made alternative thinking over Taiwan’s future impossible. On the other hand, the evolution of political consciousness of the overseas Taiwanese gradually seeing Taiwan as a potential nation state benefited from the people struggling in Taiwan. In this sense, the
overseas Taiwanese and those who stayed in Taiwan cooperated in a common effort, starting with fighting an authoritarian government and growing with a redefined self-identity.

The other duality refers to the difference between people devoted to political progress in Taiwan and those who cared more about events in the host country. There is no mutually enhancing relationship between these two positions. Yet the sharp contrast between the two not only points to the generation gap between early Taiwanese immigrants and the newcomers, but also more importantly reveals the bondage that has entrapped some of the TCA leaders and community members. To some extent they were kidnapped by their unceasing hope for a democratized Taiwan and hence ignored or were reluctant to forget they were Taiwanese “Canadians”—not the other way around.

4.3.2 The New “Mainlanders” in Vancouver?

But is it really so much of a dichotomy between caring for one’s roots and adapting to the host society? Is there any middle ground in between? Dr. A04, one of the major founders of TCA and TCCS, has been one of the most influential “brains” of the Taiwanese Canadian community. He has a long-term participation in almost all aspects of the Taiwanese Canadian community in Vancouver, and he has pondered the roles Taiwanese Canadians should play in this society. On why Taiwanese Canadians would and should help local politicians, he clearly refuses to turn it to a utilitarian endeavour:

I think this is an issue of identity. Certainly we do all these for Taiwan, but the campaigns and elections are local, you have to let them understand that you are one of them. “That’s why I’m helping you. I have some motivations, and I hope you would
help Taiwan. But that’s not the priority. Because you are to be my representative, and that’s why I’m helping you.” (A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011, Emphasis original.)

Dr. A04 uses two examples to illustrate how supporting Taiwan should be based on the care for the host society. It makes better sense as this is immigrants’ new home, and it will be more effective if you have devoted yourself to the affairs here and then convince your fellow Canadians to help Taiwan where you were from:

Canada was the only region that was affected by the Avian Flu\(^\text{30}\) outside of Asia. It was because of the heavy transportation...there were flights (from Asia) every day. My point is that “we are not doing it just for Taiwan. It’s for us, for our health—the people here.” They would not listen if you keep saying Taiwan this and Taiwan that. The health issue involves different countries, it involves us. “We are doing this for our country, for Canada.” Stephen Owen agreed with me in private. Of course he would agree. One day the oppositional party, the Conservative party, proposed several bills including one that concerned Taiwan which urged the government to support Taiwan on joining the World Health Organization. As the government had been holding the ‘one-China’ policy for years, the liberal Members of Parliament had to vote against that bill which China would protest against. He was depressed and he called me from Ottawa one day. I was not home so he left a long message to explain about this and asked me to call him back. By the time I got the message, he had left

\(^{30}\) According to Stephen Owen’s response to Dr. A04’s comments, this should be “SARS” instead of “Avian Flu.” Refer to Recording #M20110803.
his office. He went back to his constituency shortly and called me again…. I was really moved. He felt he had to speak to me. I was moved because I felt being respected…. To make people respect you…you have to become a part of this community. (A04, interview, Aug. 13, 2010, Italics original)

The other example shows how Dr. A04 realized that making a priority of local concerns is the right path to the balance between care for Taiwan and for the host community one now calls home:

Another thing I have to tell you is about September 11th…. Not long after that…the US government pointed out to Canada that Canadian border control was loose. Therefore the legislation of a new anti-terrorist law was expected. The Minister in charge of drafting the law was Stephen Owen. He is a lawyer. The Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society invited him to give a speech on issues in regard to anti-terrorist law, and he accepted the invitation. He came, and we asked some questions about it. About three months later I came across him, and he told me: “Your group is the first to call for a town hall meeting.” I feel good about it. He showed respect for us…. My point is that since you have come here, you need to identify yourself with it here. Talking about Taiwan every day is not acceptable for the others. Doing things for Taiwan and for Canada are not mutually exclusive but mutually complementary. If you do things well here…you have to make them feel “Hey, you are one of us! You are one of us.” Although you look different, and you eat differently, “you are one of us.” Then they will respect you. Once you got the respect, you live happier here, and
they would respect you as well when you do things for Taiwan. (A04, interview, Aug. 13, 2010, emphasis original)

In the vein of discussing what it means to be a Taiwanese Canadian, Dr. A04 once talked about a lesson he had learned from Dr. Edgar Wickberg (1927-2008), a highly revered scholar in the field of Chinese Canadian history:

Ed Wickberg invited me to have dinner with him. And he invited me to participate. I participated [in the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of BC] as a member but not in actual activities. I think the Taiwanese is still unique, and at this point I don’t want to be mixed up with the traditional Chinese. He had a very deep understanding of being Chinese, identity, and Chineseness. “Identity is mainly up to you. You decide how…individually.” (It’s) not about your lineage or something. I learned this from him. (A04, interview, Aug. 13, 2010)

Dr. A04 also likes to quote from Edgar Wickberg to the effect that “he said to me: ‘Identity is what you make of it’ … And I think it is so true…. You have to be a Canadian first before you can appropriately become a Taiwanese Canadian.” Dr. A04’s point of view has been influential in the Taiwanese Canadian community. In addition to his enthusiasm and charismatic character in the community, one of the most convincing reasons is that he has always been at the front in every battle, be it protests against the KMT government in Seattle or the local affairs such as the SARS crisis that jeopardized the Canadian society.
Juxtaposing the troubling identity issue for the Taiwanese Canadians and that for the “mainlanders” in Taiwan, Dr. A04 has a sharp criticism and insightful comment:

They live in Taiwan, but for them the home is always over across the straits (in China). It is the same. If we come here yet do not identify with the community here, what makes us different from those mainlanders (in Taiwan)? (A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011)

Dr. A04 and Dr. A02 (discussed in Chapter Three) were the key founders of TCA and TCCS. Although they cared about Taiwan’s democratization all their lives, they never ceased to play a role in public affairs concerning Vancouver and Canada. In Chapter 6, we will give a detailed example of how Dr. A04 and other revered community members become deeply involved in local affairs, which represents a different path to becoming a Taiwanese Canadian. Before we move to that topic, we now turn to the interactive experiences Taiwanese immigrants have had that help to reflexively examine what they used to take for granted: their identity and how they see the rest of the world.
Interaction and the Reconfiguration of Ethnic Boundaries

[To] explore the different processes that seemed to be involved in generating and maintaining ethnic groups…. I urge us to focus the investigation on the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses. (Barth, 1998, pp. 10-15)

Responding to the paradigmatic consideration of nations (or races) according to the “cultural stuff” which was readily observable in determining the difference between groups in his time in the 1960s, anthropologist Fredrik Barth called for the study of the processes of boundary generation, maintenance, and transformation between human groups. The wisdom of Barth’s proposal appears to be more relevant in our time as a globalized world has yielded more opportunities or even necessities for people from different backgrounds to examine who they really are and what makes them distinguished from the other groups. This is important in the sense that globalization often means cooperation and competition at the same time, or friendship and hostility both involved in the same process of engagement. If we move beyond a mercantilist view of world order with an assumption of the nation-state being the agent of action in the international realm, the complexity of drawing ethnic boundaries becomes even more pronounced as loyalty to one nation or one nation-state becomes less relevant for the “global nomads” who constantly move across diplomatic and cultural borders.

In the following discussion we will turn to a personal level of interaction and observe how interaction between the Taiwanese immigrants and other groups helped them not only to
examine how they used to see themselves but also to figure out their new position in the cultural mosaic of Canadian society.

5.1 Three Ways of Being a “Chinese”

Defining the connotations of the term “Chinese” is no easy task. It may not easily be used with the presumption that there exists a nation-state called China and their people as well as their language are to be deemed Chinese—no matter how loosely a “nation” is defined here. This is partly due to an unsolved geopolitical issue dating from the fall of the last empire in early twentieth-century China all the way through the Second World War and the Chinese Civil war. And the complexity of defining “Chinese” also comes from political propagandas promoted by both the Communist government and the KMT government after 1949, when the latter lost the Chinese Civil war and was driven to Taiwan. Both propagandas manage to mix two sets of conflicting principles of nation building into one imagined community—the Chinese nation. It is conflicting because it involves two contradictory sets of national narrative: (1) a primordialist claim of national and historic continuity on the soil of China which argues for a lineage of the Chinese nation (“Zhong hua min zu,” or literally the Chinese nation); and (2) a comprehensive concept of China being a multi-cultural state composed of multiple nations or ethnic groups and hence the word “Chinese” refers to whoever holds a valid passport issued by the Chinese government (the Communist or the KMT one).

Blurring the two sets of principles defining the nature of a modern Leviathan gives both governments the edge of spreading the claimed reach of sovereignty over each other’s *de facto* territories for their political pre-emptive rights. This is because each of the two
principles serves to construct the centrality of power of the claimer (the KMT or the Communist government). The primordialist contributes to the ethical legitimacy of the government, while the cosmopolitan serves to justify the sovereignty over non-Han Chinese regions (Tibet, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Manchuria, etc.). In international politics, this is why the idea of “two Chinas” has always been a sensitive issue for Beijing as well as for the KMT government in Taiwan. Both claim to be the only legitimate “Chinese” government. Even after the KMT lost its seat at the United Nations to Beijing in 1971, the KMT government still promoted the narrative that it was the victim of international politics and the Communist Party usurped its legal status and ethical centrality as the authentic Chinese government.

For the people of Taiwan under the authoritarian governance of the KMT government before democratization in the 1980s, there was simply no chance for an alternative imagination of a Taiwanese community or nation to burgeon. This is exactly why the Taiwanese immigrants in North America played such an important role in leading a narrative renovation of national identity for those who stayed in Taiwan. Living in the free world gave the former the possibility to interact with other ethnic groups and thereafter to adjust their self-image of national identity free of state propaganda. In this vein we shall look at several examples showing the importance of human interaction in consolidating or dissolving a given Chinese identity or a taken-for-granted national imagination of being a Chinese. Subsequently we will move on to a different set of examples that reveals the invention of a Taiwanese Canadian identity.
5.1.1 Returning or Visiting?

Ms. C03, the female “mainlander” introduced earlier, came to Canada at the age of 18 with her family, settling initially in Alberta and later in Vancouver. Since she was the child of a high ranking military officer who came to Taiwan from China with the KMT government, the Chinese nationalist narrative devised and promoted by the KMT found its way easily into her mind. Even though she had never been to China before her visit in 2008, with the family influence from her father and her peers she believed without any doubt what the KMT government had instilled in her. She believed that the KMT was the authentic “Chinese” government while the fellow “Chinese” people were under the tyranny of the Communist government, which took over China with the help of the Soviet Union in an attempt to put all mankind under slavery. As for Taiwan, it was deemed an island that belonged to China and which had been occupied by Japan by force. The modern history, the nature of political organizations, and the identity of people in this scenario were all parts of the dogmatic narrative offered by the KMT and the young C03 did not have any chance or any channels to think otherwise.

In 2008, at the age of 53, C03 went to China to visit her brother who was living in Shanghai for his business investments. This was the first time in her life that she stepped on the soil of China. A couple of weeks before leaving Vancouver for the trip, she told me with great excitement that she was “going back to China.” It was rather intriguing for me to hear her using the word “back” in her account of the nature of this visit. I tried to ask her why she considered it a “going-back” trip instead of a tourist visit, given that she had spent the first 18 years of her life in Taiwan and the following 35 years in Canada. It was no surprise that the answer pointed to her parents having come from China and having spent two decades in
Taiwan because of the Civil war. In a sense, Taiwan was a midway station for her and her family before they relocated to North America. It was, therefore, understandable that she was excited to finally have a chance to “return” to China—the land of her father.

When she returned from the trip in two weeks, I talked to her again and asked about her impression of China in contrast to what she had expected before she left. C03 told me that “unless absolutely necessary, I will not go to China again!” Apparently it was not a pleasant trip. Later she explained to me how several seemingly insignificant events brought her an overall unpleasant impression about China and the Chinese people. For example, she complained that most of her distant relatives that she barely knew the names of would come to her and asked for financial assistance or presents. Her friends also warned her constantly about her safety and to always keep her belongings in sight. It would be overstating the case to say that the sharp contrast between her high expectation and the disappointment from things that happened to her during the trip had brought her to identify more with Taiwan and to desert the long-held belief that she was a Chinese, yet the effects to make her distinguish Taiwan and China as different societies were real.

An example may explain the boundary-drawing practice related to C03’s visit to China. C03 was a religious person and served as clergy at a Buddhist group in Vancouver. Once she was informed that a Taiwanese friend of hers was about to make a Xerox copy of a prayer book for another friend who also attended gatherings of the same Buddhist group yet was an immigrant from China. C03 went to her Taiwanese friend and said to him that:

It would be better if you do not give him the prayer book as this is a very profound and powerful book of prayers. What happens if there’s one day in the future that
China and Taiwan engage in a war and he uses the prayer book to pray to the deities and help their side to conquer Taiwan?’

Although it sounds somewhat superstitious to believe that a book of prayers could affect the outcome of worldly warfare, the fact that C03 tried to talk her friend out of giving their “Chinese” friend the prayer book seems to suggest that when it comes to taking sides on issues of survival, C03 would stand by the Taiwanese side against the Chinese even though she still thinks of herself as ethnically a Chinese descendant. It may be safe to further suggest that given the experiences with the Chinese C03 met in China and those she met in Vancouver, the disarticulation of the Chinese and Taiwanese, who used to be under the same ethnic category of the “Chinese” and are now a separate imagined community, takes place due to real life experiences that put those taken-for-granted concepts to the test.

5.1.2 A “Groundless” Imagined Community?

If the example of C03 shows how interpersonal encounters in real life serve to make one examine the national identity propaganda one is taught to believe in, the case of Dr. A04 exhibits how constant interaction helps to consolidate the vague and feeble imagination of a community one belongs to. Dr. A04 was born in Taiwan in the early 1930s when Taiwan was under Japanese colonization. Soon after birth the young A04 was taken to Manchuria with his parents when his father took a job there. As Manchuria was practically a puppet state of the Japanese Empire, Japanese occupied all major positions in the Manchurian government. Japanese culture gradually replaced the indigenous culture, which had been Sinicized before the Japanese controlled Manchuria. The young A04 was educated in a
Japanese school and his family lived in a Japanese community. A04’s parents spoke Japanese at home most of the time even though they were Taiwanese and could speak Taiwanese, therefore A04 never had the chance to learn to speak Taiwanese and Japanese became his mother tongue.

In 1945, when the Pacific War came to an end and Japan surrendered to the Allies, Japanese in Manchuria were repatriated to Japan and the Taiwanese Japanese were repatriated back to Taiwan. “It was quite a cultural shock,” said Dr. A04, remembering the time when he and his parents were sent back to Taiwan when he was 14, “as I barely spoke Taiwanese and always got picked on by kids laughing at my accent when trying to speak Taiwanese.” Life in Taiwan was also different from that in Manchuria. Charles continued to live in Taiwan until the late 1950s. He left to study for five years in the United States in gynaecology and obstetrics and then immigrated to Canada. Dr. A04 has lived in Vancouver and practised as a physician ever since.

When asked about his impressions and feelings about Manchuria, Taiwan, and Canada respectively, Dr. A04 replied:

The first one-sixth in my life was spent in Manchuria, and the second in Taiwan, then the following four in Vancouver. Still I consider Taiwan to be my root … I saw a Taiwanese athlete on TV that when he won a gold medal in the 2006 Olympics he gave it to his Alma Mater as a token of gratitude. This is exactly how I feel about Taiwan…. Taiwan has been in such a pathetic situation. If it was not being so pathetic, we only need to care for it to a lesser degree. But it is just because it has been pathetic that we (Taiwanese) have to care more about it. This is not to propose a
narrow-minded idea of people caring only for wherever one is born. By “pathetic” I mean that this place (Taiwan) is an “orphan in the world” which has not been given due respect while it has everything it takes to be a country.... And China, I’ve never betrayed China, the Chinese culture especially Chinese characters are superb! I’m always amazed by the concise nature of hieroglyphic words in Chinese—a symbol can represent such abundant meanings…. (A04, interview, Jan. 08, 2011)

As for the place of Canada in his mind, Dr. A04 said:

Some Taiwanese immigrants take advantage of (the society). Someone has the money yet lives in a government subsidized apartment. And he drives a Mercedes! And he said I was a fool not doing the same. This is a big issue. If you consider here to be your home, and someone comes in and take advantage of you, can you tolerate it...? Maybe I identify with this country so much that I can’t stand people exploiting it…. It was about two years ago. (A04, interview, Jan. 08, 2011)

It is clear that Dr. A04 distinguishes three parts of his identity by assigning each of them a role in his life. While he sees himself first and foremost a Canadian citizen, he cares deeply for Taiwan, the root from which his life originates, for all the sufferings it has endured. As for China, it is a country from which a highly respectable and profound culture emerged and became an important part of Dr. A04’s cultural taste. In the previous chapter we have seen how Dr. A04 contributed significantly to the organizing of the Taiwanese Canadian community in Vancouver; in the next chapter we will give an example of how Dr. A04
managed to contribute to Canadian society and earned the respect from the locals. What is worth pondering is what makes Dr. A04 feel so dearly for the difficulties Taiwan has been facing, considering that he only got to live in Taiwan for an equivalent number of years as he did in Manchuria, where he claimed that no discrimination was present around him. A possible explanation is his long-term involvement with the Taiwanese immigrants since the mid-1960s when he came to Vancouver. The close relations with early Taiwanese immigrants who were mostly on the blacklist gave him the chance to realize the pathetic situation of the Taiwanese people and therefore to develop a devotion to do something for his roots.

5.1.3 “I Would Rather Die a Canadian!”

C02, who is in her late twenties, is an ESL (English as Second Language) student enrolled in the University of British Columbia. She came from Guangdong Province of China in 2009 and is currently applying for Permanent Resident status in Canada. Although she is neither a Taiwanese immigrant nor an early immigrant as in the target group of this study, her family story is relevant to our discussion of how daily life experience facilitates social agents’ identity forming process.

C02’s family has been in the porcelain trade in Guangdong province in southern China for over six generations, dating back to the Qing dynasty, the very last empire in China, which ended in 1911. C02’s grandfather (1926-2006) was in his early twenties by the time the Communist troops came in and controlled Guangdong province in 1949. Knowing that his family wasn’t of the social class that Communists would befriend, C02’s grandfather gave the order to burn all the business records (porcelain trade with British companies, etc.),
to smash all merchandise, and to cooperate with the new Communist government in every way—unwillingly. C02’s grandfather was the heir to a family fortune before the Communists came, and was accompanied by four servants wherever he went. He was trained by Russian tutors to play piano and violin and even formed one of the earliest jazz bands in China—possibly the very first in southern China—in the 1940s. All these days of wine and roses changed after the Chinese Communist Party established the new China in 1949.

From the “liberation” of China in 1949 to the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), during which all non-labour and non-peasant classes became enemies of the state and some were harassed and arrested, the C02 family were not really persecuted physically because they cooperated with the new Communist government. All property was confiscated and family members were assigned new jobs decided by the new government. C02’s grandfather, who had never done any chores in his life due to his rich family background, was sent to work for clubs owned by the state. When the Cultural Revolution started and hatred against all past capitalists was encouraged by the central government and violence was tolerated, C02’s grandfather was reassigned to a funeral home to play violin in burial and cremation ceremonies. This humiliation lessened in the later stages of the Cultural Revolution when he was reassigned to work in a violin factory, where he remained until his retirement in the 1990s.

In fear of being persecuted by the Communist government, C02’s family members had been pulling strings to move to Hong Kong or, if possible, to migrate to North America by the time C02’s grandfather retired from the job at the violin factory. Out of the dozens of family members, C02’s grandfather and parents were among the few that remained Chinese citizens in the early 1990s. Others had become either Hong Kong permanent residents or
Canadian citizens. Once retired from the factory, C02’s grandfather immediately applied for permanent residency through his daughter, who had become a Canadian citizen residing in Vancouver. He obtained his permanent residency in the early 1990s and citizenship in 2000. The delay was because he had a hard time adjusting to the weather in Vancouver, especially the winter seasons. During the seven years waiting for the accumulation of residence time for his citizenship application, he spent every spring and summer in Vancouver while returning to warm Guangdong province in fall and winter. Even when he was diagnosed with leukemia, he still travelled back and forth between China and Canada until he eventually got a Canadian passport and gave up the Chinese one. After obtaining Canadian citizenship, he went back to China and in a few years passed away in Guangdong. He never came back to Canada in between.

Why was it worth all the hassle just to obtain Canadian citizenship given his bad health and the money and time spent on travelling? What was this really for? C02’s grandfather was not applying for political refuge; neither did he want to stay in Canada for good for the last days of his life. C02 explained why her grandfather took all the time and hassle just to become a Canadian:

My auntie told me that my grandfather always felt the strongest disgust and sorrow for what happened to his family after the Communists came. The family business was all gone, the properties were confiscated, and the entire family was separated and scattered ... although he could never get used to the weather in North America (in fact he hated it and had to suffer from pneumonia if he stayed in Vancouver for the
winter), he was determined not to die a Chinese. He wanted to die a Canadian. (C02, personal conversation, Feb., 2011, field notes)

In order to understand the roles played by human contacts in the construction of one’s national identity, we may briefly compare the cases of C03, Dr. A04, and C02. In the example of C03, state-driven ideology and historical narrative were passed down from educational institutions and family. Only the disappointment and confusion when C03 was faced with the supposedly fellow nationals in real life lessened the hold of a Chinese nationalist conception and led her to reconsider her relations with her fellows. She needed to make sense out of the difference in the feeling of belonging she had with her Taiwanese and Chinese fellows respectively. Although she has not yet made her ultimate choice (in a sense she has chosen to be a Canadian, but for many people like her choosing to become an immigrant does not mean to be cut off from the ethnic identity one used to have), the taken-for-granted “Chinese-ness” was questioned and what it means to be a “Chinese” became an issue.

The commonality between C03’s case and Dr. A04’s case lies in the important role interpersonal contact plays in completing a coherent identity—only in opposite directions. In the example of C03, the disappointing interaction she had in China, in contrast to her satisfying contact with her fellow Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver, drove her to separate two groups of “Chinese” (ethnically and culturally defined): the Chinese from China, and the Chinese from Taiwan. While the majority of contemporary Taiwanese tend not to apply the tag “Chinese” to themselves as the KMT government would have wanted them to do, the residue of the ideology of a singular “Chinese nation” still haunts C03 even though she starts
to see the distinction between two parties. That is why she urged her fellow Buddhist not to give the prayer book to the “Chinese” person, as he might turn against them with the prayer book at the time of war if ever it was to happen. We may say that C03’s interaction experience cast doubts on her old categorizing system, prepared and served by the state-driven propaganda machine. The down-to-earth encounter falsified the old beliefs.

In the example of Dr. A04, however, the encounter worked to mend the deficit of land-related motives for loving and identifying a group of people. Having lived in three societies (Manchuria, Taiwan, and Vancouver), Yang felt the closest attachment to the Taiwanese Canadians he interacted with on a daily basis in Vancouver. This experience helped to overcome the lack of real living experience on the soil of Taiwan and contributed to his self-identifying with the Taiwanese Canadian community. That said, interactive experience works both ways in both C03 and A04’s cases, in that in C03’s case the parting effect is rather obvious while in Dr. A04’s case the mending effect is more noticeable.

Under different social contexts and historical backgrounds, the example of C02’s grandfather and those of C03 and Dr. A04 share something in common: interaction in real life was the catalyst of change in forming a workable identity that makes sense. Dr. A04 and Mr. C02 both suffered from state violence, and they both relied on close relations with their families and local connections to make sense of who they thought themselves to be. It is safe to say that they were both clear on the idea that the government did not equal the nation they believed themselves to be a part of. Governments come and go while one’s nation remains relatively constant, defined by real people in one’s daily life. In C03’s case, while state propaganda still presents itself in those categorizing tags she uses in her language, the effects of human contact are real. Distinction between (potential) enemies and friends became clear
once she was given the chance to meet with people from China, the country she was supposed to belong to.

In all three examples we see how ideas (often utilized by the state) such as “nation state” lose their relevance in people’s real life experience when they are forced to juggle between groups of people and eventually come to their own verdict on the basis of their interaction with people. We will now turn to some related examples of the Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver.

5.2 A “Separatist” View of the Taiwanese Canadians

In the example of C03 we see how a cultural shock with regard to group behaviours would drive one away from an old categorizing framework, especially when that framework is instilled by education with no relevance to one’s daily life experiences. This does not, however, indicate that the identity in question would swing to the other end of the dichotomy if there were such an antithetical narrative structure of nationality. In our early discussion of the roles the TCA played in the Taiwanese Canadian community in Vancouver it was suggested that the TCA did manage to offer a different (counter) account of modern history, legal status, and ethnic relations of Taiwan. They did so with the intention to influence the political awareness and judgments of Taiwanese immigrants in order to make a political mobilization against the authoritarian KMT government viable.

While it is hard enough to influence people’s mindsets and social knowledge generally, changing the mind of someone like C03 would be even more difficult. She was from a so-called “mainlander” family and had been warned to be very cautious about anti-government thoughts and words, the risks of which are demonstrated in the letter mistakenly
sent to one of the “radical” Taiwanese independence activists. This may be why C03 still finds those “activist” types of Taiwanese Canadians dangerous and to be kept away from, even though she has started, on the basis of her unsatisfying encounters in China, to see the Chinese immigrants as a different category from the Taiwanese immigrants. For her, they are both Chinese in ethnic background, but they are different types of Chinese. This split of national identity may or may not grow into a fully-fledged pro-Taiwan self-identity (meaning that she sees herself simply as Taiwanese Canadian, not Chinese Canadian or Taiwanese/Chinese Canadian), but her having noticed the difference may arguably be attributed to her interpersonal encounters.

In the studies on Taiwanese Canadians’ experiences in adapting to the alien environment in Vancouver, examples of this sort of difference spotting or “separatist” experience are numerous. They are worth further discussion in order to understand how the tag “Taiwanese Canadian” becomes more than just a term indicating the ethnic origin (Taiwanese) of one group of immigrants in Canada. For Taiwanese Canadians, each part of the term takes a process of social encounters and self-reflection to make it meaningful for building a new identity in the host society. It does not always apply to all Taiwanese immigrants though. For some, “Taiwanese Canadian” is just a term, and Canada to them is just a passport.31

5.2.1 Meeting the Chinese

As previously discussed, early Taiwanese immigrants were raised and educated in a relatively closed society in Taiwan during the 1960s and 1970s before they came to Canada. 

31 This kind of immigrant (caring only for the happenings in their sending country) is exactly what Dr. A04 calls the new “mainlanders” to the Canadian society.
State propaganda was employed to equip them with hostility and suspicion towards those from China. And the same probably applied to those from China. This framework and social knowledge was naturally brought to Vancouver when they landed. Let us look at how the Taiwanese immigrants encountered their “fellow Chinese” from the other side of the Taiwan straits:

There were few Chinese then. In 1974 or 1975 when I moved in here. A person came to my door. My wife has a brother who went to China when he was young. And this person (who came to my door) was the younger brother of my wife’s sister-in-law. He asked if it’s alright to have a word with me, and I said okay. He came in and said to me: ‘You Taiwanese are piteous. And I really want to help you.’ ‘Why?’ I said.’ He said: “You are still eating banana peels for food and export the good part for money, right?”…They truly believed that…. Then I asked him: “Do you have a car?” He said no. “Do you have a house then?” And he said no again. I said: “It seems I’m more well off than you are in this case.” He said: ‘That’s true! I have to go visit Taiwan some time!” (A45, interview, June. 15, 2011)

The warring ideologies affected immigrants from Taiwan and China respectively and the contents of the ideologies changed over time. A much more recent example (which happened only a few years ago according to the interviewee) shows how rational thinking might spin off once politics was in the conversation:
(Interviewer C) I have an acquaintance here, and he is Chinese. Guo-zheng Lee is the name. He was a commentator of the media…. You can discuss with him on all sorts of topic. He has a very democratic and liberal person. He is a very rational person to discuss issues with—be it Chinese politics or Taiwanese politics. There was once that I was chatting with him in my house, and out of nowhere he yelled: “Taiwan is not allowed to be independent!” as if that was the bottom line for him. He never talked to me with that attitude before…. It was not like he’s to bully you or something; it’s more like he feels being betrayed by a close family member…. It seemed more like his feeling had been hurt rather than merely losing his temper. (A30, interview, May 04, 2010)

There is a subtly shifting definition of what it means to be a Taiwanese through interaction with the Chinese people from the real China. The knowledge base those early Taiwanese brought to Vancouver was challenged and confronted, and that called for an adjustment. In the two quotes just mentioned, the former represents how difference was noticed while the latter shows a spark exists even till today—only that it takes a different outlook. As discussed in Chapter Four, at the beginning the KMT government was the oppressor from China. Later, after the 1980s when the KMT gradually became part of the reality of Taiwanese life, the rising militant government in Beijing became the oppressor. For the early Taiwanese immigrants, the exogenous nature of the KMT government seemed to lessen in importance while the Beijing government gradually came to play the role of a bully after the 1990s. This can also be seen in that the target of protests organized by the
Taiwanese Canadian community shifted from mainly the KMT diplomatic offices to the Chinese officials visiting North America.

It is only through interaction in person that people adjust their prejudices and old frames in accordance with their new social encounters. One interviewee was a professor of the Department of Chemistry at Simon Fraser University. After he was invited to teach at a university in China, he came to this conclusion:

The problem is, many Taiwanese cannot distinguish between the Chinese government and the Chinese people. Although the government acts like that, common people are nice to Taiwanese. If you explain to the people in China about the things of Taiwan, they would understand. The Chinese government always does negative propaganda against Taiwan to prevent Taiwan from pursuing independence. (A32, interview, June 01, 2010)

Whether or not the difference between Taiwanese and Chinese can be resolved eventually is not an issue to be discussed here. The lesson we learn here from the experience of the Taiwanese immigrants is that the open environment of the host society gives immigrants of different yet closely related backgrounds a chance to examine what they have learned about each other. The realization of the difference offers them a chance to reflect upon their old worldview and to make a choice on their ethnic identity accordingly.

In a best case scenario, if Dr. A04’s balanced theory on new identity covering both the sending culture and the host society is to prevail in the Canadian multi-cultural society, the life experience in Vancouver might serve as the common ground for both the Taiwanese
immigrants and the Chinese immigrants. One interviewee talked about how he responded to an allegedly Chinese official when he was invited to lead a visiting tour group to China:

In 1974, I was elected to be the chair of Taiwanese Canadian Association. It was not a big deal…. But they thought it was an influential organization. There was one time a person who was called “consular Chen” (although I was not sure if that’s true or not) came to see me and asked me for the contact list of the members. I told him that being the Chair of the Association I cannot just give the list to anyone who is not a member to the Association. And there was a second time he came to me and asked me to organize a visit group to China. I asked him what name should be used for such a group. He did not answer. So I said: “Do you want me to use ‘Taiwan Compatriots Visit Group to the Motherland’?” He responded: “That would be the best!” I then said: “Mr. Chen, everybody dreams, and I dream. In my dreams, I always dream about Taiwan, particularly my folks in Miao-li. And in my dreams I speak Hakka, which is widely used in my hometown in Miao-li. Maybe my ancestors came from China, but I don’t know what China looks like. Everything I see in my dreams is concrete and real in life, so my motherland is Taiwan.” (A06, interview, June 03, 2011)

5.2.2 Meeting the Real Chinese

In some extreme examples, due to the education and propaganda that had been given to people in Taiwan regarding the evil nature of the Communist Party, some interviewees assumed that the Chinese were some other type of people. For other new Taiwanese
immigrants, a somewhat fresh experience of categorizing self or others as “Chinese” was ready to enter their horizon when they started to fit in the Canadian society. They came to the realization that they were not the genuine Chinese in the eyes of Cantonese-speaking Chinese Canadians, who mainly came from Hong Kong or were the descendants of the Pacific Railway construction workers that migrated from Cantonese speaking areas in southern China. One of the earliest Taiwanese immigrants in Vancouver reported that he was mistaken as Japanese only because he could not speak Cantonese, which was deemed *Chinese*.

It was 1967 and I had been teaching at Simon Fraser for two years. I was the first Taiwanese that came to this town. Whenever we went to Chinatown, the “Chinese” would call us “Japanese” because they said, “you can’t speak the national language.” They meant that Cantonese was the national language. (A32, interview, June 01, 2010)

Another interviewee also recollected a confusing and shocking occurrence:

Now you think that you speak Chinese because you speak Mandarin. But they think it is Cantonese that is Chinese. The majority of overseas (Chinese) was Cantonese people at that time. There is this one time that I walked to downtown in the neighbourhood of Pender Street. I was a newcomer, and it was 1979. I didn’t see the Pender Street sign. And I saw a Chinese over there. So I went over and asked him “Can you show me where Pender Street is?” He ignored me and walked away from me. After a few steps away he turned his head and said “tong yahn m sik gong tong
“wah,” which means “a Chinese who doesn’t speak Chinese.” He meant that I was not a Chinese. At that time if you go to Chinatown and talk to a waitress but you don’t speak Cantonese “No way, bye bye!” (A20, interview, Apr. 14, 2008, emphasis original)

It appears that quite a few interviewees have had similar experiences interacting with the Cantonese Chinese. Another Taiwanese reported how it became necessary to learn a few phrases to get by if you wanted to shop in Chinatown:

The Chinese here were mostly from Hong Kong. If you go to Chinatown for shopping and you do not speak Cantonese, they would ignore you. I am not joking. There’s once I went to Chinatown to buy some vegetable and stood in a line, they simply ignored me. So I had to learn a few phrases in Cantonese such as “ah-baak m goi nei.” I still don’t know what that really means even today, but they said it means “I am sorry, Sir.” If you don’t say it, they would not even look at you when you say I want this and that [after saying that]. Then I can say, “I want some pork” or something else. (A47, interview, June 28, 2011)

Similar testimonies were found from several interviewees regarding language and how it became a key factor in the clarification or redrawing of boundaries between ethnic groups, particularly between Cantonese and Taiwanese immigrants. In the former case just quoted, an assumed affinity between Taiwanese and Hong Kong people (since they share a lot of common Chinese cultural traits) for the Taiwanese newcomers was challenged and
some adjustments to the old ethnic configuration were needed to deal with the bewilderment experienced in interpersonal interactions. Certainly any adjustment made here could be revoked, fine-tuned, or strengthened later on due to new encounters or new interpretations of what happened earlier to the social actor.

5.2.3 Meeting the Mainlander Chinese

Another factor that challenged Taiwanese immigrants and made them adjust their definition of what it means to be a Taiwanese was their direct or indirect interaction with the mainlander Chinese who also moved to Canada from Taiwan, yet tended not to mingle with the Taiwanese for reasons roughly sketched out in Chapter 3. It is true that the distance between Taiwanese and mainlanders (or their children) who moved to Taiwan with the KMT government after the Chinese Civil war in 1949 had already been there before both groups moved to Canada. It was, however, the experience living in a free society that gave them the opportunity to think about the issue of identity which they were not allowed to or were too frightened to even talk about under the white terror in Taiwan.

My husband was educated in Taipei, so he spoke good Mandarin. And he spoke English well too. It was after years when I knew that they never knew we were Taiwanese. I mean people from the university alumni association here did not know we were Taiwanese. That was the time that I realized this was how the mainlanders looked at us in their eyes. I felt sad and from then on I decided not to attend their activities any more. They looked down upon us Taiwanese. That was thirty years ago. (A23, interview, Apr. 08, 2009)
What the interviewee describes here is the realization she and her husband had when they found out that the members of the Taiwan University Alumni Association in Vancouver were mostly mainlanders and they would talked about the Taiwanese in a negative tone at the gatherings. They did this blatantly with the presence of the interviewee without knowing that she and her husband were Taiwanese, for the couple spoke Mandarin and English so well that the mainlanders took it for granted that they could not possibly be Taiwanese. The Taiwanese were deemed lower in social rank and it was thought that they could never speak Mandarin without an accent.

In another example, an interviewee revealed that something that was so natural it was taken for granted became conspicuous and called for a reaction only after she came to Canada and had the chance to observe what was happening in Taiwan from a distance:

(Mrs. A43) I remember that Chu-yu Sung was just appointed the Chief of Government Information Office. And he suppressed the Taiwanese language by ordering that the puppet plays and Taiwanese opera must be performed in Mandarin; and there were only limited time slots for TV shows in Taiwanese. Many restrictions like these. I remember a news report regarding how a fisherman in Lu-gang suffered from a big loss because he did not understand the weather forecast which was broadcasted in Mandarin. It made you angry to know news like this. Although they could not control what language you used in Vancouver, when you saw this kind of language policy being implemented, it made you even more reluctant to speak in Mandarin. Sometimes I would even forget that I did speak Mandarin! (A43, interview, Apr. 23, 2011)
Through the interaction with all these types of “Chinese” the Taiwanese immigrants were given the chance to reconsider who they really were, in contrast to those who were supposedly their fellow people yet hardly treated them as equals. For some of the interviewees it was the cultural shock in encounters in Vancouver that made them see things differently. For others the Taiwanese Canadian Association and the counter-narratives it presented to the community helped the transformation (or merely fine tuning depending on various factors) to take place. In the next section, we will turn to a different type of experience which might also contribute to the increased bonding of a Taiwanese community: the interaction with the local Vancouverites.

5.3 Racism in Vancouver?

When asked about the experience of interacting with other groups after arriving in Vancouver, especially Caucasian locals, some interviewees seemed confused about the term “racism” used in the question and had to think hard to search for any such occasions in their memory. The reaction itself was meaningful, for it appeared that racism was not part of this interactional experience for some. One interviewee gave an example:

I don’t know if anyone mentioned this to you that in early years when we came here, the government paid you to learn English. They gave us $52 dollars weekly. So when I first came here, I was paid by the government to learn English for half a year…. The tuition was free. The rent was $100, and I had, $52 times four, which is about two hundred dollars a month. After deducting the rent, $100 was enough to survive in 1972…. They paid you to learn English, and after you get a job, you pay
for the taxes. I think this is a great investment…. I think Canadians are friendly, and I don’t recall anything discriminative. This may be due to Canadian government’s multi-cultural policy. (A42, interview, Apr. 22, 2011)

It is commonly reported by the interviewees that in the 1960s and 1970s the immigration policies were encouraging and most local people were open-minded towards the newcomers. Another interviewee remembered that it was rather the competition in the workplace than discrimination that brought frustration to some people who might wrongly attribute what they experienced to discrimination.

(Mr. A43) I got my Third Class (Power Engineering Certificate) in 1981, and all the workers under me got their certificate in the 1950s. I was yellow in race, and I got my certificate in the 1980s, so they were reluctant to follow my lead although the union sent me there to be the stationed engineer. And my English was different from theirs. But my boss liked me very much, so he told them: “If you can’t understand what Oliver says, ask him one hundred times before you come to me.” (A43, interview, Apr. 23, 2011)

Through daily interaction with white Canadians at work, the interviewee gradually took these people to be his fellow citizens and vice versa. It can be said to be a weakening of conspicuous (physical for example) ethnic boundaries while a perceived fellowship and trust was established.
These examples, however, are not enough to conclude that Vancouver has always been a friendly town for Taiwanese immigrants. Some of them experienced a very different life in Vancouver. The “go back to where you are from” is probably one of the most clichéd phrases to be used against the aliens.

When I just came here and started a job, they (white people) would tell me to “go back” from time to time. And I said: “You go back!” And they said “why?” I said: “The land belongs to the Indians. And you are neither Indians nor Eskimos.” They were so angry when I said that…. After a few rounds, they would not start the fight with you anymore. They know you are not to be intimidated easily. (A45, interview, June 15, 2011)

An even worse incident was never to be forgotten by the interviewee:

There is one thing which happened to A41 that still makes me feel hurt even now. My family and A41 were very close. And there was one day we went to a park and exercised there. It was a hot day, and we were all exhausted and laid down on the grass for a break. A41 also laid there under a tree. There came a white man taking a leak and sprinkled drops of urine on A41’s face that woke him up. He was so infuriated and he quarreled with that man. We were educated and did not know how to quarrel, not to mention to quarrel in English. Then this white man said to A41 and all of us ‘Go back to China!’ That was the high tide of anti-Asian sentiments then. None of us knew how to quarrel in English. An idea came up and I replied to him:
“Go back to jungle!”… White people really looked down on us at that time…

(Interviewer: When did it happen?) It’s either 1974 or 1975. (A47, interview, June 28, 2011, Italics added.)

In addition to the experience of discrimination in this incident, another thing that is worth noticing is another common feature of discriminative talk: the incapability or indifference to find out the actual ethnic background of the discriminated party. Tags are used randomly. In this case it was exactly the phrase “Go back to China” that gave the interviewee a chance to get a sense of how Chinese were seen in some locals’ mind. It would be overstating to say experiences like this would naturally make all Taiwanese even more unwilling to be categorized as Chinese. But for some people in the community it was an offence to be deemed Chinese partly due to reasons like this.

The same interviewee who witnessed what happened to her friend just described also mentioned one thing that she found discriminative:

After I arrived, I took a part-time job at St. Paul’s Hospital for five hours a day. It was 1977 when I was pregnant. I asked my supervisor that other pregnant women workers were assigned with lesser workload, and I request the same treatment. The supervisor was unfair when he gave other people the benefit and did not apply that to me…. Other (pregnant) white co-workers were assigned jobs that can be done sitting, and I had to stand there all day. I was a dietician’s aid so I had to collect all dietary reports of patients, prepare for specific fluid food according to the dietician’s
instructions, and deliver the food to patients. So I did feel the discrimination. (A47, interview, June 28, 2011)

After filing a formal complaint to the administration department of the hospital, the interviewee was eventually given the equal treatment she was entitled to. This and other similar experiences she brought up in the interview made her come to the conclusion that although some individuals might be discriminative against immigrants, if one dares to fight for his or her rights, this is still a society that prioritizes justice and fairness. And that is a sharp contrast to the discriminative treatment of Taiwanese by the mainlanders in Taiwan. For some Taiwanese immigrants, even encounters with the locals in Vancouver would give them the opportunity to reflect upon their identity.

There is one more way in which some Taiwanese immigrants feel that they are somehow different from the Chinese immigrants. It is the intention to blend in this host society. In a sense this might partly explain why some locals are hostile to new immigrants. Dr. A04, who has always been promoting the idea that Taiwanese Canadians should place the interest of Canadian society in front of their home country Taiwan, once mentioned what his Caucasian friend complained to him:

Richmond…a sudden influx of immigrants. I have a patient who is also a church brother of mine. He is white and he’s born here. He lives here and he retires here. He saw a lot of signs on Aberdeen and so on…with only Chinese characters on them. It’s less common now. He took it a big issue. [He said] ‘I feel like a stranger. This is my hometown!’ This person is not a racist, he’s a generous person. His daughter was
married to a black American. The man called his father-in-law by Mr. So-and-so.

One day he told his son-in-law that “no, you call me daddy.” And the tears fell from his eyes. Not because he was black, but that he was of illegitimate birth. He never had a father…. And another son-in-law of his was a Japanese Canadian. (A04, interview, Aug. 13, 2010, emphasis added.)

Dr. A04 used this example to explain how tendency for self-enclosure for immigrants might create walls between citizens. And that could be one of the major sources of ethnic tension or even discrimination.

What then, do we make of the seemingly contradictory experiences of the interviewees with regard to racism that have led to a shared and positive interpretation of what happened? This is especially an intriguing question as the province of British Columbia, or generally the Canadian society, has a long history of distrust and racism against Asian and African immigrants. Some Taiwanese Canadians that came between the 1960s and the 1970s witnessed discrimination, while for others friendship and open-mindedness were everywhere—from government agencies to neighbours. But most of them come to a similar belief that those who complain about racism are oftentimes those who refuse to assimilate to the lifestyle and the system here. And the idea of hardworking recognition by the mainstream society (respect) is widely shared by most of the interviewees, with stories after stories to support it. This may not be the place to discuss and debate the issue of explicit/implicit racism in Vancouver; nor is this pool of 62 informants representative enough to generalize how Taiwanese immigrants suffered or didn’t suffer from racism. It may suffice to say that from the life experience of these people, racism in the host society did not
stand in their way to happiness as did the government of their sending country, which
propagandized that the Taiwanese people were the fellow countrymen of those that emigrated
to Taiwan in the late 1940s.

5.4 Concluding Remarks

Coming from a closed social system in which all knowledge inputs and worldviews
were instilled by an authoritarian government, early Taiwanese immigrants in the 1960s and
1970s had the first chance in their lives to see a different world in which they learned to see
things differently, to think differently, and to act differently. These new experiences would
eventually change their conception of the new world as much as of the society and their
ethnic roots. This includes, certainly, the change in how they see themselves through the
numerous encounters on the streets, in workplaces, and with neighbours. In a sense this is a
process of old worldview and categorizing knowledge being contested, and that calls for a
modification in view. We now turn to the group and institutional level to see how encounters
in different social realms affected how Taiwanese immigrants see themselves as new
members of Canadian society.
6 When in Rome: the Experience of Civil Society Participation

Governance in a multicultural society can be rather different from that in a society promoting a singular national identity, in that all cultural heritages and practices are given (or claimed to be given) due respect and assistance from the authorities. When interests and deeper values of cultures collide in the host society, a challenge occurs to the claim that newly introduced cultures and immigrants’ ways of life are truly accepted. It is not just a test for the governments of the host society, but also a chance to tease out a modified, sometimes enriched, imagined community or a common ground for cohabitation. On the other hand, certainly, the new members to the host society are encouraged, sometimes forced, to adapt to new values and cultural practices of the mainstream society.

In the previous chapters we have seen how the Taiwanese Canadian community strove to endure the haunting political surveillance of the Taiwanese state machine on foreign soil, which led to the forming of community organizations in which a variety of functions were carried out to survive settlement in Canadian society. What we have only slightly touched on is how these groups or individuals manage to handle things in a Canadian way that has been foreign to these Taiwanese, who came from a country in the 1960s and 1970s in which democracy and the understanding of due process of law were merely propaganda under the reign of the Martial Law and people were used to acting and thinking in a docile and loyal way to avoid direct or indirect violence by the government. A social learning of realizing, recognizing, and protecting a citizen’s human and natural rights becomes not merely an adaptive process to the host society but, more importantly, an important aspect of Taiwanese immigrants’ conception of what Canadian society is about and what it means or
can mean to be a Taiwanese Canadian—in short, it becomes a meaning-yielding experience for those who take part in civic action: political or non-political, through organizations or by oneself. In a Deweyan sense the Taiwanese Canadians, or any applicable immigrant groups in their own way, are creating something called the Taiwanese Canadians through their complex relations with various actors: the Taiwanese government, the friends and relatives in Taiwan, the Canadian government, the locals, and the folks in the same Taiwanese community. This is a much richer and profound change than simply learning different etiquette at the dining table. This is a reconstruction of a way of living, a new identity.

Medical practice is an especially good example, as western medicine has swept the world with its advanced surgical effectiveness and the development of its knowledge of the nature of diseases and human anatomy. And yet traditional medicinal practice has been there in Asian cultures for over two thousand years. When Asian immigrants landed in Canada, they also brought in their knowledge, experience, and confidence in how ailments were perceived and tackled in their origin societies. Western or mainstream medicine and health care these immigrants can receive in Canadian society is not an easy substitute for something that is more complex than just curing sickness. It involves how people from different cultures define health, illness, medical practice, and the right to regulate one’s body and lifestyle. The derivative issues, moreover, can be social, ethnic, and even political. These are all related to the issues of how people from different backgrounds learn from each other and whether or not a genuine multicultural society, within which mutual respect between cultures is guaranteed to prevail, works and works sustainably.

In the case of Taiwanese immigrants in Vancouver, there exist various paths of integration into the fabric of Canadian society and reconstruction of a new self-understanding.
One that is worth attention in terms of how cultural differences come to resolution and mutual understanding is Taiwanese physicians’ fight for the existence, recognition, and the rights for their traditional medicinal practice. Two of the most prominent pioneers on these issues and four cases of a *cause célèbre* will be discussed in the following sections. These examples point to an important experience of Taiwanese immigrants’ adaptation and social learning in the Canadian society: the interaction with politicians and party politics which has been alien or at best negative in their old days in Taiwan. To argue how that affects Taiwanese Canadians’ changing vision of the world, we will also look at the examples of them fighting blacklist practice through the help of Canadian politicians. We will also give an example of how Taiwanese Canadians resort to the civil society when politicians are not around to make things happen. It is hoped that through the juxtaposition of these related yet different examples that a panorama of Taiwanese Canadians’ settlement and social learning process can be duly represented and analyzed.

### 6.1 Fighting for the Recognition of Traditional Chinese Medicine

In the following section we will look at the case of A36 and his colleagues’ fight for the legal rights of the traditional Chinese medicine they practised as an occupation which had been under unfair regulation or even discrimination in some extreme situations. Through the fight for their survival and rights they learned how the system works and what they could do to really get things done properly.
6.1.1 Traditional Chinese Medicine in Canada

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), medical practices from a Chinese heritage that are shared by practitioners in Asian societies influenced by Chinese medical culture, including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan in addition to China itself, has gone a long way in making mainstream Canadian society recognize its existence as a medical profession and its value to the society. The term traditional Chinese medicine often refers to two main categories in the traditional medical practice: acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine.\(^{32}\) While Canada opened up and welcomed immigrants from all over the world in the 1970s, the traditional medical practice of Asians was not paid due attention and corresponding policy considerations and adjustments were not made until the 1990s.

The Food and Drugs Act of Canada was enacted in 1920 and went through significant modification in 1954. The Food and Drugs Act clearly distinguishes medicines from food for the purpose of regulating their production, distribution, and consumption. For any product to be advertised and sold as a drug, a Drug Identification Number (DIN) is mandatory. The application for a DIN involves a complicated process to submit proof of medical effects of the product. Even when a substance or product of Chinese traditional medicine is filed for approval as a drug or medicinal product, terms such as “tonic” (“bu”) and “purative” (“qing”) are forbidden to appear on the label, as these terms are not part of the “modern” terminology of medical practice—modern from the perspective of Western

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\(^{32}\) Though this is not quite an accurate distinction between various forms of medical practice under the Chinese medicinal tradition, it is commonly accepted that the “intrusive” (if borrowing the term from Western medicine to describe it) practice like acupuncture is a different genre in contrast to the more commonly used herbal ingredients-based medical treatment. Both of these methods and their supporting knowledge, however, are based on the philosophy linking the external universe with the “little cosmos” in the corporeal existence of human body. And a balance between these two systems is considered the most important factor in keeping one healthy. In the following discussion we will use “Chinese medicine” instead of “Chinese herbal medicine” to make it succinct.
medicine. It is also specified in the Act that when advertising either a food or a drug, no curative descriptions of the product can be claimed for forty-six kinds of disease including cancer, cardiac diseases, hypertension, and diabetes.

The regulations regarding herbs and botanical substances were further strengthened in the 1980s. In 1985, a committee called the “Expert Advisory Committee on Herbs and Botanical Preparations” was established by the federal Department of Health. Later in 1989, “the Committee’s assessment, combined with additional consultations, led to the publication of Schedule 705, which outlines those substances not permitted for use in or as food and those substances acceptable as foods under specific conditions” (Lafreniere & Chenier, 1997, p. 3).

Schedule 705 and its subsequent regulative policies proved to have a huge impact on the TCM practitioners in Canada. Out of the 64 herbs suggested by the Committee to be regulated as drugs, 20 were commonly used in TCM as medicine. As these herbs were placed under strict regulation due to their potential hazards to the human body—for some of them were poisonous—Schedule 705 in practice banned the use of these herbs in traditional medicine, which directly limited the options of prescription for the physicians in TCM. This was even more infuriating when the government promised to listen to what the traditional medical practitioners of TCM had to say about this and yet later broke its promise and released new regulations without prior consultation.

Both the Food and Drugs Act and Schedule 705 were legislated without consideration for and consultation with the immigrant communities that took traditional medicine as a common way of keeping themselves healthy. The knowledge and presumptions behind the legislation were based primarily on Western medicine, which had a rather different
conception of health and medical practice. What is considered to be poisonous for the human organism due to its chemical components in a product or herb may be used intentionally to fight against a more malignant focus in a disease.

On top of their ignorance of and indifference to the knowledge base and practice of herbs and medicine in TCM, the authorities did not recognize the status of the physicians as professionals. Acupuncturists and physicians in TCM were not considered to be professionals in medicine until the late 1990s. The first acupuncturist licence in the Province of British Columbia was issued in 1997, and the traditional medical practitioners in TCM were allowed to use the title of Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine (Dr. of TCM) starting in 2000. These official recognitions did not come easily. A couple of pioneers led the charge against the distrust and misunderstanding of traditional Chinese medical practice, and two of the most revered pioneers are Taiwanese immigrants to Vancouver.

6.1.2 Dr. Joseph Wu and the Legislation of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Although acupuncturists trained under Traditional Chinese Medicine had started to lobby the British Columbia government for regulation as early as the 1970s, acupuncture was not designated a part of the health profession until December of 1999 when the first group of acupuncturists were granted the title of “registered acupuncturist” under the Acupuncture Regulation created under the Health Profession Act in 1996 (CTCMA, 2009). A regulatory body named the “College of Acupuncturists of British Columbia” (CABC) was formed at the same time to regulate the training and licensing of the acupuncture profession. CABC was later reconstituted into the “College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of British Columbia” (CTCMA) in June 1999 and the associated regulation
was passed in 2000. Starting in 2003, a valid registration issued by CTCMA became a required condition for those who practise traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture in British Columbia. Since then, CTCMA has played the most important role in regulating the practice of Chinese medicine and acupuncture in British Columbia. The Province of British Columbia is the first jurisdiction in North America to give acupuncture and TCM a legal status as a medical profession. It took people like Dr. Joseph Wu and his colleagues almost ten years to make all this happen.

Dr. Joseph Wu (or Yun-Teng Wu, 1938-2003) and his family immigrated from Taiwan to Toronto in 1969. He worked for Ontario Hydro as an engineer. In 1977, he returned to Taiwan to treat his spinal injuries acquired at work and stayed there to learn the theories and practice of TCM. In 1988, to further the education of his children, Dr. Wu and his family moved back to Canada. This time, they settled in Vancouver because Dr. Wu’s son was enrolled in the University of British Columbia.

When Dr. Wu returned to Canada from Taiwan, he soon realized that the traditional Chinese medicines were considered food or supplementary health products, while therapeutic practices were not deemed to be medical practice. What he saw was not acceptable to Dr. Wu, as he was raised and educated by his grandfather who was a TCM practitioner and taught the young Dr. Wu to cherish his own cultural heritage. It did not take Dr. Wu long to decide to devote his time and energy to preserving the unappreciated knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine and to promoting legislative regulation of Chinese medicine to give the practitioners the status they deserved, in addition to giving patients another option for medical treatment.
In 1992, when Schedule 705 was published, Dr. Wu started to lobby the government and to help the practitioners of different therapeutic traditions to fight together as a group. Dr. Wu and his colleagues established an organization called the “Committee for the Rights of Traditional Chinese Medicine” in April 1994. With the cooperation of other groups in British Columbia, the community of TCM practitioners and acupuncturists wielded enough power to urge the provincial government to gradually understand their cause and demands. Still, there was rocky road ahead for their fight. The authorities apparently chose to ignore and bypassed their participation in the development of TCM related regulations. Promises to consult the TCM community before any policies were decided were broken, and new legal regulations such as Schedule 705 and the later Drugs Directorate Guideline in Traditional Herbal Medicines (effective from March 1996) were passed without taking account of the suggestions of the TCM practitioners to respect and consider the ethnic cultural backgrounds of TCM practices.33

In the spring of 1997, several groups including Dr. Wu’s initiated a campaign of lobbying, petition, and protest to the federal government requesting that Schedule 705 be abolished and that the opinions of the TCM community be considered in future regulative actions and legislation. Schedule 705 was revoked in April 1997 and an eighteen-person advisory committee was formed by Health Canada to offer suggestions regarding effective regulation of herbal and Chinese medicines. This committee was later separated from Health Canada and was to report to Parliament from October, 1997. From then on, the voice of the TCM practitioners was to be heard and to play a significant role in the legislation of TCM related matters. The establishment of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine

33 Shi Jie Ri Bao (World Journal), April 26, 1998.
Practitioners and Acupuncturists of British Columbia (CTCMA) as the only regulative body under the provincial government (but not an official government agency) marked a milestone in the fight led by Dr. Wu and others.

After the establishment of CTCMA, the several most active groups of TCM practitioners merged and in 2001 formed a professional organization, the “British Columbia Qualified Acupuncturists and Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners Association” (QATCMA). It became the co-operative non-governmental organization representing the interests of the TCM professionals. Dr. Wu played a significant role, not just in pushing the government to pay attention to the voice of the TCM community but also in the co-operation between groups of TCM professionals. His enthusiasm and passion for traditional Chinese medicine and the future developments of this profession with cultural significance inspired another physician to take over Dr. Wu’s calling and continue the fight after his untimely death.

6.1.3 Promoting Coverage of Acupuncture Under the Medical Services Plan of B.C.

A36, who immigrated to Canada in 1996, had been a licensed TCM practitioner and acupuncturist in Taiwan for years before he moved to Vancouver. After knowing Dr. Joseph Wu and his cause, Dr. A36 determined to follow his lead to fight for the rights of TCM practitioners as well as that of a rich cultural heritage. Dr. A36 soon joined the QATCMA and became an important leader.

The first mission that Dr. A36 and his comrades faced was the Medical Services Plan premium-assistance coverage issue. Although acupuncture and TCM practitioners had been placed under regulation by the provincial government in 1996 and 2001 through legislation
and the establishment of the College (CTCMA), the system was more like a self-regulating community recognized by the provincial government. The TCM practitioners did not feel the respect and recognition as a real profession equal to “doctors” of Western medicine. It was even specified in relevant regulation that the title “Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine” must not be misleading to the public in relation to the “doctor” in regular medical professions. It was reasonable for the government to make a distinction between different types of medical professions, yet the message between the lines was to the TCM “doctors” and traditional medical practitioners a distrust of their existence and expertise. That called for a change beyond setting up a licensing agency (CTCMA) and allowing the TCM traditional medical practitioners to call themselves doctors. Dr. A36 and his colleagues targeted the Medical Services Plan of British Columbia.

Promoting the coverage of acupuncture practice and TCM medicine under the MSP premium-assistance program had long been a goal of the TCM community. This was not just in their economic interest because of the increased number of people who might turn to TCM if the government offered coverage and assistance in TCM doctor visits. It was also an official recognition of TCM practitioners as “doctors” equal to those trained and practiced in Western medicine. For many of the TCM community, it was not an easy task since the legislation of TCM took almost a decade to make happen.

The TCM community had been trying to convince the provincial government to include TCM practices under MSP coverage since the 1990s, and the response was always that TCM practitioners were not listed as professional medical practitioners under the Health Act of Canada. This did not make sense to the TCM practitioners, as TCM practice had been listed in the provincial Health Profession Act in 1996 as one of the medical professions in
British Columbia and other “alternate” practices such as massage therapy, physiotherapy, and chiropractic had already been covered by the MSP program.

The breakthrough came after a change of strategy in lobbying the government. Being amateurs in politics, TCM practitioners like Dr. A36 had always thought that they only had to get the support of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), officials of Health Canada, other related health profession departments of the provincial government, and the public. The lobbying was unsuccessful until they realized that they needed to talk to the right people: those who had more say on these matters, the caucus of the BC Liberal Party in this case. In a regular acupuncture session, Harry Bloy, a British Columbia MLA who was also a patient of Dr. A36, suggested that Dr. A36 and his association (QATCMA) should pay a visit to the caucus meetings in Victoria and present their cause and demands to them. It proved to be a valuable pointer later on.

A team of five led by key leaders of the TCM community including Dr. A36 (the Vice President of QATCMA), Dr. Yong Hui Hu (President of QATCMA), and Chris Vallee (immediate past president of QATCMA) was formed. They went to Victoria in May of 2007 through the arrangement of BC MLA Richard T. Lee (Liberal, North Burnaby). They made a presentation to the caucus of the BC Liberal Party and later to health department officials and MLAs of other parties. It was a successful trip and the response was friendly. In less than six months, the Health Minister of British Columbia George Abbott made an announcement that acupuncture would be included in the MSP premium-assistance program effective April of 2008. Vallee pointed out: “It’s definitely a milestone…. We’re more accepted, part of the medical system. Our medicine is proven and more recognized.”

Dr. A36 also summarized

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34 *Vancouver Sun*, October 6, 2007.
the significance of this success, indicating that for one thing, MSP would partially cover the medical expenses of acupuncture for low income British Columbians, who were 930,000 in number. This was definitely a good thing for the TCM profession as well as for the health care of the people of the province. The other significance lies in the fact that acupuncture became a designated medical practice. Still, there were more issues ahead for the TCM community, as other medical practices were not covered by the MSP. Herbal medication, for one thing, is much more complicated and it might take more years of campaigning before a further legislative change is made.

6.1.4 The Anti-Bill C-51 Coalition and the Chinese Medicine Controversy

On April 8, 2008, the controversial Bill C-51 had its first reading. The Bill covered a tentative federal government program to further regulate the use of herbs and botanical preparations. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and herbs were categorized in the same group of substances as Natural Health Products (NHPs). NHP and TCM producers, vendors, traditional medical practitioners, and even end users (consumers) were infuriated by the fact that the Bill was read without consultation having occurred with business representatives and practitioners of TCM. The Bill was not accurate in defining what it meant to be a “therapeutic product” and this grey area of definition gave the authorities the right to search the suspected sellers’ stores, confiscate any suspicious items, and to freeze the bank accounts of suspected violators without reasonable grounds and prior search warrants. The TCM community and concerned individuals and groups, including A36’s association QATCMA, formed a coalition to fight against further legislative action and future implementation of this bill:
We are against Bill C-51 because it reflects a government hostility towards NHP, TCM, and CHR. The police, for example, are required to obtain a court warrant to search for marijuana or cocaine, but if Bill C-51 is passed, the government will be able to search the property of a TCM practitioner or merchant without a search warrant.... We represent Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) practitioners, TCM educators, TCM merchants and stakeholders, and the public, and have formed a Coalition against Bill C-51. We believe that our duty is to ensure public health, health freedom and consumer rights, and to recognize the traditional culture and needs of multicultural communities. (The Coalition Against Bill C-51, 2008)

Two arguments against the bill were: (a) that it was not reasonable to regulate TCM as health food; and (b) the officials of Health Canada would be given unconstitutional power even exceeding that of law enforcement departments.

6.1.4.1 Treating Traditional Chinese Medicine as Health Food

Dr. A36 pointed out that most TCM prescriptions are complex and rely on multiple herbs and TCM preparations to be effective. If the government categorized TCM as “therapeutic products” like other NHPs to be regulated in this Bill, as they did in their earlier attempt in Schedule 705, a lot of TCM medicines (especially those deemed poisonous yet critical in TCM prescriptions) would disappear from the market as it was almost impossible to apply for a DIN for each and every TCM in a short period of time. The TCM business would be seriously damaged in practice, even though the intention of legislation might have been for the best security of the Canadian public. A deeper worry for Dr. A36 and other
people related to TCM was that this crude process of legislation did not take into consideration the multicultural background of the entire TCM practice; the tentative Bill was based on prejudice and misunderstanding of TCM and its use in traditional therapeutic methods.

TCM doctors were not the only ones opposed to Bill C-51. Shawn Buckley, chairperson of the Natural Health Products Protection Association (NHPPA), also spoke out against the Bill. He said that choosing “non-traditional therapy” was a basic human right. Once the Bill was passed, most NHP producers would be forced to discontinue selling to the public, and this would force people to purchase prescription drugs produced by big pharmaceutical companies. And this, according to Buckley, is a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

6.1.4.2 Controversial Abuse of Administrative Discretion

An even more serious effect of the Bill was the expansion of administrative power. Bill C-51 did not define “therapeutic product,” which seemed to suggest that officers of Health Canada were in the position to make the call. Dr. A36 and his colleagues summarized the impacts of Bill C-51 for TCM practitioners and the public and sought their support:

(1) Impacts to the TCM Dealers

---Your license can be suspended based on the decision of Health Minister at any time. (Section 19.6(2))

---The therapeutic products you sell will need the proof of clinical trial showing it effective and safe. (Section 18.2-5)
---The investigators can hold or confiscate your products indefinitely. You will be charged for the transportation and storage fees involved. (Section 23.2-3)

---The Health Minister can uncover your business secrets without your consent. (Section 21.1)

(2) Impacts to Doctors of TCM

---Although you are a qualified doctor with the privilege to give prescriptions, the regulation on drugs is the jurisdiction of the federal government which makes your prescriptions applicable to the Bill.

---If you give prescriptions on uncertified TCMs, you may be fined as much as five million dollars and/ or face prison time for two years. (Section 12.1 and 31.1)

---The investigators can enter your premises and order you to stop selling products in your clinic. And they can seize or confiscate these products on your costs for transportation and storage. (Section 23.2-3)

---The Health Minister can make public of your personal information without your consent. (Section 20.9)

(3) Impacts to Those Who Use TCM

---It is illegal to give your family and friends uncertified therapeutic products. (Section 12.1)

---The commonly used TCM items (as in food preparation) may be off of the market due to the new regulations.
Over seventy percent of NHP including TCM will disappear from the stores as new regulations are too strict and unreasonable for the use of them.

The investigators have the right to enter your premises without your consent. And no compensation would be applicable if any damage were made to your properties during investigation. (Section 23.4) (QATCMA, 2008)

Seeing the Bill as a major threat not just to the survival of the entire TCM practice but also to the rights of the public, the “Coalition Against Bill C-51” organized protests and petitions, and resorted to the media. Health Minister Tony Clement responded to the accusations immediately and claimed that the new Bill was not to target NHP but to regulate medicine, medical equipment, cells, human tissue and organs. He said that it was a vicious and unethical rumour to say the Bill would decrease the choice for the public on vitamins and herbal products. NHPs, according to Minister Clement, were still regulated by the “Natural Health Products Regulations” effective from January 2004. The response did not relieve the TCM and NHP communities of the worries about increasing governmental power over their practice. The response avoided addressing what it means to be a “therapeutic product” and whether or not governmental inspection would violate civil rights when investigating on pure speculation and suspicion.

The federal government did not proceed to force the controversial Bill C-51 through because it triggered so much criticism and protest. The role Dr. A36 and his colleagues in the QATCMA played in this battle was to educate and to appeal to the public for their understanding of the nature of TCM and why a choice of alternative remedies was important, especially in a self-proclaimed multicultural society. It was not their intention to avoid
governmental regulation. It was the ignorance and crude process of legislation with no respect to medical practice of the minority groups that made this Bill unacceptable.

6.1.5 The Harmonized Sales Tax Exemption Campaign

One of the main motivations in the TCM practitioners’ fight against legislative actions taken by the provincial and federal governments was to prove the value of TCM remedies to society and to establish the credibility and recognition of TCM practice as a profession. The direct and expected result was certainly in the interest of the practitioners and those related to TCM community, such as vendors and producers of TCM preparations, but the vision went far beyond business interests. As Taiwanese and other Asian communities were deeply influenced by the philosophy and practice of TCM, it was essential for the host society to show due respect and understanding to these immigrant groups’ ways of life and their traditions, as long as those traditions did not conflict with the laws and habits of the Canadian society. Dr. Joseph Wu and A36, as TCM practitioners as well as new members to the Canadian society, did more than simply defend their right to legally practise their professions. They also promoted their existence and expertise to the mainstream society and asked for recognition accordingly. The battlefield could be extended to the federal level if unfair arrangements were made there for the TCM community and for the immigrant communities as a whole. The fight for the exemption from the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) was one example of the actions Dr. A36 and his colleagues took to have TCM recognized as a medical profession. This was also a journey of learning for Dr. A36 and his comrades, as immigrants, to learn to fight as insiders—or, as Canadians.

Starting in April of 2008, acupuncture practice was incorporated into the benefit program of the Medical Services Plan in British Columbia, along with other health care
practices such as physiotherapy and chiropractic. Due to its complex nature, especially its use of herbal prescriptions, the medical practice of doctors of TCM was not incorporated in MSP. This was so even though the province had recognized TCM traditional medical practitioners as “doctors” and had established an agency, the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of B.C. (CTCMA), to examine, regulate and certify the qualifications of TCM practitioners and acupuncturists. But at the federal level TCM practice was not defined and treated as a profession. As the federal government decided to promote the implementation of HST in Canada, the issue of whether TCM was a medical profession (which had been dealt with in the battle against the provincial government of British Columbia) returned to the agenda of Dr. A36 and his colleagues at the QATCMA. According to a letter from the Minister of Finance to the TCM community in 2005, TCM practices were exempted from Goods and Services Tax (GST) because they were covered by MSP and therefore considered medical services, yet the newly instated HST did not consider TCM practices to be medical services and excluded them from the list of HST exemptions. This called for action.

Beginning by following old lobbying strategies, Dr. A36 and his team appealed to Members of Parliament, which proved fruitless. Taking suggestions from friends in politics, Dr. A36 and his team took a new strategy like they did when they tried to promote acupuncture being covered by MSP in British Columbia by going directly to the caucus of the ruling party. *They tried to stand in the federal government’s shoes and convince it accordingly.* In a letter sent to the Minister and to Deputy Premier Colin Hansen, Dr. A36 requested on behalf of QATCMA and the TCM community in general that “the health care services provided by Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists to
exempted from the HST slated to be in effect on July 1, 2010.” The rationales were as follows:

1. TCM/Acupuncture profession has been regulated as a health care practitioner under the Health Profession Act (HPA) since 1996 in British Columbia. Since then, its regulatory body, the College of TCM Practitioners and Acupuncturists of BC (CTCMA), has been established for handling the registration task and became one of the twenty four Health Regulatory Organizations (HRO) in BC.

2. Commenced on April 1st 2008, TCM Acupuncture provided by CTCMA registrants has been adopted into the BC provincial MSP Supplementary Benefit program. ICD9 codes are assigned for conditions treated by TCM practitioners who shall be considered as health care professional, and thus services provided shall be exempt from HST in British Columbia.

3. It is definitely a win-win situation for the provincial government to exempt TCM/Acupuncture services from HST, for it will alleviate the burden of health care system, benefit the health of British Columbians as well as minimize the provincial health budget ... If each registrant provides TCM/Acupuncture services to 15 recipients daily, it will add up to 6.7 million recipients every year. If all these recipients receive TCM services instead of services provided by general physicians who were paid $30 for each visit under the MSP program, it can possibly save the provincial health care budget to the tune of $200 million per year!

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4. By taking this action today, you are making this health option more affordable for British Columbians. (Ibid.)
Honourable Colin Hansen

Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier
PO Box 9048 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

February 8, 2010

Dear Honourable Minister Hansen,

On behalf of the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) community, I am writing to request that the health care services provided by Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists be exempt from the HST slated to be in effect on July 1, 2010.

Since 1996, TCM and Acupuncture services have been legislated and regulated by the College of TCM Practitioners and Acupuncturists of BC (CTCMA) according to BC Health Profession Act (HPA). TCM Practitioners and Acupuncturists are legitimate health care professionals providing natural and effective health care services to British Columbians as well as working and complimenting other health care services. As per Canada Health Act, TCM Practitioners and Acupuncturists are also qualified health care professionals.

In April 2008, the TCM acupuncture service was incorporated into the supplementary benefit program of MSP in BC along with other health care services as chiropractic therapy and physiotherapy etc. Currently, there are 1,480 CTCMA registrants in the province. If each registrant provides TCM services to 15 recipients daily, it will add up to 6.7 million recipients every year. If all these recipients receive TCM services instead of services provided by general physicians whom were paid $30 for each visit under the MSP program (the cost of specialist is not included), it will save the provincial health care budget to the tune of $200 millions per year!

Based on the letter from the Ministry of Finance to the TCM Profession in 2005, we understand that TCM services in BC can be exempt from GST since it is covered by the health care plan in the province. If you can extend the TCM services exemption to HST, it will further encourage usage of the TCM services. Given the current provincial budget shortfall and skyrocketing health care budget, it is a win-win situation for the provincial government to exempt the TCM services from HST for it will alleviate the burden of the health care system, benefit the health of British Columbians as well as minimize the provincial health care budget.

The need for Traditional Chinese medicine services is growing stronger day by day in this province. The move to exempt the TCM services from HST will certainly be welcomed by numerous citizens from all walks of life. We sincerely hope you can make a favourable decision for the suppliers and users of the TCM services.

Sincerely Yours,

Dr. TCM
President of QATCMA

Figure 12 Dr. A36’s Letter to Minister of Finance Colin Hansen on February 8th, 2010. (the “rationale” list as an attached document with this letter) (© Dr. A36, by permission)
Exempting Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Profession Services from HST

Rationale:

The TCM/Acupuncture profession has been regulated in the province of British Columbia since 1996, and TCM/Acupuncture services have been adopted into the province’s MSP Supplementary Benefit Program along with Chiropractic therapy and Physiotherapy since April 2008.

Therefore, being considered as one of the province’s health care services, TCM/Acupuncture services should be exempt from HST when the services are rendered to British Columbians.

By taking this action, you are supporting the TCM/Acupuncture profession and making this health care service option more affordable for British Columbians. It will alleviate the burden of the province’s health care system and minimize the provincial health budget.

1. TCM Practitioners and Acupuncturists are Health Care Practitioners as per Canada Health Act “Health Care Practitioner” means “a person lawfully entitled under the law of a province to provide health services in the place in which the services are provided by that person”.

TCM/Acupuncture profession has been regulated as a health care practitioner under the Health Profession Act (HPA) since 1996 in British Columbia. Since then, its regulatory body, the College of TCM Practitioners and Acupuncturists of BC (CTCMA) has been established for handling the registration task and became one of the twenty four Health Regulatory Organizations (HRO) in BC.

http://www.ctcma.bc.ca

Figure 13 Dr. A36’s Rationales for TCM to be Exempted from HST, Page 1 (© Dr. A36, by permission)
Other than British Columbia, TCM/Acupuncture profession has also been regulated in Quebec (1991), Alberta (1993) and Ontario (2006). Currently, Newfoundland is also in the regulating process and is looking forward to completing the legislation in the spring of 2010.

2. The practice of TCM/Acupuncture satisfies the policy criteria for HST exemption in the province of British Columbia. *If a service is covered by the health care plan in a given province, it is exempt in that province*. Commenced on April 1\(^{st}\) 2008, TCM Acupuncture provided by CTCMA registrants has been adopted into the BC provincial MSP Supplementary Benefit program. ICD9 codes are assigned for conditions treated by TCM practitioners who shall be considered as health care professional, and thus services provided shall be exempt from HST in British Columbia.

3. It is definitely a win-win situation for the provincial government to exempt TCM/Acupuncture services from HST, for it will alleviate the burden of health care system, benefit the health of British Columbians as well as minimize the provincial health budget. The public demand of TCM/Acupuncture services is growing stronger day by day in this province. Currently, there are 1480 CTCMA registrants throughout the province. If each registrant provides TCM/Acupuncture services to 15 recipients daily, it will add up to 6.7 million recipients every year. If all these recipients receive TCM services instead of services provided by general physicians whom were paid $30 for each visit under the MSP program (the cost of specialist is not included), it can possibly save the provincial health care budget to the tune of $200 millions per year!

4. By taking this action today, you are making this health option more affordable for British Columbians.

Here we propose:

The government of British Columbia to adopt an objective approach to determine TCM/Acupuncture services be considered as health care services and consequently be exempt from HST when the services are rendered to an individual in the province of British Columbia started July 2010.
The federal government responded positively and soon decided to exempt acupuncture services from HST, but the decision did not benefit TCM practitioners and certified acupuncturists as it only applied to the acupuncture services offered by doctors recognized by the federal government—physicians of the Western medicine professions. Dr. A36 considered it to be a successful lobbying effort, as acupuncture was officially designated as a medical service nationwide. That was a big step towards a full recognition of TCM practice as a medical profession in Canada. According to Dr. A36, the next move was to form a national front of all TCM practitioners to lobby for the exemption of acupuncture services provided by TCM traditional medical practitioners. That would be an even bigger success for TCM traditional medical practitioners who were providing medical services and expertise while not being given a rightful recognition and appreciation.

6.1.6 Co-operation Issues in the TCM Community

Being deemed “alternative” medical practices, acupuncturists and practitioners of TCM had a common goal to advance acceptance and recognition from the public as well as from the authorities. This was not just a battle against prejudice and status quo of the mainstream medical practices, but also a campaign to gain the support of the general public. It was not an easy task and it took a joint venture to make it happen. Although Dr. A36, his predecessors and his colleagues had accomplished quite a few goals in promoting the acceptance of TCM medical services, it was the lack of solidarity in the TCM community in a broad sense that made it so much more difficult. The experience of the “civil war” between TCM member groups made Dr. A36 realize how different it could be between him, other
people from different Chinese backgrounds, and the locals, despite the fact that all of them shared the same cause and common interest in TCM practice.

In the cases of Dr. Wu and Dr. A36’s adventure to promote the visibility and recognition of TCM, there have not been irreconcilable differences between Taiwanese immigrants and other immigrants of different Chinese heritages, namely those from Hong Kong (speaking Cantonese), South East Asia or from China, as we might see in issues more related to politics. For example, in the campaign to persuade the provincial government to include acupuncture in the Medical Services Plan of British Columbia, the core team members were A36, Dr. Yong Hui Hu, Dr. Michael Chung, Dr. Xiao Feng Huang, and Dr. Chris Vallee. Three of them were Taiwanese Canadians (A36, Chung, and Huang) while Hu was Chinese descendant and Vallee was Canadian. They were the delegate group that went to Victoria and presented their cause and request to the caucus of B.C. Liberals and later successfully convinced the provincial government to recognize acupuncture as medical practice to be included in the MSP coverage. According to Dr. A36, Dr. Hu and other key members in the QATCMA who were of Chinese descent worked with Taiwanese immigrants quite well. In fact, some of them were the most active and devoted partners in the campaign.

Still, differences were spotted and Dr. A36 claimed that Taiwanese seemed to be more willing to participate in events and campaigns that led to benefits that were not obvious. Dr. A36 pointed out, to neutralize the slightly critical sense of that comment, that it was rather the difference between the idealists and those who were more practical than differences between the Chinese and the Taiwanese traditional medical practitioners in British Columbia.
Compared to the mild difference Dr. A36 observed between the Chinese and the Taiwanese Drs. of TCM, the difference between Canadian and Taiwanese traditional medical practitioners was very noticeable and sometimes confusing. In September of 2000, the British Columbia Qualified Acupuncturists and Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners Association (QATCMA) was established and registered for the purpose of protecting the rights of the qualified acupuncturists and TCM traditional medical practitioners. This organization was formed to co-operate with the semi-official agency, the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of British Columbia (CTCMA). The former was a professional non-profit organization and the latter a regulative body ensuring the best interest of the public. In 2001, after months of negotiation, the Canadian Acupuncturist and TCM Alliance, which was composed of five TCM organizations, decided to disband and join QATCMA in the common cause to fight for the interest of TCM practitioners. The marriage was celebrated by the TCM community and the public who were concerned about traditional medicine. People expected that the coalition would better advance the institutionalization of TCM practices in B.C. Later in 2008, after a long wait, QATCMA and the other largest group for qualified TCM practitioners in B.C., the Traditional Chinese Medicine Association of British Columbia or TCMABC, merged to continue the use of the name QATCMA.

The joy and seemingly promising future of the TCM community did not last long. Soon differences between QATCMA and the merged Alliance and TCMABC became severe and eventually led to the discontinuation of the cooperation and partnership under the name of QATCMA in 2010. Dr. A36 reflected upon the disagreements between old members of QATCMA and the later merged members from the Alliance or TCMABC and suspected that
there had been more differences in cultural dispositions than in professional training or expertise. As the Alliance and the TCMABC were primarily organizations of Canadian traditional medical practitioners, the ways their Taiwanese and Chinese colleagues ran the affairs of QATCMA and TCM related issues became the source of quarrel and dispute. According to Dr. A36, it all came down to difference in cultural habits that could not be neutralized by a shared cause and interests in common. This was a serious setback for solidarity among the TCM professionals in British Columbia as much as it was a realization for Dr. A36 personally to learn to communicate and co-operate with local Canadians. For him, it has been a chance to know more about this new hometown of his as an immigrant who only landed in 1996.

6.2 The Blacklist Goes International

In Chapter Three we discussed how the Taiwanese government’s policy of blacklist affected many Taiwanese Canadians’ lives and forced some of them to start a new life in North America. While things like this happened, how did Taiwanese Canadians react and fight for their rights? And what effects would their experience of fighting bring to their lives as Canadian citizens and to their identity reconfiguration? Through the example of the legislative movement of the Traditional Chinese Medicine profession, as in the case of A36 and his colleagues, we see how they learned the right way of lobbying, or the rules of the game in politics, to get what they considered to be their lawful rights and to try to change the public recognition of TCM practice. These were significantly achieved because of the help from politicians of different levels and the media exposure. In this entire journey of fighting, however, what they have learned is new and profound in terms of being active members of
the community they belong to. In the following two cases we will see how Taiwanese
Canadians brought the issue of the blacklist to the attention of politicians and undertook a
civil action, which changed their conception of politics.

6.2.1 Mr. A06’s Blacklist Case

It was a natural response to avoid involvement in public affairs for Taiwanese under
the Martial Law because the authoritarian government was above the law and became too
powerful to fight against. This also applied to overseas Taiwanese who emigrated abroad in
the 1960s through the 1980s since this was how they thought politics worked, and they
learned that the Taiwan government was still lurking around even in host societies through
consular offices and intelligence posts. This partly explains the tendency discussed in
Chapter Four for some of the Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver to refuse to participate in
any event organized by the Taiwanese Canadian Association (TCA), which had been deemed
by the consular office of Taiwan in Seattle to be a “pro-independence organization” (Cf. A43,
interview, Apr. 23, 2011, quoted earlier). They would worry about the chance of returning to
Taiwan being closed to them and about the safety of their family in Taiwan. For some other
Taiwanese Canadians, however, it was exactly through the fight for their natural rights to
visit their sending country to really become an active member of Canadian society. This
was a subtle change of the self-understanding of being a member of a democratic society in
contrast to being a docile subject under the Taiwan government that was yet to democratize
before the early 1990s. In this sense the action taken to combat the blacklist through
Canadian politics, be it successful or not, constitutes an integral part of these people’s
Canadian experience which changes the way they see themselves as members of a society.
Therefore it was not merely a fight against the Taiwan government but also an experience that changed their self image and identity as Taiwanese Canadians.

In Chapter Three, particularly in sections 3.2 and 3.2, we quoted the testimonies of Mr. A06 about his application for a visa to Taiwan being rejected, his being asked to go down to Seattle for an interview, and the close surveillance before and after he finally set his feet on Taiwan again. According to Mr. A06, it was because he chaired the TCA that he had so much trouble as to deprive him of the chance to visit his dying father at a hospital in Taiwan. How did he fight against this treatment and eventually manage to return to Taiwan while others had to wait until the blacklist policy was finally ended after 1992?

6.2.1.1 The Help from a Local Member of Legislative Assembly

In an interview we quoted from in Chapter Three Mr. A06 talked about how he sought help from local politicians:

After 1979 I was not allowed to go back…In 1981, around May,³⁶ I had a feeling that I might not have much chance to see my father ever again. He was very ill then. So I applied for the visa through normal procedure at Seattle. After about one and a half months there was neither notice nor returning the passport to me. I called and asked them what had happened to my Taiwan visa application. The man said: ‘It’s been rejected.’ I said: ‘You never told me why I had been rejected. At the very least you should send me back my passport.’ He did not answer the question. And there was once I was so angry that I went to Eileen Dailly, the then Member of Provincial

³⁶ The first application and the retrieval of Mr. A06’s passport actually happened in April instead of May, 1981.
Legislative Assembly. She made a phone call to the consulate office and then she told me to contact them again. And I did. The official (at the consulate office) said: ‘You wanted the passport back (while it was still in processing). It’s not our fault.’ This is like…as we put it in Hakka dialect that they ‘slap you in the mouth with a bat.’ (A06, interview, June 03, 2011, Italics added)

Since Mr. A06 had been a member and a long term volunteer for New Democratic Party (NDP), he went to Eileen Dailly, Member of Legislative Assemberly (MLA) of B.C., for help. What Eileen Dailly could do in this case, as a local Member of the Legislative Assembly in the Province of British Columbia, was limited. Mr. A06 had his passport back alright, but he was still not given the permission to return to Taiwan to visit his father. Mr. A06 went to Eileen Dailly for further help and asked if she could refer him to federal members of parliament to force the Taiwan government to take this issue more seriously. Dailly was enthusiastic about it and introduced Mr. A06 to Members of Parliament Margaret Mitchell (New Democratic Party, 1979-93) and Pat Carney (Conservative, 1980-88).

6.2.1.2 A Cross-Party Help from Local and National Politicians

When things turned out to be much difficult than a local MLA could handle, Dailly referred Mr. A06 to her acquaintance at NDP Member of Parliament (MP) Margaret Mitchell (New Democratic Party, 1979-93) for assistance. Mitchell immediately contacted Conservative MP Pat Carney (Conservative, 1980-88) who was about to join a delegate trip to Taiwan. Carney promised to help. She promised to write a letter and bring it directly to the related Foreign Affairs officials once she visited Taiwan in May, 1981. Shortly
afterwards, when Carney realized the trip had been cancelled, she contacted Mr. A06 again and told him that she had sent a letter (see Appendix 17) instead to the consular office or Coordination Council for North American Affairs (CCNAA, a substitute for a consulate general) in Seattle about the matter. At the same time, Margaret Mitchell also sent the CCNAA a letter regarding this matter (see Appendix 18). The pressure was effective enough to make a thrust, yet too gentle for a reasonable solution to take place. This time, after receiving Mr. A06’s application again, the CCNAA required Mr. A06 to write a statement to promise not to engage in any political activities during his stay in Taiwan:

After that I submitted the application over and over again, and they wrote me back a letter saying “you have to report in detail about your anti-government activities and talks.” But this is what they said over the phone. They did not put it this way in the letter.... And then on January 1st of 1982, the next year from the rejection, my father passed away. And I was so mad. (A06, interview, June 03, 2011)

Although he had no intention to participate in any political activities in Taiwan, Mr. A06 was reluctant to comply with CCNAA’s request to make a “confession” and promise something humiliating like this. For him this was an insult to his free will, especially when he heard the response of an official over the phone. His reluctance to comply led to a rejection of his visa application on January 29th, 1982—after Mr. A06’s father passed away. In the letter of response the CCNAA explained:
To Whom This May Concern:  

January, 29th, 1982

Your application for the visa to visit Taiwan is not to proceed. According to the instruction from the government, we required you to provide a written confession and the guarantee that you will not engage in unlawful activities during your stay in the territory of Taiwan. It has been months and we have not yet received the documents aforementioned. Please find the attached Canadian passport number XXXXXXXX and a check of the amount of 11.30 US dollars. If you still would like to apply for the visa, please prepare for the document with your passport and the application form (see the attached blank form) all sent to our office, or you may call us in advance. Thank you for your cooperation.

Cooperation Council for North American Affairs in Seattle

(Translated from the original documents)

The tragic delay of the visit to his ill father one last time certainly struck Mr. A06 hard. But he was not simply waiting for the CCNAA to budge between when he sent out his application in May, 1982 and when the rejection letter was sent on January 29th, 1982, four weeks after his father passed away. Mr. A06 asked Margaret Mitchell to put more pressure on the Taiwan government since he would not compromise and write a confession.

37 It seems to suggest that Mr. A06 qualifies the Class B name on the user’s manual of blacklist as discussed in Chapter Three: the overseas posts should consult with the offices in Taiwan to determine if visa is to be issued.
6.2.1.3 Letters to High Officials of Taiwan Government

The letter of rejection was sent in on January 28th, 1982. Five weeks before it arrived, Mr. A06 prepared a draft for Margaret Mitchell because she told Mr. A06 that she was not familiar with the affairs of Taiwan and she would like him to write her a draft first. Although Mr. A06’s father had passed away at the beginning of 1982, the ball was still rolling and Mr. A06 had no intention to call it off. And he considered this to be his personal inconvenience as much as a serious problem for many “Taiwanese Canadians.” On February 16th, 1982, Margaret Mitchell sent out the letter to four key government officials who might be involved somehow in this blacklist policy: the Governor of Taiwan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Premier, and the Secretary General of the ruling party KMT. This time, different from the last letters requesting Taiwan to “reconsider Mr. A06’s application” sent by both Mitchell and Carney, the issue was addressed as one of “international problems” as Mitchell wrote that “I deeply regret a rift in our existing friendship because of visa application denials without specific and acceptable reasons.”

The Department of Foreign Affairs (Taiwan), under the direct order from the Premier Yun-suan Sun, responded officially to Mitchell’s letter. A letter was sent to Margaret Mitchell on April 6th, 1982. The official C. J. Chen, who was the Director of the Department of North American Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan, replied that the Taiwanese government “would not deny visa application from any Canadian citizen unless such entry may evidently constitute a potential threat to the security of this country.” Yet Chen did not explain why Mr. A06 was declined entry to Taiwan for constituting “a potential threat” to Taiwan. Still, the result was positive. After the letter from Chen, things were easier for Mr. A06. In June of 1982, Mr. A06 applied again for the visa and was quickly
approved. What replaced the rejection was a series of polite yet exhausting interrogations in Seattle as well as in Taiwan, as discussed in Chapter 3. It appeared that since blocking the way back home for Taiwanese Canadians was no longer appropriate because of the interference of Canadian MPs, the authorities of Taiwan had to use other measures to ward off any possibility of “potential threat” to national security. Just like Mr. A06 said, however, “the government has a military force of 800,000 soldiers and I am just an unarmed person.” (A06, interview, June 03, 2011) Apparently the Taiwan government must have had some sort of evidence through surveillance or snitch activity showing that Mr. A06 had engaged himself in anti-government plots, which made it a necessity to keep a close eye on him. And that cost Mr. A06 the chance to be around his father when the latter passed away.

Another nice gesture that is worth mentioning is that when Mr. A06 was finally issued the visa to Taiwan without the need to write a confession, Margaret Mitchell and Eileen Dailly each wrote him a reference note to make sure he would be treated properly and return to Canada safely. Mr. A06 later talked about these two legislators’ efforts with great appreciation and gratitude.

6.2.2 The Blacklist Case of Four Community Leaders

Mr. A06’s case against a government which deprived him of the right to visit his family was a bittersweet story with a victory he would hardly want. In Chapter Three we also saw how Dr. A41’s application to Taiwan in 1985, when his father had been hospitalized, was rejected and how Dr. A41 was retained at the airport hotel in Taipei after he managed to get the visa and arrived in Taiwan. Although he was eventually granted entry to visit his father in 1985, Dr. A41 was later declined three times in October 1986, July 1988, and
November 1988 respectively. After encountering this inconvenience and inhumane treatment to him and other Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver, Dr. A41 decided to seek help from a long-term friend of his, Svend Robinson, who was a federal MP (New Democratic Party, 1979-2004).

For this matter, I went to see the Member of Parliament of my constituency Svend Robinson. He went to Seattle for this. He wrote to the Seattle office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan respectively asking why and on what basis they rejected visa applications from people who were originally from Taiwan. The Seattle office asked for an accurate list of complainants. Svend Robinson told me about this. So we submitted a list with four real names on it: Lin, Yang, A24 and I. (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

6.2.2.1 The Frustration

It was 1989, four years after Dr. A41 returned to Taiwan to visit his father and the door closed again afterwards for him. Dr. A41 was not particularly enthusiastic about politics, but he was active in community events and activities through which he became acquainted with local and national politicians who would come to community events—Taiwanese or non-Taiwanese. He moved to Vancouver in 1975 and started constant and friendly interaction with politicians as early as 1977 through volunteering at New Democratic Party events and inviting politicians to the community for events. The active role Dr. A41 played in his community also brought him later on to being elected Director of the Board of the Taiwanese Canadian Association which, according to his speculation, was the direct reason
that he was blacklisted. In April 1989, after a meeting with Svend Robinson, Dr. A41 sent
Robinson a letter expressing how he and his friends felt that their yearning for a solution to
their blacklist issue had finally been answered:

Our problems with the KMT government has always been avoided by our Canadian
authorities. Perhaps because our government were unable to deal directly with the
KMT. Our frustrations, therefore, had remained something that we, ourselves had to
confront. Our own efforts over the years had brought ineffective results. The
meeting with you had been an eventful one that brought us new hope.

The problems that Dr. A41 and his friends wanted Svend Robinson to help with were,
amongst others, the visa application rejections and related issues. Dr. A41 itemized their
concerns:

1. Visa denial without any explanation.

2. Suspected delay of visa processing time particularly for those involved in
Taiwanese Canadian community affairs.

3. Proof of round trip ticket required.

4. Unfair visa application charges.

5. Many were required to be interviewed in Seattle.

6. Unfair visa valid regulations for Canadians.

7. Human rights infringement in harrassing the visitors by the police or plain-clothed
agents during people’s stay in Taiwan.
Based on these summarized concerns from the discussion with Dr. A41 and other Taiwanese constituents in March, Robinson wrote a letter on May 2, 1989 to Mr. James Chang, the chief official at the Cooperation Council for North American Affairs, Office in Seattle (CCNAA) which was the Taiwan government’s diplomatic affairs agency for Western America, including Canada. Out of the sympathy and trust in his constituents, Robinson made a stern request for a solution to these matters: “Certainly, I believe such a meeting would be helpful before pursuing any further action including raising this matter with our Secretary of State for External Affairs.”

6.2.2.2 The Response from CCNAA

The CCNAA responded after three weeks. It denied most of the “charges” against its visa processing practice and related issues as sternly as Robinson had made them. In addition to clarifying the misunderstanding on technical issues of visa application (unfair fees, etc.) the CCNAA asked for more specific information on the plaintiffs:

Regarding your concerns (items 1, 2 & 7) on some “Taiwanese” Canadians claiming to have been withheld visas to our country because of their involvement in local community activities or to have been visited by police or security officers while visiting Taiwan, we would like to have more specific information, in order to get it clarified. Please advise us of names of those individuals and the local communities that complained as well as details of events, names of the security officers involved and the government agencies to which they belong, etc.
Nevertheless, any foreign national who intervenes in our internal politics or jeopardizes our national interests, public order and social norm in word and deed, while visiting the Republic of China [Taiwan], shall not be welcome by our country. Any other sovereign state shall do the same and it has nothing to do with the fundamental rights of foreign visitors.

There are several things in this letter worth discussing: first of all, the term “Taiwanese” was put in quotation marks, which seems to suggest a negative official attitude towards those who saw themselves as Taiwanese instead of Chinese nationals. It was 1989 and the letter seems to suggest the term “Taiwanese” was not an accurate signifier of the plaintiffs’ nationality. This may well be the fundamental disagreement between the KMT government in Taiwan and the “Taiwanese” Canadians who deemed themselves to be Taiwanese rather than Chinese citizens. And for the KMT government this conception of one’s national identity was treason and politically dangerous, whether or not it had anything to do with actions against the government. The KMT government still claimed its sovereignty over China in the late 1980s, even though the United Nations had rendered China’s seat at the UN to the CCCP government in 1971, and it became rather difficult for the KMT to obtain support in the international community. This was even more serious when Martial Law was laid on the Taiwanese residents and they were denied freedom of speech to even discuss a different imagination of the future of Taiwan. Although it is understandable in this vein to see why the KMT government would put the word Taiwanese in quotation marks and how to them this word was a forbidden and sensitive term insinuating a pro-independence political inclination, the practice of blacklist on the basis of perceived
thoughts and inclinations did cost some Taiwanese Canadians their human right to return to their birthplace, causing them “frustrations” as stated in Dr. A41’s letter to Svend Robinson.

The other point in this letter by the CCNAA is its request for a detailed list of and information about the plaintiffs. While it seems to be a reasonable request for processing the cases at issue, it may also be seen as a strategic way to intimidate these people to drop the case. This is because the very reason these people would file a complaint was because they allegedly had experienced inconvenience and harassment here in Canada, as had their families in Taiwan. The required disclosure of information may well be deemed a form of threat, even though the CCNAA had every right to make this request as it was in charge of processing visa application cases. Another reason that this request might be treated as an intimidation tactic is that after Dr. A41 and his fellow plaintiffs later did submit a list of people frequently suffering from visa screening and harassment, the CCNAA did not give any explanation of exactly why these exposed individuals were rejected entry to Taiwan on the grounds that “any foreign national who intervenes in our internal politics or jeopardizes our national interests, public order and social norm in word and deed” would be denied entry to Taiwan. Certainly this was not to be explained, as it would be as good as admitting that the Taiwan government had been monitoring Canadian citizens to identify the “word and deed” they deemed threatening to national security.

6.2.2.3 The Community Fights Back

After receiving the letter from Svend Robinson regarding the CCNAA’s response to him, Dr. A41 and the others wrote back to Robinson with their comments and a list of names and details of four people’s visa application cases and harassment of themselves and their
family members in Taiwan. In the letter, Dr. A41 and his friends noted that it was not surprising that the CCNAA would deny the allegations and they refused to give out names and information about those mistreated except for the four active members and former chairs of the Taiwanese Canadian Association.

This is an often used ploy for them to obtain further information on people. We cannot reveal the names of these people. In the four cases we are providing, we have obtained their consent to have their real names used. As to the names of the security officers in Taiwan, we also cannot provide any since the security officers do not give their names when they are asked…. At the CCNAA, they already have all of our cases on file. *It is not the names and details of places that they need, they want to know who are doing the complaining.*

In the cases of Mr. A40, Dr. A41, and Dr. A35 discussed in Chapter Three, especially those who were denied the right to return to Taiwan to visit ill parents, the Taiwan government seemed to treat them as foreign nationals “who intervene in our internal politics or jeopardize our national interests, public order and social norm in word and deed.” But for these people, the reasons to go to Taiwan could be as simple as the following:

I applied (for visa) twice and both were rejected. (Interviewer: Did they tell you why?)

No, they’d never tell you…. The first time I was allowed to visit Taiwan was after the Martial Law being lifted…. I always had a wish to bring my son (Marx was born in
Taiwan) to visit the place where he was born after he graduated from university. (A04, interview, Jan. 08, 2011)

Apparently there did not seem to be trust between these Canadians of Taiwanese origin and the government of Taiwan. This was not simply a matter of technical blockade of overseas political dissidents from causing trouble “in word and deed,” as the CCNAA or the Taiwan government worried about. There were diverse and sometimes conflicting perspectives of the imagined community of Taiwan: while the government insisted that Taiwan was a province of China and the government allegedly represented some Taiwanese, if not the majority, Taiwanese might think otherwise. And under the Martial Law the Taiwanese, including those who moved to Canada, were intimidated into remaining silent and docile to state policies. Whoever spoke out and questioned the policies of the Taiwan government would be deemed unwelcome “foreign nationals” once they were out of Taiwan.

The letter exchanges between the plaintiffs, Svend Robinson, and the CCNAA led to a meeting between Robinson and the CCNAA representatives later the same year. Yet some of the Taiwanese Canadians still suffered from visa declination and other forms of harassment including police visits to their family members in Taiwan. As negotiations with the CCNAA seemed to have reached a dead end, unlike in the case of Mr. A06 who was successful after Margaret Mitchell’s letters to Taiwan’s high officials brought his case to the attention of the Premier of Taiwan, Svend Robinson sought further support on this issue in the system. This time, the Canadian one.

In a letter Robinson sent to Joe Clark, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Conservative, 1984-1991), Robinson put into practice what he warned the CCNAA he
would do if the issues were not resolved in a satisfactory manner—he asked the federal government to defend the interests of Canada appropriately.

Dear Joe:

I am writing to express my continuing concern about harassment of Canadians of Taiwanese origin who are seeking visas to visit Taiwan. I have personally met with representatives of the Coordination Council for North American Affairs office in Seattle to voice my concerns on behalf of a number of constituents and members of the Taiwanese Canadian community in British Columbia. Subsequent to that meeting, a number of Taiwanese Canadians continued to receive refusals of their applications for visa on the grounds that an election is currently underway in Taiwan and their presence was not welcome.

I understand that there have been requests submitted by the Taiwanese authorities to open a Taiwan trade office in Toronto or Vancouver. *I would ask for your assurance that we will not cooperate in any way in this proposal without an assurance of significant improvement in the processing of visa applications and in the human rights climate in Taiwan.*

Svend J Robinson, MP

Burnaby-Kingsway (Italics added)

It is not clear whether Robinson’s letter to Clark created pressure on the negotiation between Taiwan and Canada regarding the establishment of offices that played the de facto
role of consulate offices. The offices later named “Taipei Economic and Cultural Office” (or TECO in short) were established in March and April of 1991 in Toronto and Vancouver respectively. According to the interviewees, the officials that were sent to Vancouver were rather polite and they showed their good intention to construct a friendly relationship with the Taiwanese Canadian community by inviting the most revered and well known figures in the community for a dinner—including some that were on the blacklist. The officials refused to give details or to admit the blacklist had been a constant policy of the Taiwan government, and their polite contact with the community still cast a shadow on the minds of some Taiwanese Canadians. And it was reported that after 1992 when the legislative body of Taiwan revised “the National Security Act,” which had been used to limit the government’s discretion on citizens’ freedom to migrate, the so-called blacklist policy was finally revoked. Most Taiwanese Canadians and Taiwanese Americans who were allegedly on the blacklist were able to visit Taiwan after 1992. This is also consistent with the testimony of the owner of the blacklist, discussed in Chapter Three, that he was not instructed to give back the blacklist in exchange of a new and updated copy after September, 1992.

Whether the pressure Svend Robinson had tried to lay on the CCNAA or the Taiwan government through the Canadian diplomatic departments really worked to make things easier for Taiwanese Canadians to obtain visas to visit Taiwan, the sincere gesture and the effort put into this matter made Dr. A41 and his friends in the community feel respected and taken care of as Canadian citizens. But this was not merely out the good will of Svend Robinson or Margaret Mitchell, Pat Carney, and Eileen Dailly (the latter three in Mr. A06’s case). It was a returned favour for these active members’ participation in the public affairs of the community—some were related to the Taiwanese and some were not. For them it was a
good investment well paid off after several years. In the case of Dr. A41 and his friends, the relationship with Robinson had been close for over one decade before they considered asking him to speak out for them. Dr. A41 noted:

I moved in here in 1975… the first gathering I attended was the welcome party at the International House of UBC. It was 1975… There were only limited members of the Taiwanese Canadian Association. And the earlier contact between Taiwanese and the Canadian government was in 1977. I started keeping in contact with the Deputy Premier of British Columbia Grace McCarthy. And the next was in 1978 or 1979 with Member of Parliament Margaret Mitchell… she was the first M.P. we contacted. I lived in the constituency of Svend Robinson, so I have had long and positive relationship with him as early as in 1979. He is a good friend (of us) in Canada. And he is the first M.P. that was deported out of China. He is very friendly to Taiwan…

(Interviewer: why did you contact politicians in the first place? Grace McCarthy for example?)

I don’t remember. It might be just an event and we invited them to attend. (A04, etc., group interview, March 08, 2011)

The entire process of filing a complaint with the CCNAA through the help of Svend Robinson was a new learning experience for people like Dr. A41 who came from a highly authoritarian country in the 1960s and 1970s. It is best to situate it in their life histories to have a grasp of what this means to them in relation to acquiring practical knowledge and habits of participation in public affairs and approaching the political system as seeking
assistance rather than asking for a gracious favour from the state. In this sense it might be argued that experiences like this that partly constitute early Taiwanese immigrants’ appreciation and recognition of this host society would account for their increased identification with this land, this system, and the people here.

6.3 A Fund-Raising Campaign for B.C.’s Children’s Hospital

We have so far presented cases of A36’s fight for the recognition of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Canadian society and two similar cases of taking political action to bring the issue of the blacklist from private frustration to public discussion. Although motives and measures taken to counter these sorts of assumed unjust treatment may vary, the process itself contributes to the construction of the Taiwanese Canadians’ self-image and their identification with the host society. This may be said to go further than “adapting” to the new environment. It is a generating process of the category of Taiwanese Canadian which comes a long way from Dr. A-Sin Tsai’s reluctant stay in Vancouver with no clear conception of her mixed identity except a vague and pristine concept of being a “Taiwanese” to the more sophisticated self-understanding of identity and a more proactive gesture to be part of the host society, as shown in the cases of Taiwanese Canadian Association’s active members and leaders. Before we move to a discussion of these cases at the end of the chapter, it might be useful to bring in another type of learning from participation in public affairs. This time, it is not much to do with what one brings from the sending country (expertise as in Dr. A36’s case), nor has it to do with one’s linkage with the old past which affects the new life (as in the cases of fighting the blacklist policy of one’s birth country). It is simply the experience of being or “doing” in order to be a British Columbian.
6.3.1 Taiwanese Physicians and Their Organization in Vancouver

In earlier chapters we noticed that the majority of early Taiwanese immigrants followed the pattern of studying abroad and then changing their status to “immigrant”—voluntarily (for freedom or better job opportunities) or reluctantly (being marked down on the blacklist). Some of them received medical education either in Canada or in the United States. Of all the physicians living and working in the Greater Vancouver area, excluding Dr. A-Sin Tsai who was not allowed to practise due to the lawsuit and legal controversies, Dr. A04 (Obstetrics and Gynecology), Dr. A03 (Neuro-biology), and Dr. Tsung-yi Lin (Psychiatry) were the most well-known for their reputation in their respective fields as well as their pioneering roles in community affairs. But these three doctors were not the only active medical professionals who participated in public affairs and community life. In September of 1992, an organization for medical professionals working in Vancouver was incorporated as a response to the increasing needs of the health professionals arriving in Vancouver after 1988, one year after the Martial Law was revoked and the immigration policies in Taiwan became flexible. The organization was the Taiwanese Canadian Health Professional Association (TCHPA), which has become dormant in recent years yet was quite active in the 1990s. By the time Dr. A04 took the position of chairperson (1998-1999), according to his memory, the total number of members came to about three hundred people from all areas of the health profession.

We have quoted quite a few of Dr. A04’s recollections of how the Taiwanese Canadian community became organized; we also presented his views on how immigrants should maintain a balance between their care for the birth society and love for the host
community. In Dr. A04’s point of view, it is the local concern that comes first, and it is only through one’s engagement in local community issues that new immigrants can adapt to the new home and then become useful in making a contribution to their old country. This is an “effective” method as much as a morally right thing to do. Dr. A04 mentioned how the late UBC professor Edgar Wickberg was influential to his understanding of why identity is a free choice and a path one chooses to walk on; he also talked about how his interaction and friendship with local politicians such as former Member of Parliament Stephen Owen led him to believe what he considered to be the proper way for immigrants to become part of the family in their new home. There is one more thing that significantly influenced Dr. A04 and his colleagues at the TCHPA in terms of how they see themselves as Taiwanese Canadians.

### 6.3.2 The Need and the Action Needed

In 1999 when he was chairing the TCHPA, Dr. A04 was asked to help organize a fund-raising campaign for a program of the British Columbia’s Children’s Hospital (BCCH) to purchase ECMO machines and to initiate ECLS treatment for children and newborns in B.C. This was a program that BCCH could not accomplish by itself due to budget constraints, not just for BCCH but also for the provincial government. While the provincial government agreed to fund the maintenance and operating costs of the machines and the system, the BCCH had to find the money to purchase the machines. It was estimated that a total amount of $250,000 dollars was needed to buy four ECMO machines to start the program.
ECLS/ECMO(Extracorporeal Life Support/ Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation) is used when a patient’s lungs and/or heart can’t function on their own due to serious illness or injury. High-tech machines take over for the heart and lungs until the patient’s own system can recover, while a team of highly-trained medical specialists provide round-the-clock, intensive care. In the past, B.C. children were sent to Edmonton for ECMO treatment. (BCCH, 1999: 1)

As a practising physician specializing in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Dr. A04 knew well the seriousness of this matter. Therefore when he was consulted by the doctors at BCCH, he promised to initiate a fund-raising campaign through the help of TCHPA, the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society, and other organizations in Vancouver.

In 1999 I acted as the president of the “Taiwanese Canadian Health Professional Association.” (TCHPA) Children’s Hospital came to me for the fund-raising proposal of ECMO machines. It’s a machine for the treatment of heart and lungs…. Since the Children’s Hospital did not have it, patients had to be sent to Alberta or the U.S. It had been so for years. They went to the Cantonese (community) before coming to me. It was not really a big amount. $250,000 it was. Only 10 to 12 patients would need that machine per year. But it was even more expensive to transport by airplane in addition to the risk that the patient in transportation may die…. I had a patient who gave birth to a child. The child was sent to Children’s Hospital and then to Alberta. It was a torture for the mother. And this was the machine that can be used for a long time. After contemplating these I agreed to initiate the fund-raising for them. But it
was not an easy task. I did not have backgrounds with banks or big corporations. Although some board members of the TCHPA promised to help out, once the fund-raising started, they began to avoid me…. I had never been in charge of a fund-raising before that. And I had never asked for money from people in my whole life. (A04, interview, Aug. 13, 2010)

In a letter mailed to all members of the TCHPA, Dr. A04 gave more details of his experience of feeling powerless, which made him believe that the deficiency in ECMO treatment needed to be taken more seriously:

My first encounter with ECMO was roughly five years ago when I was practising obstetrics at the Richmond Hospital. One day I delivered a 37-week baby by Caesarean section because of obstetrical complications. Soon thereafter the baby developed respiratory problems and was transferred to the Children’s Hospital. The next day, the pediatrician told me that the baby had been transferred again, this time by air ambulance to Edmonton, for ECMO! I was surprised and, frankly, shocked. It is now an accepted armamentarium for some of our critically ill neonates or pediatric patients: without it, fatality is the usual outcome. (Appendix 15)

The TCHPA decided to hold a fund-raising dinner named “For Children We Care” and the date was set as January 9th, 1999 (Cf. Appendix 16). To make it happen as wished, Dr. A04 and his colleagues visited members of the TCHPA and other non-Taiwanese colleagues in health professions. Dr. A04 himself donated $10,000 dollars as a starter. With the help from
Taiwanese and non-Taiwanese health professionals, non-profit organizations, local business, and philanthropists, it turned out to be a big success.

6.3.3 The Outcome and The Lesson Learned

A total of 611 people attended the fund-raising dinner, raising a grand total of $300,129 dollars raised, which was beyond the expectations of the TCHPA and the B.C.’s Children’s Hospital. The money was immediately donated to BCCH and became a life-saver shortly after the hospital purchased the ECMO machines:

It was simply bad luck that little Tasha Nazar was born fighting for her life on May 6, 1999. At the end of a normal pregnancy, Tasha’s mother Karen underwent an emergency Caesarean section when it was discovered that her unborn baby’s lungs were coated with meconium, the baby’s own fecal matter and one of the leading causes of newborn death. But Tasha and her family were also very lucky. Only weeks earlier, B.C.’s Children’s Hospital was able to launch a new program known as ECLS,….using an ECMO machine thanks to the generosity of the Taiwanese Canadian Health Professional Association and the provincial government.... As Tasha’s condition worsened, this brand-new program at Children’s offered her only chance for recovery. “We had never heard of an ECMO machine before, but we know our baby might die,” remembers mom Karen. “It was really scary for us. There were tubes coming out of her from everywhere, and she was all swollen and jaundiced.” (BCCH, 1999:1. Emphasis original)
This experience of making a significant contribution to the community one lives and works in had a huge impact on Dr. A04 and his colleagues at the TCHPA. Dr. A04 linked it to his philosophy of making oneself seen and respected in the community before helping out one’s sending country:

I did this not for the Taiwanese but for the whole province.... I’m very proud…. Three or four years later, the children who had used the machine and survived were invited in at the hospital for a barbecue. They invited me over and told the audience that “This is the person who raised the money.” They thanked me for it. I didn’t do it for the Taiwanese. None of the Taiwanese children benefited from it (at that period of time). I did it for the whole British Columbia as a Taiwanese immigrant. I have to say I’m very proud of it. (A04, interview, Aug. 13, 2010, emphasis in Italics original)

It is through the numerous incidents and interactions, small or major, that happen in one’s life that constitute a sense of ethnic boundaries and the imagination of a (sometimes multiple) community one finds attached to the most. Certainly it applies to the conception of the “Taiwanese Canadian.” In Dr. A04’s case, it was the effort put into the host society which brought him self-fulfillment and confidence in being a Taiwanese Canadian. Firstly he tried to practise it, and then he learned in his own way what it (should) mean to be a community member as an immigrant.
6.4 Concluding Remarks

Before moving to Canada, most Taiwanese immigrants experienced an authoritarian government and the Martial Law (May 19, 1949 to July 15, 1987) which was imposed shortly after the KMT assumed control of Taiwan in 1945. The Martial Law caused much pain and horrific memories, as discussed in Chapter 3. The overt rationale for implementing white terror and related political measures, for the ruling KMT government, was to safeguard Taiwan from invasion by the People’s Republic of China. Yet the hidden script was to prevent all (potential) dissidents from voicing their discontent, which would sabotage the legitimacy of the KMT’s governance over Taiwan which it claimed to have had since 1945. For the common people in their daily life, however, the impact on their lives was direct and intimidating. This accounts for the peculiar path of the brain drain from Taiwan in the 1970s and 1980s; and it explains why those people managed to emigrate and stay away from the land of their birth. What these people brought to North America was the habit of being obedient subjects under a highly powerful military government controlling their lives. And what they learned gradually after landing and settlement was a different story, which may explain how they “became” Taiwanese Canadians instead of Taiwanese exiles merely living in Canada to avoid political persecution and waiting for the right time to return to where they were from.

There are several points to observe from the cases presented in the previous sections of this chapter. First is the geographic mapping of Taiwanese Canadians’ sense of “home.” Based on his study of the changing concepts of lineage and family for the early Taiwanese that emigrated from China to Taiwan as early as the 17th century, anthropologist Chi-nan Chen argues that a process of “indigenization” can be found in Taiwan (Chen, 1987). He
argues that Chinese immigrants in Taiwan experienced the change from a kinship structure based on vertical lineage to an emphasis more on locality. Theoretically it means the factor of blood line becomes less important while an identification with the immigrant society becomes dominant in determining one’s identity. In the cases of Taiwanese Canadians discussed here, it seems that the Taiwanese immigrants developed the sense of identifying with the Canadian society not just because of the comfortable living experience but more importantly because of the respect and freedom they earned through interacting with the local people, particularly politicians, who played the role of helpers instead of rulers or bureaucrats.

The second and related point is that the Taiwanese immigrants experienced how things run in a non-authoritarian society, which was absent in their personal life histories in Taiwan. Numerous studies on Taiwan’s political structure in the civil society indicate that the basic structure was what had been called “patronage-clientelism,” which turned local politicians into the interest-distributors and eyes for the central KMT government (Chang & Tsai, 1994; Chen, 1995; Tu, 1994; Wu, 1987; Wu & Chen, 1993). In the case of A36’s fight for the coverage of acupuncture under the Medical Services Plan of B.C., the rule of the game was learned through the actual promoting and lobbying experience with Members of Parliament, the caucus of the B.C. Liberal Party, and through the understanding of how a vision of local or even national concerns was a key in persuading politicians and the public of one’s cause. In the case of Mr. A06’s and Dr. A41’s fight against the blacklist through the help of Members of Parliament and the Legislative Assembly, it came to their realization as much as it was for Dr. A36 that politicians were helpers and could be reached via one phone call. Dr. A04’s story in Chapter 4 regarding how a high-ranked government official kept trying to reach Dr. A04 to explain why he voted against the wish of Dr. A04 and his
community was another example of Taiwanese Canadians’ contact experience with the host society. As for the case of Dr. A04’s fund-raising, it offered a different path to involvement in local community life which brought out self respect and pride in being part of the community through fighting for the benefit of the locals.

The last point that is worth mentioning is more subtle in nature: the habit of being a citizen. Certainly seeking help from politicians for a particular purpose is one major aspect of living democratically. For the Taiwanese Canadians, however, it was more than just knowing the channel of appeal to express discontent and obtaining positive feedback from the politicians. The whole process of fighting for one’s cause involves understanding how opinions become decisions through discussion and meetings. In the case of Dr. A36’s legal actions it included the experience of settling disputes between comrades and that of dealing with the freeriders and saboteurs in an action. The quality of being a citizen can be learned only through practising it in action, which was a deficit for the Taiwanese immigrants.

Although the struggle for the recognition of the status of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the fight against the blacklist policy of their home country, and the engagement in local fund-raising campaigns seem to be different forms of combat in different battlefields, what the Taiwanese Canadians experienced through all these bits and pieces of participatory action in the public sphere not only helped them adapt to the host society but also nourished their self-understanding of what it means to be a member of this community they now call home.
7 Conclusion

In the conclusion, we will briefly discuss how the findings of this research have contributed to documenting the life stories of an under-studied group of immigrants of (broadly defined) Chinese heritage as well as to broadening our understanding of nation, nationality, and the concept of “home” through the analysis of the Taiwanese immigrant community in Vancouver.

7.1 The Becoming of Taiwanese Canadians

Chinese immigration to Canada has a long and rough history which not only witnesses and contributes to the rise and transformation of modern Canada in the 19th and 20th centuries but also nourishes the march of China into the modern world. In addition to the financial assistance the overseas Chinese immigrants offer to their old homeland as many studies have shown, social and political impact brought to the Chinese society are also significant. This is expressed in a famous saying that “the overseas Chinese are the mother of revolution,”38 in which the success of the 1911 revolution overthrowing the last imperial dynasty is attributed to the participation of overseas Chinese. It is important, therefore, for Canadian society as much as for Chinese society to have an appropriate account of the history of Chinese migration. However, the complex history of Chinese diaspora in modern times makes it difficult to discuss “the Chinese immigrants” in a singular sense.

In Vancouver, for example, we have Chinese immigrants from the Southern provinces of China, who speak Cantonese; we have Spanish-speaking Chinese that came from Peru; and we also have Chinese immigrants that came from other Asian countries or

38 Allegedly said by Sun Yat-sen, one of the main leaders of the 1911 revolution which overthrew the rule of the Qing Dynasty.
regions including the Taiwanese that landed between the 1960s and the 1970s. These different groups of people of Chinese lineage and cultural heritage share a self-image as Chinese to only a limited extent. This is because the differences between their spoken languages and between their trajectories of migration to North America were sometimes more significant than a vague sense of being nationals in a nation-state which itself was still an on-going project when they left China. This explains in part the conflicts between the early Chinese immigrants in most Chinatowns in North American cities after the Chinese Communist Party seized the power and drove the KMT to Taiwan in the late 1940s. In this vein, what it means to be “Chinese” is blurred and in constant need of clarification. For the immigrants themselves (if we avoid making the question even more complicated by introducing the generational gap) there is also the need to fine-tune, re-define, or even re-construct their self-image as a “Chinese Canadian.” Several elements are in play: the life experience back home in China or in an intermediate location (such as Peru as just mentioned), the new experience in the host society, political forces, and the competing narratives (or ideologies).

It is in this sense that the study of Taiwanese Canadians helps to fill the knowledge gap in understanding the “Chinese” population residing in Canada. Through the study of Taiwanese immigrants we not only become familiar with the history of a group of culturally defined Chinese and their distinctive struggle to re-position themselves in society; we also get a better sense of how social experiences, politics, and discourses interplay in social realms to stimulate a lively re-examination of ideas of nation and nationality.
7.2 Nation Building in a Transnational Context

In an earlier section of this dissertation (section 1.2), a quote from Stephen Castles (Castles, 2003) was used in conceptualizing the case of Taiwanese immigrants. Castles argues that increasing globalization and transnationalism have made the boundaries of national societies blurred. This is in fact only partly accurate. The much discussed and debated phenomena related to what some scholars call the processes of “globalization” and “transnationalism” indeed largely change some old ways of seeing the world around us. But the presumption behind this statement that boundaries of national societies were clear-cut before they were made blurred is itself challengeable. This is to say that the boundaries of national societies might well be as blurred as those shaped by the newly discerned forces of globalization Castles pointed out. In a somewhat different yet relevant context, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (Hardt & Negri, 2000) said that “the reality is not dialectic, what is dialectic is colonialism.” The “boundaries of national societies” may very likely be blurred right from the start and made homogenized by state actions through nation-building projects including education, propaganda, and pop culture mystification of the origin of a nation. The advancing globalization and transnationalism only make it harder and harder to disguise the complexity of any “national society.”

This is why the use of the term “transnational” in this dissertation is provisional and insinuated. On the one hand the use of a presumably non-blurred conception of national boundaries gives a starting point to discuss border-crossing migration between politically and legally identifiable entities (or sending and receiving countries); on the other hand the prefix of the term “transnational” suggests that nation-building is constantly on-going in the sending as well as in the receiving countries of immigrants. In the discussion in the previous chapters
we see how the Taiwan government and outbound Taiwanese immigrants were in an on-going wrestling match in defining the national identity of these people. The experience of settlement in Canada added a very important player in the game and contributed to both the contestation of the assigned “Chinese” identity and the shaping of a new national identity of Taiwanese Canadians—“national” being composed of the element from Taiwan and that from Canada. It is much more mobile and complex than the defining words on one’s passport.

Through the study of Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver, it is contended that nation building (in the sense that it is by the people, not initiated by the state) can emerge and change in a transnational context. Maybe it is even plausible to say that the context of transnational migration offers the very chance for the overseas Taiwanese to take their uncertain identity more seriously and to construct a meaningful (as based on real life experience) national imagination. And as we mentioned earlier, the use of “national” here, though it appears to be confusing for immigrants, makes sense once we stop considering national identity in an either-or framework, which has been largely challenged by globalization theories.

7.2.1 The Genesis of Taiwanese Canadian Identity

From the examples of the Greater Vancouver Taiwanese Canadian Association (TCA), the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society (TCCS), and other organizations given in Chapter 4, we see that the hardship for early immigrants made their bonding grow rapidly. It was estimated that there were only 168 households of Taiwanese immigrants living in Vancouver in 1968, and about 310 households in 1977, and most of them were members of
the TCA. Since the establishment of the TCCS, which indicated that not everyone was interested in or dared to get involved in political issues, an overlapping membership has always existed. Certainly the bonding does not translate into a mobilizable resource for collective action. But it did form the basis of an imaginable grouping of individuals, which gave the community elites the chance to promote counter-narratives to the idea that Taiwanese were no different from the Chinese.

Being “diasporic” also suggests the reluctance to be an immigrant. In the case of early Taiwanese Canadians, some were either forced to live overseas in exile (as in the case of Dr. A-Sin Gibson Tsai) or deprived of the right to return to Taiwan because of their involvement with “anti-government” movements in North America (as in the examples of Dr. A35, Dr. A03, Mr. A06, Dr. A41 and many others on the “blacklist” discussed in Chapter 3). The “pull” of bonding due to hardship in life and the “push” of feeling discriminated against by one’s own government on foreign soil made the immigrants susceptible to the counter-narrative devised by intellectuals. Although the degree of feeling “forced” to stay in the host society varied based on their degree of participation in community affairs, the interviewees were clearly aware of the possible consequences of standing against the Taiwan government’s policies or narratives. This fact gave the voluntary immigrants from Taiwan some tint of involuntariness.

By experiencing the life in a transnational setting, which made interaction with different groups of people more frequent and exposed one’s old categorizing system to the tests of daily life, Taiwanese immigrants, with their (taken-for-granted) social knowledge of who they thought they were, gradually came to the understanding that there might have been something wrong with the old worldview and self-identity they had learned from the
education system in Taiwan. The image of the Chinese, the fellowship with other “Chinese” groups, and the fresh experience in interacting with other members of local community also created another condition for the renovation of old social frames to make sense out of the confusing encounters.

Furthermore contact and involvement in public affairs offered a chance for community members to learn how things work, how disputes are settled, and what roles the political system plays in a citizen’s life. Through the cases presented in Chapter six we see how early Taiwanese immigrants, coming from an authoritarian society in which a civil society developed only in the 1980s, learned to be citizens far ahead of their fellow Taiwanese back home. This had a huge impact on the progress of Taiwan’s democratization, as the overseas Taiwanese immigrants did not just offer a “protection regime” (Ooi, 2009; 2011) when Taiwanese politicians sought help but also had a better vision of their hometown without a government telling them what they should believe. In this sense, we may say, risking the possibility of oversimplifying, that a Taiwanese immigrant in an relatively open society like Canada experienced the changes from being a subject of an authoritarian state to being an active citizen in the host society in which he or she learns to review his or her own belief system and reconstruct the national identity (ties) he or she considers appropriate.

We have used the example of Dr. A-Sin Tsai to be a metaphor for the uncertain and compulsory nature of the Taiwanese identity issue. We also see how people on the blacklist struggled to fight the unjust system denying their right to care for their “homeland.” Now it might be useful to look at Dr. A04’s case again to see how his self-understanding of his identity to some extent represents what the Taiwanese Canadians have been through and how
flexible they have become in terms of imagining their own multiple identity. Dr. A04 commented:

And a person can have several identities…. Speaking of identity, just because you were born somewhere doesn’t mean you always take it as your identity. This is wrong. *You are a living being.* The same thing applies here: once you come here (Canada), you would take it as your identity…. “I am a Chinese and not a Taiwanese; or I am a Taiwanese and not a Chinese.” You can have both or even one more. It’s up to you. You decide what you want to be…. In politics, the Liberals and the Conservatives may be attacking on each other, yet when speaking of identity there’s only one Canadian identity. (A04, interview, Jan. 08, 2011)

What Dr. A04 means here is that the multiple identities one possesses do not necessarily conflict with one’s master identity. For him, it is the identification and priority to the place one lives. This is exactly why he finds it irritating whenever he sees someone taking advantage of Canada—even those from Taiwan:

The longer I live here, the more I feel different. *I feel I’m a different breed.* The more I identify with this country, the more difficult I feel to identify with new immigrants. They have different concepts. Such as applying for this and that, or lying (to the government), or tax evasion—I mean the illegal kind. It is alright to avoid tax legally. But the tax evasion or the taking advantage of the system… I really don’t like it…. It upsets me. (A04, interview, Aug. 13, 2010, emphasis added)
“A different breed” indeed. For many interviewees Taiwan has changed since they left it thirty or forty years ago. Many reported that they would go there and visit their families once in a while, but most of them chose to stay even after the blacklist was abolished. It is not just the better living environment Canada has to offer, but also a different way of life that has grown to a different breed called the “Taiwanese Canadian,” not “Taiwanese.”

7.2.2 Nationhood Across Borders

In line with the discussions in the previous section, it is argued that “Taiwan” as the name of a nation was not created in Taiwan and brought to overseas host societies; on the contrary, it was the overseas Taiwanese immigrants who led the charge and challenged the official historical narrative with an alternative concept of Taiwanese. And this was nourished by the freedom they enjoyed outside of Taiwan through various forms of interaction and participation in public affairs. Although it was the elite (a few in Taiwan and mostly in exile) who laid the theoretical base and offered alternative interpretations of Taiwan’s history and the blueprint for the future, it was the transnational and diasporic social settings that made this transformation of national identity possible. This is to say, even if the intellectual was eager to promote, say, a democratic political system or the right for the people to exert their civil and political rights (while Taiwan was still under martial law), the “audience” would be easily swayed or controlled by the government through public media under control from the state or by sheer police violence. For example, when the democratization movement began to challenge the legitimacy and authority of the Taiwan government in the late 1970s after the ROC’s seat in the United Nations had been replaced by the Beijing government (PRC) in
1971, news agencies controlled by the government easily fabricated distorted messages and reports vilifying the oppositional movements and groups as sheer mobs. One of the well-known photographs released by the government-controlled media showed an old lady standing on her knees begging the “mob” to stop hurting the police officers and the military police guarding the people and government buildings from assault by the “mobs” on Human Rights Day (10 December) 1979. However, the fact was that the police suppressed with overwhelming force the protest against the government’s infringement of the right of publication and the right of speech.

But this was not the case for the overseas Taiwanese in Canada that had the chance to voice their cause and to take action. As early as 1979, when the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) visited North American cities, the TCA organised a protest trip from Vancouver to Seattle, Washington State. And this was the luxury of political rights only overseas Taiwanese could enjoy. Conditions like this played an important role of ferment for change in their self-image and the will and know-how to step up for their rights.

To push the argument further, we may even say that the overseas Taiwanese went ahead of the Taiwanese in Taiwan and had a vision for a Taiwanese nation—something deemed treasonous by the KMT government in Taiwan—before the democratization took off in the late 1980s. And this new imagination of a nation of one’s own was made possible only because the overseas Taiwanese stayed in the free world and had the chance to learn to be citizens in a modern democracy. This idea of Taiwanese being something different from Chinese was experienced, interpreted, consolidated in the overseas immigrant communities, and then imported back to Taiwan. However it does not mean that overseas Taiwanese constructed a “Taiwanese identity” from scratch all by themselves and all for themselves.
Their fellow Taiwanese in Taiwan had always been a part of the imagined community for the overseas Taiwanese. In this sense the geographical adjacency Benedict Anderson (1994) proposed as one of the conditions for nationalism may lose its relevance if the separated parties shared experience of cohabitation, kinship relationships, etc. and, more importantly, had mobilizable basis (memories of oppression, etc.), mobilizability (democratic social settings, etc.), and mobilizers (narrative providers, etc.), as seen in the case of Taiwanese Canadian community in Vancouver. The life experience and social setting of the host society, to borrow the concept from theories of social movement studies, offered the overseas Taiwanese an “opportunity structure” to question the Taiwan authorities and to promote democratization and an alternative narrative of the nationality of Taiwan’s people (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996).

Let us imagine a scenario like this: One son of a family left his home and was suspected by the father to have said something bad to bring disgrace to the family. The father forbad this son from returning to his home. He became used to the life in the outside world after many years and realized that it was his father’s suspicion that kept him away from his own home—he did not do anything wrong. And when he joined force with his brother who still lived with the father and forced their father to stop acting like an authoritarian king, he realized that he would not return to this home anymore because he had a new home, although he would cherish his love for this old home from which he came. For this outcast brother, the care for his old home and the love for the new home are both part of him—“a new breed,” the phrase used by interviewee A04.
7.3 Nation, State, and Democratization

In his second edition of the book *Understanding Scotland: The sociology of a stateless nation* (McCrone, 1992), David McCrone changed the title to *Understanding Scotland: The sociology of a nation* (McCrone, 2001). That was after Scotland had been granted the right to establish its own parliament. In the case of Scotland, for McCrone, “nation” was not a major concern while “state” was. In the discussion in Chapter 4 we briefly mentioned that the overseas Taiwanese have gone through several stages from a “stateless nation” to a growing imagination of a future “nation state.” Compared to McCrone’s analysis of Scotland, however, Taiwan has not yet moved fully to a “nation state” as the status quo is still in the hands of the old state machine that came to Taiwan in the late 1940s, which still claims to be the “Chinese” government. So the problem for the Taiwanese society has always been the issue of “nation” instead of state form. Although under the threat of the rising China the KMT government would take the same stand as the local political forces on certain issues (using ROC and Taiwan interchangeably at certain occasions for example), still the mutual distrust between pro-KMT Taiwanese and anti-KMT Taiwanese exists. And this comes from, to some extent, the bifurcated definitions of the national identity of Taiwan—or, the different self-images in the world.

This has been the main theme for political disputes in Taiwan as well as in the overseas Taiwanese community. As mentioned earlier, the distrust and grudges were even brought to immigrants’ communities in host societies. The physical distance away from Taiwan, however, and the experience of fighting in a democratic society relatively free of ethnic conflicts gave the Taiwanese Canadians an opportunity to develop the capacity of democratic association and the habits to respect difference and settle disagreements in a
mutually acceptable way instead of resorting to a “clientelist” political order which favours status quo holders and their clients and suppresses alternative voices from the civil society (Wu, 1987; Tu, Y., 1996; Wang, 2004). In the example of Drs. Joseph Wu and A36’s fight for the rights of practitioners of Traditional Chinese Medicine presented in Chapter 6, or in the cases of Mr. A06 and Dr. A41 to file complaints with the assistance of Members of the Canadian Parliament, we see how these Taiwanese immigrants found their way in the system. They have learned to talk to the right people, to cooperate with those you might have doubt about, and to appeal with the right cause and right language (the interests of the public instead of their own). In a word, this is the social learning that has effects beyond immediate benefit and interest. It is a change of behaviour patterns, such as when Dr. A-Sin Tsai was surprised when she realized her insistence on fighting for her right (when she was wrongly accused of practising medicine without a licence in 1944) would gain the sympathy from the public of Vancouver even at the high tide of the Pacific War when racism was a serious issue for Canadian society. Dr. Tsai’s will prevailed and the judge had to release her unconditionally—but this only happens in the overseas society. Nine years after the victory at court, when she was back in Taiwan, the threat of governmental violence forced her to marry Rev. Gibson and move to Canada. Dr. Tsai’s story was not a rare case in the Taiwanese Canadian community, as presented in Chapters 3 and 6. It was the host society that gave the Taiwanese immigrants a fresh start and the chance to re-examine their national identity at first (which was later introduced back to Taiwan). It was also the migration experience that changed their social awareness of their rights, the actions to take, and the know-how about how the system works that later brought impact through them to their folks in Taiwan.
There is no intention here to salute the political system of Canadian society as an undisputable democracy which gives hope to the sending societies of the immigrants. It is granted that the system has its own problems and to what extent the system successfully works to secure people’s rights is a contested issue for political scientists and scholars of different disciplines. What is emphasized here is only that the early Taiwanese Canadians who studied here did benefit from this political system, different from that of their sending society in which people’s civil and political rights were at the mercy of the state. And this comparatively more democratic system gave the Taiwanese Canadians a useful leverage (through activities discussed in Chapters 4 and 6) to assist or even to initiate actions aimed at increasing people’s awareness of their rights in Taiwan or at forcing the Taiwan government to change for a more open society.

In the same vein, this dissertation does not make a hasty causal argument about the overseas Taiwanese taking most of the credit for the democratization in Taiwan between the 1980s and the 1990s. What is argued here, rather, is that the experience of transnational migration and the accompanying opportunity structure, with the proactive participation of Taiwanese immigrants, did play a key role in creating conditions for democratization to take place: not the sufficient conditions, but the necessary ones at least. The examples discussed in Chapters 4 and 6 show how the Taiwan government was under pressure from the international society which was attributed to the efforts of the overseas Taiwanese in such strategies as lobbying the Congress and the Senate (mainly in the United States) to voice the concerns of the overseas Taiwanese communities, or harbouring the political leaders of the oppositional forces from Taiwan and offering them financial and other forms of support (in Canada as well as in the United States), and so on.
7.4 Home Away From Home

It is commonly assumed that one’s loyalty to nation cannot or should not be multiple. At certain points one has to make a decision, such as in the case of war. Hardt and Negri (2000) traced the development of modern nation states and argued that the transcendental nature has replaced religious higher beings and become the unchallengeable principle of present time conceptualization of a variety of things: the “people,” the “Natural Law,” or the “nation state.” The radical part of this argument lies in the bold assertion that whatever a political system is named—national socialist, communist, or democratic—the core principle of present day polity is a homogenizing and heresy-suppressing “totalitarianism.” This is to say that modern society and state offer a means to unite a people (or a “nation”) against external threats in a positive sense while at the same time eliminating internal differences and heresy in a negative one. For normal people at the occasion of becoming a new member to a community or society, the oath one takes when renouncing an old legal identity is only an administrative procedure. For people in real life, loyalty, especially for involuntary migrants or immigrants from politically unstable sending countries, is much complex than the prints on a piece of identification.

In the previous chapters, we have argued that a nation-building process, or the shaping and re-examination of national identity, can be initiated by people instead of the state apparatus. Moreover, the alternative narratives from common people may work their way through the mystifying propaganda of a state serving the status quo of a few in a given society or “nation state.” In the case of Taiwanese immigrants’ community in Vancouver, the life experience as immigrants yields this very opportunity to intellectually reflect upon one’s taken-for-granted identity formation and to take actions accordingly to confront the
official narrative and practices that contradict people’s real life experiences. And the net result, for the Taiwanese Canadians, seems to be a construction of a category, an identity that incorporates the Taiwanese element and the Canadian component—each of which may vary from established sets of identity held by people who lack the experience of being a border-crossing “national.” This reflects in the idea of “home” of some Taiwanese immigrants interviewed in this study. One Taiwanese immigrant talked about his idea of “home”:

It’s just not possible [for me] to return to Taiwan. My lao jia [literally “old home” or “old family”] is Taiwan. But my jia [“home” or “family”] is Canada…. If you asked me about what I think of the word jia…. I’ll give an example: a friend of mine was born in Korea, raised in Japan, and has lived in Canada for over thirty years. He was a colleague of mine when I worked for the Japan Airlines Corporation. Whenever there is a game going on, say Canada vs. Korea or Korea vs. Japan, which team should he cheer for? This is not an easy question. If you asked me, if I have to choose, I will definitely choose Canada. This is because that I have lived in Canada for forty years although I was raised in Taiwan. The concept of family in western world is different from that in Taiwan. You, as an individual, are a basic constituent unit of a family. There’s only two generations in it…. This is my understanding.

(A42, interview, Apr. 22, 2011)

The interviewee’s distinction between jia and lao jia indicates that he sees both Canada and Taiwan as his home. Maybe there is a priority when there is a game. But his emotional attachment to his sending country is still strong. Actually, the interviewee was
also on the “black list” in the 1970s and failed to return to Taiwan to see his mother before she passed away (see Chapter 3 for the stories of A42). The co-existence of both homes (or “two or more identities” as Dr. A04 put it) is quite common in the testimonies of Taiwanese interviewees. Another interviewee said:

If you ask me where my home is, I would say that Vancouver is my home. But I still have an inseparable attachment to Taiwan. In the past few years I have been travelling back and forth between Taiwan (and Vancouver), and this is out of the feeling of giving back something to it. I retired early, and I wished to contribute my expertise to Taiwan hoping it will become better in some ways…. It is not likely that I will move back to Taiwan. Still I am very concerned about the future of Taiwan, especially the 2012 presidential election. It will have a great impact on Taiwan. (A41, interview, Apr. 21, 2011)

This interviewee is Dr. A41, the very person who was held in custody at the airport hotel and who had to fight the blacklist system through the help of his friends and Members of Parliament for his constituency. For him, both Taiwan and Canada are home to him—although Canada comes first after forty years of living.

It is no surprise that in the previous examples both interviewees talked about the possible choice of priority in favour of the Canadian home in extreme circumstances. It is in fact difficult to determine if they really believed what they said and to forecast what they would actually do at war or other extreme situations. For our purpose of showing how multiple loyalties and the complex identity composition come into play in people’s lives
through the diasporic experience, as shown in Taiwanese Canadians’ stories, it should suffice to say that the question asked at the beginning of this study regarding “who are the Taiwanese” has been answered by the interviewees themselves according to their life experiences: they are Taiwanese as much as Canadians. The words “Taiwanese” and “Canadian” here do not necessarily share the same meaning and definition as in the vocabulary of those who have never had the chance to relocate and settle in an unfamiliar and challenging environment. The Taiwanese immigrants studied here live out their identity by giving these terms meaning on basis of their endurance, struggle, and accomplishment. In the introduction we mentioned how W. E. B. Du Bois’ concept of “double consciousness” is altered and used in Leo T. S. Ching’s cultural analysis to indicate the “triple consciousness” of the Taiwanese. In relation to different socio-historical contexts and focuses of analysis, these two terms point out the cultural process of the making, the problematizing, and the struggle for a self-identity. For the Taiwanese Canadians in Vancouver, the “Chinese” element becomes more culturally oriented, while “Taiwanese” and “Canadian” become nationally and legally defining elements of their identity. As discussed earlier, loyalty, like dual citizenship as tolerated in Taiwan and in Canada, can be multiple.

It is not argued here that a happy ending for the Taiwanese Canadians comes into being and a new (and in singular form) and exclusively national identity is fixated after a long and weary journey battle against injustice in the sending society while embracing the all-rosy lifestyle in the new home. On the contrary, it is reiterated at several places in this dissertation that the building of national identity is and will continue to be a mobile and constantly contested process in which various social agents play their roles according to their desires and needs. The transnational experience of migration brings forward difficulties
along with opportunities that trigger the tuning of immigrants’ own definition of identity and self-representation. Certainly this understanding of identity construction may not apply to all types of immigrants—not to the “investment class” immigrants from Taiwan after the 1980s to name just one example. The bittersweet stories of immigrants in Canada, however, do bring us to a better understanding of the texture and complexity of people’s social lives.
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Appendices

Appendix 1  Complete List of Interviews (Table 6)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview number</th>
<th>Alphanumeric code name</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
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<th>Profession</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Landing year</th>
<th>Status of landing</th>
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<td>Engineering</td>
<td>School Board Station Engineer(retired)</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</table>
## A. Interviews on individual immigrants or couples (continued)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Interview number</th>
<th>Alphanumeric code name</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Landing year</th>
<th>Status of landing</th>
<th>Blacklist experience</th>
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<tr>
<td>43_20101123</td>
<td>A39</td>
<td>20101123</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>Tradition Chinese Medicine</td>
<td>Physician(retired)</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
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<tr>
<td>44_20101207</td>
<td>A40</td>
<td>20101207</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>Wood processing(retired)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
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<tr>
<td>45_20110108</td>
<td>A04</td>
<td>20110108</td>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>Obstetrics &amp; Gynecology</td>
<td>Physician(retired)</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>46_20110421</td>
<td>A41</td>
<td>20110421</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Pure Mathematics</td>
<td>Travel Counseling(retired)</td>
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<tr>
<td>47_20110422</td>
<td>A42</td>
<td>20110422</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Management and Accounting</td>
<td>Travel Counseling(retired)</td>
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<tr>
<td>48_20110423</td>
<td>A43</td>
<td>20110423</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Biomechanics</td>
<td>Contractor(retired)</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
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<td>49_20110529</td>
<td>A44</td>
<td>20110529</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Housewife(deceased)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
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<td>50_20110603</td>
<td>A06</td>
<td>20110603</td>
<td>M.B.A.</td>
<td>Business Management</td>
<td>Professor(retired)</td>
<td>1969</td>
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<td>51_20110615</td>
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<td>College</td>
<td>Mechanic, carpentry</td>
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<td>52_20110624</td>
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<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Government economist(retired)</td>
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<td>53_20110628</td>
<td>A47</td>
<td>20110628</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Art and design, Library management</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>1974</td>
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<td>54_20110805</td>
<td>A48</td>
<td>20110805</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Electrical mechanics</td>
<td>Aero mechanic(retired)</td>
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<td>Immigration</td>
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<td>55_20110812</td>
<td>A49</td>
<td>20110812</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Molecular Biology and Virology</td>
<td>Professor(retired)</td>
<td>1969</td>
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<td>56_20110819</td>
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<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Pharmaceutics</td>
<td>Egg farmer(retired)</td>
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<tr>
<td>57_20110823</td>
<td>A51</td>
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<td>B.A. dropout</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
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<td>Immigration</td>
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<td>58_20111111</td>
<td>A52</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Family reunion</td>
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## B. Group Interview or Seminar sessions

<table>
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<th>Interview number</th>
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<th>Number of attendants</th>
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<tr>
<td>520100513</td>
<td>Casual conversation</td>
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### B. Group Interview or Seminar sessions (continued)

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<td>S20110308</td>
<td>Mainstream society participation 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; session</td>
<td>A04, etc.</td>
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<td>S20110412</td>
<td>Mainstream society participation 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; session</td>
<td>A41, etc.</td>
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<td>S20110125</td>
<td>Meeting with B01</td>
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### C. Other interviews

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<td>M20110803</td>
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<td>Detail check</td>
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<td>C02</td>
<td>Private conversation</td>
<td>Student</td>
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<td>C03</td>
<td>Private conversation</td>
<td>Retired</td>
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Appendix 2  Advertisement for the Hunting Club, *Vancouver Tong Xun*

Source: *Vancouver Tong Xun* (Vancouver Newsletter), April, 1980, p. 3 (Figure 15) (© Taiwanese Canadian Association, reproduced with permission).
Appendix 3  Sample Page of the Vancouver Tong Xun

Source: Vancouver Tong Xun (Vancouver Newsletter), issue 7, May 1978. (Cover Page) (Figure 16) (© Taiwanese Canadian Association, reproduced with permission).
Appendix 4 Sample Page of the Service TCA Offered to its Members

Source: Vancouver Tong Xun (Vancouver Newsletter), issue 2, May 1977, p. 5. (Figure 17) (© Taiwanese Canadian Association, reproduced with permission).
### Appendix 5  Partial List of Main Newsletters Published in the Taiwanese Canadian Community in Vancouver between the 1970s and the 2000s (Table 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Publication date</th>
<th>Page count</th>
<th>Note (important contents)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vancouver Tong Xun</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1977.05.27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Official publication by the Vancouver chapter of the TCA (Taiwanese Canadian Association).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vancouver Teh Xun</strong></td>
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<td>1977.06.17</td>
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<td>(Vancouver Special Newsletter, or “Vancouver 特訊” in Chinese)</td>
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<td><strong>Vancouver Tong Xun</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1977.08.05</td>
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<td>1977.11.17</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1978.01.18</td>
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<td>1978.06.23</td>
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<td>1979.01</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Constitution of the TCA and information of TCA’s incorporation to British Columbia</td>
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<td>1980.04</td>
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<td>A call for participating in fund-raising to publish a North America-based newspaper</td>
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<td>Announcing the phone number of the “Voice of Taiwan”: 277-9535</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>1987.01</td>
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<td>Reporting the fund-raising dinner for Hsing-liang Hsu on November 15, 1986. Noting that approximately 170 people attended.</td>
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<td>Dr. C. C. Yang wrote on the establishment of the FAPA (Formosan Association for Public Affairs).</td>
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<td>Dr. Tsung-yi Lin’s article: <em>Formosa—my country and my home.</em></td>
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<td>1988.01</td>
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<td>Dr. H. Y. Hsia’s article: <em>Who cuts the umbilical cord to the motherland?</em> Statement in support of political prisoners Yo-chuan Tsai and Tsao-teh Hsu (imprisoned 1987-1990 in Taiwan)</td>
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<td>Summary of the “May 20th Farmers’ Movement”</td>
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<td>44</td>
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<td>A detailed report on political events in Taiwan in the past year. Notice of the plan for establishing a senior’s organization in the community</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>1989.05</td>
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<td>Dr. Yun-hsin Chen’s article in memory of Nan-jung Cheng, who set himself on fire in support of Taiwan independence on April 7, 1989</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Issue</td>
<td>Publication date</td>
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<td>Dr. H. Y. Hsiao’s article on the idea of “one nation, two governments.” Advertisement for “Dong Ning xu yuan” (an educational facility for younger generations of Taiwanese Canadians)</td>
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<td>Statement reprimanding the ignoring of the TCA’s participation in the establishment of Taiwan’s offices in Canada</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1991.03</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Reporting the visit of Ming-the Shih, former political prisoner, to Vancouver on February 17, 1991</td>
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<td>1991.07</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>The transcript of Dr. Tsung-yi Lin’s speech on the February 28th Incident. Dr. Lin’s opening speech at the TCCS. Reporting the contact with TECO (Taipei Economic and Cultural Office) in Vancouver to open in August, 1991.</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Fund-raising for Yi-hsung Lin’ on December 27, 1991 (amount of funds raised:120,000 dollars)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Transcript of Dr. Tsung-yi Lin’s speech.</td>
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<td>Reporting the protest to the Chinese Consulate in Vancouver for the “Qiandao Lake Incident.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Publication date</td>
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<td>Reporting a successful fund-raising for posting an advertisement on the Vancouver Sun in protest to China’s missile test between March 8 and March 15, 1996. Reporting a 2,000 people rally to the Chinese Consulate in Vancouver.</td>
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<td>Statement calling for the abolishment of the “Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission” of Taiwan government.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2001.10</td>
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<td>A public plea for supporting Taiwan to enter the United Nations.</td>
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<td>2002.04.02</td>
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<td>2002.10.01</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Statement in support of Shui-bian Chen’s (the president of Taiwan, 2000-2008) comments on “one country on each side.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2002.12.31</td>
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<td>Issue</td>
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<td>2003.07.01</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>Reporting the rally in protest against China’s concealment of the epidemic situation of SARS (350 people attended the rally)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2003.10.01</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>Statement supporting the “Taiwan Name Rectification Movement.” Reporting China’s request to the Canadian government that Taiwanese applicants applying for Canadian passports should be noted China as country of origin.</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reporting the news regarding Shui-bian Chen being re-elected president of Taiwan in 2004.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wen ge hua tai wan tong xian hui hui kan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1994.04</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reporting the protest against the Chinese government regarding the “Qiandao Lake Incident.” Transcript of Dong-Fang’s speech on April 10, 1994.</td>
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<td>(Vancouver TCA newsletter, or “溫哥華台灣同鄉會薈刊” in Chinese)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1994.06</td>
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<td>WUF’s newsletter. Reporting the “Taiwanese Convention in America.”</td>
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<td>Commentary on the “Lin Family Murder.”</td>
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<td>1994.04.05</td>
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<td>Official publication by the “Republic of Taiwan Association in Vancouver” which was established on February 20, 1994 and became dormant in the late 1990s. A politically oriented organization promoting democratisation and political self-determination of Taiwan.</td>
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<td>Reporting the visit of the “Delegate of the Democratic Progressive Party” from Taiwan. Analysis on the election of Mayor of Taipei city (non-KMT candidate, later the president of Taiwan, Shui-bian Chen being elected).</td>
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<td>1995.09.30</td>
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<td>Reporting that non-KMT activists Ming-min Peng and Chang-ting Hsieh are running for presidency on behalf of the DPP (the Democratic Progressive Party, the main dissident party in Taiwan).</td>
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<td>Political statement by the Taiwan Presbyterian Church on “a new and independent Taiwan.”</td>
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<td>An open letter to the Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali protesting his comments on Taiwan (being an island of China).</td>
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<td>Summary of Shih-mon Chen’s speech on April 24, 1996. Summary of Tsan-hung Chang’s speech on May 26, 1996.</td>
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<td>Dr. H. Y. Hsiao’s article on the sovereignty dispute over the Diaoyutai Islands (or the Senkaku Islands).</td>
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<td>Commentary on China’s repossessing the sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997.</td>
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<td>Reporting the protest against Jiang Zemin. Commentary on the results of Taiwan’s local elections.</td>
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<td>1998.04.30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Articles in memory of Nan-jung Cheng’s death. Cheng set himself on fire on April 7, 1989 to protest the KMT government for suppressing people’s freedom of speech. He was deemed by most anti-KMT activists as a martyr.</td>
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<td>Commentary on Taiwanese businessmen’s investment in China</td>
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<td>Statement condemning the “Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commissions” for its inappropriate handling of Taiwanese American affairs in Seattle.</td>
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Appendix 6  Report on the Visit of Hsin-Liang Hsu to Vancouver

Source: *Vancouver Tong Xun* (Vancouver Newsletter), issue 37, January 1987, p. 2. (Figure 18) (© Taiwanese Canadian Association, reproduced with permission).

Source: *Vancouver Tong Xun* (Vancouver Newsletter), July 1995, p. 10) (Figure 19) (© Taiwanese Canadian Association, reproduced with permission)
Appendix 8  Report on the Protest against Jiang Zemin (President of China) on November 23, 1997

Source: Tai Wan Ren Tong Xun (Taiwanese Newsletter), Nov/Dec, 1997 (Cover Page). (Figure 20) (© The Taiwanese Newsletter, reproduced with permission)
Appendix 9  Dr. A04’s Letter to Members of the TCHPA (Figure 21)

Dear Colleague: Friend,

Re: Purchase of ECMO machines for the Children's Hospital

On behalf of the Taiwanese Canadian Health Professional Association (TCHPA) and B.C. Children’s Hospital Foundation, I would like to invite you to the upcoming “For Children We Care” Fund-Raising Dinner. TCHPA is a group of health professionals from Taiwan who have settled here in Vancouver, and some of us are in active medical practice. Our goal is to raise $250,000 for ECMO machines (Extra-Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation).

My first encounter with ECMO was roughly five years ago when I was practicing obstetrics at the Richmond Hospital. One day I delivered by caesarean section a 37-week baby. Soon thereafter the baby developed respiratory problems and was transferred to the Children’s Hospital. The next day, the pediatrician told me that the baby had been transferred again, this time by air ambulance to Edmonton, for ECMO! I was surprised and, frankly, shocked. It is now an accepted armamentarium for some of our critically ill neonates or pediatric patients: without it, fatality is the usual outcome.

We need to address this terrible deficiency in B.C.’s only pediatric tertiary-care hospital, and we have the means to start the process. We have a donor willing to underwrite the entire dinner expense of $30 per person. We have the cooperation of Children’s Hospital Foundation, and the Ministry of Health has approved the budget for the operating cost of these labour-intensive ECMO machines. The only thing missing is the capital investment: $250,000 will buy four ECMO machines.

The Fund Raising Dinner will be held on January 9th, 1999 at the Westin Bayshore Hotel, Vancouver. Tickets are $200.00. Although the tax deductible portion is $170, the entire $200 will go to the purchase of the machines.

I look forward to your participation in this very worthwhile cause. It is for our community, our children/grandchildren and our patients. For tickets, please contact me at 273-5646 or Candice (Children’s Hospital Foundation) at 875-2597 or 816-3095. If the date of the dinner is not convenient for you, I invite any alternative ways of helping us.

Thank you very much.

M.B., FRCSC
President, TCHPA

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Appendix 10  Ticket for the Fund-Raising Dinner on January 9th, 1999 (Figure 22)

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