MISS QUEEN OF CATHAY (1954):
CHINESE WOMEN, FAMILIES AND ASSOCIATIONS IN VANCOUVER

by

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B.A. (Honours) Hong Kong Baptist University, 1991

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

in
The Faculty of Graduate Studies
THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

August 1995

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DE-6 (2/88)
Abstract

This study is an exploratory attempt to examine the process of female emigration in relation to marriages, the integrity of overseas Chinese communities and the relationships between Chinese women, families and associations. Personal reminiscences of women have revealed that female emigration was part of the process of family emigration rather than merely the result of male emigration. The late appearance of women in the stream of overseas migration and the arrival of wives completed the family emigration cycle, and thus overseas Chinese families were formed. In overseas Chinese communities, Chinese education was and is a means to cultivate and maintain Chinese culture. Chinese schools were therefore established. However facing limited subsidies from the local government, Chinese people had to raise funds within their ethnic community for establishing Chinese schools. Organizing fund-raising campaigns, such as the fund-raising campaign for the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao (溫哥華華僑公立學校), or the Vancouver Chinese Public School in 1954, became the survival tactic that Chinese people adopted to provide community services for themselves. The participation of individuals and associations in the campaign reflects the integrity of Vancouver’s Chinese community in the 1950s. Individuals generously contributed and the associations cooperated when there was a need to collect money for the provision of social services. Using primarily the Chinese vernacular newspapers and personal narratives, the Miss Queen of Cathay contest has shown the participation of families in associations, the identification of Canadian-born daughters with the associations to which their fathers belonged, as well as the Chinese patriarchy in overseas Chinese families and associations.
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The Celebration
Romanization

To standardize the Romanization of Chinese words, names of persons, institutions, and places in this thesis are Romanized in the *pinyin* system.
Acknowledgment

I would like to thank my supervisor, Diana Lary, for her support and guidance in this thesis. She has taught me much about Chinese women and Chinese families. Thanks should be extended to Dianne Newell who first introduced me to the field of family and gender issues, and has given me useful comments to revise and edit my thesis. I also want to thank Glen Peterson and George Egerton for examining my oral defence.

This research would have been impossible without the help of the following people: Graham Johnson, Elizabeth Johnson, Victoria Yip, Nick and Mary Yip, Rosalie Wong and Sylvia Lee. I greatly appreciate the time and efforts that Shirley Yip, Jessie Ing, Lily Iwata, Carole Ann Soong, Holly Siu and Jean Chow have given in the research.

Much thanks are due to Elizabeth Sinn of the History Department, University of Hong Kong, for sharing with me the emigration data that she collected from the Hong Kong government records and her experiences in interviewing Chinese elderly. I want to thank Wesley Pue for allowing me to attend the oral history workshop held in April 1994 by the Faculty of Law at UBC. In the workshop, I have learned techniques in doing oral interviews which is useful in my research. Thanks are also due to Edgar Wickberg and Timothy Stanley for their advice on the development of Chinese education overseas.

I want to thank the following organizations for their assistance: the Special Collections and Asian Library of UBC, the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao (溫哥華華僑公立學校 Vancouver Chinese Public School), City of Vancouver Archives, Main Library of the University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Public Records Office.

Many friends have been supportive and helpful in various ways in this research. Van and Richard Nguyen-Marshall always encourage me. Wing Chung Ng has given me comments and suggestions on Chapter One and the issues of overseas Chinese education. Angela Szeto has edited my writing and discussed with me the usage of some difficult words to clarify my arguments. Special thanks should go to Ken; his expertise in computer and photography has been helpful in reproducing the photos for this thesis.

My family did not help directly in this research, but their understanding and warmth has comforted me in the lonely research and writing. I appreciate the love of my elder sisters — Betty, Joyce, Clara and Dily — and of my parents to whom this thesis is dedicated.
Introduction

This thesis is an exploratory study of several aspects of the overseas Chinese community in Vancouver — female emigration patterns, family relations, roles and status of Chinese women in overseas Chinese communities. The thesis focuses on an event and movement of major impact for all of these issues — the 1954 fund-raising campaign for the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao (溫哥華華僑公立學校, Vancouver Chinese Public School) and the Jingxuan Nuhuang Yundong (競選女皇運動, Miss Queen of Cathay contest) which formed a central part of this campaign. By analyzing this event in the development of the Vancouver Chinese community from a female perspective, the thesis hopes to shed new light on the roles and status of Canadian-born Chinese women as Chinese families and culture adopted to the new overseas environment of Vancouver after the end of WWII and the repeal of the Exclusion Act in 1947.

My interest in studying Chinese emigration and the contest from a female perspective has been influenced by the increasing interest in women’s issues in Chinese studies. Women’s studies, especially on marriage and the family, has traditionally been regarded to be in the domain of anthropologists. Historians of China have seldom looked

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1 The Miss Queen of Cathay is the English-language translated title used by the local English-language presses, such as The Vancouver Sun and The Province. The Chinatown News also translated the Chinese-language title into Queen of Chinatown. To distinguish this contest from the later beauty pageant, Miss Chinatown, I prefer to use Miss Queen of Cathay in this thesis.


at women’s issues. Only with the recent growing interest in social history, have social historians begun to combine anthropological research methods, sociological data and historical evidence for interdisciplinary studies. A respected anthropologist, James Watson, has suggested that historians “must become anthropologists of sorts if they hope to understand the complexities of Chinese social institutions.”

The time-frame of this project is the 1950s. The purpose is to scrutinize and assess the proposition that substantial post-war Chinese female immigration to North American, and to Canada in particular, was the direct result of male emigration. The pattern of Chinese emigration has been understood as one in which males took the lead and were followed by females. In this gendered migration pattern, women did not appear in the stream of emigration until they were sponsored to go abroad years after their husbands emigrated. During the period of separation, the male emigrants remitted money and visited home periodically. Sociologists have interpreted and explained this pattern of Chinese emigration in several ways. Some argue that white racial superiority and institutional discrimination has inhibited female emigration. Other scholars have

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6 See Peter Li, The Chinese in Canada (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988). Daniel Kubat points out that before WWII there was increasing control over Oriental immigration. See Daniel Kubat, “Asian Immigrants to Canada,” in Pacific Bridges: The New Immigration from Asia and the Pacific Islands
attributed the delay of female out-migration to the maintenance of Chinese kinship at
home. This thesis views the pattern of Chinese emigration as a type of family emigration
in which women appeared as individual emigrants themselves though they were sponsored
to come to Canada. The arrival of the women signaled a crucial phase in the overseas
migration cycle and in fact completed the cycle of many Chinese families. Instead of being
sojourners and preparing for retirement back in China (luo ye gui gen 落葉歸根), many
immigrants began to take roots in the host countries (luo de sheng gen 落地生根).

Sucheng Chan has rightly pointed out that “with the single word sojourner, some
oft-quoted scholars have banished Asians completely from the realm of immigration
history.”8 For the term “sojourner” implied that Asian immigrants, such as the Chinese,
were just temporary migrants who would eventually leave the host countries and thus did
not participate in the community fully; in any case, community participation under such
circumstances was not encouraged. The families studied in this research, though they did
not experience the male-dominated family emigration process described above, show that
the idea of “sojourner” should not always be appended to Chinese emigration. The
pageant contestants, their families and the associations to which they belonged were
committed strongly to the Chinese community in Vancouver.

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Overseas Chinese Communities

The concept of community has been explained, in sociological terms, using boundaries which display geographical and ethnic concordance as well as a common interest among the members. In MacIver’s and Crissman’s words, a community is “an area of common life based on common interest which can determine activity” and “has ethnicity as well as locality as its basis.” Influenced by this emphasis on regional and ethnic boundaries, some historical geographers have tended to confine overseas Chinese communities to Chinatowns. David Lai’s study on the evolutionary development of the Chinatown has argued that Chinese people voluntarily created the Chinatown as the major, if not the only, Chinese community overseas. Within a geographical boundary, an ethnic community should have its own newspaper printed, circulated and read by members. In addition, the community should also be able to support all kinds of associations for social welfare and business purposes. There should be community leaders to speak for the members as a whole.

Previous literature on overseas Chinese communities has focused on Chinese associations which have been treated as the basic and essential units in forming communities. This body of literature, written from a male perspective, has looked at the institutional history of overseas Chinese communities. These institutional histories of overseas Chinese associations have focused mainly on the structure and formation of

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associations. Most research findings seem to suggest that overseas Chinese communities were ethnically homogenous but institutionally and structurally divided. The division was reflected in the segmentary nature of overseas Chinese associations which were formed based on social functions and needs for welfare services and aid to the members of the community.\(^\text{12}\)

The segmentary nature of the associations also derived from the different principles in forming community associations. Crissman and Ng noted that language, locality and surname were the major criteria which led to the segmentary structure of the overseas Chinese associations. These three criteria interlocked and overlapped with one another in different levels and segments.\(^\text{13}\) For Crissman, surname was subordinate to both speech and geographical boundaries. Dialect and regional factors could cut across, as he claimed "speech communities [associations] can segment into sub-communities [branches] based

\(^\text{12}\) A typology of eight kinds of Chinese organizations can be identified. Clan and district organizations were based on regional boundaries from where members came. Some trade and professional organizations were formed. Another type was political associations. To provide cultural activities, educational and journalistic bodies, recreational-cultural associations and religious groups were founded. The last type would be the so-called "umbrella" organizations which were community-wide coordinating and representative associations. Wickberg further modified this classification and suggested a typology of five based on the needs that many overseas Chinese acquired. The needs were competitive interest articulation, social services, expression, re-sinicification, and relations with the larger society. The rationale behind this classification was integration; integrating with the host society was the trend of development in overseas Chinese communities both in Southeast Asia and in North America. "[An] integrated Chinese population is one with a community, identifiable as such through the existence of community-based organizations."

on counties or groups of counties, which in turn can be segmented on the basis of smaller territories down to the level of communities drawn from single villages.”  

Crissman interprets community at different levels. There is a community at large, and the association functions as a community for its members, and the further down ‘branch-communities’ within associations are formed according to smaller territories.

In the Southeast Asian context, Ng and Yen found that dialect is a decisive principle in forming overseas Chinese associations. Ng looked at the proliferation of *huiguan* (會館) between 1900 and 1941 in Singapore and found that occupational, dialect and territorial boundaries cut across one another, and guilds and clan associations became multi-dialect groups after the turn of the century.  

Yen also argued that dialect was a decisive factor in determining the membership for non-localized lineage organizations which were an alternative to the localized lineage organization. The non-localized associations were formed because of the difficulties in recruiting members of the same lineage. Therefore people grouped together on the basis of broader geographical units but within the same dialect boundary.

The structure of overseas Chinese associations was symptomatic of Chinese patriarchy and modeled on the Chinese kinship system. The formation of *fang* (房) or sub-localized groups particularly resembled the parental structure within the Chinese family. The sub-localized groups or *fang* were formed to distinguish clansmen from different localities in the same village. The formation of *fang* symbolized the lineage maturation at

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its multiplication that is the number of sons or male descendants in the genealogical record determined the number of fang formed.\textsuperscript{17}

The recent literature, however, takes a different approach to the structure of overseas Chinese communities. Instead of looking at associations as the basic units in forming the community, more attention has been given to individuals and their life experiences. Particular attention goes to the role of women. Some of this literature contains interviews and personal life stories collected by scholars to shed light on social behaviour and experiences, for example Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women by the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) and Chinese Canadians: Voices from a Community by Evelyn Huang and Lawrence Jeffery. The voices of the individuals as actors themselves in the community can be heard in these collections. The CCNC editorial board particularly aims at correcting the generally "sadly neglected" stories of Chinese Canadian women.\textsuperscript{18} These recently collected life stories record the adaptation and struggles of immigrant Chinese women and Canadian-born Chinese women in a non-Chinese country and a male-dominated Chinese community.


In addition, *Smoke and Fire: The Chinese in Montreal* by Chan Kwok Ban and *The Concubine's Children*, the family history of Denise Chong, are two important recent publications on the history of Chinese in Canada. Both of them use personal narratives in their books; Chan, as a male researcher, interviewed ten women while Chong used the narratives of her mother and uncle, and the family letters and pictures. These two books have highlighted the process of Chinese family emigration to Canada. Some of the ten short life histories in *Smoke and Fire* tell of the male-dominated overseas migration cycle of Chinese families. This cycle started with the husband’s emigration, followed by the male children and later completed by the wives’ migration. This gendered migration process and the late appearance of the women in the cycle will be further discussed in Chapter One. Chong’s family experience, on the other hand, reflects the pattern of concubinage marriage. This kind of concubinage marriage reflected a type of female emigration through marriage. Consequently, a divided family was formed with the major or first wife in China and the qie (妾 the minor or second wife) living with the husband overseas.

**Chinese Education and the Maintenance of Overseas Chinese Communities**

Chinese education, part-time or otherwise, for children of Chinese ancestry living overseas was meant to cultivate good character, to maintain traditions, and to affirm identity and continuity within the Chinese community. Its primary aim was to teach Chinese children the virtues of “Li” (禮 Courtesy), “Yi” (義 Righteousness), “Cheng”, (誠 Honesty) and “Xiao” (孝 Filial Piety).¹⁹ For many community activists, overseas Chinese

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education (Huaqiao Jiaoyu 華僑教育) was viewed as a means of maintaining Chineseness or Chinese identity overseas. Its ultimate purpose was to prevent Chinese children from being westernized.\(^{20}\)

In addition, it was hoped that through acquiring the knowledge of Chinese language, Chinese people could be united as Li Yufen (李毓芬), leader of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) in Victoria, believed that “apart from promoting Chinese culture overseas, Chinese education was an important binding force to unite Chinese people in Canada together. That unity could eventually help raise the status of Chinese people in this country.”\(^{21}\)

Chinese-language was also used to maintain the parent-child relationship in overseas Chinese families. Some people believed that the mandate of Chinese education should be teaching the basic Chinese moral principles such as demeanor, altruism, and humility. These principles would cultivate the children’s respect for their parents.

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Therefore, for some Chinese education advocates teaching Chinese-language became merely the "teaching that parents are always right in the same line of thinking of merchants — that customers are always right." Chinese language was also a medium for maintaining, if not improving, the communication between parents and children. Because many immigrant parents spoke little English (which was often the first language of their children), there was much demand for Chinese language teaching. Consequently, many Chinese schools gave priority to reading and speaking abilities.

**Chinese Merchants and the Development of Chinese Education Overseas**

In British Columbia, Chinese education began in the late 19th century, soon after Chinese started immigrating to Western Canada in the 1880s. Its development evolved from private tutoring to a public school system. The private teaching was marked by the sponsorship of wealthy merchants and was perceived as a privilege of the merchant class family. In the early 20th century, Chinese schools became institutionalized and Chinese merchants helped to popularize Chinese education to children of Chinese ancestry.

For private tutoring, many Chinese merchants hired scholars from China to tutor their children at home. The children were taught classical Chinese language and literature.

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23 A survey done in the 1970s that some Chinese schools were oriented toward reading and speaking abilities, and followed by writing skills and Chinese culture. Manitoba Ad-Hoc Committee on Chinese Education Studies, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, *A Survey on Chinese Education in Prairie Region*, November 1979.
such as the *Si Shu* (四書 The Four Books) and *Wu Jing* (五經 The Five Classics). The teaching method emphasized memorization rather than creativity. Some merchant-parents, however, would ask the accountant or bookkeeper of their business to teach their children Chinese characters, bookkeeping, calculation and the use of abacus instead. This type of teaching was practical, for it helped to prepare the children, sons in particular, to take over the family business. Evening classes were usually held at the stores after business hours, because the children had to attend day schools and the shopkeeper-teachers had to finish their work for the store. Students were usually the children or close relatives of the business owners. Often these “private schools” were named after the business that financed the classes. During the heyday of this type of private teaching, there were as many as eight to nine private schools in Victoria’s Chinatown, for examples Huayuan Sishu (華源私塾) and Taiyuan Xuexiao (泰源學校).

From the 1880s to the early 1900s, the private Chinese schools in Victoria were amalgamated and consolidated under the Lequn Yishu (樂群義塾) which began the public Chinese school system and the subsequent setting up of Zhonghua Xuetang (中華學堂).

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25 *The Four Books* and *The Five Classics* are the very important literature in Chinese history and philosophy. *The Four Books* contained *Daxue* [大學 The Great Learning], *Zhongyong* [中庸 The Doctrine of the Mean], *Lunyu* [論語 The Analects of Confucius], and *Mengzi* [孟子 Mencius]. *The Five Classics* included *Shi* [詩 The Book of Songs], *Shu* [書 The Book of History], *Yi* [易 The Book of Changes], *Li* [禮 The Book of Rites], and *Chunqiu* [春秋 Spring and Autumn Annals].

26 Zhang Zheng-fan, *Huqiao Jiaoyu Zonglun*, pp. 36-37 and Wickberg, *From China to Canada*, pp. 26-27. Dr. Wickberg also suggested to me that due to racial discrimination Chinese people were not allowed to work outside of Chinatown in the late 19th and early 20 centuries. Many of them had to work in Chinatown where Chinese language was the major medium of communication. Therefore Chinese language was important for many young Chinese to pursue their careers in business. Also, Dr. Wing Chung Ng suggested that learning Chinese was preparing to return to China in case the discrimination against Chinese in Canada got worse.


During this period, the merchants initiated and raised money for setting up the Lequn Yishu and donated properties for establishing the Zhonghua Xuetang. For example, Li Mengjiu (李夢九), a major proponent for education, established the Lequn Yishu in 1899.29 Within a few months, $3,000 was raised and the school was officially opened on 1 July 1899, and attended by 39 pupils.30 Classes were held on the third floor of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (Zhonghua Huiguan 中華會館).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the educational segregation crisis occurred in Victoria. The segregation began in 1901 when there were attempts to separate Chinese from white children in public schools. The policy was based on complaints made by white parents that Chinese students were unclean, untidy, and ill-mannered. The white parents feared that the Chinese children would have a demoralizing influence on the white children. The school board also charged that the Chinese children had no intention of learning, but were attending public schools simply to receive the refund of the Head Tax of $500. Finally, all 15 junior Chinese children were placed in a separate classroom in Rock Bay Elementary in January 1903. This left only a few senior Chinese students studying with white children. The segregation crisis recurred in 1907 when 19 Chinese children, who had recently arrived from China, applied for permits to attend school. George Jay, the school board chair, felt that since these children did not know English their presence in classes with white children would slow the progress of learning for the whole class. Therefore on 29 August 1907, the school board ruled that no Chinese

29 Li Mengjiu was locally recognized as Lee Mongkow. According to Wickberg, Li was an Immigration interpreter but he probably was also a prominent merchant, as his name appeared in some business transaction documents in the Sam Kee paper deposited in City of Vancouver Archives.
children were permitted to attend public schools until they could understand the English language. It was ruled that permits to attend public schools would be issued only to native-born Chinese children. This new regulation legislated by the school board disqualified many Chinese children from attending schools, the Chinese in Victoria therefore were searching for ways to provide both Chinese and western education to the Chinese children. The CCBA placed all the China-born children in the Lequn Yishu and raised funds from the Chinese communities across the county to build the Zhonghua Xuetang. With the help of Lin Libin (林禮斌) and Li Mengjiu, who generously provided the land for building the school and playground for students, the Zhonghua Xuetang was officially opened on 7 August 1909.

Definitions of Terms

Some terms in this thesis need to be clarified and defined. “Overseas Chinese” (huaqiao 華僑) refers to sojourners while “Chinese overseas” (huaren 華人) means Chinese people living abroad regardless of whether they are immigrants or overseas-born,

31 It was a law that Chinese children could obtain a refund of the Head Tax with the certificate which proved their attendance in school for a year. Lai, “The Issue of Discrimination in Education in Victoria, 1901-23,” pp. 50 and 52. The amount of money that the CCBA raised was debatable. Lai recorded $7,800 was raised whereas Lee noted that $40,000 was collected from the Chinese in Vancouver and Vancouver Island. Lee, Jianada Huaqiao shi, p. 329. For the details about Chinese children’s educational segregation issue, see Mary Ashworthy, “Chapter Two, The Chinese,” in The Forces Which Shaped Them: A History of the Education of Minority Group Children in British Columbia (Vancouver: New Star books, 1979) and “Chapter Ten, Chinese Children,” in Children of the Canadian Mosaic: A Brief History to 1950 (Toronto: Osie Press, 1993); and Timothy J. Stanley, “White Supremacy, Chinese Schooling, and School Segregation in Victoria: The Case of the Chinese Students’ Strike, 1922-23,” Historical Studies in Education 2, 2(1990): 287-305.

32 Lin Libin, “Yubu Zhonghua Huiguan zhi yange ji Huaqiao Xuexiao chuangli zhi yuanqi,” p.2. The educational commissioner representing the Qing government, Liang Qinggui (梁慶桂) suggested the CCBA to name the school Daqing Qiaomin Xiaoxue (大清僑民小學 Imperial Chinese School). However, his suggestion was rejected by the community and the name Zhonghua Xuetang was adopted instead
and suggests a change in citizenship.\textsuperscript{33} Other terms like Canadian-born, local-born and \textit{tusheng} (土生) refer to descendants of Chinese who are born in Canada. "\textit{Huiguan}" and "\textit{gongsuo}" (公所) are used interchangeably in this thesis for "association". "Association" is the general English translation of both. "\textit{Huiguan}" is a guild association while "\textit{gongsuo}" is a community meeting place. In Chapter Three, \textit{gongsuo} is frequently used instead of associations or \textit{huiguan} in keeping with the contestants' personal narratives.

This thesis has three main chapters. In Chapter One I will use the published oral histories of Chinese women’s emigration experience to explore the process of family emigration, with particular attention given to female emigrants, and the formation of the Chinese family overseas. The first part will discuss Canadian immigration policy with respect to Chinese immigration to Canada and will compare immigration data of Canada with Hong Kong emigration figures. In the second section, I will argue that from a sociological and anthropological perspective, the process of female emigration was directly related to their marriages which can be described as the overseas, delayed-transfer marriages.\textsuperscript{34} The last section will examine the lives of immigrant wives and the formation of the overseas Chinese family, with particular attention given to the education of the


\textsuperscript{34} Here I am borrowing and expanding the idea of delayed-transfer marriage coined by Janice Stockard. Her research was largely based on Marjorie Topley's extensive research on marriage resistance of Shunde women. See Janice Stockard, \textit{Daughters of the Canton Delta: Marriage Patterns and Economic Strategies in South China, 1860-1930} and Marjorie Topley, "Marriage Resistance in Rural Kwongtung," in \textit{Women in Chinese Society}. Stockard’s book has been widely reviewed by scholars. Norma Diamond, an anthropologist, criticized Stockard for "presenting herself as the discoverer of this variant," \textit{American Anthropologist} 92(1990): 534.
second generation overseas Chinese. Chapter Two delineates the details of the Miss Queen of Cathay contest — its purpose, format, and results, and looks at the individuals and associations that participated in the 1954 fund-raising campaign for the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao. The campaign included individual donations and the Miss Queen of Cathay contest which will form the major bulk of this chapter. I will argue, at the macro level, the campaign demonstrates that organizing fund-raising campaigns for the provision of social services for Chinese people as a survival tactic of the overseas ethnic Chinese community. At the micro level, the contestants' family backgrounds demonstrate that merchant families were part of the elite who assumed leadership in the community, and the result of the contest shows that the power and influence of the sponsoring associations in the community did not necessarily lead to the contestants' winning the competition. My interviews with the contestants are used in Chapter Three to reveal how Chinese patriarchy has manifested itself in an overseas Chinese community and how women perceive their identity in relation to the influence that parents have on daughters. The interviews tell in particular of how the women, as daughters, positioned themselves and their families in the associations which their fathers joined.
Chapter One

Historical Patterns

Chinese people started immigrating to Canada when the gold rush in the Fraser River began in 1858. Most of the migrants came from Siyi (四邑, The Four Counties) and Sanyi (三邑, The Three Counties) in the Pearl River Delta, Guangdong province. Economic betterment was the major driving force for emigration. They engaged in gold mining activities and the construction of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). These migrant workers were predominantly male labourers, married and single. Having left their families in the hometown villages, they formed a “bachelor society” in Canada while their lives were marked by loneliness and hardship. Their relationships with families in China were maintained through financial remittances and occasional visits. Eventually some “married bachelor” migrant workers were joined by their children and wives after 1947. The arrival of the immediate family completed the overseas migration cycle.

This Chinese out-migration cycle was a gendered chain process: the male migrants usually formed the first link in the chain and then they were followed by their female counterparts. The Canadian immigration law was a form of institutionalized racism

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4 It was quite common that the children would go abroad to join their fathers before the mothers so that they could receive education or career training. One of the reasons that mothers were left behind was that they had to take care of the elderly family members in China.
against Chinese immigration which shaped this pattern of Chinese female immigration to Canada and the family life of many overseas Chinese. The head tax and its subsequent increases presented a financial obstacle for many Chinese men who wanted to bring their wives over to Canada before 1947. Thus, the immigration legislation prolonged the separation period between wives and husbands, and delayed the arrival of Chinese wives. However, the late appearance of women in the emigration cycle of Chinese people is usually seen as a result of overseas male migration rather than a characteristic of the process of female emigration. Female emigration indeed was integral to the emigration cycle of Chinese people; joining their husbands overseas complete this cycle and formed the Chinese families overseas.

If the emigration of women is to have significance beyond being a mere appendage to male migration then we need to ask: what were the circumstances which prompted female migration? Why did female emigration come after male emigration? How many women actually entered Canada? What was the significance of female immigration to the formation of overseas Chinese families? Recently, scholarships on Chinese women and overseas Chinese have given much attention to personal life histories. These researches have provided some understanding to these questions.

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6 The definition of overseas Chinese families allows for several possibilities. Some families would be polygamous, either with more than one wife living together overseas or one wife in China and one overseas. The former case usually happened in merchant families. Some would be divided couples, with the husband living overseas and the wife staying in China. Another type would be the monogamous couple living together overseas after a long period of separation. This chapter will focus on discussing the last type of overseas Chinese family. See Denise Chong, *The Concubine's Children* (Toronto: Viking Press, 1994) and *Yip Sang Biography, 1845-1927*, Chinese Canadian Research, The Special Collections, University of British Columbia.
Canadian Immigration Policy and Chinese Immigration to Canada

It has been argued that Canadian Immigration policy was racist and that Chinese people were subjected to more racist and discriminatory legislation than any other ethnic group in Canada.\(^7\) As soon as the western portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway was finished and the entire country was linked up, an Immigration Act was passed by Parliament to restrict Chinese people from entering Canada. Beginning in 1886, a tax of $10 was levied on each disembarking Chinese immigrant. Exemption was granted to several categories of people, including diplomatic and consular officials, tourists, students who could present valid visas and proof of qualifications, and merchants. Ten years later, because anti-Chinese sentiment grew further in the country, the tax was raised to $50, and then doubled in 1900; it finally peaked in 1904 at $500 to discourage Chinese immigration to Canada. However, these policies did not seem as effective as they were expected to be in prohibiting Chinese people from entering Canada. (Table 1.1)

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Table 1.1 Chinese Immigration to Canada, 1880-1923

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Entries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1880-1884</td>
<td>18,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885-1889</td>
<td>2,684</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890-1894</td>
<td>11,236</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895-1899</td>
<td>15,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>2,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-1904</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905-1909</td>
<td>6,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-1914</td>
<td>26,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-1919</td>
<td>6,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-1923</td>
<td>5,682</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures are missing.

Source: Wickberg, Table 1, From China to Canada, p. 296; T.H. Lee, Jianada Huaqiao shi, pp. 418-420 and K.W. Taylor, Table 1. “Racism in Canadian Immigration Policy,” p. 5.

Table 1.1 shows the number of Chinese people entering Canada. The drop in the number of immigrants in 1885-1889, 1900, and 1905-1909 is deceptive; it only indicates that the head tax was effective temporarily in discouraging Chinese immigration in these three periods of time. The data recorded between and after these three periods present a great rise of entrants. The figures are incomplete and do not show how many people were first-time entrants, how many were returnees and how many were under the exempted categories.

In 1923, the Chinese Exclusion Act was finally imposed on Chinese immigrants. This legislation stipulated that the head tax would be abolished and that no students below university age would be admitted. Only four categories of Chinese people were allowed

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8 Lee Tung-hai has pointed out that it was not until the head tax was imposed that there were official records on the number of Chinese people landing in Canada. T.H. Lee (李東海), Jianada Huaqiao shi / The History of Chinese in Canada (Vancouver: Jianada Ziyou Chubanshe, 1967), p. 417. Interestingly, the Hong Kong Harbour Master, to whom Chinese people leaving the territory had to declare their destinations, reported higher numbers of Chinese people emigrating to Canada. This does not suggest that the Canadian government’s record tended to under-state the immigration data on Chinese immigration. There are indeed many possible reasons for the differences in the figures recorded by the two governments. Some passengers might have died during the voyage, or lied to the Hong Kong government about their destinations. Some might have only claimed that they were going to Jinshan (金山) without knowing that Canada was their destination and then landed in other places. Also, there is a possibility of Chinese individuals entering Canada as “Canadians” by birth or naturalization. See Appendix.
to enter Canada: university students, merchants, returning native-born and diplomats. The Canadian authorities recorded a minimal number of Chinese immigrants entering Canada during the so-called exclusion years (1924-46); however the Hong Kong Harbour Master’s Report (HMR) presents a different story and gives some interesting insights on this subject.\(^9\) Table 1.2 presents a great number of Chinese people \textit{claiming} that they were leaving for Canada during the exclusion years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exits</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exits</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>7,735</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>3,611</td>
<td>1940*</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>5,231</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>2,996</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>7,710</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>4,201</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>6,448</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>4,712</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>7,753</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>3,875</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>7,310</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>3,974</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>6,604</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>4,797</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>5,890</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>2,962</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No data was recorded between 1940-1946. During the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong between 1941 and 1945, no Chinese people were allowed to leave the territory.

Source: Hong Kong Government, Harbour Master’s Reports, 1923-46.

The HMR data does not indicate whether these emigrants were Hong Kong locals or transients from other Asian countries. Neither do the figures indicate whether there were some passengers who had first landed before exclusion or been born in Canada. The data, however, at least shows considerable movement. In fact, some steamship companies, such as the Canadian Pacific Steamships, evidently carried passengers traveling between British Columbia and Hong Kong on a frequent basis.\(^11\) The Blue Funnel, \textit{lanyintong} (藍煙通) in Chinese, was a popular steamship line that many Chinese people took to travel between Hong Kong and Vancouver. Its agents in Vancouver advertised widely in the Chinese

\(^9\) It was recorded that between 1924-46, 15 Chinese people entered Canada. See Lee, \textit{Jianada Huaqiao shi}, p. 420 and Taylor, “Racism in Canadian Immigration Policy,” p. 4. Patricia Roy pointed out that eight Chinese immigrants entered Canada between 1925 and 1940. Patricia Roy, “Educating the ‘East’: British Columbia and the Oriental Question in the Interwar Years,” p. 56. Since Hong Kong was the major port in Asia from which many Chinese took steamships to North America, looking at the official records of people leaving Hong Kong to Canada can shed light on the subject from another perspective.

\(^10\) I am deeply indebted to Dr. Elizabeth Sinn for generously sharing these data with me.

community about their services, the fares and voyage schedules. In Hong Kong, *The China Mail* regularly printed the voyage schedules to Vancouver and displayed advertisements for steamship companies, such as The Western Canada Steamships Ltd.

The HMR data on Chinese women emigrating to Canada during this period is of particular interest. Between 1924-39, 2,076 female adults and 437 female children embarked in Hong Kong who declared that they were going to Canada. The Canadian government, however, does not have records on the entry of Chinese women during the exclusion period which match the HMR figures. In legal terms, these female entrants must have belonged to one of the categories stated in the Chinese Exclusion Act in order to be admitted. But the number is so high that it is unlikely that there were as many as 2,513 Chinese females who were university students or Canadian-born Chinese returning Canada. Apart from those women who entered Canada legally, it is possible that some used false Canadian birth certificates while others might have left Hong Kong legally but entered Canada illegally. Thus, the huge number of female emigrants to Canada that the Hong Kong Harbour Master recorded shows a gap in the study of Chinese female emigration to Canada.

The lifting of the Exclusion Act in 1947 saw a gradual but substantial increase in immigration of Chinese women to Canada. Table 1.3 shows that between 1946 and 1949 more than 50 percent of the immigrants were wives. From 1949 onwards, these female-spouse entrants accounted for at least a quarter of the total number of Chinese immigrants to Canada annually. (Table 1.3)

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13 For example, see 30 January, 3 & 15 February, 18 & 25 March 1947, *The China Mail*.

Table 1.3 The Number of Chinese Immigrants and Wives among Chinese Immigrants Entering Canada, 1946-56

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total no. of Chinese immigrants</th>
<th>Wives</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946-47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>71.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>1,028</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>32.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>2,178</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>25.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>2,745</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>20.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>1,961</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>22.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>2,028</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>27.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>31.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>2,575</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>28.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table 2.2 and 2.4 in Wing Chung Ng, Ethnicity and Community: Southern Chinese Immigrants and Descendants in Vancouver, 1945-1980, Ph.D. Thesis, The University of British Columbia, 1993, pp. 47 and 51.

The arrival of wives provided an unprecedented opportunity for family life, and was greeted with euphoria by the entire Chinese community. For many overseas Chinese, it was the first opportunity to live with their children and wives in years. Even if they had wanted to sponsor their families to come to Canada previously, the restrictive immigration policy had constrained their ability to do so. The removal of the policy finally made their wishes come true. To celebrate the family reunion and to introduce the newcomers to the Chinese community, many locality or surname associations held reception parties to welcome the newly arrived immediate families of their members.

The immigration of Chinese women in the post-WWII years was also reflected in the travel business between Hong Kong and Vancouver. On 9 January 1954, the advertisements of two travel agencies in the Qiaosheng Ribao vied with each other for potential customers. The Canadian Pacific Airline advertisement read,

15 The Hong Kong Harbour Master’s Report, between 1947-50, records no people leaving Hong Kong to Canada.
16 Wing Chung Ng, Ethnicity and Community, p. 52.
Flying from Hong Kong to Vancouver
Only $500 Now

In reaction to the $500 price quoted by the Canadian Pacific Airline, an advertisement placed by the Jun An Company's (均安號) read,

Dealing for international airlines
Pay less $500
For new customers flying from Hong Kong to Vancouver
Quick and easy

These advertisements were targeted at Chinese people who could afford to bring their families from Hong Kong by flight. Apart from those hoping to achieve a family reunion, the companies also aimed at the Chinese bachelors who wanted to bring their brides from Hong Kong. Therefore three years later, the Jun An Company had another bold promotion in the Chinatown News which was captioned "Bringing a Bride from Hong Kong? Make the trip home your honeymoon!" Paul Yee argues this advertisement was printed in a bi-lingual magazine run by Canadian-born Chinese to attract second generation Chinese males of marriageable age. Though the relaxation of immigration legislation in 1947 allowed many Chinese women to come to Canada, the ratio of men to women in Chinatown remained to three-to-one because daughters were seldom sponsored to come. A further change in immigration regulations in August 1956 made it possible to send for prospective brides upon paying $1,000 deposit bond.

This new wave of female immigration was not only due to the removal of the Canadian immigration restrictions but also to political changes on the mainland. After the civil war between the KMT and the Communists, the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 changed the relationship between the Chinese-Canadian community and the Chinese homeland. Traveling in and out of China was restricted; overseas Chinese found it hard to visit and invest at home so they started to bring wives.

17 See Yee, Saltwater City, p. 118.
18 Ibid., pp. 118-121.
and children abroad. In addition, the Land Reform in China in the early 1950s and some other social reforms destroyed ancestral graves and investments of overseas Chinese. Thus, the Chinese lineage was weakened. This series of political changes broke the dream of retirement in China for many overseas Chinese and made them decide to settle down overseas.  

The Process of Female Emigration

Some recent studies on the lives of immigrant wives have revealed that the process of female emigration was directly related to the marriage to a huaqiao (華僑). Many migrants were middle-aged before they were married because they could not afford to pay the bride price and support their brides without labouring for years. In other words, the emigration of the bride to Canada was determined by the economic stability of the groom. If the groom was successful in his business, the bride would be sent for and married in Canada. In this case, the marriage would be arranged without the initial meeting between the bride and groom in China. The marriage was also marked by a large age difference between the bride and groom. Eva Lee whose mother came to Canada as a bride in 1902 told Dora Nipp that

My father didn’t get married until he was 44. My mother was only 17 when she came over. In English years she was 16. His family sent her over. Before they didn’t have to go back to meet each other. The older folks wrote letter to him ... and matched them up. His parents did this.


It was similar to the Japanese arranged picture bride marriage under which overseas Japanese men chose the pictures of their potential “wives” initially, and then sent for the brides to marry them overseas. It was quite common in the North American Japanese community. Yuko Shibata, “Coping with Values in Conflict: Japanese Women in Canada,” in Visible Minorities and Multiculturalism: Asians in Canada, ed. K. Victor Ujimoto and Gordon Hirabayashi (Toronto: Butterworths, 1980) pp. 262 and 266. Some people have used the term “mail-order bride” to describe this arrangement. However, “mail-order” is rather modern and western concept and has not been in common practice until recently; it seems to me that this term imposes a western concept on an oriental marriage arrangement.

Chen Meiyu, who traveled on her own as a bride to meet her arranged-husband, described her arranged marriage as a “blind marriage” (盲婚 manghun). 23 She remembers:

... My husband came a long time ago. He was about 10 or 12 years old when he came. He is much older than me, about twenty years older. He was about 40 or so when we married. ...

Some of these brides came to Canada and married as concubines (second or minor wives) because the groom wanted to raise a family overseas. This usually happened in wealthy Chinese merchant families, such as the Ye Sheng (葉生 Yip Sang) family. By the early 1900’s, Ye Sheng was one of the most prominent Chinese businessmen in Vancouver. “As his fortune prospered, his family also increased in size.” 25 After his first wife died in China and he became a naturalized British citizen in Canada, Ye Sheng decided to raise his family in Vancouver. He brought his second and third wives from China. He had three wives and a total of 23 children — 19 sons and 4 daughters. 26 However, Denise Chong’s family history has taught us that some poor Chinese “married bachelors” who wanted to have a company overseas would borrow money to send for a concubine. Shortly after her arrival, the newly married bride was put to work to pay off the debt. Two families, one in China and one overseas, would be raised, and the second wife worked to support the first wife, and the husband would travel between China and Canada.

Some women who were married overseas Chinese but were not sent for and married overseas would be married in the form of overseas-delayed transfer marriage. 27 The marriage was arranged and held upon the groom’s visit home. After the wedding

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24 Ibid.
26 Ibid. The first wife gave birth to 5 children, the second and third wives 8 children each. The entire family lived in the Wing Sang Company building on Pender Street.
27 This description is specifically applied to women who were married to Chinese emigrants and were not able to join their husbands overseas until WWII ended, after a long period of separation.
cereemony the husband would normally stay in China for some time hopefully to father a son. Then he would have to go abroad again and leave the wife in China, thus the separation period began and the husband and wife did not enjoy conjugal relationships until WWII ended. The wife would be left behind in China and the husband would go abroad on his own. The couple would only meet on the husband’s occasional visits. Living with her in-laws, the wife was expected to take the place of her husband to care for the elderly and her husband’s younger siblings, and to help in the fields.

Similar to the delayed-transfer marriage in Shunde, the overseas, delayed-transfer marriage was marked by a period of separation between the couple. The separation, however, frequently stretched to a period of 10 years or more whereas the buluojia (不落家) in Shunde were usually separated for three or four years. Some women did not join their husbands until 30 to 35 years after their husbands landed in Canada. Some did not live with their husbands until they were in their late fifties. The major difference between marriages of the “overseas brides” and the buluojia was that the women of the overseas, delayed-transfer marriage could not control the length of the separation period. Unlike the buluojia, delayed-transfer overseas brides were dependent on their husbands’ remittances; they did not support their natal families; they never spent time in girls’ houses and they lived with their husbands’ families.

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28 The delay-transfer marriage, coined by Janice Stockard, was found in Shunde. Under this marriage, the bride would not settle in the husband’s family after three or four years of separation. The bride instead would live with her natal family and spend time in the girl’s house. She worked to support the families of the husband and the parents. Helen Siu also has found this delay-transfer marriage practised in area surrounding the market town of Xiaolan in Xiangshan county, Zhongshan, south-east of Shunde, in the late 18th century. Helen F. Siu, “Where were the Women? Rethinking Marriage Resistance and Regional Culture in South China,” Late Imperial China 11: 2(December 1990): 32-62.

29 A buluojia (不落家) was a woman who refused to take the non-marrying vow and the non-marrying women’s hairdressing ceremony to be a zishunu (自梳女). A buluojia would eventually marry but would not live with her husband after three or four years of separation. Instead she would live with her natal parents and spend time in the girl’s house. A buluojia would also have to support the natal family and the family of her husband financially.

The Late Appearance of Female Emigration

The emigration of women from China to Canada was indispensable to the completion of the overseas migration cycle of Chinese people. With the arrival of the wives husbands no longer needed to travel between China and Canada; families settled down abroad and the sojourner period finally ended. However, this gendered overseas migration did not arise just out of historical circumstances; it was heavily influenced by the traditional Chinese favoring of males over females.

The late appearance of female emigration was caused by the sojourner mentality and the desire to preserve Chinese kinship. Reinforced by the sojourner mentality, Chinese kinship was not carried overseas by the male Chinese migrants but flourished in China. This was because many Chinese migrants did not plan to stay in Canada and therefore saw no need to send for their wives to join them abroad. According to Chinese patriarchy, women were responsible for domestic chores and child care. Consequently, Chinese migrants were discouraged from bringing their wives to Canada. Men often claimed that “Life is too harsh here. What is she going to do here? She is better off staying at home and looking after the family.” Or they would ask “What is the use of bringing your mother over here? She should stay home and look after the household.” Meanwhile the husbands would remit money home for building houses and for their retirement. For example, one woman mentioned that

He [her husband] wrote me four, five times a year. He would send money when he wrote. They money he sent was enough. We had a lot of rice fields in China, a number of acres. We rented them out to people. My husband used to come back to visit every three years. ...

The late appearance of female emigration can also be explained by favoring of males. The high value placed on male descendants in Chinese families directly influenced

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32 Interview with Mrs. Tan Wushi. Chan Kwok Ban, Smoke and Fire, p. 74 & 75.
34 Interview with Zhang Lingjiao. Chan Kwok Ban, Smoke and Fire, p. 59.
the decision on which family members were to go abroad. Female family members were seldom considered, and thus the emigration of women was delayed. In fact, many early Chinese migrants in Jinshan (金山 Gold Mountain) were strongly prejudiced against females. Evidence shows that whenever any possibilities of sending relatives overseas arose, females, such as wives and daughters, were not given first consideration. The head tax further reinforced this gender bias. Considering the heavy tax, it was not practical to sponsor females to Canada. Males were chosen because their labour could pay off the tax. This gender favoritism created the so-called paper son phenomenon. Birth certificates of sons of overseas Chinese were sold to other Chinese who wanted to bring their children or who themselves wanted to go abroad.

Before 1923, Chinese residents in Victoria did not sponsor daughters. A Chinese immigrant with a pregnant wife would tell the Canadian immigration officer on his return that the wife had given birth to a son. If later the baby turned out to be a girl, he would sell or exchange her for a boy, usually a nephew or a close patrilineal kin to sponsor him as a 'son'.

This prejudice was held strong even in the 1940s in Canada.

I still have a mother and a sister in Mainland China. My father did not sponsor them after 1947 because it was usual practice only to sponsor sons and not wives and daughters.

Undoubtedly, the bias against female emigration was the result of traditional Chinese patriarchy. In traditional Chinese society, male descendants were always the centre of family because they could carry on the patrilineal family line while daughters were married away to another family. This patriarchal attitude is expressed in the Chinese colloquial saying, "jia chu de nu, po chu de shui" (嫁出的女, 溢出的水, to marry off a daughter is like....

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35 Jinshan or Gold Mountain signifies North America and symbolizes success and riches. This term was used by many Chinese migrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
37 Ibid. The emphasis is mine.
splashing water) which means once daughters marry they become outsiders and do not belong to the natal family (niangjia 娘家 or pojia 婆家).  

**Immigrant Mothers and Descendants in Overseas Chinese Family**

The landing of Chinese wives in Canada completed the overseas, delayed-transfer marriage and the overseas migration process, as well as ending the sojourner period for many Chinese migrants. The reunion of husband and wife formed the family outside China in which the role of the wife, as an immigrant wife and mother, should not be neglected. The recollections of female descendants about the experiences of their immigrant mothers reveal that the labour of their mothers was indispensable to the family economy. They were both waged and non-waged laborers.

... My mom did the gardening. My mother cooked for six people. We had a good lunch and a supper. My mom did most of the work ...

All the women in Chinatown would work if they heard that any work was available. If there was any cannery that needed help, they went. If they heard any help was needed to pick berries, they went. My mom waited for the others in the tram station and then they went together. She went because she needed the money. Picking, chopping, cutting, sorting were her work. They applied for the jobs together. They picked fruit and vegetables. She worked full time.

Some immigrant women became breadwinners of the families after their husbands died. They were left to take care of their families alone. Anna Ma recalls,

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38 Both Janice Stockard and Ellen Judd have pointed out that married daughters still maintained ties with the natal families. These ties could be visiting and direct financial contributions. Judd particularly indicates that “...it will never be acceptable for a daughter to neglect her niangjia by not visiting her parents or not giving assistance if she is close enough and able to do so.” (p. 528) However, married daughters were still *traditionally strongly* regarded as outsiders to the natal families. This was largely because of the adoption of the husbands’ surnames, which is extremely important to Chinese people. See Ellen R. Judd, “Niangjia: Chinese Women and Their Natal Families,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 48, 3 (August 1989): 525-544.


“Miss Mathew ... suggested I apply for welfare to which I replied, 'I'd rather die than taking charity.' ... When Rev. David Smith who was in charge of the Chinese work across Canada came on tour, he asked me to carry on the work for the next few months and he would pay me $45 a month.\textsuperscript{41}

Zhang Lingjiao from Montreal also told of her sweatshop work in the laundry business which became harder after the death of her husband.\textsuperscript{42}

After my husband passed away, I did not know how to run the business, so I hired someone to help me. ... As time went on we could not break even, and I could not stand on my feet anymore. Subsequently, I left to work elsewhere, but was laid off. ... One day, he [my son] left a note on the door saying that we would not be collecting any more laundry. The Caucasians came around and asked, 'Why are you not working, you will have nothing to eat.' I replied, 'Look at my feet,' They in turn said, 'Oh Madam, you better take it easy and rest.'

The landing of the immigrant wives finally bridged the divided families. The Trans-Pacific family, distinctive to the overseas Chinese family, was formed.\textsuperscript{43} Gender equality and Chinese language education were the two central themes in this type of overseas Chinese family; equal opportunities in education were given to both male and female in the second generation.\textsuperscript{44}

This gender equality in Trans-Pacific family "marked a departure from the traditional Chinese family."\textsuperscript{45} The relationships in traditional Chinese family were governed by the hierarchy of gender. The male family members dominated the family; father and son held the highest authority and privileged positions while mother and daughter were seldom entitled to enjoy any privileges. Inequality was obvious in the treatment of children. However, the Trans-Pacific family presented a different family structure. Although the father still held the highest authority, the children were treated

\textsuperscript{41}Memoir of Anna Ma, Chinese Canadian Research, The Special Collections, University of British Columbia, p. 79.
\textsuperscript{42}Interview with Zhang Lingjiao. Chan Kwok Ban, Smoke and Fire, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{43}This term was coined by Haiming Liu. See, Haiming Liu, "The Trans-Pacific Family: A Case Study of Sam Chang's Family History," Amerasia Journal 18:2(1992): 1-34.
\textsuperscript{44}It should not be generalized that overseas Chinese parents, like Sam Chang, would give very much attention to education although many of them usually do. Not many Chinese immigrant parents were as well-educated as Sam Chang. His grandfather was a xiucai (秀才), a degree holder in feudal China, and Sam Chang himself was a civil servant back in China. So, it was the tradition of Chang's family to highly observe the importance of education.
\textsuperscript{45}Liu, "The Trans-Pacific Family: A Cast Study of Sam Chang's Family History," p. 5.
equally, at least in terms of educational opportunity. Both the male and female children in the Trans-Pacific family would be given opportunities to receive education and to develop their own careers. This attitude deviated greatly from traditional Chinese thinking which is expressed in the saying of “nuzi wucai bian shi de (女子無才便是德, it is proper that girls should have no talent). The prevalence and dominance of this attitude in traditional Chinese society barred many Chinese women from receiving education. However, the more liberal atmosphere in the Trans-Pacific family allowed daughters to obtain education.

Most Chinese parents valued education highly. Parents of the Trans-Pacific family were no exception. This prioritization was perhaps influenced by the traditional Chinese attitude toward education. In traditional Chinese society, education was viewed an avenue to gain wealth and to achieve upward social mobility. When a scholar passed the civil service examination, he would be honoured. Entering officialdom, his social status rose. Not only did this bring prestige to himself but also to his family and the clan. Within the North American context, many Chinese parents maintained this traditional respect for education. Furthermore, because of the language environment, emphasis was placed on both Chinese and English education. Some second generation descendants were sent to China for Chinese education after finishing high schools in North America. This arrangement provided an excellent upbringing for the second generation to settle down in

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46 Daughters receive more attention in the Trans-Pacific family than in the traditional Chinese family. Interestingly, Elizabeth Johnson found that some Hakka people in Hong Kong favoured and valued daughters more than sons even though they claim that they treated their children of both sexes equally. See Elizabeth Johnson, “Women and Childbearing in Kwan Mun Kau Village: A Study of Social Change,” p. 229-233.

47 Mark Elvin correctly pointed out that “the emphasis on particular virtues also varied from time to time.” (p. 112) For the socially recognized virtuous behaviour of women in the Ming and Qing dynasties, see Mark Elvin, “Female Virtue and the State in China,” Past and Present 104(August 1984): 111-152.


North America. Being literate in both languages, the North American-born could easily engage in professional careers.\textsuperscript{50} 

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The comparison between the emigration and immigration data recorded by Hong Kong and Canadian governments shows evidently that there is a gap in the figures. The gap further indicates that Chinese women were active agents instead of passive late-comers in the history of Chinese emigration. The published personal recollections of immigrant women have revealed that the female emigration was part of the family emigration process, and was related to their marriages. The delayed appearance of women in the emigration cycle was greatly affected by Chinese patriarchy. The final transfer of women overseas completed the emigration process and re-united the divided families. The so-called Trans-Pacific Chinese family was formed outside China and was characterized by the labour of immigrant wives, the gender equality among children and the attention given to educating the second generation overseas Chinese.

Chapter Two

The Miss Queen of Cathay Contest
and the Integrity of the Overseas Chinese Community

...the community was not dependent on outside. People at that time did not talk about welfare. When people needed help, they just looked for help within.¹

Vancouver began to take the place of Victoria as the major Chinese centre after 1910. The Chinese population in Vancouver grew rapidly due to natural birth and immigration, and the growth rose tremendously especially during the interwar years. In 1931, 13,011 Chinese people were recorded residing in Vancouver whereas only 3,702 Chinese people in Victoria.² The growth of Chinese population accordingly increased the demand for Chinese education in Vancouver. However, Chinese education was a supplementary education provided by the Chinese community and received no subsidies from the Canadian government. The Chinese, therefore, raised money within the Chinese community in order to maintain and improve the quality of Chinese teaching. Under such circumstances, a fund-raising campaign was launched in 1954 to raise money for the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao. The campaign included individual donations and the Miss Queen of Cathay contest. The following depiction of the 1954 fund-raising campaign and the Miss Queen of Cathay contest will mainly be based on reports in the Chinese vernacular press, the Qiaosheng Ribao, and my interviews with the contestants.

¹ Interview Tape 1994-95: 5.
² Wickberg, From China to Canada, Table 7, p. 303.
The 1954 Fund-raising Campaign

The objective of the fund-raising campaign was to collect funds to purchase a property for the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao on the corner of Jackson and Pender Streets. The property included a church and playground for the students, and the money raised was mainly used to renovate the church for teaching purposes and to acquire furniture and materials that the school needed. The renovated church contained an auditorium and rooms where more than 200 children could attend classes. The total cost for the new school premise was estimated to be $100,000.³

The campaign consisted of individual donations and the Miss Queen of Cathay contest. The individual donations were accepted at any time while the contest was organized from late 1953 to April 1954, for almost six months. Seven contestants representing ten associations were in the contest. The contestants were Carole Ann Huang, Holly Lei, Lily Li, Jean Liao, Shirley Lin, Jessie Zhang and May Zheng.⁴ They were sponsored by the Huang, Li and Lin Associations (黃氏公所 and 林氏公所), Longgang Association (龍岡親義公所), Zheng Rong Yang Association (鄭榮陽堂), and the Kuomintang (KMT). Other sponsors included the Gangzhou Association (岡州會館), Kaiping Association (開平會館), Enping Association (恩平會館) and Chongyi Association (崇義同鄉會).⁵ Except for Carole Ann Huang and Jessie Zhang, the contestants were all students of the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao. Huang

³ *The Province*, 19 April 1954.
⁴ Their Chinese names are Huang Xiuxian (黃秀娟), Lei Mujuan (雷慕娟), Li Mulan (李慕蘭), Liao Zhongai (廖仲愛), Lin Jinli (林金麗), Zhang Xiulan (張秀蘭) and Zheng Yueai (鄭月愛). Zhang was known as Li in English. When her grandfather, Zhang Li, came to Canada, the immigration officer mistakenly took Li as his surname. Since then Li has been the family name on all government records and Zhang is used in Chinese. When Jessie’s father was born, he was registered as George Li.
⁵ In the interview, Holly Lei told me that her sponsor was the Chongyi Association. However, the Chinese newspaper said the Zhongshan Tongxianghui (中山同鄉會) sponsored Lei in the contest.
attended the Wenjiang Xuexiao (文彙學校) while Zhang went to the Dagong Yixue (大公義學). The contestants attended Chinese-language classes for five to six years on average, while Zhang attended Chinese classes for 12 years. The Qiaosheng Ribao reported details about the donations, such as the benefactors' names and the amount and materials that were given, as well as the progress of the contest. The reports indicate that Vancouver's Chinese community in the 1950s was an intact society in which individual members contributed generously when there was a need to raise money for community services. This type of cohesion is a characteristic of the survival tactic of overseas Chinese communities in host countries.

Individual Donations

The individual donations collected in the 1954 fund-raising campaign came in two forms; benefactors could either bestow equipment, such as stationary and furniture, or present money to the school. The donation of equipment was usually done through the Chinese press while financial contributions were given directly from individuals to the school, and followed by the school's acknowledgment of the gift in the newspapers afterwards.

In general, the donation of equipment opened an avenue for individuals to contribute to the school. Unlike some wealthy merchants who could give out thousands of dollars, some individuals wanted to contribute significantly but could not afford to do so. Therefore donating equipment to the school was convenient for them since the furniture that the school needed, such as chairs and lights, usually only cost a few hundred

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6 Personal interviews.
dollars or less. In theory, donating furniture and stationary was a practical way to help the school because the school could notify the public in advance about what to donate. For example on 20 March 1954, an article in the *Qiaosheng Ribao* reads,

> The school's organizing committee has been receiving many gifts since we have announced that the school will be opened on 18 April. Various associations and generous individuals have asked us about what kind of material that the school needs. Indeed, the school needs many equipment and stationary to make it the best equipped Chinese-language school in Canada. For instance, for the Meeting Room we need a set of sofa ($200), 6 chairs ($20 each), a table ($30), 2 lamps ($15 each) and a clock ($25). For the Conference Room, we need a conference table ($50), 10 conference chairs ($15 each), 30 chairs ($10 each) 2 tables ($25 each), a file cabinet ($60) and a clock ($25)...\(^7\)

33 items which cost about $12,250 were listed in the above article.\(^8\) In less than two weeks time, there were prompt responses to the above article from companies and individuals. Donations started to come in. For example,

> ...Lotus Inn, Broadway Inn and Mr. Ma Panji (馬盤基) donate 10 conference chairs of $150. Bamboo Terrace contributes a light of $50 for using in classroom. Also each of the following persons has donated a set of desk and chair of $20, they are Cao Meiding (曹美定), Xu Zichang (許子昌), Pan Rongyi (盤榮益), Wu Guohua (吳國華), Deng Zhanlong (邓湛隆), Guang Chongying (關崇穎), Zhou Gansen (周幹芬) and Mrs. Deng-Jiang Pingshan (鄧蔭娟)...\(^9\)

The individual financial donations usually came from wealthy merchants who generously gave thousands of dollars to the school. The four major donors including Li Riru, Li Yilu (李奕侖), and Lin Juzhen (林舉振) contributed $16,000 in total.\(^10\)

**The Miss Queen of Cathay Contest**

There has been some debate about the nature of the contest. Was it a beauty pageant or a fund-raising activity? The contestants claimed that beauty was not the focus

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\(^7\) *Qiaosheng Ribao*, 20 March 1954.
\(^8\) *Ibid.*
\(^9\) *Qiaosheng Ribao*, 31 March 1954.
\(^10\) *Canjia Jingxuan Nuhuang Zhaopian* (参 加競選女皇照片 *Photos of the Miss Queen of Cathay Contest*) compiled by the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao. This booklet contains photos taken on 18 April 1954 in the ceremony and is provided by Shirley Yip.
of the contest, and that therefore it was a fund-raising event. However, some people have
called this contest a beauty pageant because the contest was exclusively for women even
though beauty was not the major determinant for the crown. The title and format of the
contest might suggest that the Miss Queen of Cathay was derived from the North
American type beauty pageant but was modified with Chinese culture and the charitable
purposes in this fund-raising contest. Both the Chinese-language and English-language
translated titles of the contest do not connote beauty but contain the term nuhuang (女皇)
or queen. The Chinese title Jingxuan Nuhuang Yundong means the competition for queen
movement, and its English title, used by the local English-language press, is the Miss
Queen of Cathay contest. Literally, the Chinese title more appropriately reflects the
organizer’s intentions to have a large scale, community-wide activity vis-à-vis the
connotation implied by the exotic English translated version.\textsuperscript{11} Using these terms suggests
that this was a contest for women, but does not indicate any ideals related to beauty.

Whether or not it was a real beauty pageant can be determined by its format, the
method to select the winner. The North American type beauty pageant required the
contestants to wear bathing suits, to answer questions and sometimes to perform on the
stage.\textsuperscript{12} The ladies in the Miss Queen of Cathay did not answer questions and were not
required to showcase their talents; they wore the traditional Chinese dress, qipao (旗袍),
and walked and posed for pictures.\textsuperscript{13} They also sold raffle tickets (maipiao 賣票) in order

\textsuperscript{11} The Chinatown News also provided an English-translated title, Queen of Chinatown, for the contest. To
distinguish this contest from the later beauty pageant, Miss Chinatown, I prefer to use the Miss Queen of
Cathay in this thesis.

\textsuperscript{12} I have read reports about beauty pageants such as the Miss University or Miss College in The
Vancouver Sun printed in 1954 when the Miss Queen of Cathay took place.

\textsuperscript{13} Qipao is the formal name. In the interviews, all contestants called their dresses cheung-sam (長衫)
which is the informal Cantonese name.
to raise money and determine who won the Miss Queen of Cathay contest. The misconception of this contest as a beauty pageant is mainly due to the fact that the contest only invited ladies to participate. In fact, holding fund-raising contests of this type was not unprecedented in the Chinese community in British Columbia. A similar contest was held in 1950 to raise money for the Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao in Victoria. However, it is not known why the contest adopted this method. Two contestants suggested that it was an interesting and yet easy fund-raising method.

To encourage participation, the key fund-raiser, Li Riru, composed a poem to invite girls to run in the contest. In the poem, he used the traditional Chinese allusion of *Jinguo* (巾帼) and *Xumei* (騏眉), and highly praised the efforts of women in developing Chinese education for the community. The poem contains four parts of which Part One reads,

Widely raising funds for establishing [Chinese] education,  
ladies are graciously to accomplish the task.  
Together with the efforts of Xumei,  
**Jinguo** is a heroine.

In the allusion, **Jinguo** and **Xumei** implies females and males, and the gender power between the two sexes. **Jinguo** literally means jewelry worn by women, and the allusion suggests that women are as brave and as capable as men, and they can achieve as much as,
if not more than, their male counterparts. The relationship between Jinguo and Xumei was reflected in the relationship between the organizers and contestants. The organizing committee, entirely composed of males, was Xumei who initiated and planned the contest while the ladies, as Jinguo, helped to sell tickets in the contest. The two parties cooperated to accomplish the task easily and successfully.

In the contest, Shirley Lin, the representative of the Lin Association, sold the most tickets and won the crown. Lily Li and Jessie Zhang were the first and second princesses. Jean Liao, Holly Lei, May Zheng and Carole Ann Huang followed.\(^{17}\) (Table 2.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number of Tickets Sold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shirley Lin</td>
<td>8,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily Li</td>
<td>5,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessie Zhang</td>
<td>4,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly Lei</td>
<td>3,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Liao</td>
<td>2,846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May Zheng</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carole Ann Huang</td>
<td>1,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,247</strong>(^{18})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total ticket sales came to 28,247. However, not all contestants remembered the cost of a ticket. According to Li and Zhang, each ticket cost one dollar. They remembered when they sold the tickets, people usually bought booklets of tickets from them, each of which cost $10.\(^{19}\) The contest accordingly raised $28,247, more than a quarter of the estimated cost of the renovation.

\(^{17}\) In the inauguration ceremony on 18 April 1954, each contestant was presented a bouquet of flowers, $50 and a 24K gold necklace with a plaque on which her Chinese name was engraved. *Chinatown News*, 3 May 1954 and Interview Tape 1994-95: 2, 4-7.

\(^{18}\) *Qiaosheng Ribao*, 31 March and 1 April 1954.

\(^{19}\) Personal interviews. Only Li and Zhang remember the cost of the tickets. Zhang further said that a dollar was a lot of money in the 50s; a bottle of milk only cost 10 cents, and a loaf of bread might be 5 to 10 cents. A movie cost less than a dollar. A meal for 4 people would cost 5 dollars.
For the ticket-buyers, buying the raffle tickets gave them a chance to win prizes. The more they bought, the higher their chances would be. Fifty prizes were given out. When the contestants sold the tickets, the buyers kept the tickets while the associations retained the ticket stubs. All stubs were put in a box on which a label of “fifty prizes” was put. At the finale of the contest, the contestants were accompanied by community leaders and divided into seven groups to draw the stubs out from the box. The stub’s number was announced and written on a board. The winners could collect their prizes afterwards.

The contest was also run across the country and overseas. People domiciled in other parts of Canada or overseas could buy tickets through their associations. For example, members of the Li Association in other parts of Canada could buy tickets through the Li Association in their place of residence. Lily Li thinks that “[i]t was very good of them because it had nothing to do with them. The school was in Vancouver. The school was not for them, but they participated … I think it was the Li Association, so they would help each other whether they were in Winnipeg or Toronto.”

The Contestants and Their Families

Based on the theory by Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan in *Power and Society: A Framework for Political Inquiry*, William Skinner has defined “value” as “the sense of a desired or goal event — or a generalized complex of related desired events” which are “well-being, wealth, enlightenment, skill, power, respect, rectitude, affection, and religious values.” Skinner defines value as wealth, prestige and power which are the

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20 Interview with Lily Li.
three major values which the elite in a society or community possesses. Wealth, prestige and power agglutinate cyclically; wealth generates prestige, prestige brings in wealth and subsequently power, and power is the access to wealth and prestige. These three values cannot be identified purely as cause or effect of the other two. In his survey on Chinese leadership and community in Bangkok, Skinner suggests that economic power increases the prestige and influence of families in societies and thus often confers on wealthy individuals or families roles of leadership in the community. In the case of the Miss Queen of Cathay contest, the domination of the merchant families shows Skinner's thesis was reflected in the Chinese community in Vancouver.

Similar to the situation in Bangkok, the wealthy Chinese merchant families in Vancouver formed the elite in the community that possessed these three values. Most of them were from middle class families enjoying prestige, influence, and were respected. Unlike the Chinese families depicted by Paul Yee and Denise Chong, the contestants' families were much better off. The Chinese families that Yee and Chong described were of the lower class in Vancouver's Chinatown. Positioned at the bottom of the social stratum, these Chinese families did not enjoy any wealth, prestige or power. In Breakaway, Yee described a family which is looked down upon because the family grows asparagus and collects garbage from restaurants at night in Chinatown. In the Concubine's Children, Chong wrote that her mother's family was despised because her.
grandmother was a teahouse waitress who was a gambler and alcoholic. Chong’s portrayal further underscores the gap between women of upper and lower classes.\textsuperscript{22}

Six contestants came from merchant or business-related families who were running businesses in the Chinatown area.\textsuperscript{23} These families presumably enjoyed high social prestige, but not necessarily power in terms of being able to influence policies in the community.\textsuperscript{24} Some families enjoyed greater prestige and power than others due to the fact that the fathers were the executive directors of the associations to which the families belonged. The followings families were involved in the contest:\textsuperscript{25}

The Lin family owned the Jinliyuan Company on Pender Street in Chinatown. The social prestige accorded to the family was established by the business and Mr. Lin Juzhen’s (林學振) service in the community. Mr. Lin established the company which administered an import and export business between Canada and Asia.\textsuperscript{26} He occupied a high position in the Lin Association while serving as director of the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao. Mr. Lin had three wives; Shirley Lin was a daughter of the third wife. The age difference between her and her eldest sister was 12 years. Shirley Lin’s mother

\textsuperscript{22} See Paul Yee, \textit{Breakaway} (Toronto: Groundwood Books, Douglas & McIntyre, 1994) and Denise Chong, \textit{The Concubine’s Children}. Yee’s other youth story books have also described the lives of Chinese youth in Chinatown, see Paul Yee, \textit{Teach Me How to Fly} (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1983) and \textit{The Curses of Third Uncle} (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1986).

\textsuperscript{23} Since I could not contact the 7th contestant, May Zheng, therefore I do not look at her family background.

\textsuperscript{24} I do not intend to measure the wealth, prestige and power of the contestants’ families in this research; rather I only want to show the contestants’ family background, and the advantageous positions of their families which eventually enabled them to assume leadership in the community. I have collected my information mainly from the \textit{Qiaosheng Ribao} and interviews with the contestants. William Skinner, on the other hand, has used a scientific sociological research method and theoretical analytical framework to test his informants and to measure their wealth, status in society, and positions as well as influence in the associations. See Chapters 3 and 6, \textit{Leadership and Power}.

\textsuperscript{25} The arrangement of the families here does not represent their wealth, social prestige and power in the community. I introduce the families according to ticket sale results just for convenience.

\textsuperscript{26} See the business records in \textit{Yip Family and Yip Sang Company Ltd.}, City of Vancouver Archives.
was very enthusiastic in fund-raising events, she claimed that "my mother was always a
fund-raiser in Chinatown. At one time, she even went to every floor of an apartment
building in Chinatown, knocked on people's doors and asked them to donate money."27

Lily Li and her family lived on Keefer Street, near the Strathcona School, until she
married in 1955. Her parents moved out of Chinatown in the 1960s. Mr. Li Ziliang
(李梓良), Lily’s father, was always a businessman and involved in the community,
according to her daughter. He established the Huaqiao Restaurant (華僑酒家) in
Chinatown which was like a night club and after he closed the restaurant business Mr. Li
became the manager of a Chinese sausage company (金然棧). He was a senior member of
the Li Association having joined it since he came to Canada. Like Lin Juzhen he was
always a firm support of the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao.

Unlike Lin and Li, Jessie Zhang’s family did not live in the centre of Chinatown but
on Powell Street, close to Japan town. The family owned a grocery store. Her father,
George Zhang, was born in Canada while Jessie Zhang was the third generation. The
family moved to Vancouver in the 1940s from Kamloops. Her father was just an ordinary
member of the Longgang Gongsuo.

The third princess, Holly Lei, was a student when she was in the contest. The Lei
family did not live Chinatown either. Lei remembered that her father, a businessman and
the treasurer of the Chongyi Association, often attended the association's meetings. Holly
Lei was the second oldest daughter of the family. Her mother was born in Canada while
her father was an immigrant who also had had a wife in Hong Kong but she had died.

27 Personal interview with Shirley Lin.
Jean Liao, whose father was a businessman as well, won the fourth place. Her family lived in the Chinatown area but her mother usually did not allow them to go there, except for attending Chinese-language classes because her mother did not want them to *mix* with the people there. Chinatown, for them, was an unsafe place, and therefore her father did most of the shopping. Jean Liao was the first generation of the family born in Canada. Her father was sponsored by her grandfather to come to Canada when he was 12 or 13 years old. He joined the Gangzhou Gongsuo and served as one of the higher officers. He also served as the treasurer of the Shadui Association (沙堆同鄉會). Liao claimed that her father was active and well-known in the community.

Carole Ann Huang came from a pioneer Chinese family in Canada. She was the third generation on her father’s side and the fourth on her mother’s. The family lived in Chinatown and her father established the Bamboo Terrace which was the first air-conditioned Chinese restaurant in Vancouver. The prominence and prestige of the family was greatly due to her father’s political activity in the community and the history of her mother’s family. Mr. Huang, educated in Canada and China, was completely bi-lingual. Having had experience of and discrimination against Orientals in western societies, and a deep understanding of Chinese culture as well as the corruption of Chinese government, Mr. Huang was politically active in both Canadian and Chinese communities to fight for the rights of Chinese people. According to Carole Ann Huang, her father’s bilingualism was the key that made him so well-known in both mainstream and Chinese communities. Her maternal grandmother, from the Cumyow family, was the first Chinese female born in British Columbia. Carole Ann Huang was nominated in the contest partly because she
was among the first group of Huangs entering the University of British Columbia. The Huang Association felt that such an achievement would raise its prestige in the contest.  

The Association Sponsorships in the Contest

The analysis here will examine the sponsorship in the contest to show how the sponsoring associations clustered themselves around their own representatives in the competition. It is not to suggest the presence of any deliberate strategy adopted in the sponsorship. In fact, this would be hard to determine unless one could have an access to the archives of each association involved in the Miss Queen of Cathay contest. Instead, the relationship between sponsorship and the possibility of winning the crown will be examined. The structure of the sponsorship, that is which associations sponsor which contestant, seems to suggest no positive or direct correlation between the influence of the associations in the community and the representatives' chances of winning in the contest. Supported by a relatively powerful and influential sponsoring association did not guarantee a contestant's victory. This argument is contrary to a stereotype of Chinatown politics: the larger and more powerful the association, the greater its influence. Through this relationship between power and influence, an association would maintain its prominent place in the community.

Ten sponsoring associations participated in the contest, of which five were clan associations, four were district associations and the KMT. The clan associations were: the Huang Association, Li Association, Lin Association, Longgang Association and the

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28 Carole Ann Huang was a social worker and worked in the federal government for over 20 years. She has just retired recently. See Carole Ann Huang, "My Experiences in the Women's Movement," in Sharing Our Experiences (Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1993), pp. 229-232.
Zheng Rong Yang Association. The four district associations were: the Gangzhou Association, Kaiping Association, Enping Association and the Chongyi Association. These associations were non-profit organizations of which some were believed to be relatively more powerful than others in the Chinese community in terms of size and influence. Some girls were sponsored mainly by a single association, and some were sponsored by two combined associations. (Chart 2.1)

Chart 2.1 The Association Sponsorships in the Contest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carole Ann Huang</th>
<th>Holly Lei</th>
<th>Lily Li</th>
<th>Jean Liao</th>
<th>Shirley Lin</th>
<th>Jessie Zhang</th>
<th>May Zheng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Chart 3.1 shows that Lei, Liao and Lin were sponsored by their own clan or district associations; the rest were supported by combined sponsorship. Huang and Li provided the interesting cases for examining common memberships in associations and the associations’ support to the contestants. Both of them enjoyed the strong patronage of the KMT and their respective clan associations. As would have been known in the community, the Huang and Li Associations were the two major clan associations in terms of the size of membership, power and influence. The KMT, on the other hand, functioned as a fraternal association and exercised political influence. It welcomed

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29 Interview Tape 1994-95: 1-5.
members from any clan and from any district. Therefore, it was not surprising that membership often overlapped between the KMT and other associations. Members related to the Huangs and Lis in the KMT would support the contestants who represented the Huang and Li Associations.

The cases of Zhang and Zheng illustrated the influence of Chinese kinship and lineage in the sponsorship. Their sponsors consisted of a clan and a district association. But, both the Zheng Wing Yung and Longgang Associations were not single clan associations but multi-clan organizations: for example the Longgang Association included members of Liu (劉), Guan (關), Zhang (張) and Zhao (趙). It was likely that the population of the Lius, Guans, Zhangs and Zhaoes was not big enough for them to establish their own clan association so they grouped together and formed a common association for themselves. The involvement of the Kaiping and Enping District Associations suggests that the contestants’ families were from these two counties and that their fathers were members of these two associations.

The sponsorships of Lin, Li and Huang were to look at for the relationship between the associations’ power and influence and the contestants’ chances of winning the crown. The Lin Association was thought of as being not as powerful as the other two in the Vancouver Chinese community in terms of membership size. Thus, compared with Lily Li and Carole Ann Huang, Lin had less stronger sponsorship. Despite this, Lin won the crown. Her winning in the contest, to some extent, reflects that the contest was a competition between associations but that the winning was not determined by the power and influence of the sponsoring associations in the community. In other words, the

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30 Interview Tape 1994-95: 1, 3-5.
greater the influence of the sponsors did not necessarily lead to a higher possibility of winning for the contestants. In Lin’s case, the prominence of the family was probably the major reason why she won the contest. Living and doing business in the centre of Chinatown, the Lin family was well-known. In her narratives, Shirley Lin attributed her success to her mother’s assistance in selling the tickets for her. She also remembers the people who knew the family through business or other means buying tickets from her.

For the contestants, the contest was a competition between the associations. But the associations were competing with good intentions; it was for the benefits of the Chinese school and the community. The associations raced each other to sell the raffle tickets for their representatives. The more tickets that could be sold, the more money was raised. Lily Li commented that “[i]t was more like a competition among the associations, not the girls. The associations were competing to sell tickets. If the Lis were going to sell more, the Huangs would try to beat the Lis and sell more tickets, and the other associations would follow and sell more tickets. Then more money would be raised for the school.”

Amongst the contestants, Lily Li, Jean Liao and Jessie Zhang received the most assistance from their sponsoring associations which usually sent members to help the girls sell tickets. These members formed a campaign committee; their duties were to promote the contest, introduce the girls to the public and bring the contestants out to sell tickets. Usually banquets were held by the associations in which the girls were introduced to the members and the committee would ask the guests to buy the tickets. Jean Liao and Jessie

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31 Personal interview with Lily Li.
Zhang talked about the banquets which they attended: "... There were banquets I remember. Big banquets. The gongsuo had banquets for me and introduce me to the members. The committee was there to get people to buy the tickets." Zhang recalled the banquets with great excitement, she said "[i]t was a fun time; I met all the people. And it was always a dinner here and a dinner there that I got to go. They were big banquets. It was nice that I was sitting up at the stage..."

The committee also brought the contestants to sell tickets in Chinatown on weekends. The campaign committee was involved heavily in the visits to Chinatown; they would organize and prepare the visits and dominated the conversations with the potential ticket-buyers, for they presumably knew the stores owners and operators in Chinatown better than the contestants themselves. It was also because the contestants could not handle the conversation with potential ticket-buyers in Chinese completely by themselves. Thus, the contestants usually followed the committee and did what they were told to do. Zhang remembered clearly her visits to Chinatown with the committee:

People from the association would take me out on the weekends, may be on every other weekends. We would go to the stores in Chinatown to sell tickets. ... I spoke Chinese when I sold the tickets in the stores. As a matter of fact, the person took me to Chinatown did all the talking. Being in Chinatown, he probably knew every store owner or operator. He would go in and say it is Zhang Xiulan who is running for nuhuang and maipiao. Would you buy some tickets? He did all the talking and then I just wrote down the names of the buyers for him.\(^{34}\)

Lily Li had the similar experience when going out to sell tickets with Li Riru, representing the Li Association. They went to Victoria and it was proved an unforgettable trip for Li since it was her first time to go there and to be on a plane. Li recalls,

\(^{32}\) Personal interview with Jean Liao.
\(^{33}\) Personal interview with Jessie Zhang.
\(^{34}\) *Ibid.* The emphasis is mine.
Li Bick (Li Riru) was the one that took me going around to all the stores. He was the one that I worked with. He took me to the stores in Chinatown and asked people to buy tickets for me. Also, I remember very clearly that he took me to Victoria which was my very first trip to Victoria. We flew over there just for one day and we went to all stores in Chinatown. He introduced me to people, and explained to people the purpose of selling tickets and building the new school, and then asked them to buy tickets. *He did all the talking and I just followed him around.*

They girls would assist promoting the contest, selling the tickets and recording the names of the ticket-buyers. Whenever tickets were sold, they would go to the associations which handled every thing including counting the amount of tickets sold. The contestants did not necessarily know exactly how many tickets people bought from them.

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In retrospect, the 1954 fund-raising campaign has revealed the cohesiveness of the overseas Chinese community. Living in a non-Chinese country and being ruled by a foreign government, Chinese people in Vancouver joined together to form their own community in which the elite and associations, taking the leadership role, worked together to provide social services for people. The fund-raising method, including the individual donation and the contest adopted aroused people's attention and attracted contributions to the community so that Chinese educational services would be more accessible for children of Chinese ancestry.

A closer look at the association sponsorships in the contest has shown that the combined sponsorship was clustered according to either common membership or Chinese kinship and lineage. And, the contestants' personal narratives have revealed that, from the contestants' perspective, the associations were competing among themselves in the contest. The involvement of the associations in selling the raffle tickets, to some extent,

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35 Personal interview with Lily Li. The emphasis is mine.
36 Interview Tape 1994-95: 3.
dominated the contest and marginalized the contestants who were supposed to be at the centre of the event. In addition, the winning of Shirley Lin indicates that there was no positive correlation between the power of the sponsoring associations and the possibility of winning for the sponsored contestants.
Opening of the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao's new premise, 1954. (Photograph courtesy of the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao)

The board of directors and the contest's organizing committee. Taken in the school's auditorium. (Photograph courtesy of the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao)
Drawing the raffle tickets.
(Photograph courtesy of the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao)
The contestants. (from left) Shirley Lin, May Zheng, Jean Liao, Carole Ann Huang, Jessie Zhang, Lily Li and Holly Lei.  
(Photograph courtesy of Mrs. Jessie Ing)

The inauguration. (from right) Lily Li, the first princess, Jessie Zhang, the second princess, Holly Lei, the third princess, Shirley Lin, the queen, Jean Liao, the fourth princess, May Zheng, the fifth princess, and Carole Ann Huang, the sixth princess.  
(Photograph courtesy of the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao)
The Queen, Shirley Lin
(Photograph courtesy of the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao)

The queen and the second princess, Jessie Zhang
(Photograph courtesy of the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao)

The celebration. (Photograph courtesy of the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao)
Chapter Three
Chinese Women, Families and Associations

The Vancouver Chinese media commented that “[t]he contest [the Miss Queen of Cathay] is organized for the development of Chinese education. It is unprecedented in Vancouver and marks a vigorous awakening of overseas Chinese education. The contest deserves attention.” Despite such urging, the contest has not received much attention. This comment gives us only a superficial understanding of the cultural and historical significance of the contest. A closer examination of the contest raises issues such as the reasons for which the young women entered the contest, how they entered the contest and the relationships between the contestants and the sponsoring associations. Unfortunately no known body of writings by scholars addresses these questions. But one valuable source that has remained relatively untapped is the personal reminiscences of the contestants. Their voices, narrating the event from the participant’s viewpoint, give an understanding of the contest from a female perspective. The contestants’ accounts reveal that patriarchal structures persisted within the Chinese community in the 1950s. This is especially evident in the case of Chinese association. Under Chinese patriarchy, the family in this situation became like an extension of the father: his individual membership automatically entailed the collective family membership in the association. Furthermore, the personal reminiscences show the patrilineal continuation of membership in associations. The membership could only be passed down from generation to generation through male descendants. The outlawing of female participation reflects the male domination and traditional favouritism of male over female in Chinese society.

1 Qiaosheng Ribao, 31 March 1954. The emphasis is mine.
Confucianism and Family Relationships

Relationships (guanxi 關係), in a Chinese perspective, consists of lun (倫) or order and, more specifically, hierarchy. In traditional Chinese society, Confucianism defined human relationships or interactions. Individuals are highly conscious of their status in the hierarchy and of their relationships with other people since all responsibilities, roles and interactions are strictly governed and defined according to Confucian principles. Confucian social theory envisions interactions which take place between individuals who are seen as being a part of a larger whole; individuals are not conceptualized as separate entities. Therefore Chinese sociologists have suggested that human relationships in Chinese society are neither geren benwei (個人本位 individual-based) nor shehui benwei (社會本位 society-based). Instead, human relationships are based on relationships, the so-called guanxi benwei (關係本位 relationship-based). In this way, the nature of the relationship between individuals governs the degree of the relationship; the closer the lun between individuals, the stronger the relationship will be.

In general, human relationships in Chinese society are defined by the five cardinal relations. These principles are the fundamental theories by which the guanxi between human beings are organized. The five principles are yi (義 righteousness) between ruler and subject, qin (親 affection) between parents and children, bie (別 distinction) between

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2 See Liang Shuming (梁漱溟), Zhongguo wenhua yaoyi [中國文化要義 The essential features of Chinese Culture] (Taiwan: Zhengzhong shuju, n.d); Fei Xiaotong (費孝通), Xiangtu Zhongguo [鄉土中國 Rural China] (Hong Kong: Wenxue Chubanshe, n.d); Yu Yingshi (余英時), Cong jiazi xitong kan Zhongguo wenhua de xiandai yiyi [從價值系統看中國文化的現代意義 From the perspective of value system to understand the modern meaning of Chinese culture] (Taipei: Shibo Wenhua Chuban, 1983) and Tu Wei-ming ed., The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994).

3 Geren benwei places the focus on individuals in the relationship between individual and society vis-à-vis shehui benwei. Liang Shuming (梁漱溟), Zhongguo wenhua yaoyi, pp. 89-95.
husband and wife, xu (序 order) between brothers and xin (信 sincerity) between friends. These guidelines establish the status and responsibilities for individuals belonging to different lun. Basically relationships can be categorized into either which are preordained and those which are voluntarily formed. Among these five relations, the parent-child and brother-brother ones are preordained and naturally formed; the husband-wife and friend-friend relations are voluntarily constructed. Because of this difference in the nature of human relationships, scholars have argued that even though the preordained relationships have fixed individuals in predestined positions and prescribed their duties, individuals still enjoy autonomy to voluntarily develop their network of non-preordained relationship. In other words, individuals are free and independent to extend the web of relationships according to their own desire and will.4

Confucian social theory reflects the patriarchal structure of Chinese family relationships in which the focus is always placed on males.5 Chinese patriarchy is characterized by the supremacy of men and the subordination of women.6

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5 For many Chinese, family is an elastic and flexible entity which may be as small as the nuclear family, and as large as the whole clan which includes all kinsmen. Therefore, family relationships in Chinese families are complicated. For an understanding of family relationships, see Ba Jin (巴金), Jia [家 The family] and Irene Cheng, Clara Ho Tung: A Hong Kong Lady, Her Family and Her Times (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1976).

family, the father is the head and possesses the highest authority while the women, wife and daughter, are expected to be submissive. The parent-child relationship, the father-son relationship in particular, takes priority over all other kinds of family relationships because of the importance given to Chinese kinship. According to Confucianism, male descendants can carry on the patrilineal inheritance, such as property and family name. Sons are able to bring grace to the family whereas daughters are traditionally perceived as "worthless" and a "curse." Since girls are destined for marriage, eventually they belonging to other families and become "outsiders" to the natal family. Consequently they are not entitled to any family inheritance. Under the influence of this rationale, many Chinese fathers trained and equipped their sons, particularly the eldest son, with the necessary skills required to run the family business or to engage in any business for a future career. The business-class family in particular was accustomed to preparing the eldest sons to become the head of the family and the business.

The Families in the Contest

Confucian social theory places attentions to the father-son relationship in family relationships. The following analysis will look at the parent-daughter relationship, as revealed in the Miss Queen of Cathay contest, in overseas Chinese families. Two aspects of the relationship will be examined: the parents' influence on the daughters' entering the contest and the parents' assistance in selling the raffle tickets for the daughters. The findings suggest that the heavier the fathers were involved in the associations and the community at large, the more the daughters felt that they were obligated to run for the

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contest on behalf of the associations that their fathers belonged. This obligation, to certain extent, was influenced by the Chinese patriarchal expectation that daughters should be obedient and listen to the parents. On the other hand, the parents also thought that they were obligated to help their daughters in the contest. Thus, the contest became the joint effort of the daughters and parents.

The drive to win the contest was a joint effort between the contestants and their parents. The parents not only influenced their daughters’ decisions to run for the contest but they actually helped them to sell tickets. Therefore, the contestants interpreted their participation not as an individual effort but as a collective effort with their families. Some of them even said “I didn’t do it [the contest]. My parents did it.”

Apparently their father’s high profile involvement in the community associations led the girls to take part in the contest. Many of the contestants’ fathers were either members or directors of the associations (gongsuo 公所) of their own clan or district, and they were active in supporting Chinese education; for example Lily Li’s father Li Ziliang, and Shirley Lin’s father Lin Juzhen were members of the Li and Lin Associations respectively while Carole Ann Huang’s father Huang Yuanwei (黃淵偉) was the president of the Huang Association and the KMT. The gongsuo to which the fathers belonged were closely connected with the Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao in one way or another. For example the Li Gongsuo and the Vancouver KMT had common directorship with the

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8 Some parents even bought tickets for their daughters. But, according to the contestants their parents did this not to boost up sales but to win some prizes for themselves.
10 In the interviews, the contestants called the community associations either “associations” in English or gongsuo in Siyi dialect. “The gongsuo (kung-so) was traditionally a community meeting-place found in both Chinese villages and cities for discussing public matters.” Elizabeth Sinn, Power and Charity: The Early History of the Tung Wah Hospital, Hong Kong (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 17.
school. Because of this connection, the organizing committee of the contest approached the associations and asked them to sponsor girls for their *gongsuo* in the contest. "The school was trying to pick from each association. And, the associations also wanted to have representatives in the contest, therefore the members were asked to talk to their daughters."\(^{11}\) The members who were chosen asked their daughters to represent the associations and run for the contest. For the girls, running for the contest was something very foreign to them. They were hesitant to agree to it at first when they were asked. "I might have been a bit negative because it [the contest] was something very new to me and I did not know who would be involved. But they [my parents] told me not to worry and we [sic] would help you. They sort of talked me into it. They said it was nothing important, you just sold tickets."\(^{12}\) Subsequently the girls were nominated.

Traditionally girls were expected to obey to their parents, particularly to their father. The Chinese saying "*zaijia congfu, chujia congfu, laolai congzi*" (在家從父, 出嫁從夫, 老來從子) summarizes the life cycle of Chinese women: women are supposed to listen to their fathers before marriage, to their husbands after marriage, and to their sons when they become widows.\(^{13}\) Strictly speaking the adherence to this dictum is regarded as a part of the filial behaviour and respect that females are expected to display in Chinese families. This patriarchal attitude advocating the total subordination is to train the girls be patient and submissive. This, to some extent, is to prepare the girls to be good wives and more importantly to be good daughters-in-law who were expected to be absolutely

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\(^{11}\) Interview Tape 1994-95: 4

\(^{12}\) Interview Tape 1994-95: 2.

\(^{13}\) The life cycle of Chinese women has been discussed in Arthur Wolf and Chieh-shan Huang, *Marriage and Adoption in China, 1845-1945* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1980).
submissive to the mothers-in-law. This kind of indoctrination increased a daughter's chance of being married into a good family.

Not surprisingly those contestants whose families upheld this traditional attitude felt more strongly than the others that they should listen to their parents. Some contestants even honestly admitted that they ran for the contest for their parents because they understood that their parents wanted them to do it.14 Daughters were expected to listen to parents and did what they were told to do. Holly Lei remembers: “I did everything that Mum said. In the 50s, you did what your mother told you to do. You don’t ask questions, just do it.... I did it for my parents, not really for the school. In those days, people listened to their parents more than now.”15

The fathers’ involvement in the community had a great impact on the daughters, and multi-memberships in various associations in some cases caused a conflict of interests. The potential conflict of interest combined with the expectation of obedience to parents put some girls in a difficult position in the contest. Carole Ann Huang’s case is particularly revealing. Her father was the president of both the local KMT and the Huang Association. The KMT historically had been the major association sponsoring the Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao, so the party was automatically involved in the contest. But the Huang’s involvement in the contest was slightly awkward, for it conflicted with the interests of their own school, the Wenjiang Xuexiao. The Huang Association, being one of the largest clan associations in Vancouver, certainly wanted to be represented in the contest. However its representative was in a contest to raise funds for another Chinese

14 Interview Tape 1994-95: 2, 5 and 6.
15 Personal interview with Holly Lei.,
school instead of for the Wenjiang Xuexiao. The Huangs did not win the contest because it was thought that Huang was not a student of the school, and therefore she was not strongly supported despite the strong influence of the Huang Association and the KMT in the community. If she had been in a contest to raise funds for their own school, the Huang clansmen would have most probably supported her.\footnote{16 Interview Tape 1994-95: 1.}

The parents' influence was important, but was not always the ultimate reason for the girls' decision to enter the contest. Some girls were approached directly by the gongsuo because it was generally felt that they would make good representatives. Lily Li and Jessie Zhang are two examples of this. Despite the presence of Li's father, Li Ziliang, on the board of directors of the school and the Li Association, he did not approach Lily himself. Instead, Mr. Li Riru invited her to represent the association to run for the contest. Lily claimed that "being a Li, they wanted me to represent the association."\footnote{17 Personal Interview.} Jessie Zhang, as well, was approached by the Longgang Gongsuo of which her father was a member.\footnote{18 The Zhang family owned a grocery store on Powell Street, at the periphery of the Chinatown, and she was active in the YMCA at Chinatown. The YMCA in Chinatown was called Pender Y. Zhang attended some YMCA functions in the 50s which were reported by the Chinatown News.} The association invited her as their representative mainly because Jessie's reputation in the community as she was the first Chinese Canadian woman to work in Vancouver City Hall in 1952.\footnote{19 Interview and Qiaosheng Ribao, 31 March 1954. Because of her job, Jessie Zhang was on the cover of an issue of Chinatown News.} Zhang recalled: "The association asked me to run into the pageant. They came to my parents and said they would like a representative."\footnote{20 Personal interview.}

Compared to the association's campaign committee, the parents were less well-organized in assisting their daughters to sell tickets. While the associations organized
banquets at which they asked guests to buy tickets, the parents simply brought the girls
down to Chinatown to sell tickets to the people that they knew. Some also accompanied
their daughters to Victoria. One contestant remembered:

My parents came to me and said that you got to sell tickets. You got to go to Victoria to
sell tickets. My parents then went with me. We went down to Chinatown. They told
their friends about the maipiao and the school. I didn’t talk at all.21

The family would spend a whole day in Chinatown visiting the stores one after another.
Their strategy was to go to the stores they knew of. Usually the parents introduced their
daughters, described the contest, and explained its purpose to the potential ticket buyers.
These visits also showed to the girls how much their parents cared about them and how
much they could do for their daughters.22

The parents’ assistance in selling tickets for the daughters in the contest revealed
characteristics of collectivism that are also illustrated by the respect given to ancestors in
Chinese society.23 In a Chinese family, if a family member has a private concern which is
likely to affect him or her in a significant way, then commonly the entire family or, at the
very least, the parents will also assume that concern. As a result of this concept of
collective welfare, children are expected to ask for their parents’ permission before they
do anything. Some people have interpreted this as an indication that individuals in Chinese
families enjoy a lesser degree of individualism.

In addition, collective family welfare is also related to the Chinese pre-occupation
with “face” (mianzi 面子) which places the responsibility of keeping the family name

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23 In a traditional Chinese family, the success of a family member is considered to be the glory of the
entire family. Conversely, if a family member commits a crime, the whole family will be shamed and
punished. In some cases, it will not just be the immediate family, but the entire clan and can to back to
the past nine generations.
respectable upon each family member. Because individual acts have the potential to reflect back on the entire family, anyone who commits an act that could ruin the family name would risk shaming not only him or her self but the reputation of the whole family. Consequently, one of the duties of Chinese parents is to protect the family name and not to "lose face" (diaomianzi 捂面子). Therefore, the parents' participation in the contest did not necessarily mean that they did not trust their daughters or that they thought their daughters were not capable of running in the contest themselves. It was because parents had high expectations of their children that they wanted to ensure that the children did as well as they could.

Individual and Family Memberships in Associations

The setting up of clan and locality associations (tongxiang zuzhi 同鄉組織) overseas followed the tradition of patrilineal kinship from China. In China, there was a common assumption that people with the same surname descended from the same clan and of the same ancestor, however far back. In North America, clan and district associations were a common type of huiguan in which kinship was the major criterion for membership. Enthographer Hugh Baker pointed out that kinship played an important role in the pattern of Chinese emigration: "The Chinese were well convinced of the value of kinship as an organizational principle, and looked to kinship models as they institutionalized their lives.

24 "Kinship was passed through the male line and that the marker of this was surname." (p. 61) Surnames represent one's ancestry and knowing the idea of patrilineal descent is one way to distinguish civilized human beings from rustics and wild beasts. Protecting the family name is to respect the ancestors. See Ann Waltner, Getting an Heir: Adoption and the Construction of Kinship in Late Imperial China (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pp. 59-61.
People of the same clan would group together and form their own associations. These associations mainly provided social services and assistance to their fellow members.

Joining associations was for social security that the associations could provide the services that the newcomers needed. The associations acted like a surrogate extended family. Members came from the same district, spoke the same dialect and shared news from their home villages. Therefore leaving home did not necessitate cutting the lineage with home towns as membership within an association allowed the lineage to be continued overseas. Upon the docking of any ship, the association would send people to register the people of the same county or kinship. The association would provide accommodation and find jobs for the single newcomers. A contestant remembered "...[a] lot of our relatives were single men who could not have their families here who were in China. They stayed in the association. As a kid, I remembered quite clearly that they were on their own." The association also served as an agent for purchasing tickets back home and receiving correspondence from home for their members. Some members also got married in the gongsuo. The association also looked after everything if someone passed away. If the members were single men or if their families could not afford to pay for the funeral, the association would do everything.

Many associations were dominated by men because of the Chinese emigration process. As mentioned in Chapter One, men were the first group of emigrants while

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28 Interview Tape 1994-94: 5.
29 Interview Tape 1994-95: 7 and 4.
women were left behind at home. This resulted in an unbalanced ratio of males to females in overseas Chinese communities. The presence and participation of males consequently formed the core membership of the associations; the directors and members were all men.\(^{30}\) Even after the female population increased and the gender ratio became more balanced, women were not admitted to the associations because by then the associations had already been constructed and were perceived as a "man's world" completely.

The exclusion of women from the associations was caused by Chinese patriarchal constructions of gender; women were supposed to take care of domestic chores while men were expected to participate in the public sphere which included work and participation in associations.\(^{31}\) This emphasis on domesticity confined women to the private sector and prevented them from entering the public sphere. For example, some contestants remembered that their mothers always stayed at home and took care of the house work while their fathers were the major breadwinners for the families. Their fathers often attended meetings in the associations on their own, and their mothers never went to any of these meetings. "My mother would only stay at home. She would go to the banquets but not the meetings. In those days, it was always the men going to those functions."\(^{32}\)

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\(^{30}\) Traditionally women are not allowed to join these male dominated associations. Women associations (funuhui 婦女會) are not popular until after WWII and since then many associations started to have sections for female members. Even though female membership was not acceptable in associations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was a women association formed by both Chinese and Caucasian women in Nanaimo. Some women of the Ye Sheng (Yip Sang) family were involved in that funuhui. Interview Tape 1994-95: 1 and 2, and *The Yip Family and Yip Sang Company*, The City of Vancouver Archives.

\(^{31}\) This belief of the domestic role of women is not unique to Chinese society. In western society, there is distinct differentiation between the roles of males and females in public and private spheres.

\(^{32}\) Interview Tape 1994-94: 4.
Within this patriarchal context it would be interesting to look at how daughters interpreted their fathers' membership in the associations, and how they positioned themselves and perceived the status of their families in the associations in relation to their fathers' membership. In general, the contestants perceived the membership in collective terms; their father's individual membership represented the collective membership of the family to the associations. Although the father joined the association initially as an individual, his membership would include his wife after he married. Subsequently the membership would be further expanded to include his children. The family would belong to and attend social activities organized by the association. In this way, the father's individual membership was transformed into a collective family membership.

The family's attendance at the association's social functions reveals the position of women in the male-dominated associations. Although the contestants identified themselves with the associations and called them "my association", they would appear in some functions only when the families were invited. They were never in the associations as individuals. The family, in this way, functioned as a unit-member and only attended social events, such as the annual banquets and in Qingmingjie (清明節). As the contestants recall, the family had no right to take part in making any executive decisions.

In those days, there were lots of activities in the associations. It was also a place to go to. ... Dad did all the meetings. But we had to go to all the functions, like the celebrations for New Year and the Double Ten Day. We did not participate in the associations about what was going on in the community. Only the men did this. In lots of times, my Dad always had to go to meetings after dinner. In those days, associations were good for families. For the families, the associations were the place to know and meet people, and to know what was going on in the community.33

We only went to the annual meeting around New Year time. After the meeting they always had a tea party. We went down only for that. We also went to the cemetery in qingming festival.34

My Dad went to the meetings. We only went to the banquets listening to people but we did not understand what they were saying, just sit there for four hours. ... I remember when we were growing up, the family was very close to the association.35

Family only went to those banquets. To be active participants, it was mainly the man.36

The wife and children were a part of the associations only if the family was involved; otherwise the male head of the family was the designated member representing the family in the association.

Patrilineal Continuation of Membership in Associations

Although the daughters identified themselves with the associations which their fathers joined, they could never be members of the associations because they were females. Not only did the patriarchal structure of the associations forbid women to be members, but the membership could also only be passed down patrilineally through male descendants generationally from father to son and then to grandson. Male descendants were entitled to join the associations because they belonged to the clan of their father, and because they would continue the kinship of the family. The father then would enter the names of the sons in the gongsuo to register the children’s membership. Jean Liao remembers:

My father was in the gongsuo when he was little because my grandfather was in the gongsuo. Therefore he automatically put all the boys in the gongsuo, my uncles and brothers. Not the girls because girls did not belong.37

34 Interview Tape 1994-95: 7.
35 Interview Tape 1994-95: 6
36 Interview Tape 1994-95: 5.
37 Personal Interview with Jean Liao.
Passing down the membership to male descendants ensured that family membership in associations was continued. Once the sons and grandsons were registered in the associations, the families would remain as members of the associations even after the original members deceased. In this way, the family membership was extended from generation to generation. In traditional Chinese society, all male descendants, not just eldest sons, were entitled to register in the fathers' associations. The male descendants regardless of their positions in the family could join the associations at any time.

Patrilineal continuation of association memberships is greatly influenced by the concepts of nei (内 inner) and wai (外 outer) in Chinese kinship. Male children are regarded as paternal descendants. The relationship between children and paternal grandparents is supposed to be closer than that with maternal grandparents. In Chinese-language there are distinct terms for paternal and maternal grandparents to differentiate their relationships with grandchildren. The paternal grandparents are zufumu (祖父母 grandparents) while the maternal grandparents are called wai zufumu (外祖父母 outer-grandparents). The term grandchildren is also differentiated according to the children are born to sons or daughters. The children of sons are nei sun (内孙 inner-grandchildren) and those of daughters are waisun (外孙 outer-grandchildren). Nei and wai connote the closeness of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. Wai denotes a less intimate relationship between grandparents and grandchildren vis-à-vis nei. Male descendants are the paternal successors of the family name and kinship, and are entitled to enter the clan and district associations. Children cannot join the association on the
mother's side because, firstly, they are the "outer-grandchildren" and, secondly, their mother do not belong to her father's association.

In addition to the nei-wai concept in Chinese kinship, the gender of children and the Chinese inheritance rule are also important considerations in defining the eligibility to association membership. Traditionally women are regarded as waixinren (外姓人, people of different surnames). Therefore the daughter's position in family is so low that she is not entitled to inherit any family property. Only male children are legitimate heirs because daughters can be married off and become outsiders to the natal family. She would belong to her husband's family. If a married woman maintains the right to inherit her natal

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38 This term reveals the ambivalent identity of Chinese women. To the natal family, the married daughter would be a waixinren because she has adopted her husband's surname. However, to the husband's family she is a waixinren too, for she is from a different family.

39 Patricia Ebrey has extensively discussed female inheritance in Imperial China, and she has argued that dowry is a form of property inheritance for women and that the uxorial marriage is a method of inheritance through women. See, Patricia Ebrey, Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 99-113 and 235-249. Under the uxorial marriage, a groom would be married into the bride's family. In some cases, he would either change his surname or allow some of his sons to take their maternal grandfather's surname. James Watson's case study on Shatin, Hong Kong, has revealed that the uxorial arrangement is commonly regarded as the most dangerous method of succession because the son-in-law might threaten to take away his children if he thinks he is entitled to a larger share of inheritance. James L. Watson, "Agnates and Outsiders: Adoption in a Chinese Lineage," Man 10(1975): 294. There are no rules of inheritance in overseas Chinese community. Chinese customs of inheritance are practised and sometimes will be combined with local practices. The will of Mr. Ye Sheng (Yip Sang) stated clearly that female descendants would not inherit any of his property which would only go to his male descendants. The Yip Family and Yip Sang Company, The City of Vancouver Archives. Interestingly the Chinese merchant families in the Philippines follow neither the inheritance laws of the Philippines nor of China strictly, but combined the two. Usually the immediate family is the primary and only beneficiary when the family head dies. The elder son is expected to replace the deceased as the family and business head and would get a slightly larger share. The sons and the widow would decide who would be other beneficiaries. Sometimes, married daughters would be offered some share of the estate in respect of Filipino law. See John T. Omobundro, Chinese Merchant Families in Iloilo: Commerce and Kin in a Chinese Philippines City (Athens, Ohio: The Ohio University Press, 1981), pp. 149-155. There was a serious debate in Hong Kong in April and May 1994 about the female inheritance of family property in the New Territories where the natives or benderen (本地人) had practised the Chinese customary law for a long time. Christine Lok, a feminist legislator, proposed to have equity between men and women in the New Territories with respect to the right of inheritance. Her motion in the Hong Kong Legislative Council aroused great objections from the conservative male natives. Finally the motion was passed. But, some women still claim that the new law has not been effective in protecting their rights. For example, see 20 May 1994, South China Morning Post.
family's property, it would threaten the interests of the natal family as the property inherited would eventually become the property of her husband and then be passed down to her children who are of a different clan. Because such a situation could upset family harmony, women have been prohibited from inheriting any family property. This attitude towards women also shapes the volatile female membership in associations. Women, perceived as "outsiders", are not supposed to belong to their fathers' associations as permanent members. As daughters, they would be attached indirectly to their fathers' associations before marrying. After getting married, they were affiliated with their husbands' associations.

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To sum up, the Miss Queen of Cathay contest and the contestants' experiences in the event provide an interesting example of some aspects of Chinese patriarchy in overseas Chinese community. In the post WWII years, the traditional Chinese concept of male domination and female submission still heavily influenced Chinese families and associations in Vancouver. At the family level, the roles of male and female were clearly divided so that husbands were supposed to be in charge of public matters, such as working outside and attending meetings in associations while the wives took care of domestic chores. Although the wives were not prohibited to join any associations, they at least was not encouraged to do so. For the daughters, they might not be required to be completely submissive, but were taught to be obedient and to listen to their parents. Some of them were greatly influenced by their parents to enter the contest, and their participation in fact reflected the family participation in the activity. The parents' involvement in selling
tickets, in some ways, revealed the characteristic of collectivism in Chinese family. At the community level, many clan and district associations were male-dominated; women could only take part in social functions when the families were invited. Families were not allowed to take part in executive meetings. Because of this family participation and the father's involvement in the association, daughters identified themselves with the associations to which their fathers belonged, and the father's individual membership represented the family's collective membership in the association.
Conclusion

This thesis examines three aspects of the history of Chinese in Canada: firstly, Chinese female emigration in the larger process of family overseas migration; secondly, the integrity of the overseas Chinese community examined through studying the 1954 fund-raising campaign for the Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao in Vancouver; and finally, the perception of Canadian-born Chinese women of the relationship between families and associations.

People of Chinese ancestry have been resident in Canada for over a century. Studying the history of Chinese immigration to Canada in stages seems to be the conventional method used by scholars. These stages were marked by the changes in Canadian immigration legislation. The first stage was a free entry period between 1858 and 1884. The second stage, between 1885 and 1923, was marked by restriction. The exclusion policy was adopted in the third stage between 1923 and 1947. From 1948 onwards the selective entry policies began. However, this conventional method has delineated Chinese immigration to Canada in a linear development in which the representation of women is limited; women are always seen to be sponsored dependents in the stream of Chinese emigration.

In this thesis, the emigration of women has been understood in relation to their marriages. The marriage with a huaqiao began the migration cycle. Some were sent for and married overseas whereas some women would be married in the form of overseas, delayed-transfer marriage. The family migration cycle was incomplete without the

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"transfer" of the wives. Upon their arrival, overseas Chinese families were formed. The personal reminiscences of women in the overseas, delayed-transfer marriages show how they experienced this process of family migration. They were dependent and sponsored by their husbands to join them abroad, but they traveled independently and came to Canada as individual entrants.

In the discussion about female emigration, the Hong Kong emigration data and Canadian immigration figures have been compared. The comparison has revealed that a gap exists in the two set of data recorded by the two authorities. The Hong Kong Harbour Master's statistics indicate the consistent movement of Chinese female adults and youth going to Canada despite the Canadian restrictive immigration legislation whereas Canadian government only recorded a low and limited number of Chinese female entrants before 1947. Although no definite answer has been provided to explain this discrepancy, the gap found has opened questions about Chinese women's emigration to Canada for future research.

In overseas Chinese communities, Chinese education, teaching both Chinese-language and culture, was and still is a means to cultivate and maintain Chinese tradition in overseas Chinese families. The provision of Chinese education has always been a kind of social service provided by the Chinese community. To improve the quality of teaching and to meet the increasing demand for Chinese education, particularly in the mid-20th century with the growth of the Chinese population, fund-raising campaigns were organized to collect money to establish more well-equipped Chinese schools, such as the fund-raising
campaign for the Wengehua Huaqiao Gongli Xuexiao, or the Vancouver Chinese Public School in 1954.

In general, the campaign shows the cohesiveness of the Vancouver Chinese community. Though the community at large was divided into different community associations according to the kinship, lineage or dialect principles, the associations and individuals would unite together when there was a need to help in the larger community. Thus, individuals and associations generously contributed in the fund-raising campaign for the school.

The Miss Queen of Cathay contest was part of the fund-raising campaign and was organized as another way to raise funds for the school. This contest has provided a window through which the role of families in relation to the fathers’ memberships in associations can be understood from the eyes of Canadian-born daughters. In addition, the contestants’ personal narratives tell of the Chinese patriarchy which was embedded in overseas Chinese families and associations. The parents’ and associations’ heavy involvement are seen to marginalize the girls in the contest.

The ladies running in the contest mainly came from merchant families which often assumed the leadership role in overseas Chinese associations and communities. The contestants’ fathers were members of their lineage or kinship associations and some of them held director positions. For the contestants, their fathers’ individual memberships represented a collective family memberships in the associations. In other words, the families and children did not register officially in the associations as unit-members. Despite the lack of official membership status, the families attended occasional social
functions organized by the associations. Of particular interests about the contestants' narratives is their strong identification with their fathers' associations. Though women, wives and daughters, were not entitled to join the associations on an individual basis and to continue the family membership after the original member, husband or father, died, the contestants considered themselves as belonging to their fathers' associations. This has suggested a close father-daughter relationship in contrast to the father-son relationship rooted in Confucian traditions in Chinese patriarchy. On the other hand, the narratives have also revealed that the women were isolated and excluded as the family membership could only be passed down from generation to generation through male descendants.

It is ironic that the contestants were marginalized in the contest. Their accounts indicate that they did not do very much in the contest because of the heavy involvement of their parents and the sponsoring associations. The parents and associations assisted the contestants to sell the tickets in every possible way. Their assistance had become instructions for the girls who in turn were expected to do what they were told. As a result, the contestants were unable to show their individuality and initiatives in the contest in spite of the fact that a substantial amount of money was raised for the school.
Note on Research Method

In the fall of 1993, I began reading the Vancouver printed Chinese-language newspapers. After a quick glance at most issues of the Dahan Gongbao (大漢公報 The Chinese Times) and Qiaosheng Ribao (僑聲日報 Overseas Chinese Voice Daily) in the early 1950s, the reports on the Miss Queen of Cathay contest in 1953-54 are particularly interesting. The Vancouver Sun, The Province and the Chinatown News also had a few articles on the contest. However, no academic literature has documented the contest, except for a brief mention in T.H. Lee’s Jianada Huaqiao shi [加拿大華僑史], or The History of Overseas Chinese in Canada. The obscurity of the contest in academic writing has driven me to look at the contest. Using the newspaper accounts and personal narratives, the questions about how and why was this contest organized, and who were involved can be explored.

Social Memory

"Social memory' is a process by which members of a society can accumulate and disseminate information within the society. The information from that process is stored internal as well as external to the mental faculties of the society’s members." In the above quotation, Karl Lo points out that the function of social memory is to record the collective memory of individuals. He, however, has overlooked the agent by which the information — the memory — is recorded, accumulated, and disseminated. In overseas

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1 The Chinatown News, founded by Roy Mah in the early 1950s, was the first and only English-language magazine run by Canadian-born Chinese. It is still available.
Chinese communities, the Chinese vernacular press usually acts as the agent which assumes these duties. In addition, Lo also has not articulated the content of social memory. In fact, social memory should not be viewed simply as the process to accumulate and disseminate information. It also refers to the information which is passed down and remembered. This information reflects the socio-economic life experiences of overseas Chinese.

The Chinese Vernacular Press in Vancouver

In post World War II years, the *Qiaosheng Ribao* and *Zhongxing Ribao* (中醒日報) were established in Vancouver.3 The latter did not last long; it was closed shortly after it started publication on 1 March 1954. The Chinese-language presses established in this period aligned politically either with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) or with the Taiwanese government. The *Qiaosheng Ribao* started publication on

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3 In North America Chinese presses began in the mid 19th century. The *Golden Hill’s News* (金山日新報), the first Chinese vernacular newspaper, was founded by William Howard on 22 April 1854. Other than promoting Christianity, this paper was generally commerce-oriented and contained sections on prices of goods in the markets, voyage schedule and advertisements. Therefore, its readers were mainly Chinese merchants. The *Golden Hill’s News*, however, was only in print for a brief period of time. The first non commerce-oriented Chinese newspaper in America, *Long Ji Bao* (隆記報), was founded in 1881. Feng Ai-qun (馮愛群), *Huaqiao baoye shi* [華僑報業史 History of overseas Chinese press] (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1967), p. 117; L.H. Mark, “A Short History of Chinese Journalism in the U.S. and Canada,” *Chinese Newspapers Published in North America, 1854-1975* (Washington, D.C.: Centre for Chinese Research Materials, Association of Research Libraries, 1977), p. 2; and Mark, “Shijiu Shiji Meiguo Huawen baoye Fazhan Xiaoishi [十九世紀美國華文報業發展小史 A brief history of Chinese press in 19th century America],” in *Huaqiao shi yanjiu lunji [華僑史研究論集 Essays on the history of overseas Chinese]*, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Xinhua Shudian, 1984), p. 340. Many Chinese vernacular newspapers in Vancouver were initially produced by missionaries to christianize Chinese people.3 In 1907 the *Huaying Ribao* (華英日報) was founded in Vancouver. It was financially funded by some missionary authorities to propagate Christianity and disseminate modern knowledge among the Chinese community. Due to financial difficulties this paper was re-organized twice. In the summer of 1910, it was first reorganized and re-titled *Dahan Ribao* (大漢日報). Five years later, the paper was renamed *Dahan Gongbao* (大漢公報) with an English-language title *The Chinese Times*. Finally because of the competition from other Hong Kong-based Chinese-language newspapers, like *Sing Tao Jib Po* (星島日報) and *Ming Bao* (明報), *The Chinese Times* folded in October 1992.
10 October 1953, the Double-Tenth Day anniversary of the 1911 Chinese Revolution. Some mainland scholars have suggested that the Qiaosheng Ribao, similar to the Dagong Bao (大公報) which is a left-wing newspaper, carries an “independent” editorial standpoint. However after the internal reorganization of directorship, the Qiaosheng Ribao was financed by some pro-KMT agents. The paper was criticized for being “inconsistent and frequently against [the mainland] government” since then. An illustration of its alignment with the KMT government is its adoption of the republican calendar. For example the newspaper would be dated “Zhonghua Minguo Sishisan Nian Zhengyue Sanshiri” (中華民國四十三年正月三十日 or 30th of the first month in the 43rd year of the Republic of China).

Although based in Vancouver, the Qiaosheng Ribao delivered wide editorial and news coverage, including British Columbian and Canadian news, world affairs, and issues relating to Hong Kong, China and other Asian interests. Of particular importance was the paper’s function as a channel for community associations to disseminate information to members. Community associations, clan and district associations likewise, often

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4 To my knowledge, Qiaosheng Ribao was probably shut down around 1985, under the editorship of Mr. Wu Liwen (吳立文). However, Fang and Hu suggest that the paper was available in the late 1980s and was owned by a Vietnamese Chinese. Before the Qiaosheng Ribao folded, its daily circulation was limited; only 800 copies were printed. Fang Jigen and Hu Wenying, Haiwai Huawen Baokan de Lishi yu Xianzhuang, p. 210.

5 Whether or not the Qiaosheng Ribao carried an independent viewpoint was questionable. If its attitude was similar to Dagong Bao’s, it would have been pro-China or leftist. I have been reading the paper continuously from January to August 1954 and selectively in the summer 1961. Some notes of interest are worth mentioning here: the newspaper, instead of reporting news on China in a supportive manner, rapidly denounced the corrupt behaviour of some communist cadres and their policies. For example, the newspaper reported and placed particular emphasis on the many cases of kidnapping women and rapes, and attributed much social disruption to the newly legislated marriage law, in Xinchang (新昌) and Kaiping (開平). As reported, this marriage law stipulated all spouses of male overseas Chinese living in China and below 40 years of age, should re-marry local Chinese males. Qiaosheng Ribao, 5 and 13 January 1954.

6 Feng Ai-qun, Huaqiao baoye shi, p. 126.
advertised reports, meeting schedules and functions in the newspaper. Individuals could also express their opinions through a public forum section in the paper. This section was similar to the “Letters to the Editor” of the present day’s newspapers and provided a means for people to voice their opinions. An entertainment section was also available on the paper which included stories, verses and even poems, of which some were occasional contributions from readers.\(^7\)

Using Oral Narratives

This thesis has incorporated oral narratives of the contestants in the 1954 Miss Queen of Cathay contest to look at daughters, families and associations in an overseas Chinese community.\(^8\) Six Canadian-born contestants were interviewed.\(^9\) The interviews were set as informal conversations in which the contestant’s memories about the contest flowed freely. Considering the contest was held forty years ago, it would be difficult for the ladies to remember the contest in detail. Therefore the newspaper reports which have

\(^7\) However Zeng Xubai criticized the Qiaosheng Ribao for having a debased philosophy because some pornographic stories were printed. Zeng Xubai (曾虛白), Zhongguo xinwen shi [中国新闻史 History of journalism in China], (Taipei: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1966), p. 787.

\(^8\) I have considered two ways of interviewing the contestants. One was to have formal interviews in which all questions would be set and asked. The other one was informal conversations in which I would take the role of observer. This is the method that most anthropologists prefer. I choose the latter one after considering the “soft” nature of the subject. The experiences in the contest is so personal to all contestants that it would be easier for them to talk about it freely. For research methodology and the use of oral narratives for academic purposes, see Ruth Finnegan, Oral Traditions and the Verbal Arts: A Guide to Research Practices (New York: Routledge, 1992); Julie Cruikshank, “Introduction: Life History and Life Stories,” in Life Lived Like a Story (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992), pp. 21-36; Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, “Metaphors of Self in History: Subjectivity, Oral Narrative, and Immigration Studies,” in Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics edited by Virginia Yans-McLaughlin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 254-290 and Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinner: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 247-251.

\(^9\) There were seven contestants in the contest. Six were born in Canada and the other one, May Zheng immigrated to Vancouver in the early 1950s. Since I could not locate Zheng, no interview was done with her.
recorded their performance in the contest were quoted, and the photographs taken during
the finale of the contest were shown to them in the interviews. Surprisingly most of them
had never seen nor heard these photographs and reports before. The clippings and the
photographs, in this way, served as an effective aid to help them to recall the contest from
the perspective of participants.

Although it is possible that an informal interview might be fragmentary, this did
not happen in my research. In fact, their narratives were very coherent and each can be an
independent story. Mapping all of them together form a larger picture of the contest, as
the interviews supplemented one another and filled in the holes in the written reports.
Their coherent narratives chronicle the process of the contest, and the people and
associations that were involved. Embedded in their accounts were some inside stories of
the contest and the Chinese community, anecdotes which made the interviews more
interesting. The most fascinating aspect of their narratives is the verbal re-construction of
Vancouver's Chinatown in the 1950s. Though not all of the contestants lived in
Chinatown, most were familiar with the area. They knew exactly the names of the streets
and stores, and the locations of the buildings. Having visualized the map of Chinatown in
their mind, they took me on a verbal tour of Chinatown and most importantly they have
led me to experience their lives in the 1950s.

Orally narrated, the Miss Queen of Cathay contest provides a point of reference
for examining how Canadian-born Chinese women, as daughters, handle notions of
association memberships and participation, and perceive their positions and their families'
in the community associations which traditionally barred women from joining. The
personal accounts of the contestants have reflected that women perceived fathers' individual memberships as collective family memberships in associations. Families, as unit members, closely attached to the associations and participated in the social functions that the associations organized. This finding has offered a way to look at the community institutions in Chinese community from the perspective of the members' daughters who were not officially admitted as members but participated in the functions organized by the associations occasionally.
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*The Province*
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*South China Morning Post*

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## Appendix  Chinese Emigration from Hong Kong to Canada, 1868-1923

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*Source: Hong Kong Government, Harbour Master’s Report, 1868-1923.*

These data was provided by Dr. Elizabeth Sinn, Department of History, University of Hong Kong.