In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

(Signature)

Department of History
The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date October 6, 1993
Abstract

This study seeks to understand Chinese ethnicity as a process of ongoing cultural construction engaged in by Chinese people in Vancouver from 1945 to 1980. Drawing evidence primarily from the ethnic press and voluntary organizations, it uncovers a diversity of cultural positions articulated by different groups of Chinese with respect to their ethnic identity and sense of community. This interior discourse on Chineseness unfolded in part because of changing demographic conditions within the ethnic group. After the Second World War, the older settlers who had arrived in Canada before the exclusion act of 1923 were joined and gradually outnumbered by their Canadian-born descendants and new immigrants. This development ushered in a contest for the power of cultural definition among various generations of local-born and immigrant Chinese.

The emergent diversity of ethnic constructs in the Chinese minority after 1945 also reflected the continuous influence of China and the new opportunities Chinese people began to enjoy in Canada. The former unitary outlook of the ethnic group regarding the close relationship of overseas Chinese with their home country was displaced, but not by any simple cultural re-orientation to Canada. Particularly among the immigrant Chinese, the concern for the native place, the care for family members in Mainland China and Hong Kong, the desire to promote some form of Chinese culture in
Vancouver, and a residual interest in Chinese politics remained salient dimensions of their ethnic consciousness. At the same time, the dismantling of discriminatory legislation and other racial barriers in the larger society afforded Chinese people for the first time the option to nurture an identification with Canada.

In the 1970s these two fundamentally different cultural orientations were reconciled, as the discourse on Chineseness took on a new paradigm. Under state multiculturalism and with the rise of ethnic sentiments, members of the Chinese minority advanced their claims to be "Chinese Canadians" within the officially enshrined Canadian mosaic. Despite popular subscription to this category, immigrant and local-born Chinese invested this label with different meanings. The underlying diversity of Chinese ethnic construction was once again unveiled.
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ii
Table of Contents iv
List of Tables v
List of Figures vii
Acknowledgements viii

**INTRODUCTION** 1

Chapter One: Historical Background 26

Chapter Two: New Immigrants and the Contest for Community in the Post-War Era 41

Chapter Three: The Coming of Age of the Local-born Chinese, 1945-1970 91

Chapter Four: Rituals, Finance, and the Resilience of Traditional Organizations in the Post-War Era 141

Chapter Five: The Chinese Between Two Worlds, 1945-1970 197

Chapter Six: Towards a "Chinese Canadian" Identity, 1971-1980 251

**CONCLUSION** 315

Selected Bibliography 323
List of Tables

2.1 The age and sex distribution of the Chinese population in Vancouver City, 1951 45

2.2 The number of Chinese immigrants entering Canada and British Columbia, 1946-1970 47

2.3 An estimate of post-war Chinese immigrants arriving in Vancouver, 1946-1970, and the total Chinese population in Vancouver in the census years 49

2.4 The number and percentage of dependent children (under 18) and wives among Chinese immigrants entering Canada, 1946-1967 51

2.5 The age and sex distribution of the Chinese population in Canada, 1951 and 1961 (in percentage) 54

2.6 A list of youth corps established by traditional associations in Vancouver's Chinatown in the 1950s 68

2.7 A partial list of autonomous Chinese youth societies in Vancouver in the post-war period 77

2.8 A summary of Hai Fung Club's major activities, 1959-1968 80

3.1 The percentage of native-born Chinese within the Chinese population in Canada, 1901-1981 95

3.2 An estimate of the percentages of the three different groups in Vancouver's Chinese population, 1951-1971 95

4.1 The annual ritual cycle observed by traditional Chinese organizations in Vancouver in the post-war period 151

4.2 Clan associations and the birthday celebration of progenitors in the post-war period 154

4.3 An incomplete list of national conventions held by traditional associations in Vancouver's Chinatown in the post-war period 157

4.4 Investment in real estate by Vancouver's traditional Chinese associations in the post-war period 167
4.5 The repurchase of shares from the baizi hui by the Hoy Ping District Association, 1955-1970

4.6 A classification of share-holders according to the amount of their investment in the baizi hui of the Wong Wun San Society Headquarters, 1953

4.7 Individual contributions to a loan in the Lee Clan Association, 1952

5.1 The number of immigrants entering Canada from China and Hong Kong, 1949-1965

6.1 The number of Chinese immigrants entering Canada and British Columbia, 1961-1980

6.2 Time of arrival in Canada for Chinese in Greater Vancouver, 1981

6.3 The number of immigrants arriving in Canada from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, 1971-1980
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Vancouver's Chinatown, ca. 1910</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Vancouver's Chinatown, ca. 1927</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>A copy of the charter night programme of the Vancouver Chinatown Lions Club, January 29, 1954</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Recognition of financial contributions to the Mon Keong School, 1944</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>The regulations of the baizi hui in Fong Loon Tong Headquarters, 1961</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>The itinerary of Foon Sien Wong, delegate of the Chinese Benevolent Association of Canada, in his journey to Ottawa to present a brief, 1955</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>A leaflet showing the endorsement of candidates by the Chinese Benevolent Association in the federal election, 1953</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Organizations represented at the founding meeting of the Chinese Cultural Centre, February 11, 1973</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

It is impossible for me to acknowledge every debt I have incurred in the course of completing this piece of work. Professor Edgar Wickberg, my mentor, has been most generous with his advice and encouragement. I am also grateful to Professors Graham Johnson, Robert McDonald, Diana Lary, Alexander Woodside, Arif Dirlik, and Ming Chan for rendering very thoughtful comments at various points.

Without the financial support of a Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship from 1988 to 1993, it would have been impossible for me to undergo my training as an historian at The University of British Columbia. Likewise, this study would not have been feasible if not for the kind agreement of many individuals and organizations to furnish materials for my research.

My wife, How Ling, has sacrificed her career so that her husband can realize his dream. Her support, patience, and understanding, as well as the cheerfulness of Cheuk Ming and Stella Hai-yan, are deeply appreciated.
Introduction

This study is part of a scholarly effort to improve the understanding of Chinese ethnicity, or cultural identity. Similar to many other topics in Chinese social history, the burgeoning interest in Chinese ethnicity can be related to the increasing convenience of undertaking field work in Mainland China in the last twenty years. More importantly, new ways of thinking about ethnicity came about in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Since then, a generation of academics in the West has shown keen interest in probing the subject from various disciplinary perspectives. China specialists were attracted to this intellectual enterprise only belatedly, but in the last few years the work of sociologists, anthropologists, and historians has made exciting progress.

In brief, it is no longer tenable to take ethnicity as equivalent to, or prescribed by, the primordial elements that a person inherits at birth, or that a group of people passes on naturally from one generation to another. This is not to deny the existence of inheritable cultural traits such as language, religious beliefs, social values, historical experience, blood ties, and the like. Nonetheless, the cultural items embedded in any ethnic category acquire significance only in a particular historical circumstance. Ethnicity is increasingly recognized in scholarly discourse as situational and subject to negotiation by individual agents, interested groups, or the state. The most
meaningful inquiry is not to compose a laundry list of heritage items to prove or disprove that ethnicity is present, but to decipher the historical process in which a certain ethnic identity emerges as a cultural construct and how it evolves over time.\(^1\)

Pamela Crossley's fascinating study of the Manchu bannermen during the Qing dynasty is the first major monograph on modern Chinese history that espouses this perspective on ethnicity.\(^2\) She rejects the conventional understanding of the racial identity of Manchus as a cultural given which was derived from a deep-seated and exclusive sense of peoplehood in imperial China's northeastern frontier. Instead she argues that two discernible processes were at work to collapse various groups of Jurchens, and a smaller number

---


of Han Chinese and Mongols, into a tenacious Manchu category. The first one was the intense desire of the early Qing emperors to consolidate a Manchu identity for the sustenance of ideological supremacy and political control. More powerful and persistent than imperial designation in nurturing a Manchu sensitivity was the experience of a significant proportion of the bannerman population in garrison residence in Chinese cities. Crossley's observation on the changing configuration of these national and local forces behind the flowering of Manchu identity during the last half century of the Qing dynasty is especially intriguing:

As court sponsorship of Manchu livelihood and identity was withdrawn in the middle nineteenth century, the internal strengths of the cultures and communities of the garrison sustained the Manchus apart, and the repeated violence Manchus suffered in the social disorders of the nineteenth century and in the Republican Revolution undoubtedly worked to reinforce their separation. As the higher Qing political structures disintegrated, overt Manchu separatism and an ethnic discourse emerged.³

Based on these findings, Crossley further argues against the received paradigm of "sinicization" in Chinese historiography, which dwells on the assimilation of the minority groups by the majority Han Chinese. That Chinese version of a melting-pot theory is not reconcilable with the historical realities in China, according to Crossley. Ethnically defined social categories and

³ Ibid., p. 228.
relationships were as salient and significant in China's past as they are alive at present.⁴

In a more recent study, Frank Dikotter has convincingly demonstrated the prevalence of racial construction and stereotypes among China's political and educated elites since the late nineteenth century.⁵ Revealing as this is, the strengths of the new research on ethnicity in the China field do not seem to lie in this kind of traditionally conceived intellectual history. The new scholarship is most remarkable in unveiling the process of cultural negotiation on ethnic identity in local society. This is the case with Crossley's work which draws on the history of the Manchu garrison in Hangzhou. Among anthropologists, Fred Blake's work on Sai Kung in Hong Kong underlines the contest for cultural domination among various southern Chinese dialect groups and the manoeuvrability of ethnic labels and boundaries.⁶ Dru Gladney's rich ethnographic analysis of Muslim Chinese identity after 1949 in four different localities sheds considerable light on the interplay between the local socio-economic and cultural milieu and the state

---

⁴ Crossley has elaborated this argument in a more recent article, "Thinking About Ethnicity in Early Modern China," Late Imperial China Vol. 11, no. 1 (1990), pp. 1-35, which is a thought-provoking introductory essay for a special issue on "Ethnicity in Qing China."

⁵ Frank Dikotter, The Discourse of Race in Modern China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

power in matters of cultural definition.  

As in the local history of national minorities, the process of ethnic construction was equally salient in the context of migration settlement that involved primarily the Han Chinese. The research of William Rowe on Late Imperial Hankou, for example, has driven home the importance of ethnic (or sub-ethnic) identities on the basis of local origin in structuring the economic, social, cultural and political lives of residents in an "immigrant city." Whereas Rowe and others seem to have taken the home district identities of their subjects literally, Emily Honig boldly applies the concepts of ethnicity and cultural construction from current American ethnic studies to her work on ethnic identity and prejudice among urbanites in modern Shanghai. She delineates the trajectory of a "Subei" category invested with derogatory meanings by the dominant Jiangnan people since the mid-nineteenth century and shows how the negative stereotypes that suffused in public attitudes,

---


bureaucratic decisions, and the workplace were contested by the migrants from Jianghuai. Her work is a powerful revelation of a hitherto unstudied discourse on ethnicity in the history of China's largest city in the modern period.  

These prefatory comments on the new scholarship of Chinese ethnicity can hardly do justice to the depth of, or convey the excitement of, this intellectual endeavour. The point, however, is to highlight the theoretical moorings and approaches that help to orient the new research. The present study undertakes a comparable historical inquiry into the ethnic discourse of the Chinese in an overseas migration context in Canada. The subject is relatively unexplored in Canadian Chinese history and in the larger literature on the overseas Chinese. It is further hoped this work will restore some necessary balance to the current understanding of Chinese (or Asian) ethnicity in North America.

An Interior History of Chinese Ethnicity

Concern about majority-minority relationships and the issue of racism in North American society has given rise to a particular tradition in the studying of the Chinese or "Oriental" experience

---

in Canada. As exemplified by the works of Peter Ward and Patricia Roy in the case of British Columbia, some Canadian scholars have organized their research entirely around the questions of the origins and manifestations of Anglo-Canadian racism that historically confronted the Chinese and other Asian-derived immigrant groups in this country. The details of their findings need not detain us here, though it may be noted that for some twenty years or so the major argument has continued to be whether racism was culturally driven or economically motivated.\textsuperscript{10} The studies of Anthony Chan and Peter Li that seek to uncover -- one from a more personal and historical perspective and the other from a structural and sociological analysis -- the damaging effects of institutional racism on the life of the ethnic Chinese provide an

important variation of the same theme.\footnote{Anthony Chan, \textit{Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World} (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1983). Despite his academic credentials and the promise to render "a Chinese Canadian insider's view of Canadian history" (p. 8), this is a disappointing book that is poorly organized and lacks balance. Peter Li, \textit{The Chinese in Canada} (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988).}

Encapsulating the history of the Chinese in Canada under the rubric of racism, the above studies convey little about the internal dynamics and the perspectives of the Chinese as a minority group. However sympathetic to the Chinese they may be, these works consider them largely as hapless victims of discrimination, exclusion, and oppression. In their terms, Chinese ethnic identity is externally defined. These studies suggest that a group of people happened to be "Chinese" because they were defined through their mistreatment by others as "Chinese."

This way of looking at the "Chinese" only through western eyes is practised to the extreme by Kay Anderson in her book on Vancouver's Chinatown. Deploying an impressive array of western social theorists, Anderson argues that "Chinatown" and "Chinese" were racial categories constructed by European Canadians through the use of state machineries. Such a "racialization" process, as she describes it, was a means of cultural management whereby the dominant majority could perpetually define the ethnic Chinese as "others" and "outsiders." On the part of the Chinese, Anderson finds little except the internalization of those imposed categories and exogenous characterization, which is then construed as a piece
of solid evidence showing their subjugation to a western cultural hegemony.\textsuperscript{12}

The irony of this argument of a cultural hegemony is that unintentionally, Anderson (and those who work in this tradition) has actually constructed another hegemony in academic discourse. Chinese people are portrayed in her work as being stripped of their power of self-definition. They had no cultural baggage or entitlement of their own; and even if they had any of those, it did not count. What is historically and sociologically important is not the things these Chinese did or said, but simply how they were abused and why. Fully preoccupied with the western perceptions of Chineseness, the scholar has deprived the ethnic Chinese of their own voices.\textsuperscript{13}

This study examines Chinese ethnicity as a process of ongoing cultural construction engaged in by Chinese people in a local setting. The main thrust of my discussion is to uncover an interior discourse among the Vancouver Chinese on what is their own cultural identity. Scholars have defined ethnicity, or ethnic identity, in numerous ways reflecting different emphases on the biological, cultural, or sociological dimensions of this complex phenomenon.\textsuperscript{14}


\textsuperscript{13} My overall assessment of Anderson's work is given in my book review in Histoire sociale - Social History, forthcoming.

\textsuperscript{14} The following articles are a good introduction to the sizeable theoretical literature on the subject of definitions of ethnicity: Wsevolod Isajiw, "Definitions of Ethnicity," in Rita
In this study, Chinese ethnicity is broadly understood as cultural positions articulated by Chinese in relation to China and Canada. It is fluid and dynamic, as Chinese perceptions of their relationship with China and Canada change over time. It is not the primary interest of this work to uncover any "objective" social indicators of ethnicity among Chinese. The task is to underline the diversity of their self-definitions and to attempt an historical explanation. This study thus resembles the kind of "interior history" as envisaged and pursued by the late Robert Harney who insisted on retelling the story of the Italian immigrants in North America in their own terms.\(^{15}\) The advice of other Canadian scholars that the "introspective" emphasis of ethnic history often results in neglecting the host environment has also been taken seriously.\(^{16}\) As some of the following chapters will show, the "Canadian factor" was a crucial attribute in the evolving identity of the Chinese in

---


\(^{16}\) The lack of a Canadian context in some histories of the ethnic groups has drawn some fair criticisms. Among the critics are Roberto Perin, "Clio as an Ethnic: The Third Force in Canadian Historiography," *Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 64, no. 4 (1983), pp. 441-67, see pp. 445-47, and Howard Palmer, "Recent Studies in Canadian Immigration and Ethnic History: the 1970s and 1980s," *Proceedings of the First Tsukuba Seminar on Canadian Studies*, University of Tsukuba, 1989, pp. 3-37, see p. 5.
this country. This work does not play down its importance but seeks to present it as Chinese people themselves perceived it.

Given my stress on self-presentation and cultural negotiation within a minority group in Canada, an integral part of this research is to explore the different articulations of Chinese identity and their interaction with one another. These are largely unstudied dimensions in Canadian Chinese history, as scholars tend to concentrate on other issues such as immigration policy, settlement patterns, economic adaptation, the formation and development of Chinatowns, voluntary organizations, and community leadership.\textsuperscript{17} This work will also be among the first detailed local studies of this kind in the substantial literature on the overseas Chinese.\textsuperscript{18}

\begin{flushright}

\textsuperscript{18} Some years ago, Bernard Wong published an interesting article on the manipulation of ethnic symbols by the traditional Chinatown elites to overcome the challenge of the young social workers and new immigrant entrepreneurs. Surprisingly, there has been no further work along this line either by Wong himself or others who study the ethnic Chinese in North America. Wong, "Elites and Ethnic Boundary Maintenance: A Study of the Roles of Elites in Chinatown, New York City," \textit{Urban Anthropology} Vol. 6, no. 1 (1977), pp. 1-22. Academic interest on the ethnic identity of the Southeast Asian Chinese has been on the rise since the early 1980s. It seems that the new concept of ethnicity is beginning to make an important impact on this scholarship. See the two collections of conference papers, Peter Gosling and Linda Lim eds., \textit{The Chinese in Southeast

The choice of the city of Vancouver to anchor this analysis of Chinese ethnicity is more than a function of the location of my home institution. After overtaking Victoria as the largest centre of settlement for immigrants from South China during the 1900s, Vancouver has consistently been the Canadian city with the most sizeable Chinese population -- though in terms of the number of Chinese in the metropolitan area, Greater Vancouver was surpassed by its Toronto counterpart in the late 1970s. Historically, Vancouver's Chinatown was the largest in physical size and in numbers of different types of ethnic organizations, including voluntary associations, language schools, Chinese newspapers, and ethnic churches. Its "institutional completeness," in turn, means a relative abundance of source materials for historical research. Moreover, the advantage of staying in the field on a long-term basis and the existence of some major collections of research materials (see the bibliography) in Vancouver have considerably enhanced the feasibility of this study.

The choice of the period from 1945 to 1980 as the time frame of my discussion is less obvious and deserves some explanation. In


19 The term was coined by Raymond Breton. "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants," American Journal of Sociology Vol. 70, no. 2 (1964), pp. 193-205.
the first place, this period of Canadian Chinese history has attracted relatively less attention than others in most existing works. Overt discrimination and ethnic survival before the Second World War are considered major issues by Canadian scholars. The more recent influx of Chinese immigrants in the past two decades has likewise aroused considerable academic interest and journalistic concern.\(^{20}\) The period in between, particularly the quarter century after 1945, is often treated as a transitional stage without much historical importance and is therefore overlooked in research. The present study will fill in this gap of knowledge.

In addition, some major developments in the history of the Chinese minority during this period actually furnish the organizing

themes for this work. As will be argued, the unfolding of an intramural debate on Chinese identity after 1945 can be attributed in large part to the changing demographic conditions in this ethnic group. Formerly, the Vancouver Chinese population had consisted of a very large majority of single adult male immigrants from South China. A sense of community and a common outlook regarding its members' own limited opportunity in Canada and the strong ties to the native country and home districts had been considerably hardened during the exclusion era from 1923 to 1947. Such a consensus on cultural identity and visions of community began to break down when new immigrants of different cultural backgrounds -- initially from the same Pearl River Delta region in South China, and later from the neighbouring British colony of Hong Kong as the single most important source -- and the succeeding generations of Canadian-born Chinese arrived on the scene. The following account focuses on these groups of immigrant and local-born Chinese as the principal participants in a lively discourse on ethnic identity and different representations of community.

This study also seeks to re-examine the issue of changing identities of ethnic Chinese outside of "territorial China" in the period after the Second World War. In the history of the overseas Chinese, it has been said often enough that there was a general transformation from an identification with China to one with the host country in the post-war years. As one of the most influential and respected historians on American Chinese puts it, the Chinese
in the United States have changed their mentality in this period from *luoye quigen* (fallen leaves return to the roots) to *luodi sheng'gen* (put down roots in a [new] place). Indeed, the pair of expressions is so popular and its meanings so transparent that the latter part was adopted as the title of a recent international conference on the Chinese diaspora.  

At a glance, circumstantial evidence leads easily to this generalization about identity change. On the one hand, after 1945 local opportunities in the areas of citizenship, franchise, acculturation, and economic advancement were increasingly available to Chinese residents in various host countries, though there were important exceptions as in the case of the Philippines. On the other, most immigrant Chinese lost their access to Mainland China and their once privileged positions in the native place after the Chinese Communists took power in 1949. In considering the impact of these developments, this study proposes to examine this important era of identity transformation through the eyes of the Vancouver

---


Chinese. It looks into their creative responses to the new environment and discerns no unidirectional shift of Chinese identity from one cultural category to another. Instead, the changing configuration of the China factor and the new Canadian opportunities were to contribute to the diversity of ethnic construction by different groups of Chinese and thereby to the intensity of the debate on ethnic identity.  

Community and Ethnic Organizations

As suggested, an integral dimension of the Chinese discourse on cultural identity was the definition of community. It is often assumed that the "Chinese," as a distinct minority group in a larger Canadian society, constituted a "community." The concentration of Chinese people in Chinatown, the apparent close-knit social relationships among them, and their sense of belonging and social integration as manifested in the plethora of ethnic associations in their small neighbourhood are considered quite indicative of a "community." After all, did the Chinese

Cf. with Rowe's discussion of identity changes among urban residents in nineteenth century Hankou. Rowe favours the notion of identity multiplication rather than substitution, as Hankou people continued to invoke their segmentary native place identities at the same time when long-term residence nourished a new locational identity.  

The concept of community and the different levels of its meanings are extensively discussed in the literature. See, for instance, David Clark, "The Concept of Community: A Re-examination," The Sociological Review Vol. 21, no. 3 (1973), pp. 397-416; Colin Bell and Howard Newby, "Community, Communion, Class and Community Action: The Social Sources of the New Urban Politics," in D.T. Herbert and R.J. Johnston eds., Social Areas in
themselves not establish an umbrella organization -- the Chinese Benevolent Association, or simply the CBA -- to unify and speak for their "community"?

This study suggests that it may be more useful analytically to see "community" as cultural construction. In the discourse on Chineseness, different generations of immigrant and native-born Chinese sometimes came up with their own visions of community, with reference to the kind of "Chinese" culture that should prevail. A contest for the power to define Chineseness and to represent the "community" thus ensued. On some occasions and over certain issues -- such as the CBA's campaign for immigration liberalization throughout the 1950s, or the Chinese Cultural Centre movement in the mid-1970s to celebrate a new "Chinese Canadian" identity -- a particular proposition might fire the imagination of various segments of the Vancouver Chinese population and become, for the moment, a fairly successful community-inspiring enterprise. More often, however, different or conflicting articulations of Chinese identity and community persisted.

This way of looking at "community" not only illuminates the debate on ethnic identity among the Vancouver Chinese. It may also

---

shed some light on a paradox in the social history of the overseas Chinese and indeed in many studies that invoke the concept of community. How can one characterize, let alone explain, a situation whereby strong community sentiments or visions and perpetual conflicts co-exist? One way to explain away the apparent contradiction is to emphasize community cohesion and neglect intramural rivalries.\(^{25}\) A more serious effort at reasoning is to juxtapose the two as not being antithetical. Based on the ideas of Georg Simmel and Lewis Coser, William Rowe, for example, argues exactly that "Intergroup contention in Hankow [Hankou] was itself a key form of social integration. Had local subcommunities been able to regard each other with complete indifference and passivity, an urban community could not have come into existence. In the event, systematic bonds of antagonism and competition held them together."\(^{26}\)

This study posits no literal community but examines the rhetoric and propositions of community among the Chinese. Without denying the search for consensus or some degree of ethnic solidarity, it highlights an underlying contest for social space

---

\(^{25}\) This is a problem in the use of the community concept by E.P. Thompson and Natalie Davis, as Suzanne Desan points out in a recent critique, "Crowds, Community, and Rituals in the Work of E.P. Thompson and Natalie Davis," in Lynn Hunt ed., The New Cultural History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 47-71, pp. 56-64 ff.

and the power of definition within the ethnic group.\textsuperscript{27}

Having said so much about the debate on Chinese identity as well as community, where can we locate it? The ethnic media provides an obvious answer, as my discussion on sources in the following section will indicate. Nonetheless, my analytical focus is on the Chinese organizations. Institution-building was a common strategy that immigrant populations employed to deal with various problems of adaptation and advancement during and after the initial phase of settlement. Chinese were no exception in their domestic and overseas migration experiences. There is a rich historical and anthropological literature dealing with issues of organizational form, functions, leadership, and interaction with the state authority in various Chinese contexts.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{27} Edgar Wickberg has alerted me to one unpublished writing of Donald Nonini on the similar subject of "community" reconstruction and representation in a Malaysian Chinese case study.

This study will introduce new empirical information on Chinese organizations in Vancouver and draw out the implications for some historiographical and theoretical issues. Most important, however, is the overall perspective on the voluntary associations as the principal component of a public domain within this ethnic group. This part of the domain provided public responsibility, leadership positions, prestige, a sense of belonging, and acceptance which were usually inaccessible to the members of a minority group in Canadian society. Moreover, it was a cultural space the Chinese themselves delineated, in which they could define collective interests and negotiate the issue of identity in their own terms.  

A few caveats are in order. Organizations are considered in this analysis vehicles for interest articulation and cultural expressions of various generations of immigrants and native-born. The discussion will shed light on how Chinese persons of these backgrounds in Vancouver may have perceived their ethnic identity.

---

29 The use of the concept of public domain, or public sphere, in this study is different from the original formulation of Jurgen Habermas and its application in the current scholarship. Most subscribers to the concept treat the public sphere as a zone in which changing state-society relationships can be observed; this study takes it above all else as a vantage point to examine intramural social and cultural relationships. Habermas, Thomas Burger trans., The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989). A review of the application of this concept in the China field is furnished by William Rowe, "The Public Sphere in Modern China," Modern China Vol. 16, no. 3 (1990), pp. 309-29. A good example of its use in a South Asian context is Sandria Freitag, Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
However, the subject of individual ethnicity has not been systematically explored. To do that will require better sources on Chinese family life and workplace experience -- information which does not exist for the present undertaking -- and probably a different combination of research skills.30

Critics of institutional studies have rightly cautioned against excessive attention to the organizations out of all proportion to their significance.31 This study makes no pretence to cover the totality of Chinese discourse on cultural identity. Common sense tells us that Chinese organizations did not necessarily represent every member and certainly not all Chinese. Until the 1970s, Chinese women played a subsidiary role in public organizations other than in the Christian churches. Even though my narrative is not gender-specific except on a few episodes, female perspectives are under-explored.32 There is additionally an indeterminable number of Chinese individuals who had not joined any


ethnic organizations nor participated in their activities. Again, this work may not reflect much about their lives.

While these limitations should be taken into account, they do not invalidate the analytical focus on organizations. After all, associational formation and activities constituted the most recognizable and organized aspect of Chinese public life. By drawing evidence from ethnic media and institutions, the present study has assembled the best information on the discussion of cultural identity by Chinese people. These materials are made available by the more articulate and culturally sensitive members of the Chinese minority, in some cases, expressly for the purpose of ethnic construction. As such, this important portion of Chinese representation of themselves deserves to be carefully examined.

Sources and Organization of Study

In probing this interior history of the Chinese, the strategy has been to make use of materials generated from within the ethnic group as much as possible. An important item is the ethnic press, including four Chinese language newspapers, one English language magazine, and a few other short-lived and minor tabloids. On the voluntary associations, their own publications, issued often on occasions of anniversary celebration, are generally useful. Many of them are readily available in existing research collections. More valuable, in comparison, are the internal organizational archives. Unfortunately they are not easily accessible, and this study has
benefitted from only a limited amount of them. As a demonstration of how useful they can be, it is hoped that this work will encourage other researchers to explore different channels to reach these archival materials.

Another useful source is the personal papers of some prominent individuals among the local Chinese. Those of Foon Sien Wong and S. Wah Leung have been crucial to some portions of the following analysis. Finally, the documentary bases are supplemented by personal interviews, observations, and participation in social events between September 1988 and May 1993. A total of forty individuals were formally interviewed, including members from every generation of local-born and immigrant Chinese that altogether forms the subject of this research. The interviews did not follow any standard procedure or questionnaire, though they all included some biographical data and more extensive comments on organizations and Chinatown events.

This study has also drawn on some published statistical information regarding Chinese immigration and population. Local data on Vancouver, however, is very incomplete for the period under research, and therefore has to be supplemented by national level materials. In general, Canadian government sources and the mainstream media have not been used as vigorously as some people may insist is necessary. This allocation of research time is largely an outcome of my research agenda. For non-Chinese perspectives and any materials about the Chinese in public archives
or local newspapers, there is of course a whole generation of scholarship on Canadian racism, from which this account has also benefitted.

As a brief summary, Chapter One introduces the historical background of Chinese settlement in Vancouver from around the turn of the century to the Second World War. The highlight is on demography, Chinese organizations, and the sense of cultural identity and community as they evolved in those years. Covering the period from 1945 to 1970, which is referred to as the post-war era in this study, Chapters Two, Three, and Four deal with the new generation of Chinese immigrants, the local-born Chinese who came of age, and the existing immigrant settlers respectively. Chapter Two re-assesses the impact of renewed immigration with particular reference to the challenge of young newcomers to the established values, social norms, and community visions of the elderly Chinese. Likewise, Chapter Three focuses on two generations of Canadian-born Chinese and delineates their interaction with the other two sectors of the Chinese population in the process of their identity formation and articulation. Chapter Four examines the case of the existing settlers and their immigrant organizations. Dissecting their repertoire of ritual practices and cultural expressions, it makes a revisionist argument about the resilience of the traditional associations.

While continuing to analyze the post-war period, the focus of
Chapter Five shifts from particular groupings to broader patterns in the cultural orientations of the Chinese. Both the "China factor" and the newly available Canadian opportunities impinged on the Vancouver Chinese, and this evolving historical context contributed to the diversity of the Chinese ethnic construction. Chapter Six brings the analysis into the 1970s by exploring an emergent "Chinese Canadian" category as the overarching paradigm in the ongoing Chinese discourse on ethnic identity. Besides looking at the objective circumstantial factors giving rise to this new construct, the engagement of various groups of Chinese in a continuous process of cultural negotiation and contest will remain as the theme.
Chapter One: Historical Background

Chinese immigration to Canada began with the gold rush in the Fraser River in 1858. The first Chinatown was formed in Victoria by Chinese from Guangdong who had engaged in earlier gold mining activities in California. Soon afterwards, new arrivals came directly from South China to join this group of pioneers. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s, responding to local economic opportunities, pockets of Chinese population appeared in most frontier settlements along the Fraser River, in the Cariboo region and Kootenays, and on Vancouver Island. In the first half of the 1880s, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) sent some 17,000 Chinese into Canada. Though a substantial portion of the railroad workers returned to their native country just like the gold miners, the Chinese population in the province of British Columbia increased from about 4,000 in 1880 to more than 10,000 in 1884.¹

At that point, there were reportedly 114 Chinese at Burrard Inlet, including five merchants and their employees, some thirty cooks and laundrymen, and the rest working at the Hastings

sawmill.\textsuperscript{2} After the announcement of the extension of the CPR's western terminus from Port Moody to this area in 1885 and the incorporation of the city of Vancouver the following year, a small settlement of Chinese sprang up at the intersection of Carrall and Dupont Streets. It grew rapidly thereafter, emerging as the largest centre of Chinese population in the country within the next quarter century. This chapter will look briefly at some key features of this settlement prior to 1945 as an historical background to the substantive treatment of the period since World War II.

The early history of the Chinese in Vancouver can be roughly divided into three stages. During stage one (1884-1911), the number of Chinese increased to more than 3,500. The exact figure is hard to determine because Chinese immigrants were very transient, with a high rate of return migration to China, and with a number of them seeking illegal entrance to the United States.\textsuperscript{3} The problem is compounded by local mobility, owing to the engagement of some Chinese in seasonal occupations like lumbering and salmon canning outside the city during part of the year. Nonetheless, the physical expansion of Chinatown was unmistakable evidence of the growing presence of the Chinese. By the late 1900s, Vancouver's Chinatown


had come to encompass several blocks of buildings, from Canton and Shanghai Alleys west of Carrall Street stretching eastward along both sides of Pender Street (formerly Dupont Street) to Main Street (See Figure 1.1).

The Chinese population in Vancouver at the beginning of this century was overwhelmingly adult male. Out-migration in South China was mainly a male enterprise. Canadian racial antipathy towards the Chinese also discouraged these immigrants from bringing their families. An additional burden was of course the head tax of $50 Ottawa first imposed on the Chinese in 1885, and the amount was subsequently raised to $100 in 1901 and to $500 in 1903. Whatever the reasons behind the male preponderance among the Chinese immigrants, Vancouver's Chinese population of two thousand in 1901 contained less than sixty women and children. Ten years later, Chinese women were still outnumbered by 28 to 1. Needless to say, most of these women and minors belonged to the few merchant families.⁴

Affluent merchants not only had a better chance to enjoy the privilege of family life in early Chinatown; they also came to assert a leadership position in this small immigrant settlement. In the second half of the 1890s, two local merchants' societies were formed and were quickly amalgamated into the Chinese Board of

N.B. Westminster Avenue was renamed Main Street in 1910.

Trade. The organization that was set up around the same time to represent all local Chinese, known as the Chinese Benevolent Association, was similarly founded and led by merchants. The early histories of the CBA and the Board of Trade remain obscure, but it seems that these organizations were intended to protect Chinese business interests and livelihood against unsympathetic Canadian officials and a generally hostile foreign environment.\(^5\) Besides the ability to deal with these local issues, another source of the merchants' elite status was China-derived. It was a time when the Qing government in China encouraged Chinese merchants in the treaty-ports and those in foreign countries to contribute to its modernization effort. One consequence of this state promotion was the formation of many Chinese chambers of commerce and the institutionalization of merchant leadership in many overseas Chinese societies.\(^6\)

While Chinese merchants could claim to lead, they were not the only people to get organized. The first formal Chinese organization in Vancouver was the Chee Kung Tong, officially opened in 1892. It was a fraternity already well-established among Chinese gold miners


and labourers in early B.C. This brotherhood drew its model from the tradition of secret societies in China and exalted the virtues of loyalty, mutual trust, and righteous behaviour. This organization appealed to single migrant workers, shopkeepers, and small merchants and was to be very influential in Vancouver's Chinatown in years to come. Additionally, workers with the same surname or from the same native area often set up boarding houses, known in Chinese as "fangkou," to organize communal housing, mutual assistance, and social life among themselves.

One aspect of Chinese organizational activity that deserves some comment was the enthusiasm about home country politics. This was in part a result of the lack of opportunity for Chinese to participate meaningfully in Canadian society. Vancouver Chinese were conscious of their rejection by Canada, as they confronted discriminatory legislation and occasional mob violence like the anti-Asian riot of 1907. Attributing their inferior status to the weakness of China, they were all the more concerned about the fate of their native country. When Chinese officials, exiled reformers, and revolutionary emigres visited Vancouver one after another after 1895 to propagate their agendas for China, the Chinese were excited. The Emperor-Protection Association, for example, was

---

7 David Lai, Chinatowns, p. 83; Wickberg ed., From China to Canada, p. 78.

founded in the early 1900s by the merchant elite to support the reform movement of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. Likewise, the Chee Kung Tong was attracted to Kang and Liang by their political programme, but was soon converted by Sun Yat-sen and his revolutionary followers. Historical records show that the Chee Kung Tong went to great lengths to generate financial resources for Sun's programme, and some individual members even returned to China to take part in insurrections. Locally a newspaper war raged between the reformers' Yat Sun Bo (Daily News), and the revolutionaries' Wah Ying Yat Bo (Chinese-English Daily News) and later the Chee Kung Tong's Tai Hon Bo (The Chinese Times). The expressed interest in Chinese politics in the years leading up to the 1911 Revolution was later described by partisan groups as a classical example of "huaqiao" (overseas Chinese) nationalism.⁹

In the second stage (1911-1923), Vancouver's Chinese population continued to grow rapidly. Because of a high level of immigration in 1911-1914, and another brief influx in the aftermath of the First World War, the number of Chinese reached 6,500 in

1921. More important to the long-term development of this minority were the improvement in the sex ratio and the increasing number of immigrant and local-born Chinese children. The Census of 1921 indicated that there were close to six hundred Chinese women in Vancouver -- that is, a ratio of about ten Chinese men to every Chinese female. At the same time more than five hundred Chinese children were attending local public schools. Indeed, two years earlier, a missionary report noted that there were 210 Chinese families in the city, and seven percent of the Chinese were Canadian-born.\(^{10}\) Thus, after a quarter century of settlement in Vancouver, the Chinese finally and slowly proceeded to the stage of local family formation and the raising of a second generation.

In this period, the eastern boundary of Chinatown extended all the way towards Gore Street bordering the Strathcona area (See Figure 1.2). More impressive perhaps was the drastic expansion of the Chinese organizational inventory. Reflecting the rise in population and the Chinese desire to better organize for mutual help and for gaining influence within the ethnic group, formal native place and surname associations appeared in large numbers. By 1923 almost forty of them were known to exist in Chinatown.\(^{11}\)

The need for protection against Canadian discrimination and

\(^{10}\) The above figures are taken from Wickberg ed., *From China to Canada*, pp. 94-95, 306, Table 10; and Paul Yee, *Saltwater City*, pp. 49-52 ff.

\(^{11}\) Wickberg ed., *From China to Canada*, pp. 112-13, 315-18, Tables 19 and 20.
Figure 1.2

Vancouver's Chinatown, ca. 1927

the influence of China also account for the proliferation of Chinese organizations. Some occupational groups and trade associations, for example, emerged briefly as protest action against various forms of business restriction. Chinese politics continued to generate interest and conflict among the Vancouver Chinese. A few quasi-political reading rooms were formed, usually based on native place and surname ties. The major political division was now between the Chee Kung Tong, which started to call itself the Chinese Freemasons from 1920, and the local Kuomintang, which was organized by the supporters of Sun Yat-sen. The former accused Sun of reneging on his promise of rewards after the 1911 Revolution and saw the Kuomintang adherents as upstarts threatening its position in Chinatown.\(^\text{12}\)

One more thing needs to be said about the large group of native district and clan organizations. Given the recency of their formation, it is interesting to see how quickly they were accepted as basic units forming the social structure of this immigrant group. Many Chinese immigrants relied on them as a boarding facility, connection to employment opportunity, or simply a nexus of social life that alone gave them a sense of belonging, acceptance, and security in an alien society. These organizations also kept sojourners and settlers in touch with their native place, in some cases by channelling membership contributions to various investment and construction projects at home. General recognition

\(^{12}\) Ibid., pp. 101-15 ff.
of the importance of these traditional organizations came in 1918 when the CBA formally adopted a system of election to broaden its leadership base. Under the new regulations, the CBA executive would be chosen by delegates from the existing native place associations. Since these regional organizations had overlapping membership with the surname societies, an idealized segmentary structure emerged in which the CBA, as an "umbrella" organization on the top, could legitimately claim to represent all Chinese through the district and clan associations.\(^{13}\) This overall organizational arrangement epitomized a Chinese desire for ethnic solidarity, and came to be associated with a sense of Chinese unity and community.

The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 marked the beginning of the third stage. Its exclusionary effect retarded for the next twenty-four years a smooth demographic transition of the Chinese into a more balanced and stable settlers' population. New immigration, which had brought in more Chinese women and children since the 1910s, was virtually terminated. The draconian legislation and, later, the devastating effects of the Great Depression led to a drastic outflow of Chinese from the country back to China. In Vancouver, the Chinese minority suffered no immediate decline in size. The Census of 1931 in fact reported more than 13,000 Chinese in the city, which reflected the relocation of Chinese from interior B.C. to avail themselves of the aggregate

\(^{13}\) Ibid., pp. 108-09.
ethnic resources in Vancouver's Chinatown. By the early 1940s, however, the number of Chinese had dropped to seven thousand only. The large majority of this dwindling Chinese population consisted of immigrant settlers in their thirties, forties, or above who continued their bachelor lives in Canada without their immediate families. On October 15, 1941, the Province, a local daily, suggested that Vancouver's Chinese faced the grim prospect of "racial extinction" because deaths among them were almost twice as common as births.

This was no doubt the most trying period in Canadian Chinese history. Yet there were signs showing a surprising vitality in Chinese organizational activities in Vancouver. Precisely because of the difficulties, Chinese had to organize better to fend for themselves. The economic downturn and the departure of many Chinese must have reduced some associations to a nominal existence. However, some new native place and clan organizations were formed. Some consolidated two or more existing bodies with the same surname into a single structure, and a larger number reformed themselves into the Canadian headquarters of their respective organizations, reflecting a new sense of nation-wide connection and Vancouver's

---

14 It was reported in 1931 that for the first time more Chinese in B.C. resided in the two cities of Vancouver and Victoria than in the smaller settlements scattered in the province. Compare the data in ibid., pp. 303-04, Tables 7 and 8.

15 Quoted in David Lai, Chinatowns, p. 85, note 81. See also Wickberg's discussion of the demographic situation in this period, From China to Canada, pp. 148-52.
central position in the Canadian Chinese populations. More interesting, however, was the emergence of more than ten Chinese language schools and some youth-oriented musical and recreational societies in Chinatown. Though many were short-lived, those sponsored by traditional organizations tended to be better provided and were able to last well into the post-war era.\(^{16}\)

Chinese language schools were nothing new in Vancouver, for the first one had come about at the beginning of the century as a subsidiary of the Emperor-Protection Association, and another, the Chinese Public School which still exists, was founded in 1917 by the CBA. What was spectacular during the exclusion period was the apparent Chinese enthusiasm for cultural maintenance. In the eyes of the immigrant settlers, children who migrated to Canada before 1923 and the local-born descendants all needed to be taught Chinese language skills and other cultural subjects because they were vulnerable to deculturation. Moreover, opportunity for Chinese in the larger society was so limited that these youngsters would need Chinese cultural skills if they were to work in Chinatown or to pursue a promising career back in China.

The other underlying reason for this cultural sentiment and the general organizational activism was the events in China. The nominal unification of the country under the Kuomintang regime of Chiang Kai-shek in 1927 represented the best political achievement

of China since 1911. Chiang's promise of national dignity and modernity for the country aroused much excitement among Chinese at home and abroad. In Vancouver, Chinese nationalistic feeling was on the rise. The Kuomintang, now representing the ruling authorities in China, claimed more influence in Chinatown than ever. Another feature of this period were the seemingly endless and ubiquitous efforts to contribute financial and moral support for various causes in China, such as for flood or drought relief, for refugees of war, or for construction projects in the native area. Some new organizations emerged specifically to co-ordinate these efforts, but the established traditional associations were most visibly involved. These China-bound events reached a high tide during the Sino-Japanese War in 1937-1945.  

Even at the height of the national salvation movement to help China in its battle against Japanese invasion, Vancouver's Chinatown was still plagued by the bad feeling between the Freemasons and the Kuomintang, and other group conflicts and leadership rivalries. Nevertheless, two sets of conditions since the late nineteenth century had contributed to a fairly unitary Chinese outlook on the question of cultural identity. On the one hand, remaining family ties in South China, native place feeling, cultural sentiments, home country politics, and rising Chinese

\[17\] Wickberg ed., From China to Canada, pp. 157-68, 188-91. Also Paul Yee, Saltwater City, pp. 94-99.
nationalism of the era all appealed to the immigrant Chinese. On the other, Canadian society, by legislation and convention, offered them little opportunity to feel accepted. The same rejection was applicable to the small number of young Canadian-born, who in the 1930s were mostly confined to the ethnic group in their careers and social life.

The sense of Chineseness was mutually reinforced by a shared feeling of community among the ethnic Chinese. For that generation of immigrant settlers and their junior local-born descendants, community could be readily identified with their ethnic neighbourhood where most of them worked and resided. But community feeling was best articulated in associational life which exalted the value of mutual assistance, domestic harmony, and ultimately Chinese unity. That "community" was to provide the Chinese with a sense of belonging, generate a realm of public responsibility and leadership positions, nurture a common identity, and protect them against a hostile Canadian society.

This prevailing sense of Chineseness and community was not a cultural given, as the changing historical context after the Second World War was to dismantle this overall consensus. Since 1945, a new demographic situation and a different configuration of China's influence and Canadian opportunity had given rise to an unprecedented intramural debate within the ethnic group, a cultural contest the rest of this study seeks to unravel and understand.
Chapter Two: New Immigrants and the Contest for Community in the Post-War Era

At the end of the Second World War, the Chinese in Canada were about to enter a new era. The mood of the time was extraordinary. With the members of the larger society, the Chinese shared the enormous joy of victory over the Axis Powers. In particular, the defeat of imperial Japan, whose invading armies had been on Chinese soil for years, generated tremendous relief and exhilaration in all Canadian Chinatowns. Additionally, this seemed to be a moment of considerable expectation on the part of the Chinese that their low status in Canadian society would soon be improved and their ill-treatment by its government rectified.

A major item of Chinese grievance was the highly prohibitive Immigration Act of 1923. Immediately after the war, the movement seeking its repeal gathered great momentum in Eastern Canada. For the first time in the history of the ethnic Chinese in this country, they were able to win the support of some Canadian churches, labour organizations, politicians, academics, and even the public media all at once. In May 1947, the Act was repealed in the Canadian Parliament, thus reopening the door of immigration to the Chinese after twenty-four years of virtual exclusion.¹

¹ The details of this campaign have been well-documented and need not be repeated. See, for example, the account by Graham Johnson in Edgar Wickberg ed., From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), pp. 204-09.
In general, scholars have argued that the significance of this historic accomplishment in 1947 was more symbolic than real. As a matter of fact, Canadian immigration policy towards the Chinese continued to be relatively restrictive for another twenty years. Graham Johnson vividly characterizes what the Chinese got in 1947 as "half a loaf."² Coming under the Order-in-Council P.C. 2115 in the aftermath, Chinese, like other Asians, could only sponsor the immigration of their wives and children under eighteen years (after 1950, twenty-one years) of age. There were some extra concessions from time to time, such as the admission of children up to twenty-five years old on compassionate grounds until 1955, the inclusion of parents into the admissible categories in the same year, and the extension of this right of sponsorship from the citizens to the landed immigrants in 1957. Still, as pointed out repeatedly by Peter Li, the Chinese compared most unfavourably with immigrants from across the Atlantic who were accorded far more liberal and generous treatment during the same period. Full equality in immigration matters for the Chinese was not attained until 1967 when a universal points-system was implemented to screen the applicants without any reference to their racial and ethnic background. Only then did a sizeable number of Chinese begin to arrive in Canada.³

² Ibid., p. 207.
³ See Li's earlier work, co-authored with Singh Bolaria, "Canadian Immigration Policy and Assimilationist Theories," in John Fry ed., Economy, Class and Social Reality (Scarborough, Ontario: Butterworths, 1979), pp. 411-22; and his more recent study, The
The restrictive nature of Canadian immigration policy towards the Chinese between 1947 and 1967 is indisputable. However, the tendency among scholars to gloss over this period of Chinese immigration history is a rather unfortunate omission. No major attempt has been made to address the nature of Chinese immigration during those twenty years at the national or local levels. This period is simply taken as a transitional stage between the previous "exclusion era" and the following one of immigration liberalization. The Chinese immigrants who came over during that time are seldom recognized as a distinctive group with discernible impact on the historical scene.  

This chapter will re-examine the significance of renewed Chinese immigration into Canada in the post-war period. In Vancouver, as it will be argued, the new immigrants were not only numerous and visible, they were instrumental in replenishing a dwindling Chinese minority in the aftermath of exclusion. Their size and composition will be analyzed, but the larger purpose here

---

4 An interesting exception is a research report written by William Willmott probably in the early 1960s, in which he briefly identified three different groups within the Chinese population in Vancouver at that time, namely, the elderly immigrants, the local-born Chinese, and those "recently arrived immigrants of the Orient." Entitled "A Study of the Chinese Community in Vancouver: (A) Preliminary Report" (n.d.), the work is buried in the Chinese Canadian Research Collection, Special Collections Division, University of British Columbia Library (hereafter cited as CCRC), Box 20, along with some interview materials on Chinese leaders under restricted access.
is to delineate the important changes in the ethnic organizations and in the discourse on community owing to the inputs of the newcomers. Discussion will focus on the group of young male arrivals whose venture into the arena of Chinese organizational activities -- initially, the domain of the old settlers -- represented a quest for public recognition of their presence and of their need for social space within the ethnic group. Their criticisms of the existing Chinese settlers, new visions of community, and thoughts on Chinese cultural identity as articulated in various organizational settings will be charted.

The Replenishment of An Ethnic Minority

The enforcement of the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 was both humiliating and devastating for the ethnic Chinese. A most tangible outcome was the significant decline of the Chinese population in Canada. Between the early thirties and the end of World War II, the number of Chinese shrank from more than 46,000 to around 30,000. In the same period, the Chinese population in Vancouver was reduced more drastically from 13,000 to about 7,000. Table 2.1 shows the age and sex distribution of the Vancouver Chinese in 1951, when this minority group was slowly recovering from the "exclusion era" but still bearing the imprint of the

---

5 The best overall account of this difficult period in Canadian Chinese history is furnished by Wickberg in From China to Canada, pp. 148-203. See also the demographic analysis of Peter Li in The Chinese in Canada, pp. 60-70.
Table 2.1

The Age and Sex Distribution of the Chinese Population in Vancouver City, 1951

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>Male No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 9</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>10.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 19</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>1,187</td>
<td>13.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 34</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>6.91</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>1,239</td>
<td>14.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>10.74</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>1,124</td>
<td>12.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 64</td>
<td>1,605</td>
<td>18.38</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1,703</td>
<td>19.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 &amp; above</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1,663</td>
<td>19.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,524</td>
<td>74.73</td>
<td>2,205</td>
<td>25.25</td>
<td>8,729</td>
<td>99.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of Canada 1951, p. 6--30.
earlier period. Structural imbalance was probably the most salient demographic feature. Over half of the Chinese population was made up of adults forty-five years old or above, and more than ninety-two percent of this group were men. Actually, one in every three Chinese in the city was an elderly man at least in his late fifties. It is not difficult to imagine that only a couple of years earlier, this had been a dwindling and aging Chinese settlement with a large majority of above middle-age males, relatively few families, and a small local-born generation. With such a situation as the baseline, the impact of renewed immigration can hardly be exaggerated.

Based on immigration records, Table 2.2 indicates that more than 14,000 Chinese entered Canada between 1946 and 1955. By 1960, this group had been joined by another 10,000. In the following decade, some 43,000 Chinese immigrated to this country. Though there is information regarding the number of Chinese immigrants arriving in British Columbia, local data on Vancouver and re-migration figures are not available. The following estimation of Chinese immigration into Vancouver in the post-war years is therefore an educated guess.

The only local statistical data is found in the Census of 1951, which reported that over seven hundred Chinese had arrived in Vancouver from 1946 to May 1951. This was about 55 per cent of the Chinese who entered British Columbia. Since many small Chinese

---

6 Census of Canada 1951, pp. 54--11, 55--30, 60--11, and 61--30.
Table 2.2
The Number of Chinese Immigrants Entering Canada and British Columbia, 1946-1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>British Columbia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946-47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>1,028</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>2,178</td>
<td>808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>2,745</td>
<td>1,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>1,961</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>2,028</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>1,950</td>
<td>644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>2,575</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>2,093</td>
<td>799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1,662</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>2,615</td>
<td>993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>2,561</td>
<td>822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1,370</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1,187</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>2,674</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>4,352</td>
<td>1,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>5,178</td>
<td>1,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>6,409</td>
<td>2,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>8,382</td>
<td>3,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>8,272</td>
<td>2,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>5,377</td>
<td>1,588</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. From 1946 to 1961 the figures represent the numbers of immigrants of Chinese ethnic origin, with ethnicity being self-reported at the point of entry. From 1962 onward, they indicate the numbers of immigrants whose country of last permanent residence was either China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan.

settlements on Vancouver Island and in the interior of B.C. gradually withered away in the post-war period, it is conceivable that Vancouver steadily increased its relative intake of Chinese immigrants in the province. Based on this assumption, it is projected that there were approximately 4,600 and 10,000 new Chinese arrivals in Vancouver in the decades 1951-1960 and 1961-1970 respectively, as indicated in Table 2.3.

If these estimates are correct, then such an influx of immigrants was massive, relative to the size of the current Chinese population. Again, from Table 2.3, it can be calculated that about eight per cent of the 8,700 Vancouver residents of Chinese background in 1951 had arrived since the end of World War II. This proportion increased substantially to one-third in 1961. And by 1971, when the Chinese population reached 30,000, over half of its members were post-war immigrants.

As Canadian policy before 1962 limited Chinese immigration to just a few categories of family members, it is not difficult to get a general idea of the composition of this population movement.

---

Table 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Chinese entering B.C.</th>
<th>Proportion of B.C. arrivals settling in Vancouver</th>
<th>Total no. of Chinese in Vancouver (year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946-1951</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8,729 (1951)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1955</td>
<td>3,724</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1965</td>
<td>2,974</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: See Table 2.2 and also Census of Canada 1951-1971.
National-level statistics can further give us a sense of proportion regarding the various components of this inflow. Before 1956, only spouses and unmarried minor children were eligible for immigration. Table 2.4 shows that these two groups accounted for about ninety per cent of Chinese immigration around 1950. The declining percentage of children in 1951-1956 is deceptive because the figures do not include those between eighteen and twenty-five who were admitted during this period on compassionate grounds. It is reasonable to assume that the Chinese must have made the best use of this concession, and the size of this special group of immigrants must have been large -- say, forty per cent of the total Chinese immigrants in the early 1950s, as the figures in the last column of the table suggest.

The Chinese were also eager to send for their spouses after the immigration restriction was lifted. In the early fifties, wives made up about one-fourth of the new immigrants. For a number of years after 1956, they actually formed an absolute majority, as young Chinese responded enthusiastically to the special scheme of bride sponsorship. From around the same time, immigrant parents

---

8 The rest could well be re-entries of previous immigrants, student-visa holders, and the like.

9 This special concession was withdrawn in 1955, though Chinese granted admission under this arrangement continued to arrive at the point of entry in 1956. In Peter Li's discussion of the same statistical information, he seems to be unaware of the effect of this policy and has taken the decline of children immigration in the early fifties at face value. The Chinese in Canada, pp. 92-93.
### Table 2.4

The Number and Percentage of Dependent Children (under 18) and Wives among Chinese Immigrants Entering Canada, 1946-1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Wives</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Remainder</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946-47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57.14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42.86</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.66</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79.16</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.91</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>71.17</td>
<td>9.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>60.01</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>31.90</td>
<td>8.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>1,318</td>
<td>60.51</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>25.52</td>
<td>13.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>969</td>
<td>35.30</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>20.72</td>
<td>43.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>22.69</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>22.94</td>
<td>54.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>21.54</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>27.31</td>
<td>51.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>22.10</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>31.12</td>
<td>46.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>17.43</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>28.62</td>
<td>53.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>18.39</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>36.93</td>
<td>44.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>18.29</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>54.93</td>
<td>26.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>26.04</td>
<td>1,439</td>
<td>55.02</td>
<td>18.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>28.97</td>
<td>1,243</td>
<td>48.53</td>
<td>22.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>24.16</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>54.30</td>
<td>21.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>18.11</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>57.37</td>
<td>24.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>19.40</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>35.82</td>
<td>44.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>24.76</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>36.05</td>
<td>39.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>36.79</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>27.56</td>
<td>35.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1,602</td>
<td>36.81</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>22.28</td>
<td>40.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1,161</td>
<td>22.42</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>16.64</td>
<td>60.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1,796</td>
<td>28.05</td>
<td>1,254</td>
<td>19.56</td>
<td>52.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: See Table 2.2.
were also admitted; their numbers are subsumed under the last column of Table 2.4. In 1962, Canada began to accept independent Chinese immigrants and this group likewise contributed to the steady expansion of the "Remainder" category.

To supplement these statistical data, one can draw on the insiders' perspectives of the Vancouver Chinese. A popular social event in Chinatown in the late 1940s and early 1950s was the reception party sponsored by a native place or a surname association to welcome the newly arrived spouses and children of its members. This was a joyous occasion to announce formally the arrival of one's immediate family members and to introduce them to a larger circle of acquaintance. The jubilance is not hard to understand. Firstly, many immigrant settlers saw their wives and children for the first time in years. Previously even if they had wanted to re-unite with their families in Canada and had been able to afford the expense, this would have been inhibited by the immigration policy. The legal barrier was now gone. Secondly, the outbreak of civil war between the Kuomintang government and the Chinese Communist Party in China meant additional urgency to get the remaining families out of the country. When the Chinese Communists finally took power in 1949 forcing the Nationalist regime to withdraw to Taiwan, many elderly immigrants believed that their dream of enjoying retirement in the home village after years of sojourning and toiling overseas was shattered. Their only hope

---

For example, see Chinese Times 14 November 1948.
was to apply for their children, spouses, and, if possible, other relatives to join them in Canada. This desire was most conspicuous throughout the 1950s in their support for the lobbying effort of the Chinese Benevolent Association to expand the categories of admissible immigrants.  

This wave of renewed immigration provided some Chinese with an unprecedented opportunity for family life. For the ethnic group as a whole, the coming of young adults and children helped to rejuvenate the aging population, while the arrival of wives and daughters likewise had a balancing effect on the sex distribution. Though statistical data on Vancouver are not available, the trends seem unmistakable from quantitative evidence gathered at the national level, as indicated in Table 2.5. These developments — including a younger population, a more balanced sex ratio, more settled intact families, and the local reproduction of a second generation — all augured better for the future of the ethnic group than at any time in the previous eighty years of Chinese settlement in Vancouver.

Given the size and the nature of this renewed immigration, the discussion of its repercussions and larger meanings naturally unfolded among the Chinese. The following is one example written by

---

11 The importance of this campaign by the CBA will be examined in more than one context in the later chapters.

Table 2.5

The Age and Sex Distribution of the Chinese Population in Canada, 1951 and 1961 (in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>1951 Male</th>
<th>1951 Female</th>
<th>1951 Total</th>
<th>1961 Male</th>
<th>1961 Female</th>
<th>1961 Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 9</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>10.59</td>
<td>11.90</td>
<td>10.91</td>
<td>22.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 34</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>12.27</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>10.92</td>
<td>28.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>10.84</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>12.86</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>14.46</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 64</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>21.94</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>9.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 &amp; above</td>
<td>15.67</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>16.10</td>
<td>13.08</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>14.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78.88</td>
<td>21.08</td>
<td>99.96</td>
<td>61.96</td>
<td>38.01</td>
<td>99.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of Canada 1951 and 1961
the editor of the English language *Chinatown News* in February 1955 in response to a report in the *Province*, which claimed that the numerous young arrivals had flooded the labour market in Chinatown, leading to a crisis in its ethnic economy:

Has the arrival of these newcomers actually created a crisis in Chinatown? Let [us] briefly review the situation:

Before 1948, there were only eight groceries in Chinatown catering exclusively to consumers of Chinese merchandise. Today there are twenty-four. This increase is explained by Chinese businessmen as a logical development since...these newcomers almost invariably consider Chinese food as indispensable.

Look at another aspect of the picture. The arrival of these immigrants is regarded as a godsend by all five Chinese language papers in Canada.  

There was a time when high on the conference agenda of publishers and editors was the question of a bi-lingual paper to capture the evergrowing [sic] number of Chinese...who read nothing else but English language papers and periodicals. The question was shelved only after the gradual arrivals of spouses and children of Canadian citizens from the Orient.

Chinese churches, too, have found their attendance increasing by leaps and bounds within the last few years. More and more [English] classes have to be opened to fill the need of these newcomers who are anxious to master the language in the land of their adoption. Our ministers of the gospel will readily testify that the group as a whole is industrious, frugal, ready and willing to tackle any

---

13 They were the *Chinese Times* and the *Chinese Voice* in Vancouver, the *New Republic* in Victoria (relocated to Vancouver in 1958), and the *Hung Chung She Bo* and the *Shing Wah Daily News* in Toronto.
kind of jobs offered them.¹⁴

Notwithstanding their defensive purpose, these observations reveal several of the ways that people thought about replenishment of the ethnic group. First, the newcomers may have contributed to the growth of the size and the scope of the Chinese ethnic economy. As pointed out in the editorial, their arrival led to the expansion of the Chinese clientele for some ethnic businesses in Chinatown. Those immigrants who came in their late teens and early twenties without any English facility often entered the Chinese job market right away as a new source of cheap labour. Renewed immigration and family reunion could further be related to the Chinese acquisition of more residential properties, particularly in Strathcona, and the steady proliferation of Chinese real estate agents during this period.¹⁵

Second, there was a dimension of cultural replenishment. The new immigrants boosted the volume of Chinese readership and thereby revived the Chinese language press, as suggested by the Chinatown News. The three remaining Chinese language schools -- the Chinese Public School, the Mon Keong, and the Tai Kung -- all renovated and expanded their facilities to accommodate a growing number of

¹⁴ Chinatown News 3 February 1955.

¹⁵ See the testimony of Foon Sien Wong to Vancouver City Council in April 1958, in Chinese Voice 25 April 1958. The proliferation of Chinese real estate agents was most noticeable through the commercial advertisements in the Chinese language newspapers.
Chinese children. Their total student enrolments increased from about four hundred at the end of the war to almost a thousand in the 1960s. Moreover, the demographic expansion of the ethnic group seems to have rekindled a strong interest in Chinese culture. Some Chinese began to engage in an intensified debate on the content of this culture and on the best way to promote it. This phenomenon will be examined later in this chapter and revisited from other perspectives in the rest of the study.

Finally, closely related to cultural replenishment is the effect of renewed immigration on the ethnic institutions. The claim of the Chinatown News that Chinese churches grew considerably by absorbing the new immigrants is perhaps exaggerated, though not totally unfounded. The church histories of the Chinese Presbyterian, the Anglican, and the Christ Church of China all indicate that they underwent modest growth in the post-war years, and some Canadian missionaries were able to plant two new projects -- the Chinese Pentecostal Church and the Lutheran Church -- in the Chinatown area. In one case, the Chinese United Church developed


17 Yunbu Huaren Zhanglaohui qishi zhounian jinian ji mingxie (Thanksgiving and Souvenir Publication of the Seventieth Anniversary of the Chinese Presbyterian Church in Vancouver 1895-1965) (1965); Yunbu Huaren Zhanglaohui jiushi zhounian tanger (The Chinese Presbyterian Church of Vancouver Ninetieth Anniversary Souvenir 1895-1985) (1985); "A Brief History of the Parish Church
a special social service programme in its ministry to the newcomers. Its English evening classes, dormitory, and, later, day-care assistance and English tutoring for Chinese housewives were known to be quite popular.\textsuperscript{18}

The same thing, however, cannot be said about the traditional associations. They apparently did little to bring themselves into line with the changing composition of the ethnic group. Though the elderly settlers continued to celebrate the coming of their wives and daughters, public attention was always given to the few thousand young males among the new immigrants. They saw in these youngsters images of their previous selves, as men who had come to Canada to struggle for a better life. At the early stage of this renewed immigration, they appeared to have shared a great expectation that these "zuguo qingnian" (the youth from the native country) would prove themselves to be worthy successors by taking an active part in the Chinatown organizations.\textsuperscript{19}

As it turned out, the hope that the immigrant youth would

\begin{flushleft}
of the Good Shepherd," in The Dedication of the Church of the Good Shepherd Souvenir (1985); Zili Zhonghua Jidu Jiaohui qishiwu zhounian gan'en jinian kan (Seventy-fifth Anniversary Thanksgiving Report of the Christ Church of China) (1986); and my interviews with some former and current pastors of these ethnic churches.


\textsuperscript{19} See, for example, some articles in Chinese Voice 10 November 1954, 5 August and 12 November 1955, and 1 March 1956.
\end{flushleft}
replenish and energize the traditional associations did not materialize, at least not in the way the elderly generation had expected. The relationship between the two groups was far from cordial and was marked by ambivalence as well as tension. Some young newcomers initially relied on the existing facilities provided by the organizations. Yet they were less content than their predecessors and more eager to break new ground. The Chinese boarding houses were a case in point.

Since the beginning of Chinese settlement in Vancouver, the boarding houses had served as lodging facilities and as an important nexus in the social and cultural lives of the single migrants. Known among non-Chinese as "Chinese bachelor houses," they were probably all over the Chinatown area by the late twenties though their exact number cannot be confirmed. Some of them were run by the district and surname associations to provide simple accommodation for the members. A larger number were affiliates called "fangkou" or "fang," which were set up by fellow districtmen and clansmen themselves.

With the formation of more family households after 1947, the demise of boarding houses was inevitable. Nevertheless, evidence

---

20 The boarding houses were a typical ethnic institution found among many immigrant societies in North America in the first phase of their migration and settlement. Surprisingly, we know little about their history, especially among the Chinese. For an illuminating study of the Italian "lodging houses" in Canada, see Robert Harney, "Boarding and Belonging: Thoughts on Sojourning Institutions," Urban History Review Vol. 2 (October, 1987), pp. 8-37.
shows that some new immigrants did resort to these lodging facilities probably because their sponsoring relatives were boarders themselves. According to the book-keeping records of Ing Suey Sun Tong, one of the smallest surname associations in Chinatown, a majority of its boarders in 1945-1955 were elderly Chinese who had been living there for at least ten years. However, close to one-half were unfamiliar faces and were presumably recent arrivals. The use of the traditional boarding facilities by the new immigrants is further confirmed by the information collected in an official survey of the Chinatown neighbourhood in 1956. In preparing the ground for urban redevelopment, the city planners discovered that eighty percent of the one hundred and fifty "Chinese bachelor houses" in the area had young men among the tenants.

Interestingly, other findings in these two sources belie that this was simply a case of replenishment of an ethnic institution by a succeeding generation of immigrants. The new boarders at Ing Suey San Tong, for instance, all seemed to have a much shorter period of tenancy than the previous occupants. Take 1955, the last year of the records, as an illustration: among the 22 rent-payers, seven of them had been living in the Tong for almost twenty years; ten were


22 City of Vancouver, Planning Department for Housing Research Committee, Vancouver Redevelopment Study (1957), pp. 43-44.
totally new to the facility; and only five had been there from two to four years, whereas many other post-war arrivals who had once resided in the Tong were gone.\textsuperscript{23} Consider also the following typology of "Chinese bachelor houses" devised by the city officials in their redevelopment studies: one-fifth of the boarding houses were occupied exclusively by elderly Chinese, and they were associated with the highest density of occupants, the cheapest rent, and the poorest housing and sanitary conditions; an unspecified number housed both elderly and young Chinese, usually in slightly better facilities; last was a noticeable group in which "young working men" shared a house in what officials perceived to be a less overcrowded and more agreeable environment.\textsuperscript{24}

The whole picture becomes clearer when we take into account the severe criticism by some new immigrants of the boarding houses in the Chinese press. Echoing the condemnations of the outside critics, young Chinese authors writing in the 1950s castigated the boarding houses as a deplorable institution perpetuating an appalling life style and living condition.\textsuperscript{25} In spite of, or because of, their initial dependence on these facilities, the newcomers were obviously upset by this kind of "institutionalized"

\textsuperscript{23} Wu Xushan Tong caoliu bao.
\textsuperscript{24} Vancouver Redevelopment Study, pp. 43-44.
\textsuperscript{25} Two typical examples are an essay by "Cen Hai" on "Fangkou" (The Boarding Houses), and another one by "Ma Bing" on "Danshen Guahan" ("The Bachelors") in Chinese Voice 27 June 1955 and 26 October 1957 respectively.
As we will see below, this pattern of discontent and the search for changes were recurring themes in the interaction of the young new immigrants with the elderly settlers and their traditional organizations. Tension and, at times, open conflict were an unavoidable part of the replenishing process of this ethnic group.

The Search for Recreation and Space: The Case of the Auxiliary Youth Organizations

The reason behind this emerging social fracture was the relative homogeneity of the Chinese minority on the eve of renewed immigration. With just a small number of families and a minimal cohort of young people, the earlier immigrant settlers were used to seeing themselves as the primary components of a "community." Very few facilities within the existing organizations catered to the needs of teenagers and young adults. Hence, after the young immigrants arrived, the older generation was unaccustomed to, if not alarmed by, the claims of the newcomers on the limited resources of the ethnic group.

In the late forties and early fifties, available amenities for young people in Chinatown were indeed scarce. The Chinese department of the Vancouver YWCA was formed in 1938 and its centre on Pender Street opened in 1943, with the support of the Chinese
United Church. The patrons of the Pender Y, as the facility was called, were mainly English-speaking youngsters or school-age children. For the Chinese-speaking immigrant youth, Chinatown had little to offer. A few traditional organizations, such as the Chinese Freemasons, had set up affiliated athletic societies for the small group of Canadian-born Chinese who had reached their adolescence in the period between the two world wars. Under the sponsorship of the two Wong's surname organizations, the Hon Hsing Athletic Club was established in 1940 to generate support from the native-born Chinese youth for the national salvation movement. However, by the end of the forties as the local-born began to organize more actively on their own, these youth auxiliaries were all reduced to a nominal existence.

Concern about the paucity of youth-related recreational facilities was reflected in a writing contest held in 1955 by the Chinese language newspaper Chinese Voice. Contestants were invited to submit essays on the topic, "My Opinions on How to Improve the Recreational Facilities in [Our] Overseas Chinese Society."

Chinatown News 18 October 1953. More will be said about the Pender Y in Chapter Three.

Information on the Freemasons Athletic Club was gathered from several interviews with its previous members. Historical documentation on the Hon Hsing Athletic Club is available in Jiayun Hansheng Tiyuhui disi zhounian jinian tekan (The Fourth Anniversary Souvenir Issue of the Hon Hsing Athletic Club, Vancouver, Canada) (1944); Huang Hansheng Tiyuhui qi zhounian jinian ji (A Chronicle of the Wong's Hon Hsing Athletic Club Seventh Anniversary) (1947); and Jiayun Hansheng Tiyuhui chengli ershiwu zhounian jinian tekan (The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Souvenir Issue of the Hon Hsing Athletic Club, Vancouver, Canada) (1965).
event naturally touched a chord among the immigrant youth. The winning essays by two young authors were almost identical. They lamented the prevalence of gambling among the elderly Chinese and treated the gambling halls as a disgrace. For the new generation of Chinese youth arriving in Canada since 1947, the authors argued that sports clubs, musical societies, literary societies, drama clubs, libraries, and theatres would be far more desirable.²⁸

In view of this agenda, it is interesting to notice how the immigrant youth later revived both Hon Hsing and the Freemasons Athletic Society. Being revitalized around the same time were two theatrical and musical societies, also with organizational affiliation: the Jin Wah Sing of the Freemasons and the Ching Won of the Kuomintang. Of all of them, the case of Jin Wah Sing is especially well-documented.

Founded in 1934 among the Chinese Freemasons, Jin Wah Sing was originally meant for the relief of unemployed members by the performance of Chinese opera. The troupe later reached a climax by putting its talents at the service of the Chinese patriotic movement in 1937-1945, but a precipitate decline followed because many members left for China and elsewhere at the end of the war. The reactivation came in 1954 with the participation of a few dozen young immigrants who took up traditional opera as their favourite pastime. Jin Wah Sing gradually regained its vitality by providing

²⁸ Both essays were published in Chinese Voice 12-13 September 1955.
its members with training in Chinese musical instruments and staging occasional theatrical performances both in and outside Chinatown. Wittingly or unwittingly, Jin Wah Sing further became an important recruiting ground for the Chinese Freemasons among the new immigrants, a role also played by Hon Hsing within the Wong's associations.29

The examples of youth auxiliaries show that some young newcomers considered the traditional associations a valuable and feasible avenue for the organization of recreational activities. The older generation of settlers in control of the Chinese Freemasons and the Wong's associations also saw the merits of recycling dormant facilities that might help to bring immigrant youth into the orbit of their organizations. Unfortunately, these relatively successful cases were the exceptions rather than the rule.

First of all, many immigrant youth did not approve the above arrangement because of a concern for their own autonomy. Again the example of Jin Wah Sing illustrates this point. Ever since the revival, Jin Wah Sing's lack of an independent image had troubled some of its young members. Enjoying the patronage of the Chinese

---

29 Ibid. 8 April 1954 and 4-5 December 1957. The following piece of reminiscence by Feng Langfan, "Ru Zhen Hua Sheng shiwu nian" (Having Joined Jin Wah Sing for Fifteen Years) is very informed. It was serialized in ibid. 1-18 October 1969. I have also benefitted from my interviews with two Jin Wah Sing veterans who participated in its revival in 1954, not long after their arrival in Canada. Later, both of them became regular Freemasons members, then joined the loyalist Dart Coon Club, and eventually proceeded to the executive.
Freemasons, they were nonetheless uneasy about the society's subsidiary status in public eyes. At times they tried to defend its "autonomy," as is evident in the following extract from a lengthy article published at its anniversary in 1957:

As our Society [Jin Wah Sing] is established for the public, we show no bias in our activities, let alone any political flavour. Financially, our Society depends on monthly membership dues, public donations, and money raised by our opera performance. We are not subsidized by any organization, and we do not have any supporter behind the scenes. As a matter of fact, we do not need any support of this kind. Instead, we count on the friendly assistance and encouragement from different sectors of the society.

As people engaged in performing art, we are not susceptible to corruption or coercion. Our Society's own administrative [independence] and freedom are inalienable. It is absolutely beyond the interference of any single person or organization [from outside]...

It is true that our members come from different backgrounds. But once we set foot in the Society, we follow its rules and do its work. Let me formally say this again: our Society's position is absolutely independent, and our objectives are unadulterated and pure.  

Despite the clarification, the problem was not resolved. A secession took place in 1961 in the name of autonomy. A group of discontented members broke away to set up the Ngai Lum Musical

---

30 This article, entitled "You Zhen Hua Shen jinian shoudao tade lichang" ([Let me] talk about Jin Wah Sing's anniversary and its standpoint), was authored by "Yi Yang." Chinese Voice 5-8 June 1957. The quote is taken from 8 June 1957.
Society. To sever its ties with Jin Wah Sing, Ngai Lum's executive passed a resolution forbidding dual membership in more than one musical society.\(^{31}\)

Secondly, unlike the Freemasons and the Wong's organizations, the large majority of old-style associations were not as interested in meeting the demand of the newcomers for recreational facilities and social space. "Qingnian tuan" (youth corps) were set up in a number of clan and district organizations in the 1950s supposedly for the promotion of youth activities (See Table 2.6). However, some of them, such as the one formed in the Lee Clan Association as early as 1951, never really got off the ground; and for those that did, they seldom lasted for more than a few years.\(^{32}\) Critics on both sides were quick to point a finger at one other. The old settlers accused the youngsters of misusing public money and trust by indulging in what they considered meaningless social activities. In return, the immigrant youth took the elderly Chinese to task for their misappropriation of the youth corps as a means of control and

\(^{31}\) Ibid. 7 and 15 June 1961.

\(^{32}\) See the case of the Lee Clan Association in ibid. 14 November and 2 August 1965. Another unfortunate example is the Shon Yee Benevolent Association, as admitted in its official history, Jianada Wengehua Tiecheng Chongyi Zonghui chengli jishi zhounian jinian tekan (A Souvenir Publication of the Seventieth Anniversary of the Shon Yee Benevolent Association of Canada, Vancouver, 1914-1984) (1984), pp. 24 and 27. Willmott has offered some contemporary observations on the demise of the youth corps by the early sixties in his "Chinese Clan Associations in Vancouver," Man Vol. 64 (1964), pp. 33-37. But he has provided no explanation.
Table 2.6

A List of Youth Corps Established by Traditional Associations in Vancouver's Chinatown in the 1950s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Lee Clan Association HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Yee Fung Toy Tong HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Lung Kong Kung So HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Yue San Association HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Kong Chow District Association HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Shon Yee Benevolent Association HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Sue Yuen Tong HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Chan Wing Chun Tong HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Yin Ping District Association HQs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HQs=National Headquarters

Sources: *Chinese Times* and *Chinese Voice* 1951-1958.
domination. Many a youth corps thus ended up being a scene of contention and frustration.

To a large extent, the troublesome trajectory of the youth corps epitomized the growing tensions between the two different generations of immigrants within the ethnic group. Despite the fact that basically all young newcomers between 1947 and 1962 arrived as dependents of the earlier settlers, the cultural, emotional and generation gap between them was considerable. For their part, the immigrant youth usually had a better Chinese education and a higher expectation about their future in Canada. For many of them, the initial phase of adaptation in Canada was agonizing. They had heard about discrimination from afar before their departure from China or Hong Kong, but owing to their educational background, sense of cultural pride, and perhaps, youthful idealism, they were less willing than the earlier generation of Chinese immigrants to accept cultural disability and isolation in the host society. There was, for instance, widespread resentment against what they saw as virtual confinement in the ethnic labour market centring on Chinatown, which offered low salaries and poor prospects. The

---

33 Two representative articles are "Qingnian de renwu" (The Responsibilities of the Youth) by "Tong Gang," and "Huaqiao shehui yingyou de renshe" ([Things] that the Overseas Chinese society should know) by "Zhong Wai," in Chinese Voice 26 February and 4 July 1958.

34 My understanding of the life experiences of this generation of young immigrants is informed by their own writings, appearing mainly in the literary section of the Chinese Voice. My sensitivity to their perspectives has also been enhanced by personal interviews.
original anticipation of the boundless opportunities on the "Gold Mountain" soon gave way to profound disillusionment.\(^{35}\)

Not surprisingly, the new immigrant youth soon became the severest internal critics of the existing Chinese minority in Vancouver. Criticism of the boarding houses, the vice of gambling, and the dearth of proper entertainment has already been mentioned. Other established institutions and practices in Chinatown were not spared. In their writings, the traditional organizations were often castigated as "tuju xingshi" (mere formalism); the "qiaoling" (leaders of organizations) as "zhengquan duoli" (scramble for power and profit); and the consular officials and visiting dignitaries from the Kuomintang government in Taiwan as "bufu zeren" (unconscientious).\(^ {36}\) Another big target was the parental authoritarianism of the elderly Chinese. The latter's demand for respect and their intolerance of a different life style were

\(^{35}\) Their anger and frustration as a result of the difficult economic adaptation can be seen in many of their essays published in the Chinese Voice. A good example is one written by Chen Zongchao, entitled "Huaqiao qingnian de chulu wenti" (The Prospect for the Overseas Chinese Youth), ibid. 30 October 1954. On the theme of "Xuming de Jinshan" (The 'Gold Mountain' as an undeserved reputation), see the article, "Dao Jia liangnian de huiyi" (A Reminiscence of my two years in Canada) by "Jian Qing," ibid. 7-9 July 1954.

\(^{36}\) Two relevant articles are "Qiaotuan shi 'fengjian de baolei' ma?" (Are the traditional organizations a 'feudalist citadel'?)) by Wu Yihong and "Shicha qiaowu" (Inspecting overseas Chinese affairs) by "Xin Huaqiao" in ibid. 20 May 1958 and 12 June 1954.
derided as overbearing and insensitive. Overall, as one young Chinese generalized, the problems were a manifestation of "Huaqiao wenhua de luohou" (the backwardness of Overseas Chinese culture). The agonized and frustrated immigrant youth had a few sympathizers outside their group. One of them was the Chinese language newspaper Chinese Voice. Considering itself an independent channel for non-partisan "Chinese voices" in Chinatown, the newspaper had adopted a relatively sympathetic editorial stance towards the views of the young newcomers since its inception in November 1953. Its literary supplement, in particular, was the most popular vehicle for Chinese youth to express their opinions.

Among the sympathizers was another fascinating personality, Father Peter Chow, who arrived in Vancouver in December 1953 as a newcomer himself. As a result of his position as a cleric at the Chinese Catholic Centre and his participation in the traditional organizations, he was respected as a public figure among the elderly Chinese. To overcome the lack of "Houtian de qinshan'gan"

---

37 Essays written by young Chinese on this issue are the most numerous, indicating the intensity of this particular grievance. See two typical examples in "Fu yu zi" (Father and Son) by "Ma Bing" and "Laonian yu qingnian" (The Elderly and the Youth) by Ling Ding in ibid. 10 November 1956 and 11-13 April 1959.

38 Such was the title of the essay by "Ai Ming" in the ibid. 12 May 1954. A similar disparaging assessment can be found in Zhen Jianyun, "Huaqiao shehui wenhua de wojian" (My View of the Culture of Overseas Chinese Society) ibid. 14-21 January 1956.

39 The microfilm holding of the Chinese Voice in the Asian Library, the University of British Columbia, begins with January 1954. I have tried in vain to search for the earliest issues. For its policy, see an editorial that appeared in 10-11 February 1954.
(acquired intimacy), which he considered as the roots of the generation gap caused by prolonged family separation, Father Chow advised the youth to be patient and forbearing. Yet he also wrote disapprovingly on the attitude of the older generation, such as the following:

[According to the ethics of the elderly,] no effort should be spared in order to make money, [self-enhancement by] reading is dispensable; labour would never be excessive, entertainment should better be kept to the minimum; "Majong" and "Tiankou" [two favourite gambling games among Chinese] are our cultural heirlooms, watching movies and picnicking, however, are undesirable western items. 40

Unfortunately, such sympathy towards the young newcomers was uncommon and the general reaction of the older generation of settlers was one of alienation and outrage. Having toiled for years and finally being able to send for their families, such an attack by the younger generation was the last thing the elderly Chinese had expected. Even though they only retorted occasionally in the press, they were noticeably offended by the young people's disrespect. Writing in the Chinatown News, Foon Sien Wong, the chief executive of the Chinese Benevolent Association in the 1950s, added that the elderly Chinese were most disgusted by the youth's

40 Quoted from his essay in Chinese Voice 30-31 May 1956, which was reprinted in his Jing quan ji (The Fountain) (Vancouver: Chinese Catholic Publishing Bureau, 1956; second edition, 1958), pp. 132-34.
extravagant spending habits and their disposition to entertainment. One commentator hinted alarmingly in the Chinese Times that the newcomers' refusal to provide cheap labour would harm business interests in Chinatown.⁴¹ Since the fifties was the time of the Cold War, and some newcomers tended to have a certain pride in the development of Communist China, another popular way for the older settlers, and particularly the Kuomintang supporters among them, to vent their disappointment and bitterness was to label those "incorrigible" youngsters as "Gongchan zai" (Commie kids).⁴²

Under these circumstances, the reluctance of the traditional associations, with the few exceptions already noted, to underwrite youth activities was understandable. Between 1954 and 1958, the elderly members in the Yin Ping District Association frustrated several attempts to set up a youth corps. The reason, given in news reports and in its official history, was a generational conflict over the sharing of financial resources and the use of limited floor space in the premises. In the case of the Mah Society, similar opposition prevailed.⁴³ As the youth corps were looked upon

⁴¹ Chinatown News 3 July 1956 and Chinese Times 18 February 1955.
as potentially troublesome, they had to be closely supervised after they were formed. Hence the Kong Chow District Association revised the by-laws of its youth corps in early 1954 when the corps was barely two years old. The amendments imposed stricter membership requirements and stipulated categorically the subordination of the corps to the larger native place organization.  

As the viability of the youth auxiliaries was undermined by mutual dislike, suspicion, and antagonism, the stage was set for the emergence of a different kind of youth organization.

Autonomous Youth Societies and the Redefinition of Community

Given the inadequacy of recreational activities for young people in Chinatown and the limited accessibility of similar facilities in the mainstream society because of language and other barriers, it followed logically that young immigrants would organize independently among themselves. As a matter of fact, so many youth societies mushroomed in this way in Chinatown in the 1950s and 1960s that tracking their number is almost impossible. Nonetheless, sheer multitude hardly accounts for the historical significance of these emergent organizations.

The most distinctive feature of the youth societies, in contrast to the youth auxiliaries, was their assertion of autonomy. From the very beginning they were founded outside the parameters of the established old-style associations. In a situation where the

44 Chinese Voice 8 February 1954.
existing organizations were seemingly coterminous with the structure of elite status and social influence within the ethnic group, and where they claimed to define issues of general interests, this endeavour of the immigrant youth was daring, to say the least. Bearing the burden of defiance, the youth societies had to confront suspicious and forbidding surroundings. They had to survive on limited resources and the devotion of their young members. These disadvantages probably explain why so many of them enjoyed only an ephemeral existence. They sprang up to organize, or to take part in, certain social, cultural and sport events, but they all suffered from the lack of financial support and organizational experience, and a rather inhospitable environment.

Notwithstanding, the autonomous status of the youth societies enabled them to leave behind their distinctive imprint on the Chinese minority in Vancouver. The size of the independent societies generally fell between the range of several dozen to about a hundred members, compared to the claim of most youth auxiliaries to have one to two hundred people on the registry. But members of the former tended to be better educated. In the sixties, there were university students and young professionals among their activists.  

45 Information on the membership size of either kind of youth organizations is sparse. For the example of the youth corps in the Yin Ping District Association, see the reports in ibid. 9 December 1958 and 20 April 1960. On Jin Wah Sing, see ibid. 14 September 1957 and 16 October 1958. My general impressions have been confirmed in personal interviews. Also, the extent of overlapping membership between the youth societies and the youth auxiliaries, and between the independent societies themselves is
For the Chinese youth in these societies, the autonomy of their organizations was more than just a matter of defiance against the elderly Chinese and their social practices and cultural norms. It afforded them the necessary space and freedom to develop and expound their own ideas about life, culture, and community. Accordingly, as we will see, they were able to explore wide-ranging and non-conformist interests, unlike those involved in the youth auxiliaries who were confined to recreational activities in traditional Chinese music, martial arts, and sports. Indeed, some of their agendas spoke constructively of new visions of community and thus altered a discourse that had been in place for decades among the immigrant Chinese.

Table 2.7 shows an incomplete list of independent youth societies that have left behind some trace of their activities in the Chinese press. If these are representative, it seems that most youth societies came into being around the mid 1950s, after the bulk of young male adults in their late teens and early twenties had arrived, and also after the experiment of youth auxiliaries in some Chinatown organizations had failed (See Table 2.6). One of the independent societies called itself specifically a "Ju She" (drama club); four were literary societies; and the large majority were of a more general type that took the promotion of cultural and social activities among the members as their mandate.

On the whole, information on each individual society is very not clear, though a few cases of dual membership are known.
Table 2.7

A Partial List of Autonomous Chinese Youth Societies in Vancouver in the post-war period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>First report / Founding date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qiao Ying Qingnian She (G)</td>
<td>13 August 1952 #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qun Qing She (G)</td>
<td>27 May 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qingnian Lianyi Hui (G) [Chinese Youth Association]</td>
<td>31 May 1954 / 19 May 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hua Cui Wenyi Xuehui (L) [Chinese Literary Society]</td>
<td>11 February 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xian Qu Wenyu She (G)</td>
<td>17 September 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Zhong She (G)</td>
<td>9 December 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bo Yi Ju She (D)</td>
<td>18 February 1956 / 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qing Hua She (L)</td>
<td>14 April 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wen Yu Zhi Yao She (G)</td>
<td>26 May 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qing Lian Wen Lian She (L)</td>
<td>22 June 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hai Feng Hui (G) [Hai Fung Club]</td>
<td>16 October 1959 / 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qing Yun Cao Tang Shi She (L)</td>
<td>16 November 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yun Qing Hui (G)</td>
<td>8 January 1965 / 1963-64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B.: English names are provided in [ ] if known;  
also G = General  
L = Literary  
D = Drama

Sources: Chinese Voice, except # which is from Chinese Times.
scarce. The case of the Hai Fung Club is the best known as a result of its unusual visibility within the ethnic group and discernible influence on other youth organizations. Founded in late 1956 and lasting well into the 1970s, the Hai Fung Club was committed to provide what it called "Gaodeng yule" (superior form of entertainment) for its members. It believed that engagement in proper recreation would nourish an admirable personality in every individual and the aggregate result would be a more healthy Chinese society.\textsuperscript{46} Renting a clubhouse first on Dunlevy Street, and then on East Georgia Street, the Club quickly built up an inventory of simple facilities, including a small library, an exercise room, a music studio, a dark room and so on. Special interest groups in literary art, music, photography, painting, table-tennis, and other ball games were organized.\textsuperscript{47}

A turning point in the history of the Hai Fung Club occurred in late 1959 when it celebrated its third anniversary. It was then decided that the Club should no longer keep a low-profile and just concentrate on the welfare of its members. Instead, further growth was to be pursued by venturing beyond the clubhouse to influence the Chinese public. The result was a perceptible reorientation by which the Hai Fung Club sought to live up to its name as "Haiwai

\textsuperscript{46} Chinese Voice 17 and 19 October 1959. My discussion of the Hai Fung Club is much informed by several interviews with three former key members of this fascinating youth society.

\textsuperscript{47} Hai Feng Hui jinian kan (Hai Fung Club: A Souvenir Publication) (1968), p. 3.
The meaning of the name "Hai Fung" is explained in ibid., p. 2. For an insider's perspective on the reorientation in late 1959, see the commemorative essay written by K. Tong Au, the current chairman during the fifth anniversary. Chinese Voice 30 November 1961.

A synopsis of the lecture is available in Hai Feng Hui jinian kan, p. 12.
Table 2.8
A Summary of Hai Fung Club's Major Activities, 1959-1968

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Its Literary group started a weekly column, &quot;Qingnian tiandi&quot; (The World of the Youth) in the Chinese Voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Began to organize the first annual table-tennis tournament in Chinatown (opened to non-Chinese) [eight times]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Held the first Cantonese Speech Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Held the first Chinese Students' Chess Competition [five times]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Set up a junior section in the Club to enrol members in their early teens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Co-sponsored an open Chinese chess tournament with the Hon Hsing Athletic Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>Held a series of public lectures on some interesting academic and cultural topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Sponsored the first B.C. Overseas Chinese Art Exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Began to provide free lessons on English language, citizenship, table-tennis, and swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Organized a Chinese volleyball tournament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Held the second Art Exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Jointly organized the Chinese Basketball League that lasted until the early 1970s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. There were also a couple of public concerts, the timing of which cannot be ascertained.

leaders in the early sixties were concurrently Hai Fung members. According to its own published history, Hon Hsing underwent a reform at that time that resulted in the expansion of a Chinese music department and the setting up of a small library, a drama department, and a very popular Chinese lion-dance troupe. In cooperation with the Hai Fung Club, it organized the first open Chinese chess competition in 1961 and a volleyball tournament in 1962. Another memorable sporting event of this period was a basketball tournament held by the Yin Ping Youth Corps in 1964. The game generated such enthusiasm that the Chinese Basketball League was formed in its aftermath, with the Hai Fung Club again playing a leading role.

This series of events in the early 1960s was epochal in the sense that it marked the full entrance of the post-1947 generation of immigrant youth into the public arena of organizational life. With the Hai Fung Club as the torchbearer, this younger generation of Chinese immigrants refused to be marginalized by the traditional associations. Instead, they came forward with their own independent societies, a fairly well-defined sphere of public activities, and above all, a challenge to the traditional concept of community.

---

50 Jiayun Hansheng Tiyuhui chengli ershiwu zhounian jinian tekan, see the section "A report on recent activities." Another indication of the close connection between two societies is the fact that from 1961, the Hai Fung Club started to rent a floor in the Wong Kung Har Tong Headquarters Building in Pender Street as its clubhouse.

First and foremost, the existing formulation of community was unacceptable to the immigrant youth because it was associated exclusively with the older generation of settlers and their traditional associations. Community issues and interests were said to be narrowly conceived; and the new arrivals, though naturally members of the ethnic group, felt that they were being relegated to the periphery. In response, the autonomous youth societies forced their way into the limelight and contended that they too were constituent elements of this ethnic community, with unique contributions to render and with legitimate claims on public resources, space, and power. Their organizational endeavour thus amounted to an expanding redefinition of a Chinese community by seeking full membership for their group in this ethnic entity.\textsuperscript{52}

The old concept of community was also objectionable to the young newcomers because of its identification with parochialism. The basic organizing units of the earlier Chinese immigrants, the traditional associations, were mostly formed on the bases of native place and surname identities. As Wong Sang, the founder of the Hai Fung Club, argued in an article on the historical roles of the clan organizations, the webs of parochial ties were beneficial to the small group of people involved. Yet such particularism was

\textsuperscript{52} A most revealing example in this respect was the Hai Fung Club's participation in an intense debate on the CBA reform in the early 1960s, in which its delegates advocated a restructuring of the CBA's system of representation to reflect the growing diversity within the ethnic group. This episode will be discussed in the last section of Chapter Four.
antithetical to any broader conception of "Huaqiao de tuanjie" (overseas Chinese unity) or "Quanti huaqiao de fuli yu wenhua" (an all-encompassing overseas Chinese interest and culture). \(^{53}\) It was the antipathy towards this parochialized framework of social organization and the desire to go beyond it that accounted for the young immigrants' rejection of the youth auxiliaries as a form of cooption into an anachronistic arrangement. \(^{54}\) To register their opposition to such parochialism, an open membership accessible to any interested Chinese youth with no particularistic string attached was \textit{de rigueur} for the autonomous youth societies.

Third, by emphasizing the promotion of cultural activities the independent youth societies pioneered a different way of thinking about Chinese culture. Literary creation, for instance, was much encouraged by the numerous literary groups within the youth societies and by the specialized literary clubs. Small library collections were started, literary works were circulated through informal networks, and piecemeal publication projects were launched. \(^{55}\) At the same time, other forms of Chinese and non-

---

\(^{53}\) "Zongqin shetuan yu huaqiao" (Clan Organizations and the Overseas Chinese), \textit{Chinese Voice} 14 December 1960.

\(^{54}\) For some scathing criticisms of the youth auxiliaries as a viable option of youth organizations, see two articles furnished by "Lao Er" and "Lao San" (probably the same author) in \textit{ibid}. 13 and 22 April 1960.

\(^{55}\) See, for example, the case of the Chinese Literary Society founded in early 1955. Its early activities were reported in the literary supplement of \textit{ibid}. 11 February, 2 March, 1-5 April, 5 and 18 May, 16, 19 and 26 July, 28 December 1955, and 7-11 June 1956.
Chinese visual art, music, and drama all received an unusual amount of attention.\(^{56}\)

The interest of young people in social and sporting events is quite conceivable but their enthusiasm for cultural creativity at this point warrants some explanation. The new arrivals were generally known to be better educated than their forefathers, and seem to have nurtured a sense of their own cultural sophistication. On the one hand, these newcomers tended to be very critical of what they saw as the cultural mediocrity and backwardness of the Vancouver Chinese. On the other, they prided themselves on their self-assured capability and mandate to develop local Chinese culture to a higher level. Seldom did they talk in terms of mere cultural preservation, which was closely identified with Chinese school education and the upholding of filial piety and harmony which the traditional organizations claimed to exemplify. This old language of cultural maintenance was found to be archaic and too passive. Propelled unabashedly by an inflated cultural pride and some kind of renaissance sentiments, this generation of immigrant youth was reinventing a community that championed cultural advancement.\(^{57}\)

\(^{56}\) On the growing interest in traditional and modern Chinese music, see Wang Jiequn, "Benbu ge yinyue tuanti jianjie" (A Brief Account of the Musical Societies in our [China]town), ibid. 12-14 August 1963.

\(^{57}\) On the rejection of cultural maintenance in favour of cultural reform and advancement, see "You Long," "Haiwai qingnian ying zhuzhong zuguo wenhua" (Overseas Chinese Youth should Pay more Attention to the Culture of the Native Country) ibid. 5-6 May 1959. On the re-enactment of a cultural renaissance and the eulogizing of
Lastly, interwoven with this enterprise was the shared aspiration of the immigrant youth for an apolitical, non-partisan and non-religious form of cultural and social life. Expressed first as a reaction against the perceived parochialism of the local Chinese and a defense against the accusation that they, the young newcomers, were a bunch of communist sympathizers, this attitude grew into a belief in the fundamental virtue of a Chinese cultural identity and personality unblemished by political divisions, partisan interests, and religious faith. The first public announcements of many youth societies often consisted of a ceremonious denial of any interest in Chinese politics.\textsuperscript{58}

Lest this categorical refusal of most autonomous youth societies to become entangled in Chinese politics be taken as the only proposition, the Chinese Youth Association should be mentioned as a notable exception. Members of this youth society considered politics not simply relevant but in fact a key component in any reconstruction of a viable Chinese identity. From its inception in 1954 to its dissolution in the early 1980s, the Chinese Youth Association displayed a leftist ideological orientation and openly praised the achievements of the communist regime in Mainland China.

\textsuperscript{58} See the examples of the Chinese Literary Society and the Yun Qing Hui in \textit{ibid.} 11 February 1955 and 4-5 March 1965 respectively.
The latter, it insisted, had laid a new foundation for a modern Chinese national pride, which the Chinese overseas could ill afford putting aside. The Association took upon itself the task of propagating the progress of Communist China. Joining the other youth societies in their activism in the early sixties, it also became outspoken in its own ways. Close ties were established with the Canada-China Friendship Association, newly formed in 1964 among some Chinese, but mainly non-Chinese, sympathizers of the People's Republic of China in Vancouver. To reach a larger audience, the Association began to sponsor film shows regularly at the Ukrainian Hall, featuring movies from Mainland China; and it started a Chinese language biweekly newspaper, *Da Zhong Bao* (The Masses), as its mouthpiece.59

It would not be surprising if this political maverick had its admirers among the local Chinese, but more often, it had to confront hostility and ostracism. The active membership of the Chinese Youth Association through the 1960s was never more than a few dozen. According to its former members, the Association's premises were once ransacked and set on fire, and its functions

59 Little is known about the early history of the Chinese Youth Association. The best internal source is the *Da Zhong Bao*, which started publishing in February 1961. Unfortunately, the only extant holding at the Asian Library, U.B.C., begins with the December issues of 1965. The political inclinations of the Association will be discussed in greater detail when we examine the local manifestations of Chinese politics in Chapter Five.
were sometimes interrupted by the police.\footnote{Paul Yee, Saltwater City, pp. 110, 129-30 provides some vivid reminiscences furnished by Jimmy Lum. Similar information was generated in my interview with one former active member.}

While the bold agenda of the radical Chinese Youth Association was treated by the older generation of Chinese settlers with intolerance, the visions of community put forward by other independent youth societies were not uncontested either. Chapter Four will discuss how the traditional organizations manifested the older settlers' ideas of community through their rejoinders to the young critics. In the meantime, let us take a snapshot of a brief and yet acrimonious exchange to get a sense of the debate.

The occasion was the B.C. Overseas Chinese Art Exhibition organized by the Hai Fung Club in 1963. To promote the event, Wong Sang published in the Chinese Voice a short essay in which he suggested that this meaningful undertaking would mark a significant departure from the undeveloped state of overseas Chinese culture in Vancouver.\footnote{26 January 1963.} This comment prompted an immediate and acerbic response from Father Chow, who, as we may recall, had once been quite sympathetic to the views of the immigrant youth. By this time, however, he was better known for his strong anti-Communism and was identified as part of the conservative establishment. In a lengthy article printed in the local Kuomintang party press, the New Republic, Father Chow retorted that the present condition of overseas Chinese culture was not as unworthy as Wong had portrayed.
He further singled out for scathing criticism Wong's disregard of the role of Confucianism and other religions in the development of Chinese civilization. In the end, he wrote alarmingly that "only a believer in materialistic Communism could say such utter nonsense. We better 'xiaoxin qiren' (keep an eye on this person)." 62

Undaunted by such criticism, the Hai Fung Club mustered its strength for a spirited defense. In a rejoinder published in the Chinese Times the following week, Wong started off by accusing his critic of pursuing a selfish desire to "xiduan huaqiao wenhua" (monopolize [the definition of] overseas Chinese culture). As he went on to argue:

In describing the current state of Chinese culture in our society as reasonably advanced, Father Chow is in fact saying that there is no need for us to work hard and to make progress. Such being the case, those self-claimed leaders among us will be leaders forever...

As for myself, I have never made any claim for a leadership position in Chinese culture. Neither am I a Communist as Father Chow insinuated... By recklessly putting red labels on the others, he is trying to generate unnecessary misunderstanding and hatred among the overseas Chinese in order to spoil our meaningful undertaking -- the Art Exhibition. 63

Later that month, the literary group of the Hai Fung Club published an essay entitled "Xin Falisai ren" (The New Pharisee).

63 8-9 February 1963.
The protagonist was characterized as a "wei junzi" (hypocrite) who misused public charities to build up his social status. He was against open-mindedness and social progress. He was absolutely intolerant, as people who disagreed with him were all condemned as renegades. The target of this passage was clearly Father Chow. No less apparent was the resolve of the Hai Fung Club to defend its rights to speak differently on Chinese culture.

To conclude, the wave of renewed Chinese immigration into Canada after the repeal of the highly restrictive Immigration Act in 1947 was instrumental in replenishing a dwindling Chinese minority. The process of replenishment was not smooth. Of course, it had a brighter side such as the celebration of family reunion. Yet the period was also full of cultural and social tensions. It was punctuated by open conflict between the older generation of Chinese settlers and the new arrivals, particularly the young male newcomers who made up a sizeable and visible portion of this inflow.

The analysis in the preceding pages has concentrated on the initiatives and perspectives of the immigrant youth. Their encounter with the elderly generation over the development of youth auxiliaries in the traditional organizations was an unpleasant one. With a few exceptions, that experiment failed because of growing mutual dislike and antagonism. The search for autonomy and a

---

desirable form of social and cultural life among the immigrant youth led to the formation of their own independent societies.

Many autonomous youth societies were short-lived. But the Hai Fung Club and the Chinese Youth Association enjoyed unusual longevity, and their activism had an inerasable impact on the local Chinese. Their existence represented a competitive claim on social space, resources and influence within the ethnic group. Their social, cultural and political agendas further challenged the traditional concept of community, and the idea of Chinese culture, associated with and perpetuated by the traditional organizations.
Chapter Three: The Coming of Age of the Local-born Chinese, 1945-1970

In the 1960s, David T.H. Lee, the self-acclaimed first historian of the Chinese in Canada, attempted to define "tusheng huayi" (local-born Chinese), or simply "tusheng," as follows:

By "tusheng huayi" we mean those huaren (ethnic Chinese) who have received only English education and do not have the mind of zhongquoren (Chinese people). This group includes Chinese who were born locally and those who came from the ancestral country to Canada as minors and are English-educated...

Local-born Chinese usually [mis]take things in Chinatown as representative of Chinese culture. They consider the lion dance, opera, and martial arts as our cultural essence, without which Chinese civilization is devoid of any merit. They think Chinese culture is despicable and China is no more than just a huge country. Hence they suffer badly from an inferiority complex...

Among Chinese people, the local-born often claim to be Canadians... Yet westerners have little respect for them and continue to call them Chinese. Since their [way of] thinking has been westernized, they mix with westerners in their social life and have lost touch with the Chinese. Their contact with [our] community has also been attenuated as a result of their poor command of Chinese language. So, it is hard to expect them to support charitable undertakings and associational activities in the community, let alone relief work for the native country or the national salvation movement [of anti-Communism based in Taiwan]. Nevertheless, they are more than enthusiastic about some recreational events in Chinatown. Whenever there are parades and dancing parties, or when some beautiful [Chinese] ladies from elsewhere are in town, they are the first ones to show up
at the special functions. Probably they are influenced by western utilitarianism.¹

The above description of the "tusheng" was obviously informed by derisive attitudes towards the Canadian-born Chinese current in the Chinese minority in the post-war period. Most probably, it also drew on a deep-seated disapproval among the older immigrant Chinese of the cultural orientation of the local-born. Since the early twentieth century, the number of "tusheng" children had steadily increased in tandem with a growing concern about their susceptibility to deculturation. The first Chinese language schools in Vancouver were set up to preserve Chinese cultural skills and national sentiments among these youngsters who were to grow up in a foreign country. Before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, it was not uncommon for well-off merchant families and more modest shopkeeper households to send at least one of their sons, or even daughters, back to China for an authentic Chinese education. In the eyes of succeeding generations of Chinese immigrants, the "tusheng" was characterized by the fragility and vulnerability of their Chineseness; they also occupied a marginal status in a community defined by and for the immigrant Chinese.

Although this prejudice against the "tusheng" was to persist and, in some ways, intensify in the post-war years, another significant factor had come into play. Previously, the local-born

segment had been too small and too young to assume anything but a junior position in a predominantly immigrant Chinese population. This picture changed at the end of the Second World War when the Canadian-born began to acquire growing visibility and autonomy within the ethnic group. This process manifested itself most powerfully in their unprecedented capacity for self-definition in the public arena and in their emergence as full participants in the discourse on Chinese cultural identity and community. No longer were they simply a subject of concern and disparagement by other Chinese.

This chapter seeks to examine the articulation of local-born Chinese interests and identity through associational activities. Two generations of "tusheng" and their representative organizations will be discerned, before it turns to the important role of a local-born Chinese publication, the Chinatown News. It will be argued that the evolving Canadian-born Chinese identity was the aggregate result of three different factors after 1945. The first was demographic conditions, including the growing size and the maturing age of the "tusheng" population. Secondly, the host society was more open, with job opportunities, social life, and cultural options beyond Chinatown becoming more accessible to the local-born. Both of these variables, the demographic and the socio-

---

2 The magazine was originally called Chinatown. For no reason given, it was renamed Chinatown News at the beginning of its fourth year in September 1956. It will simply be called, or quoted as, Chinatown News throughout this study. The Vancouver Public Library has a complete holding.
cultural, have been appropriately recognised in the literature as instrumental in fostering the autonomy and influence of the local-born Chinese. However, little attention has been given to the equally important factor of intra-ethnic relations. As a matter of fact, the "tusheng" identity took shape after 1945 when the local-born positioned themselves in relation to the elderly settlers and the newcomers. Their sense of difference was clearly disclosed in their debate with the latter on issues of Chinese cultural identity and community. While this interactional process in the construction of "tusheng" identity forms the main thrust of this chapter, the last section will focus specifically on the question of mutual prejudice and cultural assaults between the local-born and the other two groups.

**Canadian-born Chinese Organizations and Identity**

Prior to a survey of local-born Chinese organizations, a sketch on the "tusheng" population in Vancouver in the post-war period is in order. Because precise local information is lacking, national level statistics will be our first reference. Table 3.1 shows that the percentage of local-born within the total Chinese population in Canada increased steadily during the first half and

---

### Table 3.1

The percentage of Native-born Chinese within the Total Chinese Population in Canada, 1901-1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Chinese Population</th>
<th>% of Native-born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>17,312</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>27,831</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>39,587</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>46,519</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>34,627</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>32,528</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>58,197</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>118,815</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>289,245</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 3.2

An Estimate of the Percentages of the Three Different Groups in Vancouver's Chinese Population, 1951-1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1971</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The early generation of immigrants</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-1947 Newcomers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local-born Chinese</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Census of Canada 1951-1971. For the proportion of the post-1947 immigrants, see the discussion in Chapter Two, especially Table 2.3. The percentages of the local-born are based on a minor adjustment of the national average.
well into the second half of the twentieth century. Between 1941 and 1961, the proportion actually doubled so that by the latter census year as many as two-fifths of the Chinese were registered as being born in Canada. Thereafter, the sizeable influx of new immigrants reversed this upward trend.

The situation in Vancouver roughly corresponds with the national pattern, except that the relative size of its local-born Chinese population seems to be consistently above the national average. The Census of 1951 indicates that there were 3,200 native-born Chinese in Vancouver, which was about 37 per cent of the Chinese population at that time. Comparable information is not available in 1961 and 1971, but in 1981, the Census reported that 27 per cent of the Chinese in the metropolitan area of Greater Vancouver were Canadian-born. The higher percentage of "tusheng" in Vancouver can perhaps be related to the relatively large size of its Chinese settlement which made possible family formation earlier than in other Canadian Chinese populations. Some local-born Chinese in Vancouver were also known to have relocated from the more historical but shrinking Chinatown in Victoria. Whatever the explanation, Table 3.2 suggests that at least one out of three Chinese residents in Vancouver during the period 1951-1971 was a

---

^4 This is arrived at by subtracting the number of Chinese-speaking immigrants from the total Chinese population. Census of Canada 1951, p. 61--30.

^5 Census of Canada 1981, pp. 4--13, 4--14. "Greater Vancouver" includes the city of Vancouver and a dozen neighbouring municipalities.
Canadian-born.

Although information on the age distribution of the "tusheng" is not available, the first significant batch of Canadian-born youth and adults seems to have become active within the Chinese minority around the Second World War. Born in the 1920s or earlier, they constituted what will be called the "first generation" local-born Chinese, and began to assume a conspicuous role in the definition of Canadian-born Chinese interests and identity upon reaching maturity. Sharing with this group a comparable childhood and similar cultural traits were a few Chinese who had come at an early age before 1923 to join their fathers or uncles. For this reason, they may be considered belonging to this local-born generation.6

Just as the "tusheng" component was becoming more sizeable within the local Chinese population, Ottawa provided a catalyst for the transition of a fledging Canadian-born Chinese identity into a more coherent, endurable, and assertive form. At the last stage of the Pacific War, about five hundred local-born Chinese, half of

---

6 I am not alone in adopting this view. Other examples include David Lee (see the quote at the beginning of this chapter) and Edgar Wickberg ed., From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), pp. 94-98. It should be noted that my use of the terms, the "first generation" Canadian-born Chinese and later, the "second generation," refers only to the demographic segments throughout this study. Unless specified or made clear by the context, they are not used to indicate the genealogical depth of family settlement of local-born individuals or groups in Canada.
them from British Columbia, were inducted into the Canadian armed forces. Up to this point, the Canadian-born Chinese in British Columbia held only "second-class" citizenship. In spite of their status as British subjects by birth, they had no franchise at any level of government elections, and were therefore barred from certain choice professions and from getting onto the official payrolls. They were influenced by Canadian culture and life style through public education and the mass media, but they were generally deprived of substantial contact with the mainstream society. Being equally victims of discriminatory legislation and popular racism, they could well be bracketed with the rest of the ethnic group as uniformly "Chinese."

Against this background, the draft order in the summer of 1944 had the dramatic effect of singling out the "tusheng" from the Chinese population as a special category owing to their eligibility to bear arms for Canada. The initial responses of the local-born Chinese were mixed. Some of them resented the call-up to fight for the country that had denied their rights as citizens. But the majority opinion was to grasp the chance for a demonstration of loyalty to Canada and then to demand full citizenship in the aftermath. No sooner had enlistment begun than several socially-

---

7 Paul Yee is driving more or less at the same point, when he writes that "The War focused attention on one special segment of the community: the new Canadian-borns." See his discussion and the excerpts of interviews with a few Chinese veterans in his Saltwater City: An Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988), pp. 99-105 passim.
conscious local-born sprang into action to seek redress of their constitutional status and formed a Chinese Canadian Association in Vancouver in late 1944. In the following February, it petitioned the government of British Columbia "for the granting of franchise to all Canadians of Chinese descent in the province." The submitted document deplored the range of political and economic disabilities imposed on the Canadian-born Chinese. It referred with pride to the progress the local-born Chinese had made in terms of acculturation and assimilation, and the manifold contributions they had rendered to Canada’s war efforts. It argued passionately that "since they [the Canadian-born Chinese] bear, and bear gladly, full citizenship responsibilities, they should be entitled to all citizen rights."\(^8\)

At the end of the war, the returned Chinese soldiers organized themselves into the Army, Navy, and Air Force Veterans of Canada, Unit 280, and continued the lobbying effort. The general opinion in Canada after the war was strongly in favour of the granting of full citizenship and the Chinese in British Columbia were duly enfranchised provincially and federally in 1947 and municipally in

With this success, one would expect the Chinese Veterans organization to flourish as the first major "tusheng" society. Compared with the members of most contemporary Chinese organizations, the Veterans were exceptionally young and fresh with esprit de corps, and their collective image commanded respect both inside and outside the ethnic group. Surprisingly, Unit 280 declined within a couple of years into a low profile social club on Pender Street for a largely working class and small shopkeeper membership.

A period of activism for the Chinese Veterans' organization eventually came in the early 1960s. One interesting dimension of this revival was its association with the Canadian Liberal Party's effort to regain its lost support in Chinatown. The leaders of the Veterans at that time, Dr. S. Won Leung and Harry Con, were both widely acknowledged as the architects behind the Liberals' rebound in Chinatown in the federal elections of 1962 and 1963. Locally, the Veterans' organization was visibly involved in the campaign leading to the election of J.R. Nicholson, and the effort was rewarded with political patronage. For example, when Nicholson visited Vancouver as the incumbent Minister of Citizenship and

---

9 See Carol Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement." Also useful is a brief article by Foon Sien Wong, "Past Achievements, Future Aspirations," in Chinatown News 3 January 1956.

10 My discussion of the Chinese Veterans' organization, in this and the following paragraphs, has benefitted greatly from talking to five of its members in some detail, and from observing its activities on various occasions between 1990 and 1993.
Immigration in April 1965, the Veterans was one of the three Chinese organizations arranged to present a brief.\(^{11}\)

While the Chinese Veterans gained status and influence inside the ethnic group through this and other outside connections with Canadian politicians and the larger society, they also made a direct attempt in the early sixties to elevate the pride of the local-born in relation to the immigrant Chinese. At the fourteenth anniversary of the Chinese Veterans' organization in 1961 -- its first public celebration in years -- it released a lengthy declaration in the Chinese press. As a self-compiled eulogy, this document perhaps contributed most to the reinvention of what we might call "the Chinese Veterans' myth."\(^{12}\) The following extract serves to highlight some of the claims it made on the Chinese minority at large:

Indeed, we Veterans are the "heroes of Canada," for we have defended the country [in order to uphold its] democracy, liberty, and independence... As for our unit...it is the only Chinese Veterans organization in this country...

The participation of huayi (local-born Chinese) in

\(^{11}\) Chinatown News 18 November 1965. For an synopsis of the brief presented to Nicholson, see ibid. 3 April 1965. The other two briefs were submitted by the CBA and the Chinese Canadian Citizens Association. The impact of Canadian electoral politics on Vancouver's Chinatown will be assessed in Chapter Five.

\(^{12}\) The word "myth" is not intended to deny the historical contributions of the Veterans to the improvement of the status of the Chinese in Canada. For the purpose of the present analysis, the stress is placed on how the story of the Veterans was retold among the Chinese.
World War II has won some trophies for our giaobao (overseas Chinese compatriots): We Chinese can now live and work in peace and contentment in Canada; we can send for our remaining family members to come over [referring obviously to the repeal of the restrictive Immigration Act in 1947 and the subsequent liberalization in relevant legislation]; we have new arrivals who can continue the enterprise launched by our predecessors; we can work at all levels of the government bureaucracy; we can join any political parties; we have the franchise; and we can participate in electoral politics at different levels... By our military service in the Canadian forces during the Second World War, we, local-born, have brought home these trophies to share with all Chinese. We are not bragging or self-gratifying. These are undeniable facts in the eyes of all Chinese. We surely remember that the above privileges were beyond our reach before the War.\(^{13}\)

In the late forties, the local-born Chinese consciously used the veteran status to advance a claim for full citizenship. A decade later, the same symbol was recycled to gain cultural and psychological advantages over the other Chinese. The Chinese Veterans now asserted themselves as the heroes of the Chinese minority who had ushered in all the historic changes in its favour. As later examples will show, the first generation "tusheng" often portrayed themselves as the key for the ethnic Chinese to enter a more hospitable Canada. This way of self-presentation was a most tangible strand in their identity complex in the 1950s and 1960s.

The symmetry between organizational vitality and ideological claims was better sustained in the case of the Chinatown Lions

\(^{13}\) *Chinese Voice* 10-11 May 1961.
Club, the second major Canadian-born Chinese organization established in the post-war period. Chartered in January 1954, the Lions Club was founded by the group of professionals and businessmen emerging from the first generation local-born Chinese. Among its 26 charter members were George D. Wong, a McGill graduate and the first Chinese manager in a Canadian bank, Andrew Lam, the first native-born Chinese pastor who commenced his ministry in the local Chinese Anglican Church in 1941, and several Canadian-born Chinese pioneers in the medical and dental professions. Also on the roster were Tim and Tong Louie from the H.Y. Louie family, which operated one of the largest wholesale grocery businesses in Western Canada, and the Victoria-born brothers Charles and Bent Chan Kent of Aero Garment Limited. The group was joined by the first Chinese pharmacist in the city, another bank manager, a Chinese architect, a couple of lawyers, and some local-born businessmen, raising the membership of this elitist organization by 1970 to about fifty.\(^{14}\)

Compared with the Chinese Veterans organization, the Chinatown Lions Club brings to our attention other social and cultural changes unfolding in the Chinese minority at that time. The Lions were among the earliest beneficiaries of the breakdown of discriminatory barriers against the social and economic mobility of the Chinese after 1945. An increasing number of "tusheng" of their

\(^{14}\) Vancouver Chinatown Lions Club Thirtieth Anniversary 1954-1984 (1984), pp. 11-17. Personal interviews with two of its charter members have been most helpful in my reconstruction of the Club's early history in these pages.
generation began to get jobs outside the traditional ethnic economy in Chinatown and to join professions which had previously been inaccessible. On top of their newly-acquired economic independence and the accompanying rise in social status was the possibility of substantial interaction with non-Chinese. Western organizational styles and their cultural paraphernalia became available. This was the case of the prestigious Lions international organization and its example of high-profile public service. (See Figure 3.1 showing a copy of the Club's "Charter Night Programme," which is full of symbolism.) Of course, the model of the Lions organization was compatible with the Chinese ideas about public charities and leadership, and it readily became a cherished alternative for an up-and-coming first-generation Canadian-born Chinese elite.

From its inception, the Chinatown Lions Club was indeed a progressive, non-traditional, non-Chinese style organization that professed to be "concept[ually]...totally different from some of the existing [Chinese] associations in the city [of Vancouver]." It followed completely the Lions' code of ethics and format of organization. Non-Chinese were eligible for full membership and even the club presidency, though an overwhelming majority of its members were ethnic Chinese. Prestige in the international arena of the Lions associations was keenly sought, and in less than ten years the Club had successfully campaigned to send its charter

15 Chinatown News 18 July 1958. Vancouver Chinatown Lions Club, the introductory page.
A Copy of the Charter Night Programme of the Vancouver Chinatown Lions Club, January 29, 1954

**Vancouver - Chinatown Lions Club**

**CHARTER NIGHT PROGRAMME**

*FRIDAY EVENING, JANUARY 29, 1954*  
*6:30 P.M.*

**Georgia Hotel Ballroom**  
**Vancouver, B.C.**

**Sponsor... Burrard Lions Club of Vancouver**

**Programme**

**CALL TO ORDER**

- Ted Gong, President, Burrard Lions Club

**"America" and "O Canada"**

Invocation... Rev. Andrew Lau  
Public, Chinatown Lions Club

Introduction of Trustees... Ted Gong  
President, Burrard Lions Club

Introduction of Head Table Guests...  
Hon. Harry McGregor  
Past President, Burrard Lions Club

Rail Call of Clubs...  
Hon. Harry McGregor

Installation of Officers...  
Leo Biln Wolski  
Past International Director

PRESENTATION OF CHARTER  
District Governor, District 19-A, Leo Jacob  
(Port Angeles, Washington)

Acceptance of Charter...  
George D. Wong  
President, Chinatown Lions Club

Address to Lionists...  
Fred W. Smith (Port Moody, Calif.)  
Past President, International Lions Clubs

Presentation of Gifts...  
Perry Mason  
Chancellor, Vancouver Lions Clubs

Acceptance of Gifts...  
Ted Gong  
Past First President, Chinatown Lions

**"STAR SPANGLED BANNER" and "GOD SAVE THE QUEEN"**

**DANCING**

---

president, George Wong, steadily through the hierarchy and eventually to the top position of the Lions international directorship.\textsuperscript{16}

This cosmopolitan orientation of the Chinatown Lions Club had not drained away its Chineseness, as David Lee's archetypal local-born Chinese identity suggests. Like the Veterans organization, which claimed to have brought the ethnic Chinese a larger degree of acceptance in Canada, the Lions Club seems to have consciously positioned itself as a bridge between the ethnic group and the larger society. By its name, it chose to anchor its image on the ethnic neighbourhood. In some of its public functions, it flirted with the idea of interpreting Chinese culture to a Canadian audience, the most obvious case being its sponsorship, in 1958, of the first local performance of traditional Chinese opera in English. The same strategy was underlined by the bulk of its charitable undertakings within the Chinese minority, besides its commitments outside. Its favourite charities were the Mount Saint Joseph Hospital and the Home for the Aged on Campbell Avenue where most of the patients were Chinese. The personal delivery of Christmas hampers to the needy families in the Chinatown area was another popular event.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, in celebrating their own economic advancement and progress in integrating into the mainstream society

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Vancouver Chinatown Lions Club}, pp. 14-17, 49.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 28-37 passim. Also \textit{Chinatown News} 18 July 1958, and 18 December 1960.
and culture, this group of "tusheng" also expressed sympathy towards the less fortunate members of their ethnic group, whom they might have considered lagging behind on both counts.

While both the Chinese Veterans and the Chinatown Lions were the best known organizations of the first generation Canadian-born Chinese, lesser examples are not lacking. For instance, the Chinese Golf Club was set up as early as 1950 and many of its members later joined the Lions Club. In 1965, a lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of Canada was formed by two dozen local-born Chinese in white collar professions such as insurance salesmen and real estate agents. Similar to the Lions but in a less flamboyant fashion, the Chinese Elks engaged in mainstream charities and organized regular social events for its members. In the same period, some local-born Chinese climbed into leadership positions in the ethnic churches, working closely with the Chinese-speaking pastors and missionary delegates from the Canadian home mission authorities. Besides personal faith, their English education, language skills, and profession-derived social influence were plausible attributes of their new status.

---

18 Chinatown News 3 September 1953, and 3 December 1965.

19 Ibid. 18 June, 3 July, 3 August, and 3 November 1965. Also Chinese Voice 27 January, and 17 June 1966.

20 The case of the Chinese United Church is shown in its Minutes of the Official Board 1953-1967, and Annual Reports 1959-1967.
By the sixties, the above endeavours of the first generation Canadian-born Chinese at organizational activities had already involved a few precocious members of the second generation "tusheng" who were born in the 1930s and 1940s. Nevertheless, the junior local-born also embarked on ventures of their own, which suited their needs as teenagers and young adults in the post-war decades.

One interesting "tusheng" youth organization was the Chinese Varsity Club, or the CVC, on the campus of the University of British Columbia. Today, the Club claims that it was established early this century for Chinese students excluded from other student bodies. In fact, Chinese students on campus were very few before the Second World War and only eleven of them had reportedly graduated by the mid-thirties.\(^{21}\) The growth of the CVC into a noticeable centre of native-born Chinese student activities came actually in the 1950s. By 1958, the official number of Chinese students at U.B.C. had reached an impressive 230. No comparable figure on a later period is available, but it is known that the CVC's membership increased from about fifty in 1955 to almost two hundred in the next ten years.\(^{22}\) The CVC was able to organize in-house social events for its expanding constituency around the


academic year and even provide an orientation programme for matriculated Chinese students. Throughout the 1950s, this student body represented Chinese culture and identity to a university audience.\(^{23}\)

The image of the Chinese Varsity Club as a "tusheng" organization was further solidified with the arrival of an increasing number of Chinese immigrant and foreign students from the late fifties. A majority of the newcomers had a Hong Kong background, and the group was large enough to set up the Chinese Overseas Students' Association, or COSA, in 1960, with about one hundred members.\(^{24}\) From all indications, the relationship between the CVC and COSA was not cordial. For reasons of cultural compatibility, the CVC appeared to co-sponsor extra-curricular activities with the Japanese Nisei Varsity Club more than with the COSA. The latter was known to have openly expressed its reservation about the CVC's representation of Chinese culture.\(^{25}\)

This unpleasant situation on campus mirrored a similar division in the local Chinese minority, as the influx of newcomers

---


resulted in a general awareness of the cultural distinctiveness of the local-born Chinese. Not only did the new arrivals reflect poorly on the local-born's command of Chinese cultural skills. Inter-group tension between them was aggravated by communication problem and mutual prejudice. The details of this intra-mural conflict will be examined at a later point; suffice it to say here that the local-born were never quite the same once new Chinese immigrants began to arrive again in Vancouver after 1947.

In Chinatown, some second generation "tusheng" were searching appropriate venues to organize social, recreational, and sporting events. They usually shrank away from the traditional organizations because of the generational and cultural differences with the elderly Chinese, who were in control. The few youth-oriented facilities these associations set up decades earlier to attract the local-born either remained dormant or were reactivated by the young new immigrants. Christian churches were comparatively more agreeable to the youthful interests and western style of the junior local-born Chinese. They were able to attract some of them to the teenagers' and young adults' fellowships and to the boy scout teams organized under their auspices. In the late fifties and sixties, the Gibbs Boys' Club on Pender Street provided the most accessible gymnasium in the Chinatown area. Its sports facilities were

The case of the Chinese United Church is well-documented in its annual reports, particularly the sections on youth activities and Christian education. For the churches' sponsorship of scout teams, see Chinatown News 18 October 1956, and 3 July 1961.
therefore held at a high premium by both the local-born and immigrant youth, though the two groups did not interact much on the same premises.²⁷

For the young "tusheng," the most popular recreational facilities by far were located at the Pender Y. This Chinese extension project of the Vancouver YWCA was first conceived in 1938. With the support of the Chinese United Church, the YWCA was able to open its Chinatown facilities in 1943 and moved into a new structure on the northwestern corner of Pender and Dunlevy Streets in 1952. Officially named the "International Y" in 1950, seventy-to-eighty per cent of its several hundred young patrons were nonetheless ethnic Chinese. Its workers organized numerous interest groups and programmes for young people in different age brackets. Moreover, a few "tusheng" youth societies, such as the Chinese Bowling Club and the Chinese Athletic Club, met there regularly. During the mid-1950s, these affiliated bodies mushroomed at such a speed that the Pender Y decided to convene an inter-club council to facilitate the co-ordination of their activities.²⁸

In retrospect, the engagement of the two generations of Canadian-born Chinese in institutional building was the surest sign of their coming of age. No longer the appendage of an immigrant minority, they had come up with a sufficient number of people and

²⁷ Chinatown News 3 October 1956.
²⁸ Ibid. 3 September, 18 October 1953, 3 & 18 February, 18 April 1954, and 18 November 1957.
the necessary economic resources to establish organizations of their own. Two points are worth remembering in our discussion thus far. First, like the young new immigrants we have studied in Chapter Two, the native-born Chinese generally aspired to be different and independent from the circle of the old-style Chinatown associations. Second, through their organizations the first generation of the local-born was able to project ideological claims and cultural agendas forcefully into the public arena.

"We, Canadians of Chinese Descent," A Local-born Chinese Voice

Notwithstanding the analytical focus on organizations, no treatment of the Canadian-born Chinese in the post-war period will be complete without mentioning the English language Chinatown News. Two earlier "tusheng" publications in Vancouver -- the Chinese News Weekly started in 1936 and The New Citizen in 1949 -- were both short-lived. The Chinatown News was the first one (and still the only one) that lasted. Run by its founding editor, Roy Mah, starting in September 1953, this Vancouver-based biweekly magazine quickly established a solid reputation for representing the interests of the local-born English-speaking Chinese in Canada.

29 The Chinese News Weekly is mentioned in Paul Yee, Saltwater City, p. 83. I have not seen a single issue of this publication so far. Only a few issues of The New Citizen are available in the CCRC, Box 21. This biweekly was relocated to Toronto in 1951 and soon came to end thereafter.

30 See the editorials in the first few issues -- 3 September, 3 October, and 18 October 1953 -- for an idea of its self-perception. For some biographical information on Roy Mah, see Evelyn Huang, Chinese Canadians: Voices from A Community
Obviously, not every native-born subscribed to its viewpoints; and the editorial opinions may reflect mainly Mah's position as a member of the first generation. Nevertheless, the reports in this local, community-style newspaper furnished extensive details on the public lives of both the first and the second generations of Canadian-born Chinese, seldom covered by the Chinese language press. They were instrumental in reclaiming an otherwise imperceptible cultural space for the "tusheng" by weaving together their disparate experiences and concerns into a single story. In this sense, the Chinatown News played a uniquely important role in the construction of a local-born Chinese identity.  

From its beginning to the early 1960s, the editorial stance of the Chinatown News can be characterized as favouring assimilation and integration. It advocated the fullest participation of the

(Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992), pp. 70-79.


The failure of many Chinese to make a difference between the two concepts was pointed out categorically by an observer associated with the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1965. "Report: Private Meeting with [a] Chinese-Canadian Group, Vancouver," in PAC, RG 33, Series 80, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Vol. 120, file 634E. Of course, this was before the time when a careful distinction between the two terms was made by most Canadians, and not just the Chinese residents in this country. As will be discussed in Chapter Six, from the mid-1960s onwards there was evidence of a clearer understanding among Chinese of the difference between the two concepts. Assimilation was taken to mean a total absorption into the mainstream society and the subsequent disappearance of one's ethnic heritage. By contrast, integration was understood as
114

ethnic group, with the local-born Chinese as the vanguard, in all aspects of Canadian life. The following editorial that appeared in the issue of June 18, 1954, is typical:

Trouble with us as a minority group in the larger Canadian society is that we tend to restrict ourselves too much for our own good. We think because we are Chinese we should isolate ourselves socially, occupationally and psychologically from the rest of the community. True, in the past we have suffered terribly by race prejudice, but time has changed and a new vista is dawning. The opportunity for Chinese to become an integrated part of the community is now more visible than ever before. It is up to us to take every advantage of it.

A cursory examination reveals we have come a long way in the last couple of decades. Socially, we have taken advantage of all opportunities to intermingle with the society around us... Occupationally, this generation has ventured from past practices of limited dealings with Chinese only... Psychologically, we are undergoing a metamorphosis of losing our nationalistic feeling of being Chinese. The ill wind of World War II blew in strongly to bring about this good effect...

The foregoing does not mean we are denying there are no background differences with our Caucasian citizens, or that the existence of these differences are necessarily harmful. We are, however, advocating an attitude of looking at ourselves as individuals similar to others in this intermingled Canadian society.

Committed to the promotion and celebration of Chinese participation in the mainstream society, the Chinatown News implying a full identification with the country of adoption but without the loss of one's native culture.
lavished attention on the achievements of Chinese individuals, most of them local-born, in their various pursuits. The first Chinese employee at the City Hall, for example, was made a cover story in late 1953. News about Chinese entering the medical and legal professions, and later, occupying Canadian public offices were reported vigilantly. The Chinatown News pointed with pride to such "tusheng" organizations as the Lions, the Elks, and the Veterans, arguing that they were the outcomes of "the attainment of...personal status and material achievements." So successful were the native-born Chinese that they could "afford to channel some of their efforts and energies [in]to the improvement of the larger society beyond the confines of Chinatown... The mushrooming of such organizations...is a good sign. Let us see more Chinese names on their rosters."  

Within the Chinese minority, what made the Chinatown News the best known -- and to some, the most disliked -- local-born Chinese publication were its opinions on contentious issues. Examples in the later discussion will show how it got involved in debates and came to the defense of the "tusheng." In the meantime, two cases will suffice to highlight some Canadian-born Chinese perspectives on local controversies.

The first concerned the threat of urban redevelopment which


34 Ibid. 3 August 1971.
was engulfing the Chinatown neighbourhood from the late 1950s. Many local residents and Chinatown organizations were apprehensive of financial loss, dislocation, and a dismantling of their ethnic "community." To their dismay, the Chinatown News gave the city planners its singular support. In its many editorials on the subject, published over the span of several years, the Chinatown News consistently portrayed the situation as "a choice between progress and temporary inconvenience." This once "self-contained" ethnic enclave had already fulfilled its historical functions during the days of exclusion and overt discrimination. Its present value was mainly that of a "tourist attraction." Moreover, as the voluntary dispersal of Chinese population from Chinatown and from Vancouver to the outlying residential areas had already begun, the latest move by the government merely provided impetus to an "inevitable" assimilation/integration process.

The other example concerned the diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China by the Canadian government, which took place in October 1970 after a prolonged period of negotiation.

The resistance movements at successive stages and their larger ramifications on Chinese organizations and leadership will be analyzed in Chapter Five.


The most recent scholarship on this subject can be found in the collection of articles in Paul Evans and Michael Frolic eds., Reluctant Adversaries: Canada and the People's Republic of China, 1949-1970 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).
In stark contrast with the Chinese language press, the minimal reportage of the Chinatown News on Chinese politics and related factional rivalries in Vancouver Chinatown was characterized by a tone of indifference. With unexceptional detachment, the Chinatown News rationalized Ottawa's rapprochement with Beijing as an expedient in line with Canada's interests and global stability, and expressed implicitly its approval. More impressive, however, was the way it underlined the response, or lack of it, of the local-born Chinese. In its first editorial on the subject, which appeared in late 1966, the Chinatown News argued that the Canadian-born Chinese have become too well integrated and too accustomed to the Canadian way of life to find attraction in any foreign ideology or totalitarian form of government. Unlike the older generation ...[they] have manifested little interest in the political fortunes of governments outside of Canada, save as an academic interest. They are more at home with Canadian political parties -- Liberal, Conservative, New Democratic Party and Social Credit.\textsuperscript{38}

Two years later, commenting on a protest by the pro-Kuomintang people against Canada's recognition of Communist China, the Chinatown News again contrasted that reaction with the apparent disinterest of the local-born, whom it described as "more attuned to Canadian outlook and thinking." "In any event," as its editor

\textsuperscript{38} Chinatown News 3 December 1966.
went on to assure his readers, "recognition will have little effect [on the native-born Chinese], for when it comes to clarifying our stand, we are proud that we are Canadian citizens of Chinese ancestry. Our very background makes us appreciate more fully the wonderful advantages of this nation. We believe in her institutions, ideals, and [the] traditions and glory in her heritage."\textsuperscript{39} This kind of image-projection by the Chinatown News contributed to the emergence of the local-born as a self-conscious and autonomous component of Vancouver's Chinese minority in the post-war period.

Of course, the reconstruction of the Canadian-born Chinese identity did not take place in an historical vacuum. The process evolved in full view of the older settlers and the new immigrants, and also through interaction with their respective cultural assumptions and agendas. It is to this piece of uncharted territory in intra-ethnic group relations that we now proceed.

\textbf{Cultural Offense and Defense}

As mentioned, the immigrant Chinese reacted negatively to the cultural trajectory of the local-born. The details of their criticisms need to be spelt out. Also embedded are larger questions about the relationship between the "tusheng" and the other two sectors of the local Chinese population. Let us address these issues by first making a few observations on the attitudes of the

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid.} 18 August 1968.
local-born Chinese.

It is necessary to remember that the domestic measures at cultural maintenance and the inaccessibility of social life and career choice outside the ethnic group were a general condition during the childhood and the adolescence of the first generation "tusheng" before the 1940s. These factors also influenced the way these local-born, as adults in the post-war period, related to the older immigrants and to the community life and social organizations the latter were so accustomed to define. On the one hand, they were searching for autonomy, as manifested in their endeavour to delineate a distinctive sphere of organizational life. On the other, even though they were trying to distance themselves culturally and socially from the older generation, their approach was marked by discernible empathy.  

The reasons for this last point are two-fold. First, despite the differences in age, outlook, and values, the emotional and historical distance separating the first generation "tusheng" from the older settlers was relatively small. Many of them grew up in the Chinatown neighbourhood with some understanding of its cultural norms and social practices, a familiarity with the traditional organizations, and a degree of facility in spoken Chinese. More importantly, they could identify their personal encounter with racial discrimination in the earlier period with the experience and

40 I am not aware of any single piece of public criticism of the older Chinese settlers by the local-born remotely comparable to the scathing remarks of the new immigrants examined in Chapter Two.
endurance of their parents' generation, which they had observed first-hand. As a result, these native-born Chinese were more likely than either the new immigrants or the junior "tusheng" to empathize with the elderly generation.

Second, unlike the situation of the young newcomers who were locked in conflict with the existing settlers over the same cultural and social space within the ethnic group, the Canadian-born Chinese generally looked beyond the ethnic boundary for economic and symbolic resources to nurture their sense of identity and autonomy. They thus presented themselves not as critics but as cultural brokers or mediators who could bring the Chinese minority ever closer to mainstream Canada. A few well-known individuals from a first generation Canadian-born background were a case in point. With bilingual facility, a relatively broad cultural orientation, and personal leadership skills, they emerged in some major traditional organizations as their leaders and spokesmen to the outside world.41

While it may be difficult to gauge the self-perceptions and motivations of these individuals, it is easier to provide concrete

41 To name just a few, active in the Wong's organizations were Quon H. Wong, a graduate of U.B.C., and Foon Sien Wong. Foon Sien, as the latter was commonly called, came to Canada to join his father at the age nine around 1910. At the end of the Second World War, he was about to become the leading executive of the Chinese Benevolent Association. Another example that appeared slightly later in the Chinese Freemasons was Harry Con. We will encounter some of these personalities in other parts of this study.
examples at the organizational level. Both the claims of the Chinese Veterans and the ideological self-positioning of the Chinatown Lions discussed earlier can be construed as cultural offensives of the Canadian-born Chinese to gain advantages over the immigrants. The following example of the Chinese Merchants' Association represents a variety of the same approach.

Similar to their counterparts in urban China and in other Chinese settlements overseas, Chinese merchants in Vancouver had formed commercial associations since the turn of the century. As a collective action to deal with the unsympathetic municipal officials or the customs authorities, these organizations tended to be reactions against specific grievances over business practices or import restrictions and were usually short-lived. The one that survived into the early post-war years was the Chinese Merchants' Association, first founded in 1929. Needless to say, only established Chinatown merchants, mostly of immigrant background, were represented.\(^{42}\)

In August 1957, several local-born members who had been nominally involved in the Association up to that point suddenly agitated for reform. They suggested a revamping of the organization.

to include not only merchants in the traditional lines of import- and-export businesses, but traders, businessmen, and professionals engaged in all kinds of commercial pursuits. In this way, it was argued, they could institute "yige xinxing shangren jiguan" (a businessmen's organization of a new kind) to encompass the broadest spectrum of Chinese economic interests.\(^{43}\) Apparently, the idea was well-received and a committee of 25 proceeded immediately to work on a reform. In June 1958, the organization was renamed the Vancouver Chinese Association of Commerce (VCAC) to reflect the enlarged membership, though the Chinese version "Zhonghua Zongshanghui" remained unchanged. Other reform measures included the adoption of a revised constitution, the opening of a new clubhouse on Pender Street, and most interesting of all, the election of an executive which was dominated by a large majority of Canadian-born Chinese from the Chinatown Lions Club.\(^{44}\)

This was literally a takeover of an existing organization of the older immigrants by the first generation native-born. Hence it is amazing that the events occurred with almost no detectable tension at all. Since the Chinese Merchants' Association had been in effect dormant, perhaps the incumbents considered it not worthy of putting up a fight. An equally plausible explanation seems to lie in the approach of the reform agitators. The Chinatown News

\(^{43}\) *Chinese Voice* 3 August and 14 September 1957.

called the reorganization "epoch-making...[because] the appearance of this new group...means that the vision of a more progressive, enlightened and prosperous Chinatown has been translated into a reality, and in every businessman's heart there breathes new hope." 45 Again, it cast the local-born Chinese as the harbingers of progress and prosperity for the larger ethnic entity. This language of common advancement and public good would have made the reformers' propositions palatable. Moreover, the coup de grace was delivered peacefully and the old leadership was never openly criticized. In fact, some previous leaders continued to serve on the executive by occupying minor or honorary positions. Taking this arrangement at its face value, the Chinese Voice praised the effort at "ji xianjin qiaoshang yu qingnian qiaoshang yu yitong" (bringing pioneering merchants and young businessmen together) as the most remarkable feature of this reform. 46

In the following years, the new Association became another centre of public activity of the senior native-born Chinese until, in the early 1960s, it lost momentum and succumbed to the fate of its predecessors. The brief revival is worth-mentioning, however, because it represented an outburst of energy and new ideas. As local overseer of Chinese business interests, the Association interceded frequently with the government authorities. Within the ethnic group, it was once accused by the Chinese Benevolent

45 Chinatown News 3 July 1958.
Association of defiance because it raised a separate fund for the fire victims of the Nanaimo Chinatown. But this organization was best remembered for the novelty of its social activities. Inspired by the example of its counterpart in the San Francisco Chinatown, in 1959 it re-introduced the grand celebration of Chinese New Year. A year later, it sponsored an unprecedented "Miss Vancouver Chinatown" competition in which the contestants were not evaluated according to the amount of tickets they could sell, as in the case of fund-raising projects, but on the basis of their talent and beauty. Attracting many non-Chinese, these functions were viewed by the organizers as a way to enhance the allure of Chinatown and to present the festivity and elegance of Chinese culture to a larger Canadian audience.

The foregoing example indicates the growing influence of the native-born Chinese in the post-war years. They managed to displace the position of the older settlers in an existing organization. At the same time, this case shows the relative magnanimity of their approach and their self-designed role as the instrument for bringing more acceptance of the ethnic group by mainstream Canadians.

The reaction of the elderly immigrants to the propositions of

---


the local-born Chinese was rather mixed. The "tusheng" organizations were often castigated as too "xi hua" (westernized); and they remained excluded from any representation in the CBA, despite some agitation in the early 1960s to get them admitted.49 The majority of elderly settlers seem to have resigned themselves to the degeneration of Chinese cultural skills and the loss of Chinese national sentiments increasingly evident among the younger local-born. On occasion they heaped scorn on the alleged deculturation of the "tusheng."

Such was the case during the controversy over the redevelopment of Chinatown. At one public hearing, a spokesman of the Chinese opposition satirized the "tusheng" as typical "Han jian" (traitors among the Han people) in Chinese history by quoting from a poem attributed to Lu You (1125-1210), a Southern Song poet noted for his patriotism:

Hanren xue de Wuren yu, yao xiang chengtao ma Hanren. (After these Han Chinese learnt the language of the barbarians, they turned around toward the Han people on the top of the city wall and scolded them [in their barbarian tongue]).50

49 For example, the new commercial organization was taken to task for being too westernized on at least two occasions during its brief history. Chinese Voice 22 March and 4 July 1958. See my discussion of the proposed reform of the CBA in Chapter Four.

The local-born Chinese were denigrated as having been corrupted by western culture and having lost whatever interest they had had in the well-being of their ethnic group.

These criticisms aside, one must not lose sight of some ambivalence in the attitudes of the elderly Chinese. For one thing, few of them could question the desirability of winning more acceptance and respect for the ethnic group in the host country, despite their resentment against the local-born's assertion as the linchpin. For another, it is not difficult to detect among the older generation a certain pleasure and pride in seeing their children achieving competence and success hitherto unknown among the ethnic Chinese in Canadian society. Scholarship awards made available with much publicity by the traditional associations to the children of their members attending or graduating from university immediately come to mind.\footnote{From various sources, it seems that this practice was first started in the early 1960s and became common in the following decade. For example, see Lim Xihe Zongtong Qiumu Gongsuqo hebing jinxin jinian tekan (A Special Issue of the Lim Sai Ho Tong Headquarters/Kow Mock Kung So Amalgamation Golden Anniversary) (1980), Chronology section, p. 14} In other words, the merits of acculturation -- that is, the acquisition of local values and cultural skills -- were undeniable, and the headway made by the "tusheng" in this respect was appreciated.

The native-born's relationship with the new immigrants was far more problematic. From the very beginning, the two groups were less
accommodating to the differences of one another. Some local-born took the newcomers as an embarrassment, as if their arrival would somehow turn back the clock of acculturation and their acceptance by Canadian society. In return, the immigrant youth harped on what they considered the cultural deficiency and pretensions of the Canadian-born Chinese. The result, inevitably, was a series of open conflicts and disputes.

In January 1954 a fight broke out between two parties of local-born and new immigrant youth in Chinatown and brought considerable public attention to such a problem for the first time. Reportedly, this took place after some snowball throwing and exchanges of verbal insults. The local police intervened and made a number of arrests. In a number of ways, the response of the Chinese was very revealing. First, most observers felt indignant, not because the incident had taken them by surprise, but because a domestic conflict had been so disgracefully exposed. In the same vein, an article in the *Chinatown News* warned that this "uncalled for action on the part of the youths [had] afforded anti-Chinese elements an opportunity to stir up ideological dissension [referring perhaps to the suspicion that all the newcomers were Communist sympathizers] and intense feelings against the Chinese."\(^{52}\) The CBA called an emergency meeting of the district organizations and issued an appeal for restraint. Specifically, it urged the Chinese press to sway public opinion in the same

\(^{52}\) 3 February 1954.
direction and the relevant associations to discipline their members.\textsuperscript{53}

There is no evidence regarding any follow-up action taken by the organizations, but as far as the editorial stances of the press are concerned, battle lines were quickly drawn. In their appeals for reconciliation, the two local Chinese language newspapers could hardly veil their sympathy for the new immigrants and thus laid the blame entirely on the native-born Chinese. One of the editorials in the \textit{Chinese Voice}, for instance, contrasted the acculturation of the "tusheng" pejoratively with the so-called "chuncui de zuguo feng" (pure ancestral country style) of the immigrant youth. The local-born Chinese were advised to discard their pride and prejudice. "They could also become the future masters of the overseas Chinese community," as the editorial concluded, "if they apply their English language skill to improve the lot of the Chinese in Canada...and learn more about their native country from the immigrant Chinese."\textsuperscript{54} (emphasis added) The local-born were again placed on the periphery of a community defined by and for the immigrant Chinese.

In coming to the defense of the Canadian-born Chinese, the \textit{Chinatown News} furnished a seemingly objective and balanced assessment of the incident, as follows:

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Chinese Voice} 25 January 1954.  
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Chinese Voice} 26 January 1954. See \textit{ibid.} 6 February 1954 for a letter by "Cao Xingren" and also the reports in the \textit{Chinese Times} in this period.}
The recent fracas in Chinatown between a group of newcomers and some [local-born] teenagers... resulted in the arrest of seven youths charged with being in possession of offensive weapons... Ostensibly, the incident was touched off by a snowball fight. We believe, however, that there are deeper underlying causes behind it all. At the basis of the conflict is a wide cultural gap between the two groups whose upbringing, habits and customs are totally different from the established practice of one another...

[The local-born Chinese] sometimes forget that for the newcomers from the old country, there is the tremendous problem of adjustment -- both cultural and psychological -- which must be met. To be successful, it will require all the sympathy and understanding that we [Canadian-born] can show them. In a word, what the newcomers seek from us is help, not hindrance; encouragement, not ridicule; and tolerance, not prejudice.

On the other hand, the sooner the newcomers abandon their silly notions that because of their Chinese education they are culturally superior to their [local-born] brothers, the better it will be for all. After all, it will be only a matter of time before our immigrant friends too will be undergoing the same process of acculturation as [the Canadian-born] have already gone through, which means the acquiring of the cultural pattern of the land of their adoption.55

By attributing the event to cultural differences, mutual dislike and antagonism, the Chinatown News held both sides responsible for causing the fight. The local-born youth should not have looked down on the newcomers because of the latter's ineptitude in a new cultural environment, it suggested; nor should

55 3 February 1954.
the immigrants have ridiculed the "tusheng" for their poor command of Chinese cultural skills. However, this "even-handed" appraisal was encapsulated in a larger argument about the future of the ethnic group. The fundamental issue presented here was one of cultural adjustment on the part of the new immigrants. Since acculturation was inevitable and desirable for the Chinese, the cultural arrogance of the newcomers and their self-assured Chineseness were baseless. For their own good, they should have embarked on the process of local adaptation readily, and in that case, the local-born Chinese would have been in a better position to offer their sympathy, assistance, and support. The Chinatown News was indeed steadfast in upholding the native-born's cultural agenda.

Thereafter, no further affray was reported, though the chasm between the two groups remained as a fixture in the rest of the post-war period. At least it was considered to be so in the Chinese press. Occasionally, the latent tension erupted in open altercations. From the cases that are known, the immigrant youth appeared almost like a group of cultural vigilantes jumping on the local-born about various aspects of their deculturation. Considering their inflated cultural pride and their relentless criticism of the older immigrants in Vancouver, their affront to the "tusheng" was perhaps the other side of the same coin.

---

See, for examples, various articles in Chinese Voice 30 April - 1 May 1954, and 1 September 1956; Chinatown News 3 April 1968.
Bearing the brunt of these attacks were the younger second generation Canadian-born Chinese, in part because they were the contemporaries of the young newcomers. Moreover, their progressive loss of Chinese cultural skills, or interest in things Chinese, had rendered them more vulnerable to such disparagement than the first generation native-born.

In the immigrant youth's criticism of the "cultural mediocrity" of the Vancouver Chinese, the native-born's language preference was a popular target. Given the fact that facility in the English language can be both an economic asset and a status symbol for minorities in Canadian society, the local-born's command of English and, by contrast, the newcomers' own deficiency were a source of inter-group hostility and, for some immigrants, personal anxiety. The newcomers resented the Canadian-born's use of English in their dialogue with ethnic Chinese as showing-off. As a young Chinese essayist put it bluntly, "It should be clear that we are learning English in order to deal with westerners. We are not supposed to use it among fellow Chinese. If we all do that, will it not mean the end of overseas Chinese culture in this place?" This instrumental view of English amounted to a repudiation of the right of the "tusheng" to use what, after all, was their native language.

In addition, the new immigrants mocked the local-born's loss of facility in the Chinese language as a sign of their deculturation. The following excerpt, taken from an essay entitled

---

57 Chinese Voice 17 November 1956,
"Zhongguoren yu zhongwen" (Chinese people and Chinese language) in the Chinese Voice on October 20, 1956, is an example of their criticism of the "tusheng" on this issue:

Many overseas Chinese youths have totally neglected their Chinese language. They have failed to promote Chinese culture in our [Chinese] society...and present the wonderful heritage of our native country to the western people. Instead...they deride Chinese language as archaic and praise English as the most valuable language in the world. This situation is indeed lamentable.

Most Chinese youth who came from China have had their Chinese education up to the primary level. They know enough of the language and are not illiterate Chinese. This is not true for the local-born. I can assure you that a large majority of them are not interested in Chinese at all. They think that they have the same status as the local people since they grew up here. So they disregard Chinese and learn only English. Even though their parents force them to attend Chinese language school, they take the opportunity lightly with no serious intention of learning Chinese. Some of them have been studying for four or five years but still do not know how to write their name in Chinese. How miserable they are!

For Chinese people, not knowing any English at all is unimportant. They should not be expected to be otherwise. But for Chinese people to be ignorant of Chinese language is simply ridiculous. They are not qualified to be called Chinese.

At the end, the author proposed a number of ways -- attending Chinese language schools, reading Chinese newspapers, watching Chinese movies, and so on -- for the local-born to redeem
themselves.\textsuperscript{58}

The different view of the Canadian-born Chinese on this question can be gleaned from their writings over the years in the Chinatown News. Two editorials, published in 1957 and 1966, advocated explicitly and consistently that the local-born should learn Chinese, but only as "an extra" and "a foreign" language.\textsuperscript{59} The latter editorial further furnished some specific reasons for re-acquiring facility in the Chinese language:

Without a knowledge of the Chinese language we tend to lose \cite{sic} all consciousness of things Chinese. The ability to speak [Chinese] makes us conversant with another culture, besides the one in which we have been shaped in a Canadian setting. Our appearance and physical characteristics periodically expose us to [act as] the representatives of the mother [i.e. Chinese] culture. There is so much interest in Chinese things -- art, fashion and food, to name a few -- that to know the language is to acquire a priceless gem.

The editor was right when he referred to the emerging interest about China in the western countries. More importantly, the utterance reflected a growing belief in the value of Canadian pluralism and a better idea of the merits of integration (as

\textsuperscript{58} The author was "Ma Bing." The immigrant youth dwelled on this issue of Chinese language facility and the related notions of cultural dignity and ethnic loyalty in numerous articles. See another example by Xie Shaoyun, "Huatong he zhongwen" (Chinese children and Chinese language), Chinese Voice 21 April 1959. Similar essays can also be found in the Da Zhong Bao.

\textsuperscript{59} 3 October 1957 and 3 April 1966.
opposed to assimilation), which began to attract intense discussion in the larger society from the mid-1960s.

The number of local-born Chinese taking this piece of advice is not known. We do know, however, that the younger native-born tended to be uncompromising and resolute in refuting the accusation of language loss and deculturation. For instance, one local-born youth, writing in 1964, claimed that "Our elders fear we are losing our heritage -- but what they fail to realize is that our heritage is North America[n], no matter how much we or they deplore it, no matter how much they try to deny it."\(^{60}\) Two years later, a Canadian-born Chinese high school teacher observed that the local-born were doing much better in the post-war period than their forefathers. Several questions then arose: "Why should they jeopardize themselves by bringing up the past? What is this Chinese culture? Should they have a part in 'it'? Since they can get along well without speaking a word of Chinese, surely it is not at all necessary for them to learn Chinese."\(^{61}\) Compared with the first generation, the junior local-born were more emphatic in affirming their cultural differences from the immigrant Chinese.

This point also came up during a brief and rather amusing exchange in the correspondence column of the Chinatown News. The argument was triggered by the question: Could "tusheng" girls be good wives? The background of this was the extreme imbalance in sex

\(^{60}\) 18 March 1964.

\(^{61}\) 18 March 1966.
ratio among the incoming youth in the early stage of renewed Chinese immigration after 1947. Many male newcomers who soon reached their marriageable age found a dearth of suitable partners. By the mid-fifties there were reports of young Chinese going back to Hong Kong to seek spouses.\(^{62}\) In April 1956 the problem aroused even the sympathy of the Canadian government, which made a special provision to allow Chinese to send for their fiancées. Two months before this announcement was made, a young Chinese, apparently puzzled by the popularity of costly "wife hunting expedition," posed these questions to fellow readers of the magazine: "Why can't the Canadian[-born Chinese] girls capture these ambitious young men's hearts? Is there a shortage of girls? Or are there other reasons?"\(^{63}\)

In the following issue, a frank reply was given by a new immigrant youth who seems to have decided on using the occasion not so much to reason as to vent his anger and disappointment:

So far as I know, most of the Chinese girls who were born in Canada lack these requirements [of an ideal wife], and all these girls know is how to enjoy themselves and how to spend money and how to make up their faces as beautiful as white girls. They want a husband who must have a car, a house, or some other things representative of money. How can a young man afford these?... These young men are on their thousand


\(^{63}\) Chinatown News 3 February 1956.
miles' 'wife hunting expedition' because they know that some maidens in Hong Kong at least have the requirements, may be not all of these but more than the [native-born] girls...

I do not want to displease these girls, but the fact is that there are many, many Chinese girls born in Canada who ignore...their Chinese parentage...[and are] prejudiced against their own kind.64

The author of this letter was promptly reprimanded by others for his bigotry and bitter judgement on the Canadian-born Chinese. One of the rebuttals was furnished by a local-born girl from Lethbridge, Alberta:

Kindly allow me a couple of inches of your precious space to reply to Gerry Fong's highly amusing comments re. Canadian[-born Chinese] girls. Said he: "All these girls know is how to enjoy themselves, how to spend money and how to make up their faces as beautiful as white girls..." Come to think of it, Mr. Fong, if you don't find life glorious and yummy, I suggest you go and find a warm lake and do some acrobatics.

And where are you going? Wherever it may be, this much is certain: even if you have money to burn, you still can't take it with you! So why be a tightwad?

Your efforts sounded like the grumblings of a prejudiced mind when you insinuated that Chinese girls must use artificial makeup to be beautiful. Don't you realize that makeup is considered a necessity today, and not a vanity?

Certainly we want something representative of money in a man. Security should be taken into consideration. Love and understanding can grow with the years.

How can a man afford a home and a car? Why, any young man with half an ounce of ambition can acquire

---

64 Ibid. 18 February 1956.
I have yet to meet a Canadian-born who is not proud of her heritage. And you, who harbors [sic] such thoughts, are the one who should disqualify yourself as judge and jury...

Having been born and educated in Canada we naturally are a little more fussy when we come to pick our lifetime partner. Whereas many of our distant sisters [in Hong Kong] look at Canada through rose-colored glasses -- using marriage as a convenient vehicle to come to Canada. And I am sure many many must have dearly regretted their quick marriage to some of you dashing, albeit feelingless, wife hunters.⁶⁵ (emphasis added)

The right of the Canadian-born Chinese to be culturally different from the immigrants and not to be judged accordingly by others was fiercely defended.

Interestingly, the junior local-born were less aggressive in defending their right to represent Chinese culture. Perhaps this was their Achilles heel. More likely, it was because the claim to stand for Chinese culture had become a less important strand in the evolving local-born Chinese identity. One would no doubt have this impression on a revisit to the U.B.C. campus in the 1960s. As we recall, the Chinese Varsity Club of the local-born was the student organization that had represented Chinese identity and culture throughout the 1950s. This role was much resented and successfully contested by the Chinese Overseas Students' Association, made up of students originating mainly from Hong Kong. An important episode in

⁶⁵ Ibid. 18 March 1956.
the conflict between these two societies was the argument over "The Question of the Rickshaw," which broke out in February 1964.

As part of the celebration of the Chinese New Year on campus, the CVC performed a lion dance and exhibited a rickshaw. The latter, in fact, was a rather common exhibit, presented on occasions of Chinese festivity as an artifact with an oriental flavour that was exotic and appealing to non-Chinese eyes. The COSA had voiced its objection before, but this time, it launched a publicity campaign in the Chinese Voice to denounce the event as "youru guoti" (a national/cultural disgrace). In an open letter it took pain to point out that rickshaw had been an American invention in Meiji Japan. Once transplanted to China and various colonial cities in Southeast Asia, the vehicle had become an unmistakable symbol of the West's subjugation of Chinese people. To re-enact the scene was therefore a self-humiliation. The undertaking of the CVC was ridiculed as "tixiao jiefei" (laughable) and the superficiality of the native-born's grasp of Chinese culture, it argued, was evident.\(^\text{66}\)

In a rejoinder submitted to the Chinese Voice the following week, the CVC reiterated its belief in the popularity and success of the event.\(^\text{67}\) Unfortunately, this explanation just provided more ammunition for its critics who jumped on the CVC for being brazen and self-degrading, and for distorting and short-changing Chinese culture.

\(^{66}\) Chinese Voice 15 and 18 February 1964.

\(^{67}\) Ibid. 22 February 1964.
culture for the satisfaction and curiosity of non-Chinese. Reprints of letters criticizing the CVC ran for more than a week in the Chinese Voice.\textsuperscript{68} No further defense was presented by the CVC, even when the COSA published a critique in the Chinatown News.\textsuperscript{69} In the end, the COSA scored a victory in publicity. The CVC was silenced and the COSA emerged for the time being as the more dominant voice on campus regarding issues of Chinese identity and culture. But the local-born were to make a come back in the 1970s as will be shown in Chapter Six.

In retrospect, it is important to situate the process of identity construction of the native-born Chinese in the context of their relationship with the other Chinese. The increasing number and the maturing age of the local-born can be likened to a good supply of qualified actors or actresses. The cultural autonomy and economic independence of the native-born were perhaps the scripts which empowered these actors and informed their play. In the arena of intramural debate on issues of Chineseness and community, the Canadian-born Chinese acted out their cultural identity.

Compared with the Chinese immigrants, the most encompassing feature in the identity of the "tusheng" was their overall cultural orientation towards the host society. The more tangible markers included their prevailing use of English language and the locally-

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid. 25 February - 3 March 1964.

\textsuperscript{69} Chinatown News 3 March 1964.
derived formats of voluntary organizations. Among the ethnic Chinese in Vancouver, they shared the strongest sense of the embeddedness of their community in the larger Canadian society. This informed their vision of progressive acculturation of the Chinese and the future integration of their ethnic group into mainstream Canada. All these contrasted sharply with the cultural agendas of the new immigrant youth, who redefined Chinese identity by means of cultural regeneration and community revitalization.

In conclusion, the acculturation of the native-born did not necessarily lead to the obliteration of their Chineseness. Their acquisition of local culture has often been construed by the immigrant Chinese and scholars as evidence of their tendency towards assimilation. As this chapter clearly proves, Canadian-born Chinese were able to articulate a viable cultural position in the ethnic discourse on Chinese identity and community. Their divergent cultural trajectory from the other Chinese actually enlivened and intensified the debate.
Chapter Four: Ritual, Finance, and the Resilience of Traditional Organizations in the Post-war Era

The traditional Chinatown organizations such as the Chinese Benevolent Association, the Chinese Freemasons, the Kuomintang, and the numerous district and surname associations entered the post-war years representing the established order. In the earlier period, they had constituted a major effort by the immigrant Chinese to give meanings and substance to their "community" by defining and defending it in the larger context of a hostile, racist Canadian society. They had been instrumental in grooming a Chinese elite, articulating collective interests, and in the process, nurturing and solidifying a shared ethnic identity.

However, their prominent position within the ethnic group became increasingly untenable as the post-war period wore on. The cultural norms and social practices associated with the old-style associations were much criticized by the new immigrants and were rejected by the local-born Chinese. We have already examined the different emphases of these two groups in the construction of Chinese identity and in their visions of community. In this sense, the traditional organizations were victims of growing "pluralism" within the ethnic group.1

So many studies on North American Chinatowns have seemingly

---
confirmed the demise of traditional associations in the post-war years that their decline may no longer be a moot point. Gunter Baureiss, for instance, has argued from a theoretical position that since these ethnic institutions were predicated on the racist rejection which had induced the Chinese to put up a common defense, their utility and relevance to the Chinese presumably would have expired with perceptible improvement in racial relationships and the end of overt discrimination.  

Graham Johnson has offered another plausible historical explanation, surmising that "Political events in China in late 1949...were to change the nature of Chinese-Canadian involvement with the homeland and disrupt the activities of the clan and locality associations, and thus hasten their decline... Cut off from the homeland, the long-run consequence for the district and clan associations would be, with few exceptions, a decline in their vitality." In other words, since these organizations had been so preoccupied with China and the native areas, the loss of the home front after 1949 simply drained away most of their raison d'etre.


3 In Edgar Wickberg ed., From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p. 231. A different picture on this issue will be presented in Chapter Five.
Scholars working under the rubric of "modernization" theory or "development" studies also give this argument their support; they consider the traditional organizations "anachronistic" institutions and believe their demise in a modern society to be both logical and inevitable.⁴

While the dwindling popularity and centrality of the old-style associations seems indisputable, the picture will remain incomplete unless we also know something about what actually happened in, but not just to, these organizations. So far, existing studies tell us little about the internal developments of the traditional associations during those years. Relative to an earlier time, they may have been generally in decline, but they remained as a distinct category of voluntary organizations and some indeed flourished in their own way. How do we account for their staying power when the prevailing conditions, as suggested by many, were so unfavourable?

This chapter argues for the resilience of the traditional organizations and suggests that they continued to play an active role in the evolution of community consciousness and in the debate on Chinese identity.⁵ The discussion will first focus on two rather

---


⁵ Admittedly, my thinking on this subject has been considerably influenced by the works of Chinben See, Edgar Wickberg, Jiann Hsieh, and lately Elizabeth Sinn. In their research
obscure aspects of associational life, namely, the practice of collective rituals and the growth of their financial strength. Following this is an analytical history of the CBA from the late 1940s to the 1960s. Some studies have argued that the CBA generally declined from the end of World War II, and the assertion is worthy of scrutiny. The CBA was an umbrella organization that traditionally claimed to represent all Chinese. Its history will shed light on the community-making process within the ethnic group.

**Collective Rituals in the Traditional Organizations: Typology and Efficacy**

Let us begin with two general observations on the traditional associations in the post-war period. First of all, changes in the organizational inventory were negligible. Four existing associations followed the earlier examples of the others and upgraded themselves to become the national headquarters. Only two clan organizations were newly founded. One surname society reportedly resolved to disband, and others might have been defunct without being noticed. The net result was a fairly constant number on the traditional associations in various overseas Chinese contexts, they tend to ask questions that help to bring out the more dynamic side of these organizations. See the numerous works of these scholars in the bibliography.

---

of traditional associations, about forty between 1945 and 1970.\footnote{The new national headquarters included the Chee Duck Tong, Yee Fung Toy Tong, Yue San Association, and Chew Luen Society. See their organizational files, CCRC, Boxes 2 and 3. Chinese Voice 26 July and 17 November 1955. The founding of Nam Yeung Tong and Gee How Oak Tin Association were reported in ibid. 26 November 1955 and 20 March 1962. On the dissolution of the Lu Ming Bitsuey, see Ibid. 20 September 1965 and 2 February 1966. My estimate of the total number of traditional Chinatown organizations in post-war Vancouver corresponds with Johnson's in From China to Canada, pp. 329-31.}

The size of organizational membership is hard to determine and our picture is again very general. We are now familiar with the difficulties these associations had in recruiting members among the new immigrants and the native-born Chinese. We have also discerned some important variations in this respect: the Chinese Freemasons and the two major surname organizations of the Wongs were more successful in overcoming this problem because of their auxiliary educational and recreational facilities; doing less well were those associations that experimented with youth corps for a period of time; even worse were those that had nothing at all to appeal to the young newcomers and the local-born. For this last group of organizations, the failure at membership replenishment by the 1960s could be detrimental to their vitality as aging took a heavy toll among their elderly members.

Indeed, if we had been present in the post-war period and had asked some critics about the functions of the old-style associations, we might have received a reply like the following, which has been reconstructed from a variety of sources:
I do not really know. I guess not much is going on nowadays in these organizations. They are just a bunch of old people who come together for their own interests. They may have some meetings periodically to commemorate their predecessors, to celebrate their organization's founding anniversary, to create and then to rotate among themselves leadership positions, to pay homage to Taiwan, and above all, to have a feast. Their so-called "functions" are but formalities with hardly any substance at all.  

There is a certain element of truth in these criticisms. Most functions of these associations can be construed as a public performance of collective rituals, in the sense that they were activities prescribed by tradition and were so regularly observed that some participants may not have been very conscious of their meanings. Nevertheless, the denigration of ritual practices as vulgar "formalities" and the interpretation of this phenomenon as a proof of fossilization would be naive. For a simple rebuttal of these accusations, one can refer to the considerable amount of personal enthusiasm expressed during ritual observance and the heavy expenses incurred for the ceremonial undertakings at times. For a more sophisticated understanding of the collective rituals that permeated organizational activities, it will be

---

8 Two particularly useful items are: "Qiaotuan shi 'fengjian de baolei' ma?" (Are the traditional organizations a 'feudalist citadel'?') by Wu Yihong, and "Weihe youren yaozuo 'qiaoling'?" (Why some people want to be "leaders" [in the organizations]?') by "Zhan Wang", in Chinese Voice 20 May 1958 and 1 February 1969.
helpful to draw on the theoretical insights of cultural and social anthropologists who have studied rituals either generally or in a Chinese context. The work of Victor Turner, which has shaped and sharpened the thinking of many scholars on this subject, can be our point of departure. According to Turner, we can define ritual as "prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routines, having reference to beliefs in invisible beings or powers regarded as the first and final causes of all effects." Also, we should "think of ritual essentially as performance, enactment, not primarily as rules or rubrics" (emphases original). Ritual may look "rigid," "empty," and "threadbare," but it is in fact "richly textured," with living meanings embedded. Another important observation by Turner, 


From Ritual to Theatre, pp. 79-81. In a critique of 'neo-Durkheimian' analyses, Steven Lukes, a British political sociologist, defines ritual similarly as "rule-governed activity of a symbolic character which draws the attention of its participants to objects of thought and feeling which they hold to be of special
derived from Clifford Geertz, is that since ritual "is tacitly held to communicate the deepest values of the group regularly performing it, it has a 'paradigmatic' function... As a 'model for,' ritual can anticipate, even generate change; as a 'model of,' it may inscribe order in the minds, hearts, and wills of participants"\(^{11}\) (emphasis original).

This last point, that rituals communicate ideals, is relevant in two important ways to our reconstruction of the discourse on community among the Chinese. First, the elderly settlers appeared to be less vocal in expressing their thoughts in written form, when compared with the better educated newcomers and the native-born Chinese. Their patronage of public rituals in the traditional organizations was probably the best way to articulate their ideas on Chinese identity and the community. As they engaged in what Steven Sangren calls the "ritual construction of social space," their ritual behaviour provides us with the most vivid non-written "script" to work out a portrait of their "mental" community.\(^{12}\)

Second, to the critics and the uninitiated observers, the almost obsessive evocation of old-country nostalgia and sentiments

\(^{11}\) From Ritual to Theatre, p. 82. Geertz's original formulation is in his essay "Religion as a Cultural System," in idem., The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), pp. 87-125, especially p. 123.

\(^{12}\) History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), Part II.
of internal unity and harmony, and the invariable claim of importance for the organizations at the time of ritual observance (see below), were rhetorical at best and hypocritical at worst. Nevertheless, these memories, claims, and visions, irretrievable and unrealistic as they seemed to be, functioned as a "model," in Geertz's terms, in knitting together a "community." In his study of Lukang in Taiwan two decades ago, Donald DeGlopper also discovered the efficacy of "ritual pretensions" (emphasis added) for the reinvention of a *gemeinschaft* by the local residents who wanted to reclaim a glorious past for their town.13

In general the collective rituals practised in the post-war years by traditional Chinese associations in Vancouver can be divided into several types. Because a ritual performance is by nature "multivocal" -- that is, it can be endowed with different meanings and purposes by individuals who take part in it, my categories are arbitrary and are meant just to highlight some of the essential features.14

---


14 On ritual's "multivocality," see Turner, "Social Dramas and Ritual Metaphors," p. 104. To do full justice to the "multivocality" of every ritual practice would require a detailed ethnography which is beyond the scope of the present study. My following discussion of collective rituals is based on an extensive reading of news reports on these events in the *Chinese Times* and *Chinese Voice*, accounts in the publications of the organizations, interviews with people who have the experience of attending those functions, and my personal participation and observation in field work since 1988. Documentation will be provided wherever it is appropriate.
Table 4.1 shows the common items on an annual ritual cycle observed by the traditional Chinese associations. It indicates the range of ritual activities but there are a few omissions. The emphasis here is on those functions that occasioned wider membership participation. The list does not include things like executive meetings that could be equally "ritualistic" but involved only a few. The irregular events such as funerals held by the associations on behalf of the deceased members, or receptions for some visiting dignitaries are also omitted. Ceremonial activities which took place less frequently, such as the conventions sponsored by the national headquarters in Vancouver, are also not on the list though they will be mentioned.

A collective ritual that served an explicit administrative purpose was the annual election of executive officials. A traditional organization was usually run by a general committee of several dozen people. Within this committee was a smaller executive body led by a chairman and a few standing committee members. The maximum version of an election would take weeks to complete, as it included: the initial nomination of candidates; a preliminary round of election for the general committee; another round to elect executives to the standing committee and other sub-committees; and a final installation ceremony. Such an elaborate procedure was followed by the CBA and some well-established clan and district
### Table 4.1

The Annual Ritual Cycle Observed by Traditional Chinese Organizations in Vancouver in the Post-War Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Election of Officials</td>
<td>Held annually by most organizations between November and February of the following year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Spring Banquet</td>
<td>Held frequently during February and March.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Spring Rite at the Qingming Festival</td>
<td>During March and April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Autumn Rite at the Chongyang Festival</td>
<td>During September and October; Became common in the early 1960s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Founding Anniversary</td>
<td>Various dates. Held annually by many organizations with increasing regularity in the post-war period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Birthday Celebration of (Fictitious) Progenitors</td>
<td>Practised by the Chinese Freemasons and a number of clan associations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Commemoration of the 1911 Revolution</td>
<td>Annually on 10 October.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Commemoration of the Founding of the Republic of China</td>
<td>Annually on 1 January.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Chinese Times and Chinese Voice
associations. At the other end of the scale were the smaller organizations, that is, those with fewer members, less resourceful leaders, more limited financial capability, and probably lower esteem for the collectivity. It is interesting, though, to observe how they managed to compress or condense the lengthy procedure into a minimum version which was still considered dignified and presentable to themselves and any outside observers. A case in point is the Ing Suey Sun Tong. With just a few dozen members, the Tong's practice was to get everyone to sit on the executive committee. The entire election business, including the nomination, the casting and counting of votes, and the installation of the new executive, could be taken care of at an annual general meeting attended usually by less than two dozen people in a weekend evening.

The second type of public rituals was expressly religious-cum-cultural. It included the spring and autumn rites dedicated to the deceased members at the Qingming and Chongyang Festivals. Qingming had long been an occasion for ancestral worship among the Chinese and their organizations in Vancouver. The observance of Chongyang, however, seems to have been added to the ritual cycle in the early

15 At the beginning and end of every year, the Chinese language newspapers were usually inundated by reports on these events.

1960s and was therefore, to use Sangren's terms, a case of "ritual intensification." The traditional associations were likely to pay more attention to the commemoration of the deceased in the post-war period. Not only did an increasing number of elderly Chinese pass away, the dead were to be buried locally in a permanent fashion once the practice of exhuming bones and sending them back to China for reburial ceased in 1951.

The birthday celebration of the fictitious progenitors in the surname organizations was another ritual with a strong religious overtone (See Table 4.2). The Chinese Freemasons organizations were the only other traditional associations that held comparable functions. They traced their historical roots to the secret societies in Qing China and took great pride in the Freemason orthodoxy about loyalty and righteous behaviour. Their membership initiation ceremony also had the strongest religious flavour among the organizations.

---

17 Sangren, History and Magical Power. See particularly Chapter Five for his ideas on ritual intensification and the subsequent "filling in" of the ritual landscape.

18 The practice was formally terminated in November 1951 when it was decided at a CBA meeting that 860 sets of human bones awaiting shipment to China since 1939 would remain in Canada in view of the political situation in Mainland China. Chinese Times 26 November 1951. For a commentary on the more enthusiastic observance of Qingming by the traditional organizations, see an editorial in Chinese Voice 5 April 1966.

Table 4.2

Clan Associations and the Birthday Celebration of Progenitors in the Post-war Period (With the dates in parentheses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clan Association</th>
<th>Ritual Name of Progenitor(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chee Duck Tong HQs</td>
<td>&quot;Gugong danfu taiwang&quot; (March)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lam Sai Ho Tong HQs</td>
<td>&quot;Bigan taishizu&quot; (April)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Clan Association HQs</td>
<td>&quot;Sanqing dadao, shiji gaozhen, hunyuan jiaozhu, taishang laojun&quot; (March)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung Kong Kung So HQs</td>
<td>&quot;Liu zhaojie di&quot; (March)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Guan sheng di&quot; (July)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Zhang huan hou&quot; (September)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Zhao shunping hou&quot; (October)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oylin Society HQs</td>
<td>&quot;Zhou lianqi gong&quot; (October)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yee Fung Toy Tong HQs</td>
<td>&quot;Zhong xiang gong&quot; (October)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HQs = National Headquarters

Sources: Chinese Times and Chinese Voice
Compared to the second category, the third type of collective rituals displayed a stronger social and cultural rather than religious orientation. Good examples are the spring banquets in the Chinese New Year and the celebration of the organizations' founding anniversaries. The former were by far the most popular ceremonial events. Elderly members who had "Jinru yiwu" (fulfilled all the obligations [to the association]) were honoured by being escorted to the venue and treated to a nice meal. Not only were a significant number of women and children present, even nominal members who seldom set foot in the meeting hall were expected to show up. The founding anniversaries, in comparison, were usually celebrated on a smaller scale and attended mainly by active members. The special anniversaries, such as a silver or golden jubilee, were the exceptions which warranted a grander celebration.

Lastly, there were the political rituals associated with the support for the Nationalist regime in Taiwan. The local Kuomintang was the most enthusiastic about them. It observed basically every ceremonial function prescribed by the party-state to propagate the regime's orthodoxy and pay tribute to Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek. Assisted by the Chinese Consulate-General and later the CBA, it publicized these activities and encouraged other organizations to follow. Well into the late sixties, a certain number of traditional associations continued to commemorate the 1911
Revolution and the founding of the Republic of China as a token expression of their alignment with the Nationalist government. But their number dwindled. These political rituals were most vulnerable when interest in Chinese politics generally declined in the post-war years.\(^{20}\)

To put things in historical perspective, it must be added that the public rituals mentioned above, with the possible exception of Chongyang, had already been in place before the war. They intensified modestly thereafter in the sense that the annual ritual cycle became more widely observed among the organizations. Another example of ritual intensification was the holding of national conventions by the associational headquarters in Vancouver. Table 4.3 gives an incomplete list of these events in the post-war period. For at least one organization, the Yee Fung Toy Tong, the practice was unknown before the war.

What then was the importance of collective rituals? We can discern their significance by studying the symbolism and the layers of socio-cultural meanings embedded in each ritual performance. The spring banquet, for instance, signified "the presence of the group in its full numerical strength" and impressed "those present with a deep sense of group consciousness." It was an important occasion to expound the theme of unity by the delivery of appropriate

\(^{20}\) The impact of old-country politics on the Vancouver Chinese society will be assessed in Chapter Five.
Table 4.3

An Incomplete List of National Conventions Held by the Traditional Associations in Vancouver Chinatown in the Post-War Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949, 1950</td>
<td>Chinese Freemasons HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950, 1955</td>
<td>Wong Kung Har Tong HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Wong Wun San Society HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Lung Kong Kung So HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955, 1960</td>
<td>Kuomintang HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955, 1960, 1964, 1968</td>
<td>Yee Fung Toy Tong HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Hoy San Ning Yung Benevolent Assn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958, 1969</td>
<td>Mah Society HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963, 1965</td>
<td>Lee Clan Association HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Chee Duck Tong HQs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HQs = National Headquarters

Sources: Chinese Times, Chinese Voice, and various organizational publications
speeches, by recognizing the contributions of certain individuals to the organization, and by everyone's partaking together in a big feast which symbolized the sharing of abundance. It was, additionally, a potential rallying point for collective actions such as to raise money for a scholarship fund or to ponder upon a new project in realty investment. Hence, the spring banquet was (and still is) a most colourful event to observe in Chinese organizations.  

The ancestral rite in an association also had its special purpose. Unlike ancestral worship in a family setting, the object of veneration in an organization was always the progenitor of the group. The rite was therefore more than an individual act of filial piety. Besides buttressing the collective identity, it was an attempt to lay claim to a larger historical memory by commemorating the pioneering generations of sojourners and settlers whose frugality, perseverance, and hard work were considered by the elderly immigrants to be the standard of Chinese culture and instrumental in the well-being of the present generation. These "Chinese" values were then affirmed and celebrated, and the organizations were portrayed as vehicles to preserve them for posterity.

The annual election of officials was yet another interesting

21 C.K. Yang's comments on comparable communal events in traditional rural China are helpful for my understanding of this important congregational ritual. Indeed, there were many interesting parallels. See Religion in Chinese Society, Chapters Two to Four. The quotes are from p. 43.
ritual performance. Campaigning and open competition were rare, with the emphasis on consensus and some kind of power sharing or office rotation. Nevertheless, the formal election was good for both procedural legality and the bestowing of moral legitimacy upon the leadership. Of equal symbolic importance was the opportunity given periodically to members to take part in a "major" decision about the future of an organization.

Of course, the public rituals were not disparate items in the cultural repertoire of the traditional organizations. Their aggregate efficacy can best be appreciated by looking at the transcendence of two pairs of paradoxes in ritual practices.

First, ritual performances and communal celebrations were to enhance the vitality of traditional associations. Prime attention was always given to the group and participants were invited to come to renew their sentiments of pride, loyalty, and unity. The collective identity was exalted; the meeting hall was physically redecorated for the ceremonial occasions; and corporate strengths were displayed by means of reports and advertisements in the Chinese language press and were paraded on the street of Chinatown. However, individual identities and differences were transcended in the process, but not eclipsed. By taking part in congregational activities, individual members would feel secure and gratified as they refreshed their sense of belonging to the organization, rubbed shoulders with one another, and met their leaders. Some people were honoured by their organizations for their service, or because their
personal achievements reflected positively on the group. Others who helped out with the event were given a chance to assume responsibilities in the esteemed public arena. Leaders, in particular, gained visibility by demonstrating leadership qualities such as skills in making public speeches, willingness to contribute financial resource, and above all, enthusiasm for organizational affairs. To quote Turner again, these participants in rituals all became "heroes in (their) own dramas," as their personal images were enlarged and self-worth inflated. The public ritual, in this sense, wove together individuals and the corporate body of a particular organization into a single, and almost seamless, tapestry.

Secondly, it is true that the traditional associations held their ritual activities separately on an individual organizational basis. Equally undeniable is that ritual performance could be competitive and conducive to conflict among the associations. Nevertheless, the subscription to a common corpus of ritual practices and behaviour helped to transcend these organizations as separate entities and generate an aura of consensus and an "imagined community" in the Chinese minority. Not only did the

---

22 Turner called this function of ritual performance "reflexivity." From Ritual to Theatre, p. 75.

23 As argued persuasively by William Rowe, conflicts are not necessary antithetical to the development of community consciousness. See his Hankow: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City 1796-1895 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989). My borrowing of the term "imagined community" from Benedict Anderson is obvious, though in his major work, he is talking about human collectivities at a different level. Imagined Communities:
traditional associations observe basically the same ritual events
and ceremonial procedure. Above all, they spoke in unison about
their "community" by dwelling on the ideal of internal unity and
harmony among the Chinese, by upholding the preservation of their
more traditional version of Chinese culture, and by portraying
themselves as the public realm and the prop of a "community."
Cross-participation of associations in one another's ceremonies and
overlapping membership further reinforced integration through a
common ritual tradition and shared community visions. On those
occasions, they exchanged gifts, sang one another's praises, and
networked across organizations. These were often represented as the
finest moments of Chinese solidarity.  

Financial Management as Ritual

Except in passing, a special kind of collective ritual was
left out in our discussion so far. It concerns the attempts of old-
style organizations to draw on their members' resources to buttress
their financial bases. Like the rest of their cultural repertoire,
these efforts at financial mobilization followed standardized
procedures loaded with symbols and meanings. Yet, a successful
performance of these exercises would have far greater repercussions

Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso,

On ritual integration, cf. C.K. Yang, Religion in Chinese
Society, p. 95; DeGlopper, "Religion and Ritual in Lukang," pp. 66-
69; and Sangren, History and Magical Power, p. 51.
on the capability of the traditional associations to sustain themselves as vital and influential institutions among the Chinese.

Before analyzing this important subject, let us take a look generally at the financial structure of the traditional associations. Naturally, the size and details of their budgets varied from one to another according to membership size and amount of property ownership. During the World War II period the annual budget of a fairly large organization like the Hoy Ping District Association, with several hundred local members, was more than a thousand dollars. By contrast, the budget of a minor clan association such as the Ing Suey Sun Tong was relatively small.25

On the income side, members were usually required to pay a basic fee when they first joined an organization and then to contribute a small amount to the coffers every year. The collection of this "annual fee" must have been a difficult task, as some associations admitted that a large majority of their members owed them years of payment in arrears.26 Another requested item of contribution was the so-called "chukou fei" (the exit fee) of two

25 See the statement of account balance of the Hoy Ping District Association from 1925 to 1946 in Zhuyun Quanjia Kaiping Zong Huiquanzan tekan (A Special Issue of the Hoy Ping District Association Canadian Headquarters in Vancouver) (1947), pp. 49-55. For similar information on the Ing Suey Sun Tong, see Wu Xushan Tong caoliu bao (Ing Suey Sun Tong Account Books) 1936-43, 1944-51, and 1952-55.

26 For example, see Jianada Huang Jiangxia Zongtang diliujie quanjia kenqin dahui shimoji (An Account of the Sixth National Convention of the Wong Kung Har Tong Canadian Headquarters) (1955), p. 37.
dollars to be honoured by every member who returned to China. This practice is known to have been suspended during the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-45, resumed briefly in the late 1940s, and largely abandoned in the 1950s because, by then, few Chinese were going back to settle in their home villages. Even when it was in operation, however, the exit fee was not really a source of income for the organizations as it was earmarked for the cost of exhuming the bones of deceased members and then forwarding them to China for reburial. The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Victoria was in charge of this, and all the exit fees collected were eventually transferred to it.\footnote{See the record of transaction on the exit fee between the Hoy Ping District Association and the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Zhuyun Quanjia Kaiping Zong Huiquan tekan, pp. 49-50. Also David T.H. Lee, Jianada Huaqiao shi (A History of the Chinese in Canada) (Taipei: Canada Free Press, 1967), pp. 221-24.}

Over the years, associations devised various ways to supplement their meagre regular income. At the end of the war period, the Hoy Ping District Association ran an in-house lottery and netted more than three thousand dollars. The Lee Clan Association actually made this an annual event to encourage its members to pay their yearly dues.\footnote{Zhuyun Quanjia Kaiping Zong Huiquan tekan, p. 50. The sources give no indication of when the Lee Clan Association started its annual lottery for fee-paying members. My latest reference for this event is a report in Chinese Voice 20 September 1957.} It was also common to hold a fund drive to finance a project like one of the Chinese language schools in Chinatown. In talking about the fund-raising campaigns
of the traditional organizations, we have again entered a piece of highly "ritualized" territory. Rules were designed to recognize the financial contributions of the benefactors and, particularly, to articulate the differences in the amount of donation. Other than encouraging contribution, this game of "competitive generosity," as Sangren describes it, was a well-established way of grooming and recognizing leaders by the stress it put on distinction.29

Another popular way to generate extra income was to make financial contribution an integral part of any ritual performance. Members were supposed to donate some money to defray the cost of a congregational ceremony. The occasion was most suitable for members and especially leaders to express their loyalty to the collectivity and to show a concern for the common good by means of a donation. In this way, a costly public ritual could become a financially self-sufficient undertaking.30

An item of regular expense was the rental payment for the premises unless an organization had its own property. Since the early days of the traditional associations in the city, some organizations had used an ingenious method to solicit contributions

29 See Figure 4.1 for an example of "competitive generosity" in action in the Mon Keong School's fund raising campaign that lasted for several years from late 1944. For another example in a later period, see Huagiao Gongli Xuexiao choumu jingfei zhengxin lu (A Report on the Fund-raising Campaign of the Chinese Public School) (1963), pp. 3-8. Sangren, History and Magical Power, p. 78.

30 For an example of a collection of an anniversary fee, see the case of the Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association at the celebration of its sixtieth founding anniversary in 1957. Chinese Times 8 October 1957.
"...In order to encourage donation to the School, the Board of Directors has decided to use the following scheme to recognize the contributions of our benefactors:

1. For those contributing $5 or above, their names will be inscribed on a mirror hanging in the hall.
2. For those contributing $25 or above, their personal pictures of two inches large will be hanged in the hall.
3. For those contributing $50 or above, their personal picture of three inches large will be hanged in the hall.
4. For those contributing $100 or above, their personal pictures of four inches large will be hanged in the hall.
5. For those contributing $200 or above, their personal pictures of six inches large will be hanged in the hall.
6. For those contributing $500 or above, their personal pictures of eight inches large will be hanged in the hall.
7. For those contributing $1,000 or above, their personal pictures of twelve inches large will be hanged in the hall. The classrooms will also be named after these benefactors individually.
8. For the one contributing $3,000 to 5,000, a personal picture of twenty inches large will be hanged in the hall. The school playground will also be named after this benefactor....

Foon Sien Wong
Chairman, Board of Directors
Mon Keong School
9 October 1944"

Source: An extract from "Wenqiang Xuexiao xiaodonghui dongshizhang Huang Wenfu baogao shu" (A report by Foon Sien Wong, Chairman, Board of Director, Mon Keong School) (1944). In Foon Sien Wong Papers, Box 3.

N.B. Apparently, the board was expecting only one benefactor who would contribute a sum of three thousand dollars or more, since only one school playground would be built. The competitive potential of the scheme is obvious.
from members for the purchase of their own clubhouses. Property ownership not just helped to save the monthly rental. It provided an additional source of income since extra floor space could be rented out. The Wong Kung Har Tong, a leading Chinatown organization representing the biggest surname group, was a case in point. It bought a large building on East Pender Street in 1922. The second and third levels were used for the meeting hall and the Mon Keong School respectively, and the ground floor was rented out. By 1950, this piece of property was said to be worth $100,000.\(^{31}\)

During the post-war years the unprecedented number of traditional associations, many of them for the first time, making real estate investment in Chinatown was amazing (See Table 4.4). In this period of prosperity, the value of land properties rose steadily. Many organizations probably considered this venture a viable investment. Another plausible explanation for this sudden outburst of enthusiasm in buying properties was the increasing availability among Chinese of capital for local consumption. First the Sino-Japanese War and then the better chance of family reunion in Canada after 1947 had led to a decline in the amount of remittance being sent back to China and Hong Kong.\(^{32}\) In any case,

\(^{31}\) Jianada Huang Jiangxia Zongtong di wujie quanjia kengin dahui shimoji (An Account of the Fifth National Convention of the Wong Kung Har Tong Canadian Headquarters) (1950), pp. 46-47. Other examples included the CBA, the Chinese Freemasons, the Shon Yee Benevolent Association, the Lung Kong Kung So, and the Ing Suey Sun Tong.

\(^{32}\) David Lai makes the same point in his recently published The Forbidden City Within Victoria: Myth, Symbol and Streetscape of Canada's Earliest Chinatown (Victoria: Orca Book Publishers, 1991),
### Table 4.4

Investment in Real Estate by Vancouver's Traditional Chinese Associations in the Post-war Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Associations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Ming Sing Reading Room*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Chee Duck Tong*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-52</td>
<td>Oylin Society HQs*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Yee Fung Toy Tong HQs*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Fong Loon Tong HQs*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Hoy Ping District Association HQs*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>Nam Ping Bitsuey*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>Wong Wun San Society HQs*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Lee Clan Association HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Nam Yeung Tong HQs*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Chung Shan Lung Jen Association*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Shon Yee Benevolent Association HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-59</td>
<td>Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>Cheng Wing Yeong Tong HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>Sue Yuen Tong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Mah Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Kong Chow District Association HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Fong Loon Tong HQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-66</td>
<td>Gee How Oak Tin Association*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Lee Clan Association HQs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* First time property-owners
HQs = National Headquarters

Sources: Chinese Times, Chinese Voice, and various organizational publications
the corporate enthusiasm for investment in real estate expired only in the early sixties as a result of uncertainty over the future of the neighbourhood caused by the city government's plans for urban redevelopment.

The method of financial mobilization known as the baizi hui (literally, meaning "A Club of a Hundred Sons") deserves a careful analysis. The critical thing about this scheme was that unlike all the other fund raising methods, the baizi hui was not predicated on donation from members to finance a large-scale and potentially burdensome undertaking. It was also different from a conventional money pool, or hui in Chinese, in which a dozen individuals would rotate their right to use a sum of money to meet the need for personal consumption, investment capital, or emergency funds.33 Instead, the baizi hui modelled on government bonds. The association took the role of the organizer and set up a real estate company under its name. The entire membership was invited to contribute in the form of shares. The money raised would be invested in land properties that would house the association and generate rental income. Part of the proceeds so derived could be

pp. 20-22.

credited to shareholders as dividends and as repayment of the principal. An ideal scenario would then be for an organization to buy back all the shares and become the exclusive legal owner of the properties and for the members to be duly compensated for their investment.

There was a successful example of baizi hui in the Hoy Ping District Association. In late 1951, the Association managed to raise $40,000 through a baizi hui. In the following year, the money was used to buy a two-storey building on Main Street. Apparently the properties were generating good income because both the repurchase of the principal and the payment of dividends began in 1955. By 1970 the Association had acquired sole ownership after buying back a total of 800 shares from its member-investors (See Table 4.5).34

In sharp contrast was the experience of the rather hapless Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association. The idea of a baizi hui was first conceived at a grand celebration of the Association's sixtieth anniversary in 1957. More than $30,000 was raised and a building in the 200 block of East Hastings Street was bought in 1959. However, this promising undertaking quickly turned into a nightmare. In a matter of a few years, sections of the building were destroyed by fire twice (some sources say three times). Unable to pay the necessary renovation, the Association failed to derive

---

34 Chinese Voice 6 December 1951 and 18 August 1952. An article in Chinese Times 8 June 1973 also provides some of the details.
Table 4.5

The Repurchase of Shares from the Baizi hui by the Hoy Ping District Association, 1955-1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Shares Brought Back</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1 February 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>10 February 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>29-31 January 1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>13-14 January 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>19 January 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14 January 1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>17 January 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20 January 1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>15 January 1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19-20 January 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12 January 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23 January 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>27 February 1970</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Except for the year 1955 where the public notice is taken from the Chinese Times, the rest are from the Chinese Voice.
any rental income from this building and, in turn, had to continue
renting a floor from the CBA as its premises. Even more
embarrassing were its indebtedness to the bank, as a loan had been
arranged to finance the project, and its failure to offer any
compensation to the member-investors for some fifteen years. Only
in the mid-1970s did the problem finally begin to resolve itself. 35

The unfortunate case of the Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent
Association was exceptional. As a matter of fact, the baizi hui was
a sound financial scheme. On the one hand, many traditional
associations became property owners in this period through the
shrewd management of a real estate project. The returns included
a stable income and a potential source of capital for undertakings
like scholarship provision, membership welfare, and public
charities. Altogether, institutional staying power and prestige
were enhanced, rendering the traditional organizations more
attractive for leaders and members alike. On the other hand,
participants in the baizi hui were basically not required to
sustain any financial sacrifice. Seto Gock, a Chinese leader, once
explained in an article the advantages of joining a baizi hui. As
he argued, the investment was safe, it enjoyed a relatively high

35 Taishan Ningyang Huiquan liushi zhounian jinian tekan
(Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association Sixtieth Anniversary
Souvenir Publication) (1958); Quanjia Taishan yiqiao dierjie kengin
dahui tekan (A Special Issue of the Second Convention of the
Taishan Overseas Chinese in Canada) (1975), p. 46; and Yunbu
Taishan Huiquan bashi zhounian jinian tekan (Vancouver Hoy Sun
Benevolent Association Eightieth Anniversary Souvenir Publication)
degree of liquidity, and its five percent guaranteed annual interest was comparable to the yield of government bonds. The baizi hui was, simultaneously, a good "private" investment that contributed to a "public" enterprise.\footnote{Chinese Voice 8 May 1961.}

The transcendence of public and private should remind us that baizi hui was not simply a financial set-up but also a ceremonial activity loaded with symbolic meanings. Similar to other collective rituals, this undertaking emphasized the group identity. For instance, most organizations specified that members alone were eligible to take part in the baizi hui. Moreover, the collectivity claimed the inalienable right to buy back any shares that had fallen into the hands of "outsiders." These provisions were to safeguard corporate ownership, which was the ultimate purpose of the venture.\footnote{For instance, both conditions were stipulated in Huang Yunshang Zong Gongsuo shiye gongsi zhangcheng (The Constitution of the Real Estate Company of the Wong Wun San Society Headquarters) (1953). Another example can be found in Jianada Huang Jiangxia Tong shiye gongsi zhangcheng (The Constitution of the Real Estate Company of the Wong Kung Har Tong of Canada) (1944, 1950).}

An interesting feature of the baizi hui, in contrast to the other fund-raising methods which emphasized distinction, was the spirit of egalitarian participation among the members. With few exceptions, the value of each share was kept very low -- usually from five to twenty dollars -- to make it affordable. There was a uniform interest rate regardless of the difference in the amount of
investment. The date of maturity was decided by drawing lots and each investor was, in turn, to collect his principal and dividends. It is known that in at least one case, to prevent excessive ownership and control a maximum number of shares was prescribed for any single investor (See Figure 4.2). Such was the spirit of *baizi hui*. Of all the collective rituals, it probably gave the most substance to the saying that "the association belongs to all of the members," a rhetoric which can still be heard in organizational settings.

Finally, two well-documented examples can further illustrate the potency of *baizi hui*. In 1953, the Wong Wun San Society Headquarters organized a successful *baizi hui* and bought a building on East Pender Street. A report, printed in 1957, gives us a detailed picture of this financial mobilization.¹⁸ Issuing some 5,500 shares at a value of $10 each, a sum of $55,000 was raised. Among the institutional share-holders were the Wong Wun San Societies in Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, and Montreal and the Headquarters in Vancouver which contributed 1,000 shares. There were 78 individual share-holders from various Canadian Chinatowns, but the bulk of the capital was raised from local members. Table

---

Figure 4.2

The Regulations of the **Baizi hui** in Fong Loon Tong Headquarters, 1961

"...Our Headquarters has decided to buy a building in the northeast corner of Hastings and Carrall Streets at the price of $90,000. The following regulations will be applied regarding our ownership and investment:

1. A real estate department is set up in the Fong Loon Tong Headquarters.
2. The legal ownership is in the name of the Fong Loon Tong#.
3. All shares are of uniform value, i.e. $20 each.
4. The basic capital consists of the money we got from the city government when our previous building was expropriated and our savings in the bank.
5. All See and Seto clansmen, sisters (including those who have already "married out"), and our close relatives* who are residing in Canada should subscribe at least one share ($20) as a responsibility. A maximum ownership of 100 shares ($2,000) is prescribed to prevent control by any single member.
6. There is an annual interest of five per cent for the amount of investment. By drawing lots, the dividends and the principal will be paid to each investor in order. The amount of interests will be calculated from the date of the actual payment of the capital.
7. The ownership of the shares is transferrable to the spouses, siblings and close relatives upon a written notification to our department.
8. People who want to cash their shares before maturity can do so by giving the department a one-month notice. Those who withdraw during the first half of the year will forfeit all the interest of the year, and those who withdraw during the second half will be paid half of their annual interest for that year...."

# Apparently, the organization had not changed its name at the government registrar when it was upgraded into a national headquarters.

* The deviation from the standard practice of restricting shareholding to members can probably be explained by the fact that the Fong Loon Tong had too small a membership. To relax the restriction was to maximize participation.

Source: An extract from "Jianada Fenglun Zongtang shiyebu qishi" (A Public Notice by the Real Estate Department of the Fong Loon Tong Headquarters), Chinese Voice 5 May 1961.
4.6 classifies the 514 share-holders from Vancouver according to the amount of their investment. It should be pointed out that there was no such discrimination in the report, where the "Gufen fangming" (name list of the share-holders) may simply be organized according to the time sequence of subscription.

The egalitarian spirit of the baizi hui is borne out by the evidence in this table. Over seventy per cent of the member-investors contributed $50 or less. In fact, one out of four subscribed only the minimum amount of one share. The bigger investors -- say, those who bought more than $100 worth of shares -- made up only twelve per cent. Moreover, some 25 per cent of the capital was raised by the seventy per cent of small investors. This baizi hui formula seems to have worked well for the Society. Considering the outcome merely in financial terms, this real estate project generated a monthly rental income of $570 and provided the Society and the Hon Hsing Athletic Club with their new premises for a nominal rent.

The baizi hui organized by the Lee Clan Association around the same time was very different because of its exceptionally elitist impulse. Even its origin was rather unconventional. In late 1952, the Association was presented with an opportunity to acquire the

---

Table 4.6
A Classification of Share-holders According to the Amount of their Investment in the Baizi hui of the Wong Wun San Society Headquarters, 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Shares</th>
<th>No. of Investors</th>
<th>% of Investors</th>
<th>% of Investment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>12.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>18.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>7.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>11.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>14.98</td>
<td>19.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>20.81</td>
<td>13.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>20.03</td>
<td>5.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>25.68</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(514)</td>
<td>(99.92)</td>
<td>(99.93)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ownership of a hotel building on Main Street. Considering this a profitable venture, the Association at once raised a loan of more than $70,000 from 75 local members, with more than half of them contributing $1,000 or more (See Table 4.7). In the following months, a baizi hui was set up with contributions from some 180 individual members -- more than sixty per cent of them were from Vancouver -- and the loan was repaid. From incomplete information, we notice that the minimum amount of share-holding was $50, but there were only three people under this category. At least 25 individuals bought shares that were worth $1,000 or more, and they made up some fourteen per cent of the total number of member-investors. Peculiar among the contemporary baizi hui schemes, this pattern of distribution seemed to resemble more closely the other fund-raising rituals that encouraged competition and articulated leadership distinction. The arrangement of the names of creditors and shareholders on the original documents according to the amount of money they rendered also supports this conjecture.\(^{40}\)

Such a penchant for the ritual of "competitive generosity" came to the fore again when the Lee Clan Association decided to build a new clubhouse during its Second National Convention in 1963. Interestingly, the baizi hui formula was shelved and a fund-raising committee was formed instead to solicit donations from the larger membership across Canada. My sources give no explanation for

\(^{40}\) Quanjia Lishi disan jie kenqin dahui jinian tekan, pp. 54-57.
Table 4.7

Individual Contributions to a Loan in the Lee Clan Association, 1952

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Money Loaned</th>
<th>Number of Creditors in That Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6,100</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

this preference, but the strategy proved to be fatal. The uncertainty and anxiety over the future of Chinatown caused by the city government's urban renewal projects were obviously not conducive to fund-raising effort for real estate investment. Equally decisive was the culture of baizi hui which had become deeply ingrained as the most appropriate way to finance an undertaking of this kind. To entertain other alternatives was unrealistic. As it turned out, some $70,000 was raised. This was a substantial amount, but it met only half of the original target. So, even though a piece of land had been bought, the actual construction was put off repeatedly until it was decided in 1970 to abort the grandiose project. By then, $44,000 had already been expended, and the donors refused to honour the remaining $26,000 that had been pledged. Given the large majority of successful cases of real estate investment by the traditional associations, this negative example was clearly exceptional. Yet it strongly suggests the importance of performing the right ritual -- in this case, the baizi hui -- for the failure to do so could well be detrimental to the original purpose.

Clearly, the old-style associations possessed a rich tradition of public rituals, the skilful performance of which could help to re-enact their community visions and harness the emotional and financial support of their membership. They were not indulging aimlessly in formalities, as their critics suggested. Collective rituals, in fact, had became their lifeline in this critical period
of social and cultural change. As we will see in Chapter Six, the enhanced financial power and esteem of the traditional organizations gave some of them a new sense of mission as they searched for a viable Chinese community and a new definition of Chinese identity in the 1970s.

The Ritual of Unity and Representation at the Chinese Benevolent Association

Of all the Chinese organizations in Vancouver at the beginning of the post-war period, it is arguable that the CBA best represented the traditional concept of community. Its existence since the turn of the century signified the historical quest by many Chinese for an organization that could effectively encompass different interests within the ethnic group and generate at least the facade of Chinese unity in Vancouver. To achieve these ends the CBA had, by 1925, institutionalized a system of election that drew together representatives from the major district associations and some members elected at large to form an executive. This arrangement put the CBA at the apex of the Chinese organizational hierarchy. At the same time, the CBA persistently claimed to speak for the Vancouver Chinese by acting as their broker in any major negotiations with the Canadian government and the larger society.

The claim of the CBA to embody and represent all Chinese had not been an unqualified success before 1945. Nevertheless, the
ritual performance of unity and representation at the CBA continued and, to some extent, intensified in the post-war period. The following discussion will delineate this interesting development.

As an "umbrella" organization, the CBA underwent no fundamental change in its structure of representation throughout the post-war years. One minor alteration occurred in 1952 when the number of executive members at large was increased from twenty to twenty-eight. In the late 1950s, the number of representatives from the district associations was also increased from twenty-nine to thirty-two, resulting in a general executive committee of sixty members. 41

Aiming more sharply at resolving the tension in Chinatown politics was the structural rearrangement within the executive committee in 1948. Instead of electing only one chairman, the new formula opted for three standing committee members or co-chairmen. This allowed both the Chinese Freemasons and the Kuomintang to be represented in the top leadership of the CBA with the balance provided by the presence of a "neutralist." Informing this formula was the spirit of compromise which was much in need owing to the renewed conflict between the Kuomintang and the Freemasons over Chinese politics in this period. 42 The modus operandi was adopted to re-enact the vision of internal harmony.

In practical terms, the new system of tripartite leadership

41 Chinese Times 18 December 1952; Chinese Voice 2 May 1962.
42 Wickberg ed., From China to Canada, p. 223.
enhanced the appeal of CBA policies to both the Kuomintang and the Chinese Freemasons. More importantly, it created a niche for Foon Sien Wong, who was to occupy consecutively for the following twelve years (1948-1959) the position of "neutralist." During his leadership the CBA became a powerful force in shaping the community consciousness of the Chinese.

A fundamental reason behind the pre-eminence of the CBA in the late forties and fifties was steady progress in the relationship between the ethnic Chinese and the larger Canadian society. Contrary to the common assertion that improvement in racial relationships spelt the downfall of the traditional organizations, the early stages of this development actually benefited the CBA. The Canadian state suddenly became more eager than previously to inform and even to consult the Chinese on certain issues concerning them -- the exercise of their newly acquired franchise immediately comes to mind. Non-government groups committed to better ethnic relationships and public charities were also enthusiastic about involving the Chinese in their enterprises. For all of them, the CBA was most likely to be the first channel of liaison. Its role as the spokesman of the Chinese was much enhanced because of this increasing demand from outside for brokerage.

Also instrumental was the leadership of Foon Sien, whose English language facility, public relations skills, and wide acquaintance with Canadian politicians, journalists, and leaders of other ethnic groups critically improved the CBA's standing in both
Chinese and non-Chinese eyes. Moreover, Foon Sien never seemed to spare any effort to advocate and defend the interests of the Chinese in public. In particular, his high-profile and almost ceaseless championship of fairer immigration legislation regarding the Chinese energized the CBA and magnified its image as their representative organization.

The CBA's diligent attempt to drum up support for Foon Sien's annual "pilgrimages" to lobby in Ottawa between 1950 and 1959 gives us an idea of its mobilization ritual at its best. Even though preparation of the briefs and actual negotiation were carried out by a few individuals, including Foon Sien and his several legal advisors, some standardized practices were well in place to ensure that the course of action was seen as widely endorsed by the Chinese as their collective endeavour. One of them was fund-raising, during which members of the executive were asked to solicit donations on the streets of Chinatown and through their business and organizational networks. In 1953, for instance, the "campaign to change the immigration laws" raised more than $4,000 from three hundred individuals and 150 business firms, all from Vancouver. Only four of the donors contributed fifty dollars, while the majority gave the minimum amount of a few dollars. The records of the campaign in 1957 suggest a similar pattern except that total

---

Chapter Five will discuss in greater detail Foon Sien's campaign in Ottawa and its significance in terms of advancing the Canadian orientation of the Chinese. The following paragraphs concern the internal repercussions of these efforts.
contributions increased to $10,000 and the number of donors to almost six hundred, with some of them from other western Canadian Chinatowns. In line with the general strategy of the CBA's fund-raising rituals, stress was put more on the expression of solidarity than on competitive generosity."

Another dimension in this ritual performance of unity and representation was the management of publicity. Foon Sien himself was most visible in speaking for the Chinese to the English-language press and among non-Chinese. No less attention was given to the mobilization of Chinese public opinion. During each of Foon Sien's journeys to Ottawa, the Chinese newspapers were asked to give editorial support and full coverage to his personal diplomacy. Leaflets showing his entire itinerary were distributed (See Figure 4.3). Banquets were held in his name by various Chinese organizations where he was most active -- including the CBA, the two Wong surname associations, the Chinese Trade Workers Association, the Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association, and the Vancouver chapter of the Chinese Canadian Citizens Alliance. At the end of his journey, a "quanqiao dahui" ("community-wide" meeting) was convened at the CBA in which representatives from the

Figure 4.3

The Itinerary of Foon Sien Wong, Delegate of the Chinese Benevolent Association of Canada, in his Journey to Ottawa to Present a Brief, 1955

Source: Foon Sien Wong Papers, Box 3.
traditional organizations were invited to hear his report.\(^{45}\)

All of these functions aimed at portraying a unanimous Chinese opinion firmly behind Foon Sien's crusade. They were successful, to a large extent, for Foon Sien was generally accepted by Canadians and the Chinese as the spokesman for the ethnic group on this important subject. The campaign thus worked as a powerful machine in manufacturing consensus and a sense of ethnic unity. Its control or monopolization by the CBA and its leaders, in turn, gave them unprecedented prestige and influence. It was in the course of this carefully staged public campaign that the Vancouver CBA formally appropriated the title of "Quanjia Zhonghua Zong Huiguan" (The Chinese Benevolent Association [National Headquarters]).\(^{46}\) This claim to represent the Chinese nationwide was disputed by other CBA-type organizations but was appealing to the Vancouver Chinese at large. The CBA guarded the title jealously and actually refused to participate in a "Pan-Canada Conference of CBAs" convened by the Toronto-based Chinese Community Centre of Ontario in May 1952.\(^{47}\)

\(^{45}\) To reconstruct this sequence of events, for example, in 1955, see Chinese Voice 13 April, 2 & 5-9 May, and 24 June 1955.

\(^{46}\) David Lee, Jianada Huaqiao shi, pp. 196-97.

leadership were not above criticism. It was said that Foon Sien had been accused of manipulating the CBA for self-aggrandizement and some people resented the way outsiders addressed him as the "mayor of Chinatown." However, criticisms from within the ethnic group were largely muted, reflecting the potency of consensus-making in the CBA's mobilization rituals. It was not until the early sixties that they came to be voiced vociferously.

The downturn in the CBA's fortune was marked by the coming to power of the Progressive Conservatives in Ottawa in June 1957. The event cost Foon Sien his useful connection with federal Liberal politicians. The new government was less accommodating to him, a Liberal Party member, and to the demands of the Chinese to expand their privileges in immigration sponsorship. This rendered his ongoing campaign concerning immigration less viable. It was not coincidental, then, that Foon Sien insisted on retiring from the CBA executive in December 1959. The CBA thus entered the 1960s having lost its most resourceful leader and the issue that had preoccupied it for more than a decade. Its prestige was further damaged when it was implicated by the RCMP crackdown on illegal

---


49 This was Foon Sien's personal assessment. Chinese Voice 6 December 1962.

50 Ibid. 21 December 1959.
Chinese immigration.\textsuperscript{51}

Against this background, Chinese criticism of the CBA surfaced dramatically in late 1961. It took the form of a big debate on a proposed reform of the CBA. The opinions expressed indicated a range of Chinese perspectives on this important institution. The surprising outcome, however, was to seal the fate of the CBA as a community-inspiring enterprise.\textsuperscript{52}

The debate was triggered by an open letter in the \textit{Chinese Times} on 30 October 1961. Penned by someone identified as "Luo huaqiao" (literally meaning "old-timer"), it was addressed to the CBA concerning the coming executive election. The author began by acknowledging the leadership position of the CBA among the Chinese in Canada. Nevertheless, he was troubled by the "bu wanshan" (imperfection) in its election. The problem, he went on, was caused by "bu touming" (a lack of transparency) and he suspected that the CBA had fallen into the hands of a clique. To rectify the situation, the following measures were suggested: first, the traditional associations should jointly set up a committee to


\textsuperscript{52} My reconstruction of this episode is based on the articles in the Chinese language press to which, it seems to me, the debate was confined. Interestingly, while all the relevant articles that appeared in the \textit{Chinese Times} were critical of the established practices, it was in the \textit{Chinese Voice} where wide-ranging viewpoints were exchanged. That the Kuomintang's \textit{New Republic} carried not a single item on the debate is intriguing.
oversee the election; second, every stage from initial nomination to final voting should be fully publicized; and third, voters should be better informed about the qualifications of the candidates.

This letter was the first in the post-war period to discuss openly problems within the CBA. Its tone was objective and the target was sharply defined. "Luo huaqiao" obviously distrusted the present executive which, he alleged, was self-perpetuating. He saw the solution in a properly held election that would produce a truly representative and accountable leadership. The appearance of this letter in the *Chinese Times* suggested that the opinions were endorsed by, if not originating from, the leadership of the Chinese Freemasons.

The letter must have carried a lot of weight for, at an emergency executive meeting two days later, it was decided to call a "quanqiao dahui" to discuss the election issue. In the meantime, more drastic reform suggestions appeared. For example, writing in the *Chinese Voice*, Mah Fat Sing, a reform-minded leader at the CBA, admitted that the present election system was defective because it was based principally on the representation of the district associations. He believed that the scope of representation should be broadened to include "gejie tuanti" (all kinds of organizations), but he did not elaborate.^^ Echoing a similar complaint but going much further in his suggestion was K. Tong Au, ^53^  

a young lawyer associated with the Hai Fung Club. Au argued fundamentally against the use of organizations as an electoral college because of the obvious difference in their membership size and multiple memberships by individuals in organizations. The best option, he insisted, was to implement "universal suffrage" by giving every adult Chinese in Vancouver a vote.54

Discussion had grown from a complaint about the abuse of the election system to a general critique of the system, even before the public meeting was convened. From the various accounts it seems that the atmosphere at the "quangqiao dahui" was tense. Reform opinions were heard from the delegates of the Chinese Freemasons, the Wong Kung Har Tong, and the Hai Fung Club. However, no consensus was reached. In the end, at the suggestion of the Kuomintang supporters it was decided to adjourn and pass the issue of reform onto the executive of the following year. The reform advocates reportedly protested against any procrastination but to little avail.55

Debate subsided for several months until March 1962 when the CBA executive invited organizations to forward their opinions. No submissions have been uncovered. Nevertheless, the debate in the press suddenly became intense. One interesting and yet frustrating development about this second phase of debate was the almost total

54 His article was printed in 15 and 17 November 1961 in the Chinese Voice and the Chinese Times respectively.

anonymity of the participants because of the prevailing use of pen names. Short of this information, the important issues are still discernible.

The search for a new election system continued to be the biggest concern. The old format based on the representation of district associations and a partially at-large election was considered too limited to reflect the growing diversity within the ethnic group. Of the different proposals, Tong Au's earlier idea of a Chinese "universal suffrage" was much criticized as impractical.\(^{56}\) A conservative proposition was to include the clan organizations in the electoral college.\(^{57}\) More popular was the idea that organizational representation be given to all ethnic Chinese associations, as well as to professions like the Chinese lawyers, physicians, dentists, and clergy due to their special contributions to the Chinese.\(^{58}\)

Two other issues raised in the debate are also worth noting. The first concerned the search for new missions that would revitalize the CBA. As one Chinese put it concisely, "In the past (i.e. before 1960), the CBA sent a delegate to Ottawa every year fighting for better immigration treatment for the Chinese... Now

\(^{56}\) One of the critics was "Chun Lei," in Chinese Voice 4 April 1962.

\(^{57}\) For example, see an article by Yee Keung Ping in ibid. 12 March 1962.

\(^{58}\) See the articles by "Han Bai" and "Si Jia" in ibid. 2 and 5 May 1962 respectively.
the time has changed. We have to look for (new) issues...to 'tuanjie quanqiao, yizhi jizhong' (unify the overseas Chinese and develop a common consciousness)." Among other things, improvement of Chinese school education and welfare provisions for the elderly settlers were often mentioned as possible focuses in the CBA's future undertakings.\(^59\)

Another point of debate was how to "zhengming" (actualize) the claim of the CBA as the national headquarters. On the one hand, the "functionalists" believed that some nationwide activities such as an inspection tour of all Canadian Chinatowns by the CBA executive and the regular holding of national conventions were indispensable. On the other, the "representationists" insisted that the claim was unjustifiable without some formal representation of all the CBAs at the headquarters. One proponent went as far as suggesting a separation between the national and the local Vancouver CBAs. No one, however, seemed to question the wisdom of locating the national CBA in Vancouver.\(^60\)

The burgeoning debate indicated that the persistent quest for an inclusive Chinese organization, mentioned at the beginning of this section, was still present in the early 1960s. Here was a historic opportunity for the CBA to bring itself into line with the growing diversity and changing expectations in the Chinese

\(^{59}\) Quoted from Yee Keung Ping in *ibid*. 12 March 1962. See also the article by "Chun Lei" in *ibid*. 6 April 1962.

\(^{60}\) *Chinese Times* 28 April 1962; *Chinese Voice* 4 April, 11 May, and 4 June 1962.
minority, and once again to breathe life and efficacy into its consensus-making and community-inspiring functions.

The outcome was very unexpected, to say the least. As far as the debate in the press was concerned, the turning point came in June 1962 with the publication of a relatively lengthy, orthodox-sounding article in the Chinese Voice. Written by "Ning Yang" (signifying that the author was a native of Taishan), its main content was as follows:

The CBA [national headquarters] is a welfare organization for all the overseas Chinese [in Canada]. Perhaps, its internal structure is somewhat loose... or because some "yexin jia" (careerists) want to capitalize on its weaknesses to seek control for political ends, there was a debate on the so-called "question of election"... The discussion so far seems to focus superficially on the election. The fundamental nature of the CBA has been ignored...

First of all, we must recognize that besides being a charitable organization, the CBA is by nature a channel of communication between the overseas Chinese and the home country on the one hand, and a broker representing the Chinese to the local government in the country of residence on the other. As an opinion-making and a welfare agent, it speaks for all Chinese. Accordingly, its existence is "bi ran" (absolutely necessary) and will be "yung heng" (everlasting).

Secondly, all the CBAs in North America are organized on the bases of the district, surname or occupational associations. This "system of representation" is observed from New York to San Francisco, and from Victoria to Halifax. It helps to elect the best leaders and uphold the principle of democracy... In practice, having the Chinese led by their associations and these associations, in turn, by the CBA
is most reasonable...

Let me say it formally as I conclude. I am afraid this so-called "controversy" on election may indeed be a political conspiracy. [Attacking the CBA as] poorly structured, unreasonable, and undemocratic is simply a pretext used to infiltrate the organization by those savages who hold heterodox views. We should be alert.61

While the observations of "Ning Yang" on the nature of the CBA may not contradict the underlying assumptions of other people in the debate, his accusation that the incident may have been a conspiracy in disguise sounded like a familiar "Red scare" story. People were alienated, frustrated, or intimated, and the debate came to an end immediately.

In November, the CBA finally publicized a proposal for reform. The once enthusiastic discussion was already several months behind. The blueprint outlined an executive of sixty-one members, twenty of them to be elected at-large and the rest nominated by the district and surname associations. Incredibly, even this conservative proposal was defeated at a representative meeting of the traditional organizations, turning the entire episode into a fiasco.62

This debate was an landmark in the history of the CBA. In the aftermath excitement and expectation about the organization declined perceptibly. A brief attempt by Harry Fan, another Chinese

---

61 *Chinese Voice* 2-4 June 1962.
62 Ibid. 24, 26 November, 10 December 1962.
lawyer, in late 1965 to stir up discussion on the reform issue was nipped in the bud again by "Ning Yang." 63 More frequently heard were insinuations that the CBA had been captured by the local Kuomintang to keep the Chinese in Canada subservient to the Nationalist government in Taiwan. 64 Indeed, the CBA became conspicuously active in pro-Kuomintang activities, and its executive was dominated by the local Kuomintang people led by Lam Fong. Lam occupied the chief executive positions in the CBA and the Kuomintang concurrently from the early sixties to the late seventies. 65 Inevitably, this was to further marginalize the CBA in Chinese eyes. From the sixties on, its claim to embody the Vancouver Chinese was no more than an illusion.

To summarize, the decline of the CBA happened only in the 1960s, and that was after it reached its zenith by a masterful performance of the ritual of unity and representation in the early post-war years. This chapter shows that the traditional Chinese organizations in Vancouver as a whole were not doomed enterprises. Most existing accounts have focused on the changing historical environment and the failure of the old-style organizations to

63 Ibid. 17, 26-29 November 1965.
64 For example, see Da Zhong Bao 10 December 1965 and 21 January 1966.
adapt. Without denying the erosion of their popularity and influence, particularly among the new immigrants and the local-born Chinese, this account emphasizes the efficacy of their ritual performance and their successful efforts at financial self-strengthening. Moreover, the elderly settlers continued to use these organizations and their ceremonial functions as vehicles to re-enact their community visions. The latter were rejoinders the older immigrants kept on sending to their critics throughout the post-war years.
Chapter Five: The Chinese Between Two Worlds, 1945-1970

In June 1962, the Canadian government of John Diefenbaker announced a special programme to admit a hundred Mainland Chinese refugee families which had recently made their way to Hong Kong. Two months later, the first group of these families arrived in Vancouver. The Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) scheduled a public meeting to hear some of the refugees report on the current situation in Mainland China. It was a time of widespread famine and hardship in China as a result of natural disasters and human mismanagement during the Great Leap Forward. There was an obvious interest among the local Chinese in getting the latest news, particularly on their home regions. Supporters of the Nationalist government were also eager to use the occasion for anti-Communist propaganda.

Just days before the scheduled meeting, an outspoken columnist by the name of Dick Se Lee addressed an open letter to the refugee families in the Chinese Voice. He congratulated them on their coming to Canada and wished that they would be able to settle down quickly and begin a new phase of life. He then talked about the opportunities in Canada and encouraged the newcomers to make the best use of them. At the end he wrote:

Dear compatriots, just looking back will be useless. Neither will it be beneficial to the others by telling them what you have gone through [in Communist China]. Instead, let us concentrate on laying a good foundation
for the future... To us, Canada is our new world. With us, Canada is going to be a better country. May we all share these aspirations.¹

We know very little about this author except that he was a graduate of the Lingnan University in Guangzhou and had taught in the Chinese High School in Singapore before coming to Canada in the 1950s.² Since he started writing for the Chinese Voice in the early sixties, he had advocated an "integrationist" approach to Chinese adaptation to Canadian life. According to Lee, Chinese immigrants in Canada should embrace their new country. It may not be necessary for them to turn their backs on Chinese culture, but old-world politics and outlook should definitely be left behind. His idea was for the Chinese to reorient themselves from China to Canada. In fact, the same message had been driven home in an earlier essay in which he reflected on the end of the "sojourner's era". As he put it, the new generation of Chinese immigrants "should luodi shenggen because our Tangshan (as China, the native country, was often called) is now over in Jinshan (the Gold Mountain)."³

It is impossible to tell how many Chinese actually shared Lee's views. But when he advised the refugees to avoid making any unnecessary comments on Chinese politics, he was immediately taken to task by the Chinese Consul-General Wang Meng Hsien. During that

¹ 16-17 August 1962.
² Chinese Voice 18 September 1962.
³ Ibid. 4 October 1961.
public meeting at the CBA, Wang first of all criticized Lee's stance and then went on to urge the refugees to speak up against the Chinese Communist regime. Instead of settling down in Canada and forgetting all about China, Wang reminded his audience that the Chinese should use their freedom of speech in this country for the cause of anti-Communism. He hastened to add that Communist sympathizers were around and their "conspiracy" should be exposed and frustrated by all means.  

The ideas of Lee and Consul-General Wang regarding the appropriate relationship of Chinese residents in Vancouver with China and Canada were but two of the many possible opinions at that time. Nevertheless, the dispute highlights two fundamentally different cultural orientations generally discernible among the Vancouver Chinese from the late forties to the sixties. As the preceding chapters show, some Chinese, particularly those of immigrant background, remained interested in China-related issues. The first part of this chapter will furnish more evidence to support this observation. In addition, it will make an analytical distinction between different components of this orientation to China in the post-war years as manifested in the concern for native place and Hong Kong, the desire to propagate Chinese culture, and the interest in Chinese politics.

During the same period, the increasing openness of the host

---

4 For a transcript of Wang's speech, see ibid. 23-24 August 1962. Lee reiterated his ideas in a number of rejoinders before the argument came to end.
society presented the Chinese with unprecedented opportunities to advance their local interests and to nurture an identification with Canada. It would be naive to think that this new development attracted only the Canadian-born Chinese, whereas the immigrants were all but attached to China. Materials presented so far clearly suggest that the "tusheng" were more sensitive to the Canadian environment and were more capable of dealing with Canadian issues than the immigrant Chinese. Yet it is reasonable to assume that this sensitivity and capability would gradually come with residence in Canada. As the later half of this chapter will demonstrate, through a struggle for equal treatment in immigration matters, an expressed interest in Canadian politics, and a defense of their neighbourhood against redevelopment programmes, some local-born and immigrant Chinese were presenting themselves as part of an ethnic minority that had a future in this country.

The Movement to Rebuild the Native Area

A dimension of the China-orientation that surfaced forcefully in the late 1940s was the tremendous concern for native place. The care for one's native district and home village is a strong theme in the history of the overseas Chinese. It stems from a cultural tradition which literally enshrined an individual's place of origin. As suggests by Edward Shils, this "sense of place and past" was often enhanced by migration, like the case of the Chinese
abroad. The large majority of the early Chinese migrants who had made their sojourn as single males naturally had the well-being of their dependent families in China close to their hearts.

Native place sentiments of the overseas Chinese were especially discernible in the aftermath of the Second World War. This moment for re-establishing contact with families and devastated home areas had long been anticipated. It is known that, as early as 1946, some Chinese organizations in Vancouver once again collected exit fees from members departing for China. Official sources indicate that 635 ethnic Chinese registered their departure from Canada in the year 1945-1946, and the number increased to 2,112 the following year. By August 1947, the Chinese Times estimated that an average of 160 Chinese, mostly in their sixties, left for China from the port of Vancouver every month.


The collection of exit fees was reported in the Chinese Times. Annual Report 1946-47, Immigration Branch, Department of Mines and Resources. Chinese Times 6 August 1947.
For the immigrant Chinese who did not undertake this home-bound journey, many were involved in a feverish movement to rebuild their native counties through the familiar channel of the traditional associations.

A special publication issued by the Hoy Ping District Association Headquarters in Vancouver in 1947 illuminates this endeavour. One of the themes of this volume was the rebuilding of Kaiping's local economy and society. Some authors bemoaned the desolation of the native place during eight years of Sino-Japanese War and exhorted every fellow-regional to contribute to its reconstruction. Of special interest are the sections that chronicle the various rehabilitation efforts made by the District Association since the war's conclusion. They reveal that a series of petitions had been jointly submitted by the district associations of the "four counties" (Taishan, Kaiping, Enping, and Xinhui) to the government authorities in South China. The request was about the re-institution of local channels through which overseas remittances would reach their designated recipients. Remittances had long been a lifeline of the overseas Chinese area in this part of China, and stoppage during the war had been devastating to it. Thus, the Chinese abroad were anxious to restore this flow of capital for the

---

7 Zhuyun Quanjia Kaiping Zong Huiquan tekan (A Special Issue of the Hoy Ping District Association Canadian Headquarters in Vancouver) (1947). It informs the discussion in the following two paragraphs. See also the materials in the Association's file in CCRC, Box 3, particularly the transcript of an interview with Lee Quai Yut, 21 June 1961. Lee had been the secretary of the Association for more than three decades.
area's survival.

Reportedly, the Hoy Ping District Association also went to great lengths to bring to justice a group of local scoundrels in Kaiping who had foreclosed on the overseas Chinese dependents. Considering itself as a reincarnation of lineage authority, the Association did not hesitate to intercede with the Chinese officials when members of its own district were abused. Last but not least, the Association commissioned a preliminary report on the condition of the Kaiping Overseas Chinese Middle School as a first step to restoring this educational facility. The school was founded with overseas Chinese money mainly from Canada in the mid-thirties. The Association therefore claimed to have a moral obligation to oversee its speedy recovery.

The endeavour of the Hoy Ping District Association was not exceptional. Between 1946 and 1949, news reports of similar activities of many native place and clan associations were a fairly regular feature in the Chinese language press.\(^8\) Time and again, campaigns were organized to raise funds for general charities, local defense, flood relief, the improvement of local transportation, and the restoration of market towns, all of them reminiscent of similar actions by the same organizations before the Second World War.

---

These events occurred during a period in the late 1940s when a lasting peace in China failed to materialize and the conflict between the Kuomintang-controlled Nationalist government and the Chinese Communist Party escalated into a full-scale civil war. This confusing political development, hyper-inflation throughout China, and the chaos in the native regions of the various district and clan associations were disheartening. Yet the struggle for rehabilitation of the native area persisted with the hope of making life more bearable for people at home. Ironically, the efforts appear to vanish almost overnight with the establishment of the Communist "order."

The Chinese in Vancouver were generally apprehensive of Communist rule in China. The new regime initially created an air of anxiety, which was soon superseded by outrage and despair when the communist cadres began to implement land reform and instigate class struggle in Guangdong in 1950. The Chinese in Vancouver saw themselves and their families at home being penalized for their ownership of land and other properties. In this context, all prior efforts at rebuilding the native place were rendered fruitless, and

---

local rehabilitation projects sponsored by the traditional associations came to an abrupt halt.

**Hong Kong as a Surrogate and a Cultural Model**

This traumatic turn of events, however, did not obliterate the native place concern of the immigrant Chinese in Vancouver. Immediately after 1949, the traditional organizations began to shift their attention from their home areas to the nearby British colony of Hong Kong, which provided sanctuary for many Chinese fleeing from Mainland China. Among these refugees were the families and relatives of the overseas Chinese, who desperately needed assistance to resettle.

Hong Kong, of course, had no problem at all in capturing the attention of the Chinese in diaspora. As the major port of embarkation for Chinese from South China and as a regional commercial hub, it enjoyed numerous personal, organizational, business, and social connections with Chinese overseas. The latter had long been using Hong Kong and its various Chinese institutions as an interface between themselves and China. The most famous example of such an institution was the Tung Wah Hospital, the leading Chinese charitable organization in the colony. Since its founding in 1869, it had arranged the shipment of bones of deceased overseas Chinese back to the home villages for reburial, and administered relief work in China on behalf of Chinese
organizations in foreign countries. After 1949, as the home districts in Communist China were temporarily beyond reach and a critical mass of fellow natives had assembled in the colony, Hong Kong naturally became a surrogate.

In Vancouver, among the first reactions of the Chinese to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949 was a succession of appeals by the CBA to the Canadian immigration authorities and individual members of the Parliament that the processing of immigration application at the Hong Kong office be expedited. In the following years, Foon Sien Wong repeatedly communicated to the federal government the request that the Canadian immigration office in Hong Kong be expanded and that fair and due assessment procedures be installed.\footnote{Chinese Times 15 October 1949, 10 January 1950, 7 June 1950, and 3 November 1950.}

In the meantime, the regional organizations in Hong Kong attempted to take care of the local needs of the swelling Chinese population. They decidedly capitalized on native place sentiments and turned to their counterparts overseas for support.\footnote{See the preliminary study of these organizations in Hong Kong in the post-war period by Elizabeth Sinn, "Challenges and Responses: The Development of Hong Kong's Regional Associations, 1945-1990," a paper presented at the Twelfth Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, June 24-28, 1991, University of Hong Kong.} Available evidence suggests that the native place associations in Vancouver

\footnote{Elizabeth Sinn, \textit{Power and Charity: The Early History of the Tung Wah Hospital, Hong Kong} (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 72-73, 77, and 103-13.}
responded generously. The most celebrated example in the early 1950s was the fund raising campaign to finance relief after the Shek Kip Mei squatter settlement in Hong Kong was razed to the ground by fire on Christmas Day in 1953. Believing that a sizeable number of the victims were natives from Taishan, the Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association took the lead in the fund drive. After consulting the national headquarters in Victoria, a sum of HK$20,000 was cabled to Hong Kong in the name of the two organizations. Appeals were also sent to other traditional organizations, which followed with less substantial but still impressive contributions. 13

Apart from this incident, other examples of Vancouver's Chinese organizations dispensing charities in Hong Kong during the 1950s and 1960s were numerous. Many of these actions, like that in the aftermath of the Shek Kip Mei fire, were one-time occurrences aroused by emergencies. A movement to collect winter clothes for Hong Kong took place in 1959 when a large number of newly arrived Chinese were caught by severe winter weather. Similar kinds of relief undertakings were repeated in 1962 after another heavy wave of "escapees" from Mainland China ran for their lives to the

13 Huang Jishang, "Jianada Yungaohua Taishan Ningyang Huiguan shilue," (A Short History of the Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association in Vancouver), an excerpt from Taishan Ningyang Huiguan liushi zhounian jinian tekan (Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association Sixtieth Anniversary Special Issue) (1958), from the Association's file, CCRC Box 3. See also the numerous reports in the January and February 1954 issues of the Chinese Times.
colony.\textsuperscript{14} In addition, long-term commitments appeared. The Chung Shan Lung Jen Association, for instance, contributed regularly to the distribution of rice in winter to fellow natives in the colonial city.\textsuperscript{15} School education in Hong Kong also drew financial support from Vancouver's Chinese associations. In at least one case, overseas delegates from Vancouver were known to be represented on a local school board.\textsuperscript{16}

This aspect of the Hong Kong-bound activities of Chinese organizations lasted for almost two decades after 1949. If nothing else, it tells us something about the tenacity of native place sentiments of the elderly immigrants who were active in the traditional associations during this period. To be sure, the enthusiasm for relief and welfare work in Hong Kong declined gradually over the years, perhaps because the emotional attachment to the native areas was too strong and too specific to be transferred artificially to a secondary location. It finally came to an end in the late 1960s because the Chinese in Hong Kong became settled and acquired relative sufficiency. But during the period when Hong Kong acted as a surrogate native place for Vancouver Chinese, the young new immigrants and their organizations were

\textsuperscript{14} See the February 1959 and early 1962 issues of the Chinese Voices.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.} 5 October 1963, 30 October 1965, and 5 November 1969.

\textsuperscript{16} It was the Hoy Ping District Association. \textit{Chinese Times} 1 March 1952; \textit{Chinese Voice} 1 March 1954, 22 March 1962, 17 December 1963, and 4 September 1964.
coincidentally finding Hong Kong to be of growing cultural interest.

As highlighted in Chapter Two, the young newcomers in the post-war period were trying to promote various social, cultural, and recreational activities particular to their own cohort. Information is too limited to indicate whether this group was actually attempting to recreate facilities in Hong Kong. However, circumstantial evidence suggests that Hong Kong offered models and inspiration for them.

For one thing, an increasing number of new immigrants from the mid-1950s on seem to have carried the imprint of Hong Kong, where they had often spent a number of years before coming to Canada. Evidence is suggested by the fact that, in 1958, among Chinese immigrants Hong Kong started to surpass China as the self-reported country of last permanent residence.\(^\text{17}\) For another, Vancouver's Chinese population, like the rest in North America, always enjoyed a certain rapport with Hong Kong Chinese because of their common subscription to Southern Guangdong local culture and a set of related and mutually intelligible Cantonese sub-dialects. This was Hong Kong culture's advantage over cultural exports from Taiwan or Mainland China. Finally, the image of Hong Kong as a rapidly

\(^{17}\) See Table 5.1. The trend may have been accentuated by the security concerns of the Canadian government which saw that some years of residence in Hong Kong should be mandatory for immigration applicants originated from Communist China. See the discussion in Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972), pp. 332-33.
Table 5.1

The Number of Immigrants Entering Canada from China and Hong Kong, 1949-1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>2,148</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>2,696</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>1,904</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>1,881</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>1,897</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1,491</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>1,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>1,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>1,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>2,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>4,155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Between 1966 and 1970, Hong Kong was subsumed under the category of "China" on the list of last countries of permanent residence of the new immigrants.

modernizing yet Chinese city rendered it a most attractive model of modern Chinese culture.

Hong Kong's influence was especially visible in Vancouver in the realm of Chinese popular culture. Watching Cantonese movies produced in the colony gradually became a favourite pastime as the local audience got familiar with the cast of Hong Kong actors and actresses.\(^{18}\) In addition, the three musical societies active in staging Cantonese operas in Chinatown (Jin Wah Sing, Ching Won, and Ngai Lum, newly established in 1961) ordered their musical instruments and costumes from Hong Kong, and also extended their repertoire by learning from its visiting opera troupes. In 1961, Jin Wah Sing went as far as to import talent directly by sponsoring one of the colony's famous maestros to come over as an instructor for its members.\(^{19}\) This practice was comparable to that of some literary societies that stacked their small libraries with Chinese language publications from Hong Kong.\(^{20}\)

Not everyone felt comfortable with such Hong Kong influence. Some elderly Chinese resented seeing their young critics under the sway of Hong Kong culture. Curiously, they found allies among the few pro-Communist radicals associated with the Chinese Youth Association. The latter considered Hong Kong as a hybrid of Chinese

\(^{18}\) See the literary supplements of the Chinese Voice which had a fairly regular sub-section on current movies.

\(^{19}\) Chinese Voice 8 and 22 February 1961.

\(^{20}\) See two examples in ibid. 17 September 1955, and 9 December 1958.
culture and British colonialism, something not particularly admirable. At a time when the local Chinese population began to experience another influx of new immigrants from Hong Kong after 1967, a critical commentator responded in the Da Zhong Bao in the following fashion:

The unsophisticated overseas Chinese community has been like an inland sea which is calm and clean. Now the coming in of more water from the ocean [referring obviously to the Hong Kong immigrants] will inevitably lead to some changes... Let us hope that the unsophisticated overseas Chinese community can persevere. By upholding our wonderful heritage [of simplicity and frugality], it will benefit not only us, but also the coming generations.  

Such shared dislike of Hong Kong and its cultural sway did not bring these two groups any closer together. Nevertheless, their sensitive observations confirmed the increasing presence of Hong Kong influence. No wonder the author of a popular handbook for immigration to Canada, published in the colony in 1968, described Vancouver's Chinatown as "Xiao Xianggang" (Little Hong Kong).  

Longing for the "Cultural China"

Besides native place and Hong Kong, many immigrant Chinese

21 26 April 1968.

22 Lin Sen, Yimin Jianada bidu (Must-Reading for Emigration to Canada) (Hong Kong: Lin Sen, 1968), pp. 57-58. The first reference I found to the idea of Vancouver's Chinatown as "Xiao Xianggang" is in Chinese Voice 20 March 1968.
showed a strong interest in Chinese culture, defined by different people to mean various things such as Chinese language, literature, thoughts, ethics, values, history, and visual and performing art. A majority of ethnic Chinese institutions in Vancouver could claim some credit in the preservation and promotion of Chinese culture abroad. Again there were differences in definition and emphasis.

The traditional organizations, for instance, tended to endorse a more holistic view of Chinese culture. They enshrined values such as clanship, native place sentiments, filial piety, and mutual assistance through their ritual performances. They also supported efforts at Chinese cultural maintenance, especially the Chinese language schools in Chinatown. In the same spirit, several surname and native place associations made donations to the proposed Asian Library at the University of British Columbia in the early fifties, and some began to set up scholarship funds for the children of their members in the following years.

Articulating the same sentiment from a more influential

---


24 Among the benefactors were the Hoy Ping District Association, Shon Yee Benevolent Association, Wong Kong Har Tong, Wong Wun San Society, and Yue San Association. Chinese Times 2 April 1952, 7 and 27 November 1952, 8 January 1953, 23 February 1953, and 9 March 1953. The Lam Sai Ho Tong, Chan Wing Chun Tong, and Mah Society were known to offer scholarships in the 1960s. See Chinese Voice 11 June 1968.
position were the opinion-makers in the ethnic press. To a large extent, the three Chinese language newspapers -- the Chinese Times, the Chinese Voice, and the New Republic -- were all preserving Chinese culture by way of sustaining and nurturing the interest of a Chinese-language readership, reporting events from Chinese perspectives, and providing space for Chinese literary publication. Sometimes, the message was far more explicit. Consider the following excerpt from the writings of David Lee who taught at the Chinese Public School in Victoria for a long time and was occasionally on the editorial staff of the New Republic:

Chinese civilization is both broad and profound. It has served as the national foundation of China for the last five thousand years. At the same time, its scholarship, ethics, and society were all pioneers in the history of human civilization. For us who live overseas, we must understand that we are, above all else, Chinese, even though the social norms and practices that we have here are at variance with the cultural standard in our native country. As Chinese, our thoughts and consciousness should be based principally on Chinese civilization. This is an unalterable principle and should always be taken as such. At present [in the mid-1960s], there are not a few Chinese youth in our community who

---

25 Jean Burnet has pointed out the difficulty in ascertaining the circulation of ethnic newspapers, in Burnet with Howard Palmer, "Coming Canadians": An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), p. 200. The following are just estimates regarding the three Chinese language newspapers in Vancouver: The Chinese Times was increasing its local circulation from about two thousand to three thousand copies. It was followed closely by the Chinese Voice. Way behind was the New Republic, which was subsidized by Taiwan from the 1960s.
suffer from a sense of inferiority. Under the influence of western culture, they disregard the loftiness of Chinese civilization and claim themselves to be Canadians. As a matter of fact, westerners still keep us ethnic Chinese at a distance and seldom consider us Canadians. How embarrassing it is [for these Chinese]!

We should realize that it is not at all shameful to be Chinese. Indeed, it is a great honour. We Chinese have been residing in foreign countries for generations. However, because of our forefathers' tradition and our highly developed civilization, we have not been assimilated. So all ethnic Chinese should not be troubled by any inferiority complex. With ethnic pride and dignity, we shall respect and learn more about our native culture, and at the same time, love our people. Our endowments have been great. Let us carry forward our noble cause and forge ahead into the future.²⁶

So according to this more sophisticated version rendered by one of the few Chinese intellectuals associated with the ethnic press, the language schools, and the traditional organizations, the overseas Chinese should take pride in being "Chinese" because they were the bearers of a marvellous civilization. They were told that it was the resilience of this great cultural heritage which kept them "Chinese," despite the propensity for assimilation that came with residence in a foreign country. The logical step was to hold on to this culture and retain one's faith in its greatness by means of proper teaching. In this manner the heritage could be passed on from generation to generation.

Some new immigrant youth felt equally strong about their roots

in Chinese civilization, but were generally more critical of its cultural content. They tended to distinguish between certain elements of Chinese culture which they considered valuable and relevant, and others which they believed should be reformed or discarded. They clearly showed their preference by actively promoting Chinese music, art, and literary creation. At the same time, they seemed more than willing to learn from corresponding western cultural forms. Subject to their criticism, however, were Confucianist thought, parochial identities and sentiments, and parental authoritarianism.²⁷

Apparently these young immigrants brought with them a more forward-looking perspective with regards to Chinese culture. They seemed to speak more about advancement and revitalization than its preservation and maintenance. In order for Chinese culture to remain great, they would argue, it must be constantly reformed or renewed in different historical contexts. And herein lay the momentum behind their energetic programmes to promote Chinese cultural activities.

Local Manifestations of Old-world Politics

Lastly, some Vancouver Chinese were interested in Chinese

²⁷ See, for example, the following article by a Hai Fung Club member, "Kongzi he huaqiao shehui," (Confucius and the Overseas Chinese Community) Chinese Voice 5 August 1963. See also Chapter Two for a more detailed discussion of the perspectives of the new immigrant youth on the question of Chinese culture and the community.
politics. The national salvation movement during the Sino-Japanese War had left behind a legacy of what the overseas Chinese could, and perhaps should, do when their native country was in crisis. In the early post-war period a concern for political change in China was vividly demonstrated in the campaigns, during the winter of 1947-48, to elect delegates to the National People's Congress, the Legislative Yuan (Assembly), and the Supervisory Yuan of the Nationalist government. Vancouver Chinatown was the scene of a keen competition among the traditional associations, which nominated candidates and set up campaign committees.\(^{28}\) Besides differences in political opinion, local prestige and influence were at stake.

The local Kuomintang was undoubtedly the group most enthusiastic about upholding the banner of Chinese politics in Vancouver. The Party and its supporters had enjoyed a relatively ascendant influence in Chinatown from the 1920s to the mid-1940s. They wanted to ensure that allegiance to the Nationalist regime would be equated continuously with concern for China and be taken as an irreducible part of being "Chinese." They believed that the Kuomintang orthodoxy rightly praised the contribution of the overseas Chinese to the early history of the Chinese Republic. Such support from abroad, they now insisted, became indispensable to the Kuomintang's political legitimacy after its military debacle in

Mainland China and eventual withdrawal to Taiwan.  

The Nationalist government, however, never viewed the Chinese in Canada as a major front in its overseas Chinese policy. The real battles were fought elsewhere: in the United States and in some Southeast Asian countries where Chinese settlements were larger and more affluent and which offered greater diplomatic advantages. Notwithstanding, the Kuomintang's supporters in Vancouver persevered. Locally, they had a regional chapter and the Canadian head branch, both of them housed in the party property on the southwestern corner of Gore and Pender Streets. They faithfully observed all Taiwan-prescribed events and in 1958 began the publication of the party newspaper, the *New Republic*, relocated from Victoria.

The Kuomintang's local influence was more extensive than its party apparatus suggested because its members were well-entrenched

---


30 Their dissatisfaction with Taiwan's lack of support surfaced sometimes in the Chinese press. For example, see a critical essay directed at the Nationalist government, entitled "Zhengqu huaqiao zhidao" (The Way to Win over the Overseas Chinese), *Chinese Voice* 6-9 July 1964. During Party conventions, resolutions were routinely passed to request more direct assistance from Taiwan. This may reflect a genuine concern, or this may be a ritualized demonstration of loyalist criticism. See the resolutions adopted in the Kuomintang Head Branch's Thirteenth Convention held in Vancouver in the October 1955 issues of the *Chinese Voice*.

in the leadership of some traditional organizations such as the Lee Clan Association, the Lung Kong Kung So, the Lam Sai Ho Tong, the Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association, and the Hoy Ping District Association. The party was in firm control of the Chinese Public School, and by the early sixties came to dominate the CBA as well. More often than the use of party machinery, public support was mobilized and an aura of Chinese solidarity behind the Nationalist regime was portrayed through these presumably non-partisan channels. Thus, in 1953 Kuomintang supporters could proudly proclaim that more than forty Chinese organizations participated in the founding of the Anti-Communist National Salvation Association.\(^{32}\)

Moreover, the Kuomintang in Vancouver could count on the Chinese Consulate-General of the Nationalist government for assistance. The consular officials were active in cultivating Chinese support. Besides attending regularly Chinese organizational functions, they sometimes acted as if they were spokesmen for the Vancouver Chinese. For several times the Consul-General personally led a delegation of Chinese representatives to the Vancouver Police Department petitioning for more protection against criminal activities.\(^{33}\) In mid-1959, the Pacific National Exhibition Committee invited the Consul-General to organize the Chinese to

\(^{32}\) Chinese Times 9, 16, and 27 March 1953.

participate in this annual event. Evidence shows that the consular officials never hesitated to use their influence to advocate anti-Communism. They showered praises and awards on Chinese leaders who steadfastly expressed their loyalty to the Chinese regime in Taiwan. They were most vocal in presenting alarming accounts of Communist "infiltration" of the Chinese minority in Canada.

Despite its strengths, for a number of reasons the Kuomintang's objective to establish some kind of a political hegemony in Chinatown was hard to attain. First, the Kuomintang had to contend with the exceptionally strong position of the Chinese Freemasons in British Columbia. Freemason orthodoxy to date upholds that their earlier members had completely devoted themselves to the cause of revolution championed by Sun Yat-sen, only to find, in the aftermath of the 1911 Revolution, that they were betrayed and besieged by Kuomintang influence. For the Chinese Freemasons to survive such betrayal and maintain their local influence against the Kuomintang challenge, the revivalist Dart Coon Club was formed in the 1910s within the Freemasonry apparatus.

Even though the Chinese Freemasons had no effective avenue to

---

34 Ibid. April-August 1959.
participate in Chinese politics, they did maintain a political position on China well into the post-war years. Indeed, for twenty years after the Chinese Communist Party rose to power, the Chinese Freemasons continued to portray themselves as an equal partner with the two contending Chinese regimes in any political discourse on China. On various occasions, such as the Third All-America Chinese Freemasons Convention held in Vancouver in 1950 and another party convention in 1967, they issued lengthy political declarations to condemn the Kuomintang and the Communist dictatorial governments and to reiterate the Freemasons' belief in democracy and peaceful coexistence among the political contenders as the destiny for China.  

Compared with the Chinese Freemasons, no less troublesome for the Kuomintang were the small group of Communist sympathizers among the young new immigrants. Immediately after 1949, the Kuomintang capitalized quite successfully on the general alienation of the Chinese from the Communist regime and put itself in an advantageous position in the traditional associations. However, young newcomers who kept aloof from these organizations were beyond its reach. Though Canada was a professed anti-Communist country, it generated no large-scale witch-hunt comparable to the United States in the McCarthy era that the Kuomintang could tap for its own benefit. Much to the latter's annoyance, in the fifties the pro-Communist

---

37 The Freemasonry political canons are reprinted in Harry Con, Zhongquo Hongmen zai Jianada, pp. 50-53, 81-82.
Chinese Youth Association managed to persist and even develop into a visible body.

The Chinese Youth Association articulated its political stance most effectively in the Da Zhong Bao (The Masses) which began publication in 1961. The editorial policy of this semi-monthly, and later weekly, was decidedly pro-Communist China. It gave emphasis to all kinds of positive reports on the People's Republic: the country's economic transformation, advancement in technology and scientific knowledge (such as the successful explosion of China's first hydrogen bomb headlined in red on June 17, 1967), achievements in sports and cultural performance, and improvement in foreign diplomacy (including, of course, its establishment of diplomatic relationship with Canada in October 1970). By contrast, the Kuomintang party regime in Taiwan was disparaged as an internally corrupt and externally weak-kneed regime devoid of Chinese pride and dignity. In one of Da Zhong Bao's most favourite terms, the Nationalist government and its overseas underlings were derided as "minzu bailei" (Scum of the [Chinese] race). 38

With typical belligerence, the Da Zhong Bao could be very confrontational. In January 1970, the newspaper was the first to report on the Nationalist Chinese Consul-General's clandestine

38 Examples are just too many to cite here. Take the Hong Kong riots in 1967, during which Taiwan was severely criticized for its endorsement of the British colonial government's policy of suppression. Addressing the Nationalist government, one essay was entitled "Bushi minzu bailei shi shenme?" (What are they, if not the scum of the [Chinese] race?) Da Zhong Bao 15 September 1967.
selling of the official residence in Shaughnessy and his absconding with the proceeds to Seattle. It then accused the local Kuomintang leaders of covering up the scandal and criticized the other Chinese newspapers for their lassitude in the exposé. Later in the year, the Da Zhong Bao got into another acrimonious dispute with the Chinese Times that lasted for five months. The bone of contention was the Chinese Freemasons' professed neutrality in the prolonged conflict between the two Chinese regimes. But according to the Da Zhong Bao, what really triggered the debate in May 1970 was the refusal of the Chinese Freemasons to acknowledge "objectively" the profound achievements of the Communist government since 1949. The Freemasons were castigated for their "jia zhongli" (phony neutrality); were called "jia aiguo" (pseudo-patriotic) and "fangong, fanhua, fan renmin" (anti-Communist, anti-China, anti-people); and charged with having no "minzu zunyan" (ethnic pride) and accused of being potentially another group of "minzu bailei." By associating support for the People's of Republic of China so absolutely with the content of Chinese identity, the Da Zhong Bao was basically playing the same game of defining "Chineseness" in terms of political allegiance to a Chinese regime as the Kuomintang had done for decades. In response, the Chinese Times reasserted its historical right of expressing non-Communist and non-Kuomintang

---

39 See particularly the issues of 31 January, 7 February, and 14 February 1970.

40 Da Zhong Bao various issues from May to October 1970.
opinions. The Da Zhong Bao, as the Freemasons rebuked, was simply a victim of Maoist radicalism.\(^4^1\)

Finally, a discomforting situation for all three political interest groups -- the Kuomintang, the Chinese Freemasons, and the Chinese Youth Association -- was the growing apathy towards Chinese politics among the Vancouver Chinese. With some exceptions, this happened generally among the local-born Chinese. They might still have some thoughts on the Communist and Nationalist regimes, especially when they were approached by non-Chinese for a "Chinese" opinion. But they did not feel that Chinese politics per se was important or relevant to their lives in Canada. The "tusheng" organizations discussed in Chapter Three were all indifferent to old-world politics. Equally amazing was the categorical refusal of many immigrant youth organizations such as the Hai Fung Club to get entangled in Chinese political debates. According to the Club's constitution and to the interpretations of former members, the subject was too controversial and had nothing to do with being "Chinese."\(^4^2\)

Even among the elderly immigrants, such political apathy was conceivable. They were initially antagonistic towards the Chinese Communists. But steadily over the post-war years, they became disillusioned with the Nationalist regime as well. They blamed the

\(^4^1\) Various issues of Chinese Times May-October 1970, especially 3 June and 23 October.

\(^4^2\) Haifenghui jiniankan (Hai Fung Club: A Souvenir Publication) (1968), pp. 3-4. See my discussion in Chapter Two.
Kuomintang for giving the Communists a chance in the first place by its misgovernment. With the passage of each year after 1949, Taiwan's anti-Communist rhetoric and its promise to retake Mainland China sounded increasingly hollow and incredible. The outcome was a common resignation of the older settlers over the course of political changes in China. Before long, some Chinese began to consider Chinese politics not a banner to be upheld at all times but a potential nuisance to stay away from if possible. The clearest example of this attitude was the backlash in August 1959 against the Chinese Consul-General's anti-Communist propaganda. After another round of exposés to the Canadian media about Communist "infiltration" in Chinatown, some Chinese organizations led by the Chinese Trade Workers Association and the Chinese Freemasons criticized the Consul-General publicly for his remarks. Behind their reaction was growing Chinese apprehension of possible crackdown on illegal immigration by the Canadian government, a fearful and dreadful event which actually took place less than a year later.

---

43 See, for example, the New Year messages in the non-partisan Chinese Voice in the last day of publication every year during the 1950s.

44 As expected, only the New Republic came to the Consul-General's defense, whereas the opinions expressed in both the Chinese Voice and the Chinese Times were very critical. See their various issues during August-September 1959. Drawing on the opinions of the Consul-General's critics, a post-mortem on the government investigation of illegal immigration furnished by the Chinese Canadian Citizens Association also implicated him in arousing the Canadians' distrust of the Chinese. Chinese Voice 27 December 1962.
The China-orientation of the Vancouver Chinese was therefore a multi-layered phenomenon. Its political dimension was in perceptible decline in the post-war period, but its importance to certain political interest groups should not be underestimated. The support for Chinese culture also had its local champions. Yet another underlying dimension was the strong attachment to native place and a determined effort to contribute to its progress. The enthusiasm for rebuilding the home districts was clearly evident in the second half of the 1940s. After 1949 it was redirected towards Hong Kong. Hong Kong, of course, was more than a surrogate native place as the colonial society began to produce its own attractive cultural models and "Hong Kong-filtered" Chinese immigrants in the post-war years.

Unlike the China-orientation that was manifested principally among Chinese immigrants, an orientation towards the host country and local society was more commonly shared among Chinese. Regardless of one's status, whether as an immigrant or as a local-born, a Chinese person had to come to terms in some way with the realities of Canadian life. Moreover, the decline of racial barriers and the increasing openness of Canadian society to members of the minorities in the post-war period encouraged Chinese to articulate their interest and sense of belonging to Canada. The following discussion will focus on the Chinese engagement with the Canadian political process and look at how Chinese people attempted
to overcome some of the major disabilities they faced as an ethnic minority, to improve their collective standing and bargaining position as Canadian citizens, and to defend their right as local residents against state encroachment.

This approach differs from most studies of acculturation or ethnic change which tend to assemble information on linguistic usage, residential preference, intermarriage pattern, occupational change, and associational life. These variables are considered a social index showing "objectively" the ethnocultural trajectory of the group under observation. This study, by contrast, aims to elucidate Chinese discourse on their own ethnic experience. The subjects chosen for discussion are therefore those that have witnessed active and conscious Chinese involvement and have elicited the most comment from the Chinese themselves.

The Fight for Fairer Immigration Law

The Toronto-based campaign to repeal the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 relied upon non-Chinese leadership and support, and proved victorious in 1947. These facts are well-established in the literature. More obscure is the persistent attempt of the Chinese

---


to redress the residual injustice in the immigration legislation after that historic victory. This second phase of the campaign was based in Vancouver and was led by the CBA, or more exactly, by Foon Sien Wong who took the task upon himself as his personal crusade.

This effort centred on Foon Sien's annual trips to Ottawa to lobby the federal government between 1950 and 1959. Each time, he presented a brief that contained very specific requests. Their main thrust was to expand the range of admissible categories of relatives of the Chinese in Canada.\(^47\) Though every trip did not bear fruit immediately, some concrete results were achieved. Based apparently on the requests, the government allowed the admissible age of immigrant children to be extended from eighteen to twenty-one in 1950. In the following year, it was agreed that children between twenty-one and twenty-five would be considered temporarily on compassionate grounds. When this privilege was withdrawn in 1955, Chinese parents above certain age limits were added to the admissible categories. Another widely publicized example of Foon

\(^47\) Chinese synopses of these documents were usually available in the Chinese language press. My search into various archival collections has uncovered three pieces of original documents: "A Brief Concerning Immigration Laws Submitted to the Cabinet by the Chinese Benevolent Association, March 24, 1950", PAC, RG 76, Vol. 122, File 23635; "A Brief Concerning Immigration Laws (and Citizenship Act) for Presentation to the Honourable J.W. Pickersgill, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada by the Chinese Benevolent Association, March 1957", in CCRC, Box 12, File 2; and "A Brief Concerning Immigration Laws (and Citizenship Act) for Presentation to the Honourable Ellen L. Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration by the Chinese Benevolent Association, June 24, 1959" in PAC, H.W. Herridge Papers, MG 32 C13, Vol. 40, File 5.
Sien's success, and of the government's humanity, was the cabinet's approval in 1956 of a special scheme for bridal sponsorship.48

This ongoing battle to fight for the right of immigration was indicative of the changing Chinese relationship with Canada and with its government in particular. The redresses initiated by Foon Sien's lobbying in Ottawa were significant in themselves, as they afforded at least some opportunities for the Chinese to pursue the hope of settling down with their families in Canada. But of greater importance were the messages conveyed by the dramatic annual replay of this crusade. For the first time in the history of the Chinese in this country, the Canadian state appeared to be very approachable and sympathetic to the Chinese on a critical issue, not just once but over a period of many years. Moreover, the modus operandi seemed to hinge upon the right person who had the skills and the necessary contacts to communicate the viewpoints of the Chinese effectively to the federal government.

Both in and outside the minority, public recognition of Foon Sien as the linchpin was indisputable. Foon Sien had the diplomatic skills and also the necessary connections with the government in power because of his Liberal Party membership. Particularly within the ethnic group, there was a general consensus regarding the

desirability of speaking with one voice on the important subject of immigration legislation. Each of Foon Sien's journeys to Ottawa was funded by money raised mainly among the Vancouver Chinese. The Chinese press followed closely his itinerary and reported on his personal diplomacy. Enjoying overwhelming support, Foon Sien's role as a power broker in the CBA campaign was one of the best examples of the Chinese approach to the Canadian government.

Foon Sien was hardly the first or the last person who served as spokesman of the Chinese in Canada. But in retrospect, his most active years in the CBA and his high-profile and flamboyant representation of Chinese interests to the Canadian state and society in the 1950s did mark the golden age of brokerage politics for the Canadian Chinese. No individual leader has ever commanded a level of recognition among Chinese and non-Chinese on any single issue as Foon Sien did in the matter of Chinese immigration. Brokerage has always been an important mechanism for the Chinese to negotiate with the larger society. Yet after the 1950s, the CBA-style brokerage was no longer the only way, or for that matter the best one, to articulate Chinese interests in the Canadian political process.

In the late 1950s, Foon Sien finally reached the personal limits of his campaign for the right of immigration. His privileged connection with the federal government came to an end in June 1957 when the Progressive Conservatives replaced the Liberals as the ruling party. For a short while, he tried to work through Douglas
Jung, a Conservative from Vancouver Centre and also the first Canadian Member of Parliament of Chinese background. However, according to Foon Sien himself, the effort was fruitless because of official intransigence. The CBA subsequently resolved in March 1960 not to send any further delegation to Ottawa. As it turned out, three months later Foon Sien had to journey to the capital again as the leading delegate of Chinese representatives from across the country in the aftermath of the infamous RCMP nationwide operation against Chinese illegal immigration. Later in 1961 he was completely silenced on the issue after a related police raid on his Kitsilano residence.

For the rest of the 1960s, Vancouver Chinese made no significant effort to advance their right in sponsoring immigration. It was too sensitive an issue, and they were cautious. When an amnesty programme for illegal Chinese immigrants was implemented, and the Canadian immigration legislation was liberalized, in 1962 and again in 1967, the official initiatives were not based on any Chinese agitation or prior consultation with the ethnic group. In the meantime, the Chinese seemed to have ventured into two other processes in their encounter with the Canadian state.

---

49 Chinese Voice 2 April 1960, 6 December 1962.
50 Vancouver Sun 15 July 1961.
Participation in Canadian Electoral Politics

In contrast to the prolonged battle for a more open immigration policy, the Chinese struggle for enfranchisement was fully accomplished by 1949. With the "tusheng" Chinese Canadian Association and later, the Chinese Veterans organization leading the agitation, Chinese with Canadian citizenship by birth or by naturalization gained their federal and provincial ballots in 1947, and got their municipal franchise in 1949. With the Canadian-born Chinese and their organizations playing a visible role in these events, it is indeed surprising to see how little organized effort they made regarding the exercise of these rights in the succeeding years.

Within the ethnic group, the CBA was again the principal watchdog. Its task was less to prevent abuses against the right of the Chinese to vote than to encourage them to make use of their franchise. Throughout the fifties, the standard message of the Association, publicized before every election day, reminded the Chinese of their former disenfranchisement as once a stigma of their second class status in Canada and the great pains taken to remove such disability. Accordingly, the Chinese were urged not to treat their ballots lightly. In addition, the Association regularly

\[51\] For a rather general discussion on the enfranchisement of the Chinese at the federal and provincial levels, see Carol F. Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement: Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia," BC Studies no.30 (Summer 1976), pp.44-76. Foon Sien has furnished his personal reminiscences on many occasions. See, for example, his article "Past Achievements, Future Aspirations," in Chinatown News 3 January 1956.
dispensed information about registration to get onto the voters' list and the way to cast a ballot. A more partial action was to endorse the candidacy of certain individuals who were known for their "friendly" attitude towards the Chinese.\(^{52}\) After 1953, the newly established Vancouver chapter of the Toronto-based Chinese Canadian Citizens Association took on similar functions. It consisted of more or less the same group of people who were active in the CBA, though it tended to specialize in the promotion of Chinese participation in Canadian affairs.\(^ {53}\)

Initially, this method of encouraging political participation evoked limited Chinese response. In early 1950, Vancouver City Council decided to close its ad hoc facility in Chinatown for the registration of Chinese voters. Reportedly, the result of returning 186 Chinese registrants out of an estimated 1,600 qualified voters in the neighbourhood was deemed to be too low to justify the expense.\(^ {54}\) Robin Sharp, who undertook a study of Chinese electoral behaviour in the same area in a series of provincial elections and a by-election between 1949 and 1956, discovered that the degree of

\(^{52}\) The first public notice, that I am aware of, by the CBA asking qualified Chinese to register as voters appeared in Chinese Times 19 April 1948. For reports on the CBA's promotion of Chinese electoral participation in 1952 and 1953, see ibid. 18 August and 9 December 1952, and 8 August and 8 December 1953 respectively. See also Figure 5.1 for a leaflet distributed by the CBA endorsing candidates in a federal election.

\(^{53}\) For a brief early history including its founding executive and mandate, see Chinese Voice 1-4 August 1955.

\(^{54}\) Chinese Times 23 February 1950.
Figure 5.1

A Leaflet Showing the Endorsement of Candidates by the Chinese Benevolent Association in the Federal Election, 1953

Source: Foon Sien Wong Papers, Box 3.
Chinese involvement in this Canadian political exercise increased only modestly over the years. Whereas ten percent of the Chinese population in 1949 were registered voters, the proportion increased to twenty percent in 1952-53 and to 25 percent in 1956. It is further unclear whether or not this trend reflected a growth in Chinese interest, because it may simply have been the result of more local-born Chinese reaching the age of eligible voters and an increase in the number of naturalized Chinese.\textsuperscript{55}

However, Sharp did highlight an important new factor in the provincial by-election held in Vancouver Centre in early 1956. For the first time in Canadian history, an ethnic Chinese was running for public office. Douglas Jung, a second generation local-born Chinese originally from Victoria, and a lawyer by profession, was nominated by the Progressive Conservatives as a by-election candidate for the B.C. legislature. The Chinese were reasonably excited. It is true that Jung had not been active previously in Chinatown politics and organizations. For Chinese who showed some interest in Canadian politics, the majority were Liberal supporters because that party had implemented the post-war amendments to the discriminatory immigration legislation and had made a concerted effort to recruit Chinese members. Nevertheless, Jung seems to have made good use of his ethnic background in the campaign to drum up

a semblance of widespread Chinese support. For example, many traditional organizations and their leaders were formally on his campaign committee. In his reply to a report in the Vancouver Sun which surmised that Jung would face great difficulties in getting Chinese votes because of the entrenched Liberal influence among the Chinatown elite, Foon Sien went as far as saying that the Chinese were fully behind Jung.\(^{56}\)

Regardless of the amount of support Jung received from the Chinese, which is hard to determine, he was not elected. But as it turned out, his subsequent political career provided a crucial landmark in the evolving Canadian orientation of the Chinese. In June 1957 Jung became the first ethnic Chinese M.P. in the Canadian Parliament when he defeated, quite unexpectedly, the incumbent Defense Minister Ralph Campney. In another election the following March, Jung was able to widen his margin over his Liberal opponent by almost 10,000 votes.\(^{57}\) Particularly in the latter election, Chinese support for Jung appeared to be solid and clear, and there was virtually no dissenting view in the ethnic press. The prevailing Chinese opinion was to endorse Jung's candidacy because he would be a valuable spokesman for the ethnic group at the apex of the Canadian polity.\(^{58}\)

\(^{56}\) Vancouver Sun 29 December 1955; Chinese Voice 5 and 7 January 1956.

\(^{57}\) Chinese Voice 17 June 1957, 1 April 1958.

\(^{58}\) See the March 1958 issues of the Chinese Times and Chinese Voice.
For the Chinese in Canada in general, Douglas Jung's parliamentarian status (1957-62) served as a most concrete symbol of the country's openness and their full acceptance and integration into its political system. That Jung was from Vancouver of course generated additional meaning for the Chinese there. The remoteness of Canadian politics was dramatically reduced and Jung presented a channel for Chinese to influence Ottawa. Vancouver Chinatown suddenly lost all of its ghetto characteristics, and became part of the larger Canadian political landscape. Jung was not the first Canadian politician to campaign in Chinatown, but from his time on addressing a Chinese crowd in Vancouver's Chinatown became fashionable for politicians running in Canadian elections. In 1962 the *Vancouver Sun* described this Chinatown as "a speaker's paradise" for Canada's political leaders.\(^5\) Within Chinatown itself, Jung soon created his own network of patronage to remedy his disadvantageous party affiliation.\(^6\) When the Liberals rebounded a few years later, a contest for local support ensued. The lively campaigns between the Conservative Jung and the Liberal Jack Nicholson in Vancouver Centre during the parliamentary elections of 1962 and 1963 was totally unprecedented in Chinatown.

\(^5\) 15 June 1962.

\(^6\) *Chinese Voice* 17 May 1958 on the Conservatives' membership drive in Chinatown. My understanding of Jung's relationships with Chinese organizations and leaders in the late 1950s and early 1960s benefitted considerably from talking to Jack Eng, Jung's right-hand man in Chinatown. Jung's correspondence with another Chinatown-based supporter, Thomas Moore Whaum, also sheds light on this issue. In Thomas Moore Whaun Papers, Box 1, File 4.
Jung was defeated on both occasions. His credibility as a faithful spokesman for the Chinese was seriously damaged by his association with the federal Conservatives, which during its rule had adopted a tough immigration policy and had launched an investigation into illegal Chinese immigration. Thus the perceived interest of the ethnic group led many Chinese to choose Jung's Liberal opponent.\(^{61}\)

Notwithstanding Jung's failure to stage a comeback since 1962, the legacy of his political venture was immediately recognizable. Chinese confidence in their ability to participate in Canadian politics rose to a higher level. Chinese candidates became less and less a novelty in political elections. Campaigning at the same time as Jung did in the federal election of 1963 was Gladys Chong, who had run unsuccessfully in the civic election of the previous year. Three Chinese candidates were nominated in the municipal elections of both 1968 and 1970.\(^{62}\) By then, even the tone of editorial messages that exhorted the Chinese to use their vote had changed from being retrospective and bitter over the past experience of rejection and exclusion. This change is suggested in the following article entitled "Ethnic Chinese Citizens should be Concerned about Vancouver's Civic Elections," which appeared in the Chinese Voice


We must realize that the City of Vancouver belongs to all of us citizens. Some of us are locals, others are from Hong Kong or elsewhere; but now we all share the city's honour and disgrace. Hence we should support our city and ensure that it has a bright future. We should use our ballots to elect the most representative people to be the mayor, aldermen, and board members. This is the best way to show our affection for Vancouver and to make it into a better place.

The claim to be Vancouverites, to be members of the larger Canadian society could not be more explicit.

To Defend the Neighbourhood: The Politics of Urban Renewal

Besides developing an interest in Canadian politics, an important segment of the Vancouver Chinese population was driven into a prolonged confrontation with the city government over the issue of urban redevelopment. Harassment of various kinds by the municipal authority was certainly not new in the history of Vancouver's Chinatown. In December 1955, after a long period of neglect, officials in the Health Department suddenly convened a series of meetings with the traditional associations, during which they bombarded the Chinese delegates with ideas about public health decency. They accused Chinatown as a potential health and fire hazard to the city and demanded that renovation be undertaken by
the Chinese. The episode was reminiscent of similar incidents earlier this century when Chinatown was caricatured as the "Celestial Cesspool" and a "Vice-town" by non-Chinese. The difference was the more conscientious official effort at public information and consultation in the later period. This decline in official arbitrariness was to offer the Chinese incentive and space for collective bargaining and peaceful resistance, as the following account will show.

In many North American cities, the post-war period saw an upsurge of interest in slum clearance, transport development, and urban renewal among municipal officials and planners. Most Chinatowns happened to be close to downtown, occupying valuable lands in the eyes of the authorities. The popular association of Chinatowns with unsanitary conditions and run-down buildings further justified draconian measures to eradicate these "plight areas" and restore them to the proper use in public interest. In Vancouver, while the Chinese organizations proceeded with the renovation of their buildings located mainly in the commercial part of Chinatown, little did they know that the adjacent Strathcona residential district would soon be engulfed by a gigantic

---

63 See the December 1955, February and April 1956 issues of the Chinese Voice. For examples of the city's definition of Chinatown as public nuisance in the early period, see Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown, Chapter Three.

64 The general literature on urban redevelopment in North America during this period is substantial. As far as Canadian Chinatowns are concerned, see, for example, the discussion about Toronto and Montreal by David Lai, Chinatowns pp. 146-54.
redevelopment effort. In 1957, senior officials in the City's Technical Planning Board released a document that envisioned a twenty-year urban renewal scheme, in which Strathcona was designated as the primary target.  

Known to many people as the "China Valley," Strathcona had witnessed a steady influx of Chinese residents since the inter-war period because of its affordable accommodation and the proximity to Chinatown. In 1947 more than a quarter of its inhabitants were ethnic Chinese, and the proportion steadily increased to about one-half in the late 1950s, and to some three quarters in the 1970s. Thus, even though the Chinese population in Vancouver continued to disperse, leaving about one-third residing in Strathcona around 1960, the district remained as the most concentrated Chinese neighbourhood in this city.  

In early 1958, City Council endorsed the programme of its planners. The prospect of dislocation and future uncertainty caused

---


an uproar in Chinatown, even though the details of the proposal were at first not widely known. The CBA called a meeting of the representatives from the traditional organizations and concerned Chinese property owners in the area. A Chinatown Property Owners Association, or the CPOA, was formed at that meeting to organize Chinese resistance to the scheme. \(^67\) From then until 1962, the CBA-CPOA leaders attended public hearings and met with City officials over the project. On four different occasions, they presented briefs to outline the adverse effects of redevelopment on the Chinese. \(^68\) The Chinese residents were afraid, they repeatedly argued, that their livelihood was in jeopardy. Many of them were either seniors or new immigrants who lacked English language facility and resided in the ethnic neighbourhood for cultural comfort and mutual care, or for accessibility to jobs in nearby Chinatown. Their suffering upon dispersal from Strathcona would be immense. The CBA-CPOA delegates also insisted that resettlement in apartment buildings would be socially demeaning for Chinese who

\(^{67}\) Chinese Voice 17, 19, 28, and 30 April 1958.

\(^{68}\) The CPOA presented its first brief to the City Council in June 1958. The second one was submitted first to the same authority in October 1960 and re-submitted to the B.C. Royal Commission on Expropriation Laws and Procedures in July 1961. The last written presentation to the City was made in October 1962. Chinese translation of the first two briefs was printed in the Chinese Voice 24-27 May 1958, and 5-8 August 1961. An original copy of the second document is also available in CCRC, Box 2, CPOA file. An annotated version of the last brief was enclosed as Appendix IV-C in the City of Vancouver, Technical Planning Board, Redevelopment Project No. 2 (July 1963). My following discussion of the Chinese perspectives is based on these documents and other Chinese newspaper reports on the subject during this period.
were originally property owners. Intermingling with other ethnic groups in such residential context would not be conducive to a harmonious relationship because the Chinese desired their own contiguous social and cultural space.

In their presentations, the CBA-CPOA leaders further laid out the deleterious ramifications of the project for their "community." It would hurt Chinatown businesses by depriving them of Chinese customers and a good supply of labour. It would also be difficult for scattered members to attend functions in the organizations. Enrolment at Chinese language schools would drop as children and their families would be dispersed. Later on, some Chinese criticized the freeze of land values, which rendered properties in the area unsaleable; the stoppage of all public works maintenance; the refusal to grant permits for private development and renovation; and the allegedly unfair monetary offer made by the government in its acquisition and expropriation of properties, beginning in 1961.

When successive petitions by the CBA-CPOA failed to stop the bulldozers from coming to Strathcona, there was a general feeling of a community under siege. (Bear in mind the RCMP operation against illegal Chinese immigration that began in May 1960). In February 1961 Foon Sien attended the first meetings of the Mayor's Redevelopment Consultative Committee and returned bitterly to the CBA saying that "the municipal authority is determined to level our
Chinese neighbourhood." A few months later, the first stage of the redevelopment project officially started, and no sooner had it begun than a second stage was proposed. In October 1962 the submissions of nineteen Chinese organizations under the leadership of the CBA-CPOA to oppose the proposal were again of no avail.

By then the determination and intransigence of the city politicians and planners had apparently exhausted the resolve of the Chinese. After the City Council approved in February 1963 the proposal for Phase Two, local Chinese seem to have resigned in despair and made no effort to resist the machine of redevelopment until 1967.

One outcome of the above development was the discrediting of the traditional CBA-style brokerage that had served the Chinese in their negotiation with the larger society. The protests of the CBA-CPOA were loud and clear, but they were piecemeal and reactive. The traditional Chinatown leaders were galvanized into action only by an impending crisis, such as when another threatening proposal came up for deliberation in City Council, or when municipal officials were out to acquire and expropriate properties. Popular mobilization was weak except during the early stage when the CBA-CPOA organized a signature campaign. Otherwise, several members of the Chinatown elite virtually monopolized the brokerage.

A turning point in Vancouver's urban redevelopment came in

70 City of Vancouver, Technical Planning Board, Redevelopment Project No.2 (July 1963).
1967 when a group of concerned professionals spearheaded a dramatic resistance to the freeway proposals of the municipal government. The unpopularity of pro-development city planning and public indignation caused by the mayor's dictatorial way of handling this issue benefitted the Chinese.\(^{71}\) Accordingly, the CBA managed to salvage some of its prestige by fighting against City Council's proposal to run a freeway through Chinatown along Carrall Street.\(^{72}\) The campaign was a success, but the role of leadership to further Chinese resistance against redevelopment soon passed into the hands of an unconventional organization.

By 1968, the first two phases of the renewal project had been completed, clearing altogether fifteen blocks of territory and displacing some 3,300 people, many of whom were Chinese. In December, Phase Three was about to start for the remaining half of Strathcona. At that point, encouraged by some non-Chinese social workers and young professionals to defend their neighbourhood, a group of local residents established the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association, or SPOTA, an organization which was novel

---

\(^{71}\) Background information on changing city-wide opinion in Vancouver regarding urban planning strategies is available in Setty Pendakur, Cities, Citizens and Freeways (Vancouver, S. Pendakur, 1972), especially chapter 4. A good recent discussion is provided by a group of local scholars, some of them participants in these events, in Graeme Wynn and Timothy Oke eds., Vancouver and Its Region (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1992), pp. 200-66.

\(^{72}\) See the June 1967 - January 1968 issues of the Chinese Voice. Anderson has also offered a careful account of the incident in Vancouver's Chinatown, pp. 200-6.
in many ways.\textsuperscript{73}

First of all, SPOTA was a neighbourhood organization rather than an ethnic institution per se. Since over ninety percent of its several hundred members and two dozen executives were Chinese, SPOTA did appeal to the ethnic group and the traditional Chinatown organizations for support. Yet, its leaders seemed to be very conscious that SPOTA was more than a Chinese organization. All of SPOTA's internal documents and records were bi-lingual to facilitate the involvement of local residents of diverse cultural backgrounds. In public presentation, SPOTA always portrayed Strathcona as consisting of an important segment of Vancouver's Chinese population and as a neighbourhood community whose residents were entitled to contribute to public policy formulation and implementation in their own area.\textsuperscript{74}

The composition of SPOTA's leadership was unique when compared with the existing Chinese organizations. Besides some non-Chinese, there were Chinese immigrants and "tusheng" of different generations. A few Chinatown businessmen and leaders of old-style organizations were present, but they were complemented and outnumbered by housewives, college students, social workers, and many local residents who were willing to participate in the

\textsuperscript{73} Chinese Voice 17, 27-30 December 1968.

\textsuperscript{74} Good examples are the two early public documents presented to the city government. "A Brief to the Vancouver City Council by the SPOTA, January 27, 1969" in the SPOTA Files, Add. Mss. 734, Vol. 6, File 9; and "A Brief to the Vancouver City Council by the SPOTA, May 16, 1969" in \textit{iibid.}, Vol. 1, File 2.
performance of a multitude of leadership roles. Jointly, they were involved in an exceptionally high intensity of organizational activity.

Six weeks after its founding, SPOTA presented to the City Council a statement of its mandate, endorsed by the signatures of two hundred Strathcona residents. The brief urged the municipal authority to respect the residents' desire for rehabilitation instead of following its own blueprint for urban renewal. The signatories further "requested the Vancouver City Council and the provincial and federal governments to recognize SPOTA as an official body for negotiation on these and other matters [regarding their neighbourhood]." "We citizens," as the brief continued, "who are most affected by urban renewal want to be more involved in planning and have the right to full participation. This Association [SPOTA] will do all in its power to involve a cross section of local residents and to encourage positive development of this area." In the following months SPOTA carried out a general survey in Strathcona and presented its findings to City Council in May 1969. They showed solid opposition to redevelopment.

SPOTA's campaign benefitted not only from the growing sentiments against redevelopment in Vancouver society, but also

---

75 "A Brief to the Vancouver City Council by the SPOTA, January 27, 1969".

from a new federal government which was wary of the financial and social cost of any urban renewal project. The leaders of SPOTA, particularly Harry Con who was a Liberal Party broker in Chinatown, successfully cultivated the support of several key officials in charge of federal housing policy while vigorous lobbying was underway simultaneously at the provincial and municipal levels. In addition, SPOTA was very strong in domestic mobilization to keep its grass-roots supporters informed as well as committed. From the very beginning it adopted a system of block captains for internal communication. General meetings were held almost once a month in its first year to assure the members of an accountable leadership and to impress the government with its own credibility as a spokesman.77

SPOTA's struggle made history in less than a year. In October 1969 Vancouver's City Council, under pressure from the federal government, agreed to form a Strathcona Working Committee in which SPOTA participated as an equal partner with representatives from all three levels of government in Canada. It was further agreed that rehabilitation, which the residents desired, would be the

77 Shirley Y. Chan, "An Overview of the Strathcona Experience with Urban Renewal by a Participant," (March 1971) offers a candid assessment of its strategies by a SPOTA activist. In SPOTA Files, Add. Mss. 734, Vol. 13, File 2. Two social analysts who were employed from outside, in December 1972, to furnish an evaluation of SPOTA's early organization were equally amazed by the intensity of its internal mobilization as a voluntary organization. See the Chislett-Robinson Report 1968-1971 in ibid., Vol. 8, File 5. Also the report to the SPOTA by John Chislett, "Conclusions of the Self-Evaluation Study," in ibid., Vol. 11, File 3.
general goal and no large-scale acquisition and demolition of properties would be undertaken in the neighbourhood under urban renewal legislation. It took another year to reach a final agreement on a government-funded Strathcona Rehabilitation Project to be monitored jointly by official agents and SPOTA.\(^7\)

Thus SPOTA's triumph became a landmark in the struggle of Vancouver Chinese for political empowerment against a background of relative impotency. Its demonstration of admirable skills in manoeuvring among politicians and bureaucrats from the federal, provincial, and municipal governments was a clear testimony of the growing maturity of the Chinese minority in the Canadian political context. Among the ethnic Chinese, the SPOTA experience bequeathed important legacies in terms of its leadership, popular mobilization, and a confidence to challenge unpopular bureaucratic decisions, all of which were to develop more fully in the succeeding decade.

In retrospect, Vancouver Chinese had made some major progress in their evolving identification with Canadian society and the host country in the post-war period. The agitation for more liberal immigration measures, the emergent interest in Canadian electoral

politics, and the experience of grass-roots mobilization to defend neighbourhood interests were three of the important landmarks in this process. These events were concrete expressions of a claim that Chinese were fellow Canadians and Vancouver residents. Interestingly, such a Canadian orientation was growing among Chinese in Vancouver at the same time when there was still strong evidence of a China-orientation in this minority. No unilineal cultural re-orientation from China to Canada had taken place. Nor had it simply been a case of ethnic resilience. Instead, Chinese responded actively to the changing historical environment and continued to construct their ethnic identity during the post-war years in relation to both China and Canada. They were indeed living between two worlds.

In the 1970s the internal discourse on Chinese identity took an interesting turn. For the first time the two fundamentally different cultural orientations -- one towards the native country and the other towards the host country -- were reconciled in some important ways. This development afforded Chinese people in Canada new cultural options in their ethnic construction. It is to this fascinating phenomenon that the discussion will now turn.
Chapter Six: Towards a "Chinese Canadian" Identity, 1971-1980

By the beginning of the 1970s, a lively discourse on ethnic identity and community had been unfolding among the Vancouver Chinese for a quarter century. Three major groups of Chinese were engaged in a cultural argument in which they sought to define and defend their versions of Chineseness and community. This development resulted in part from the demographic changes within the ethnic group, as the generation of pre-exclusion arrivals was joined and later outnumbered by their local-born descendants and the new Chinese immigrants since the end of World War II.

The diversified cultural expressions of the ethnic Chinese also reflected the evolving historical circumstances. The formerly encompassing influence of China on the cultural and political life of the Vancouver Chinese was generally receding after 1945, though there was continuity in some respects. Particularly among the immigrant Chinese, the interest in home country politics, the care for one's remaining family members in the native place and in Hong Kong, and the desire to perpetuate, or to advance, some forms of Chinese culture overseas lingered on. Totally unprecedented, by contrast, was the degree of acceptance the host society granted to the ethnic Chinese in the post-war period. Economic and cultural opportunities in the larger Canadian society were becoming more available than previously to the members of this minority group. In
tandem with the progress in acculturation, some Chinese demonstrated skills, ambitions, and local consciousness within the Canadian political process.

Other things being equal, one would expect the variety of articulated cultural positions to increase in the 1970s, when another very different generation of Chinese immigrants and a succeeding group of local-born youth arrived on the scene. However, other things were not equal, and what appears to have developed was a paradox of convergence and divergence in this discourse.

To describe the situation very briefly, a "Chinese Canadian" category emerged in this period as the prevailing mode of identification. This new formulation advanced the claim of the ethnic Chinese to be fully Canadian and at the same time embedded the Chinese cultural component as a defining and enriching characteristic. It thus reconciled the difference between the Chinese and Canadian orientations. It also ushered in a realignment of cultural positions among the various groups of Chinese and fostered some degree of consensus. Unity, however, was limited and the saliency of internal differences remained. Despite the popular subscription to a "Chinese Canadian" identity, subtle variations in emphasis and continuous conflicts over the power of representation persisted. In this sense, the Chinese debate on ethnic identity and the contest for community continued, albeit under a new overarching paradigm.

My discussion in this chapter will first correlate the rise of
a "Chinese Canadian" identity in the 1970s with the enshrinement of the mosaic ideology by the Canadian state, the growth of social consciousness in the Chinatown neighbourhood, and the burgeoning cultural pride across a broad spectrum of the local Chinese population. The following analysis will then focus on several developments within the ethnic group to discern how this identity was articulated and contested by its members. They include the popular movement to build a Chinese Cultural Centre, the endeavour of local-born youth of the 1970s to sharply define "Chinese Canadian" identity, and finally, the search of the new generation of Chinese immigrants for its own cultural space within this expanding minority group.

The Genesis of a Cultural Category: Multiculturalism, Local Activism, and Rising Ethnic Pride

In its early days the Chinatown News sometimes referred to Chinese residents in Canada as "Chinese Canadians." On occasion, the term was used specifically to mean local-born in order to distinguish them from those of immigrant background. In either case, the usage put emphasis on the professed identification with Canada on the part of the ethnic Chinese. The Chinatown News always insisted on proclaiming the upward mobility and acculturation of

---

1 Examples are available in the following issues: 3 April and 18 June 1954, 3 June 1955, and 18 March 1956.

2 For example, 3 February 1954 and 18 March 1956.
the native-born Chinese. Interestingly, the other half of the label -- the Chinese ethnic component -- was seldom articulated, let alone celebrated. An attempt to reconcile the difference between being "Canadian" and being "Chinese" was not inconceivable in the fifties and early sixties, but it was rare. Reconciliation became more feasible, and later popular, when the Canadian state and society entertained the multicultural ideal in earnest.

Although Canadian intellectuals started to flirt with the idea of Canada as a mosaic as early as the 1920s, the assumption of Anglo-Canadian supremacy had continued to dominate in government policy and public life for the next forty years. Eventually, this sparked off the vociferous protest of the disenchanted French Canadians over their truncated cultural rights, which led to the formation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963. These events, in turn, plunged the political elite and the

3 The position of Dick Se Lee mentioned at the beginning of Chapter Five is one exceptional example.

concerned public into a vigorous and protracted discussion on Canadian identity and related national policy.\footnote{Robert Harney has furnished a succinct discussion of this debate in a broad historical context in "'So Great a Heritage as Ours': Immigration and the Survival of the Canadian Polity," \textit{Daedalus} Vol. 117, no. 4 (1988), pp. 51-97.}

Compared to some European immigrant groups such as the Ukrainians, the Chinese participated in the debate rather modestly. In the ethnic Chinese press in Vancouver, the \textit{Chinatown News} alone reported on the nation-wide discussion and expressed an editorial stance on the subject. The unique attention of the local-born Chinese to mainstream Canadian issues is not surprising, but their response to this nation-wide debate is worth exploring because it shows the causal relationship between their incipient belief in Canadian pluralism and the re-formulation of a "Chinese Canadian" identity.

A sure sign of change was the appearance of mosaic rhetoric in the \textit{Chinatown News} from the early 1960s. This seems to have begun with an editorial in June 1962 when the magazine stated categorically that the "strength and virility of our Canadian culture lies in our recognition of the need to foster [a] proper climate for the nurturing and growth of a multi-culture [sic] nation."\footnote{\textit{Chinatown News} 15 June 1962.} Before long, the loss of Chinese cultural "heritage" among the younger generation came to be viewed as "a tragedy."\footnote{For example, see the article by William Wong in \textit{ibid.} 18 March 1964.}
the magazine's exclusive coverage on a meeting in June 1965 of three Chinese representatives (among whom was Roy Mah, its editor) with the Royal Commission in Vancouver's Chinatown, the reporter noted approvingly their appeal for recognition of the cultural and linguistic rights of the ethnic group.\(^8\)

The best evidence of a refurbished "Chinese Canadian" identity is an article of February 18, 1964, written by Reverend Andrew Lam in the Chinatown News. Entitled "Assimilation or Integration," it is quoted in its entirety:

> The current interest in bilingualism and biculturalism has brought out to the open expressions from various ethnic groups concerning their viewpoints on the question. Such groups as the Ukrainian, Jewish and Indian segments of the population have stated unequivocally their intentions of retaining and promoting their language and cultural heritage, and for recognition of their respective language and culture as integral parts of Canadian life. All this has made me think again of the situation of the Chinese population in Canada. We have, in general, been participating as Canadian citizens, to a greater or less degree more and more in the life of Canadian society. On the other hand, there is the question raised as to how far this participation would go, and whether it would lead eventually to participation in full measure.

> The answer to this question has to be considered in the light of the fact that Canada is not a melting pot of people but rather a mosaic composed of many ethnic origins [sic], who will, within the foreseeable future, continue to retain their respective racial and cultural

---

\(^8\) Ibid. 3 June 1965. The Commission had also written a brief report on this meeting. In PAC, RG 33, Series 80, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Vol. 120, File 634E.
identities. Such ethnic groups as the French-Canadians and Ukrainians do not want to become assimilated into a type that is identifiable only as Canadian -- if we can imagine Canadian nationality as such -- and it seems impossible that assimilation is the answer.

As far as the Chinese is concerned, unless there is a wholesale movement towards inter-racial marriage continuing for several generations, it would be difficult for them to lose their distinctive physical characteristics regardless of how assimilable they may be otherwise.

As things look now, the road ahead seems to lie in the direction of integration rather than assimilation. In other words, let us participate wholeheartedly as Canadian citizens in the life of Canada -- as fully as opportunity is given us. At the same time, let us be proud of our ethnic origin and identity.

There is no particular merit or gain in thinking less or forgetting entirely our ethnic origin or identity. In fact, there is no need for so doing. Above all, it is not a realistic approach. Each ethnic group inherits and shares with others a way of life that contributes to the enrichment of Canadian life. It is good for the ethnic groups and Canada as well that it is possible for this enriching process to continue.

To be proud of our origin and to appreciate it fully is an attitude of mind that is not inconsistent with good citizenship or loyalty to Canada. I suggest that we should do our best to instil in our young this pride and appreciation and to teach them the language of their forbears and the culture of their father land -- but with a realistic approach to the association.^[emphases added]

By reflecting on the fallacy of assimilation and the merits of integration and cultural retention, Reverend Lam was in effect

---

9 18 February 1964.
offering the first concise exposition of a "Chinese Canadian" identity. In writing directly to the Royal Commission a year later, Lam further asked that an "assurance of full acceptance" be given to the ethnic Chinese, "so that their individual contributions in their daily endeavours and the richness of their cultural heritage may add to [the] fullness and strength of Canadian life."¹⁰

Whether the enunciation of a new official policy of multiculturalism in 1971 constituted an adequate form of assurance in the eyes of Reverend Lam is simply not known. Nevertheless, the Chinatown News did applaud when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau announced his government's endorsement of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" in his parliamentary speech on October 8, 1971.¹¹ Canadian scholars have made many discerning remarks on the intent and content of this controversial policy.¹² A few have drawn perceptive and theoretical insights from this remarkable example of state intervention to restructure the cultural and symbolic order.

¹⁰ Letter from Andrew Lam to Paul Lacoste, co-secretary, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, June 21, 1965. In RG 33, Series 80, Vol. 121, File 679E.

¹¹ Chinatown News 18 October 1971.

of Canadian society. However, little has been done to reappraise official multiculturalism in the context of ongoing cultural dialogue and negotiation within a single ethnic group. This study of the Vancouver Chinese may go some way to balance the scholarly assessment.

As a public policy and a state ideology after 1971, Canadian multiculturalism was pivotal in the development of a "Chinese Canadian" category. At least at the state level, cultural pluralism was now acknowledged as a reality of Canadian life, and being "Chinese" was no longer considered antithetical but complementary to being "Canadian." This cultural rearrangement not only met the above aspiration for integration spearheaded by the local-born Chinese, it enveloped the entire ethnic group in a socio-cultural context very different from the past. For one thing, official multiculturalism enhanced the attractiveness and accessibility of a Canadian form of identity to the ethnic Chinese. It encouraged them to think of Canada as their country, regardless of their foreign origin or minority status. For another, the multicultural policy awarded unprecedented legitimacy, status, and financial support to the maintenance and expression of ethnic Chinese culture.

---

and group interests. It thus afforded a premium for the Chinese to display and celebrate their ethnic sentiments and cultural ties. ¹⁴

It is not difficult to see that multiculturalism appealed to the Chinese in general, but the new environment it ushered in did privilege one particular group, the local-born Chinese. Compared with the immigrant Chinese, they had more sensitivity to, and experience in dealing with, Canadian issues. In the previous intramural debate on cultural identity, the emphasis had been on Chineseness and the native-born had often been disadvantaged by their lack of first hand experience with China and relatively weak command of Chinese cultural skills. Under multiculturalism, the balance tilted towards Canadianess and the local-born Chinese had the cutting edge. Their energetic participation in the discourse on "Chinese Canadian" identity will be shown later in several case studies.

¹⁴ Some critics of official multiculturalism have accused the policy of legislating "otherness." Kay Anderson has endorsed this view in her study of western perceptions of Vancouver's Chinatown, arguing that under multiculturalism the Canadian state continued to define the "Chinese" as "outsiders," though in a more positive and benign fashion than overt discrimination of the past. Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), pp. 211-44. While that may have been the case, it was not how the Chinese perceived the issue and took advantage of it as of the 1970s. That kind of criticism of multiculturalism surfaced among the Chinese only in more recent years. See, for example, Karin Lee, "Chinese -- Chinese-Canadian -- Canadian," in Henry Tsang ed., Self Not Whole: Cultural Identity and Chinese-Canadian Artists in Vancouver (Vancouver: Chinese Cultural Centre, 1991), pp. 24-29, which calls the policy a "lightly disguised racial and cultural apartheid," p. 28.
While official multiculturalism was crucial to the construction of a "Chinese Canadian" identity, at least two other sets of events contributed to that effect in different ways. The first was the sudden swelling of social consciousness and neighbourhood activities in the Strathcona area, as demonstrated earlier in the grass-roots resistance led by SPOTA against urban redevelopment starting in late 1968. SPOTA's initial campaign had been part of a larger protest movement staged by a concerned segment of the Vancouver population against the pro-development planning strategy of city officials, against the alleged destruction of neighbourhoods, and against the lack of public input in the management of civic affairs. In the following years, SPOTA remained the core of an expanding effort at neighbourhood defense and enhancement in Strathcona. For many Chinese participants and observers, the Strathcona struggle for empowerment was a most concrete expression of "community" and an assertion of local identity.  

In the early 1970s, SPOTA was in the forefront of several protest movements against a number of public projects conceived by the Vancouver municipal government. The official initiatives included new proposals to run freeway traffic through Chinatown and to build a firehall on the western edge of Strathcona between

---

Pender and Keefer Streets. The threat to the well-being of Chinatown looked real and imminent, for it was believed that any one of these projects would have dissected the neighbourhood and caused traffic hazards and other inconvenience to its inhabitants. Seeing itself as an advocate of the interest of the residents, SPOTA engaged in a vigorous and successful opposition to all three schemes. In the case of its objection in early 1970 to the conversion of Union and Prior Streets into a one-way couplet, it even threatened to resign from the Strathcona Working Committee and thereby put the prospective rehabilitation scheme in jeopardy. This was obviously a way of pitting the municipal officials against the federal authorities, which had developed a vested interest in the housing project.\(^16\) Two years later, SPOTA joined hands with three other Chinatown organizations in making strong representations to City Council against the idea of widening the Keefer-Pender diversion as a freeway connector.\(^17\)

The most dramatic Chinatown protest of this era broke out over the firehall controversy. After repeated failures in lobbying the City Council, SPOTA turned to popular mobilization as the last resort. In November 1972 it initiated a coalition of progressive Chinatown leaders and young activists in the "Committee to Fight


the Firehall Site in Chinatown." The public statement of the ad
hoc committee was loud and clear: the location of "this firehall,
with its administrative office, a multi-storey training centre and
fire-fighting equipment for the entire downtown station...amid a
beehive of activities -- schools, YWCA, churches, high density
senior citizens residence and family dwellings...(was) totally
unacceptable to the community." At a mass rally on December 10,
almost a thousand people showed up, making the protest the largest
of its kind in Chinatown's history. The demonstrators paraded
through Pender Street before they proceeded to the Strathcona
School auditorium where twenty-three aldermanic candidates for the
upcoming civic election were asked to take a stand on the issue.
Besides political skills, the occasion was a powerful display of
Chinatown's community sentiments and its resolve to confront the
authorities. The firehall plan was soundly defeated.

In addition to defensive protests, initiatives at
neighbourhood improvement also flourished in the Chinatown area in
the 1970s. These efforts at self-help were in line with public
sentiments in Vancouver, which were increasingly in favour of
community renewal through resident participation. They also
benefitted directly from the relatively liberal social policy of

18 Chinatown News 18 April and 18 October 1972. Also SPOTA
Mss. 734, Vol. 1, File 3.

19 Chinatown News 3 December 1972.

20 Chinatown News 18 December 1972.
the Trudeau government and its support for grass-roots democracy. In July 1972, for instance, SPOTA received its first major grant from Ottawa of almost $50,000 for institutional enhancement.\(^{21}\) Awarded minor start-up grants at the same time were two related lesser projects -- the Strathcona Renovation and Design Service and the Chinese Community Reading Room. Undertaken by Chinese university students both from Strathcona and elsewhere, they were geared towards specific areas of neglected social service. The former was to provide timely architectural advice to local residents in the recently commenced rehabilitation scheme. The latter began as a storefront library making available Chinese-language reading materials and translation and referral services to a neighbourhood with many non-English speakers. Getting public funding in the following years, this facility expanded into the Chinese Community Library Services Association, which still exists.\(^{22}\)

As for SPOTA itself, its original mandate was to oversee the implementation of a state-sponsored rehabilitation programme. Soon after this was started in 1972, SPOTA ventured into co-operative housing on a volunteer basis. By the end of the decade, four phases of what was called "infill housing" had been built on a total of forty-four vacant lots leased from the provincial government and on


mortgages negotiated by SPOTA.\textsuperscript{23} Meanwhile, SPOTA was involved in other neighbourhood development initiatives such as the Strathcona Community Centre opened in 1972 and the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee set up by the City Council in 1975 to channel public input into a local beautification project.\textsuperscript{24}

In light of this outburst of local activities in the Chinatown area in the 1970s, it is apparent that the emergent "Chinese Canadian" identity was more than a sanctified outcome of Ottawa's multicultural policy. It signified as well a local commitment, articulated by some Vancouver Chinese from both Canadian-born and immigrant backgrounds, to defend and advance their collective interests.

Finally, the rise of "Chinese Canadian" consciousness in the seventies cannot be fully comprehended without looking at the upsurge of ethnic sentiments among the local Chinese. In the

\textsuperscript{23} On SPOTA's input into the operation of the rehabilitation programme, see SPOTA Files, Add. Mss. 734, Vols. 22 and 23. Its reports submitted to its major federal funding agent, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, are in Vol. 4, Files 12 and 13. Documents on co-operative housing are available in Vols. 25 and 28. See also a useful summary by Hayne Wai in The Strathcona Story, a booklet published by SPOTA in 1976.

\textsuperscript{24} SPOTA's own newsletters (including a tabloid called the Mirror published between June 1977 and July 1978) are informed on these activities of the organization. On the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee, it should be noted that the leading role was played by the Chinatown Property Owners and Merchants Association formed in 1973. See Chinatown Planning Newsletter, published by the City Planning Department, November 1976 and the materials in the SPOTA Files, Add. Mss. 734, Vol. 13.
previous decades since 1947, young new immigrants had already demonstrated an interest in Chinese cultural expression. One of their youth groups, the leftist Chinese Youth Association, had attempted to equate Chinese self-esteem, or minzu zunyan, with a zealous identification with Communist China and its alleged achievements as a modern nation. After 1971, official multiculturalism afforded ethnic Chinese culture legitimacy and space within the Canadian mosaic. In the meantime, new developments in Sino-Canadian diplomatic relations, the improving international profile of Communist China in the western world, and the influence of the Asian American movement in the United States all encouraged the growth of Chinese pride.

For some twenty years after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC), most western countries under the leadership of the United States had treated Communist China with suspicion and hostility. Like its allies, Canada also withheld diplomatic recognition from the PRC and treated the defeated Nationalist regime in Taiwan as official China. Nonetheless, 

people no less influential than Lester Pearson (who later became the prime minister, 1963-1968) and Chester Ronning in the Department of External Affairs were groping for change. The beginning of wheat sales to Mainland China in 1960 further sowed the seeds of good faith and cordiality between the two countries. When Trudeau launched his diplomatic effort towards normalization in 1968, Parliament and Canadian public opinion supported it.

Whereas the establishment of diplomatic ties between Canada and the PRC in October 1970 brought to a close Canada's search for an autonomous China policy, the event was a landmark in the emerging profile of Communist China in the international arena. The year after, in 1971, the PRC was admitted into the United Nations; its open rapprochement with the Western world through the state visit of President Nixon in 1972, and through Trudeau's trip to Mainland China in 1973 boosted its international status. Communist China had always had its foreign admirers, but their once-lonely voices were now superseded by a euphoria. The new respect for China


26 For the most controversial Canadian example, see Stephen Endicott, James G. Endicott: Rebel Out of China (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).
as a potential superpower and its apparent approachability fostered an almost global interest in the country as a modern nation and an historical civilization.

Janet Lum has recently observed that most Chinese in Toronto did not consider the issue of recognition of the PRC to be of any importance or relevance to their lives in Canada.\textsuperscript{27} A general indifference to Chinese politics was also discernible in Vancouver. Yet, in both cases a small number of supporters of the two contending Chinese regimes acted otherwise. In Vancouver, the Kuomintang adherents voiced objection to Canada's diplomatic overture and warned about the communist infiltration of Chinatown.\textsuperscript{28} The recognition emboldened their local opponents, the Chinese Youth Association and other sympathizers of Beijing mainly among the post-1947 immigrants. Eleven days after recognition was announced, the Hon Hsing Athletic Society paraded the first PRC flag in Vancouver's Chinatown to celebrate its own thirtieth anniversary.\textsuperscript{29} Three months later, in preparing to welcome the PRC


\textsuperscript{28} See the initial reaction of Lam Fong, the chief Kuomintang spokesman in Vancouver, as reported in \textit{Chinatown News} 18 October 1970. Later, in September 1971, Lam again charged the PRC supporters with harassing the local Chinese residents. \textit{Province} 11 September 1971 and \textit{Vancouver Sun} 13 September 1971, as quoted in \textit{Da Zhong Bao} 18 September 1971 and \textit{Chinatown News} 18 September 1971. The centre of the Kuomintang's anti-recognition activity was in Toronto, as Lum has shown in "Recognition and the Toronto Chinese Community."

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Da Zhong Bao} 31 October 1970.
ambassador to Canada, and Vancouver, the elated Chinese Youth Association convened its first public meeting of Chinatown organizations. Though less than two dozen associations participated, a number of major district and surname organizations such as the two Wong clan associations, Cheng Wing Yeong Tong, Yue San Association, and Yin Ping District Association supported the event. The influential Chinese Freemasons were also represented at the meeting by their Athletic Society. Not surprisingly, the recognition had encouraged some former silent sympathizers of the PRC to come out. It may even have changed the basic attitude of some Chinese towards the regime.

For the Chinese Youth Association, the rising international profile of the PRC and the burgeoning zhongguo ye (China euphoria) in the West were the best vindication of its stance over the years. "New China," as the out-spoken Da Zhong Bao always insisted, would be the foundation of a modern Chinese pride. For others, the early 1970s may well have been the first time in the last quarter century, or in their lives, when they could come to think of China so positively and exuberantly. Consider, for example, the drastic change in the Chinatown News' reportage on Mainland China.

Previously, this local-born Chinese publication had been reluctant to cover any China-related issues. Occasions such as the

---

31 Da Zhong Bao 8 September 1973. See also my discussion of the Chinese Youth Association and its tabloid in Chapters Two and Five.
recognition were used to drive home the point that the Chinese in Canada and the native-born in particular were too well-integrated into the host society to show any special interest in the event. The uneasiness of the Chinatown News in associating with China receded perceptibly as the seventies wore on. This was first noticeable when the PRC table-tennis team toured four Canadian cities in April 1972. According to one of its editorials,

[t]his was the first delegation on the grass root [sic] level from the People's Republic to visit Canada. The importance with which the Canadian government viewed this people to people exchange was reflected in the calibre of personagges [sic] showing up to greet the Chinese players. The list included Governor General Roland Michener, External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp, Premier Alex Campbell of PEI, Mayor Jean Drapeau of Montreal, Mayor William Dennison of Toronto, Mayor C. Schell of Gravenhurst, Alderman Brian Calder and Alderman Ed. Sweeney of Vancouver... [The visit was to] foster the growth of harmonious links between peoples... [I]n the field of international relations,..[w]hether it is an exchange of athletes, journalists, cultural and trade delegations or just ordinary tourists, good will implies a desire to contribute to the success of the exchange.32

Holding the "Ping Pong diplomacy" in such high regard, the Chinatown News lavished attention on the team's activities in Vancouver and pointed out enthusiastically that its performance was attended by more than four thousand fans, most of them Chinese.33

Roy Mah was the only correspondent from an ethnic Chinese journal to accompany the prime minister to China the following year. Based on this trip, Mah published a series of articles in the Chinatown News on the laudable achievements of modern China.\footnote{Ibid. 3 and 18 November, 3 and 18 December 1973, 18 January 1974, and 3 February 1974.} Apparently, this editor's anxiety about reporting on Communist China had passed. Commenting on this and other related changes in the Chinatown News of the early 1970s, two contemporary observers discerned a "self-assured security of identity and a satisfaction with Chinese origins, now that these imply roots in a great and friendly nation..."\footnote{Charles Sedgwick and William Willmott, "External Influences and Emerging Identity: The Evolution of Community Structure among Chinese Canadians," Canadian Forum (September, 1974), pp. 8-12. See p. 12 particularly.}

The breakthrough in Sino-Canadian diplomatic relations brought forth not only new attitudes and feelings with regard to China. It also presented the ethnic Chinese with the chance to re-establish connections with home counties and villages in Southern Guangdong. These local ties had been attenuated by war and revolution in China and more or less been severed by the diplomatic anomaly between the two countries from 1949 to 1970. A major step towards their restoration was taken during Trudeau's visit in October 1973. The two governments agreed on a family reunion programme that would allow people from Mainland China to join their close relatives in Canada. They also agreed to an overall consular package, leading to
the opening of a PRC consulate-general in Vancouver in November 1974. The Chinese in Canada finally saw the door of China, shut for twenty-five years, reopen for contact with remaining relatives and visit to the native areas.

Joining the popular China tours in the late 1970s were many immigrant Chinese who had left their former country decades earlier. The "homecoming" was no less an attraction for the local-born Chinese, from the oldest first generation to teenagers and young adults. Their interest was all part of the China euphoria of this era, but the younger ones among the native-born were additionally under the sway of the Asian American movement in the United States to pay new respect to their ethnic origin and cultural heritage. Members of this young Canadian-born generation did not show anti-"establishment" sentiments similar to those of their American counterparts. Nonetheless, they consciously rejected what they saw as Anglo-conformity in Canadian society and sought to awaken their ethnic pride. The search for roots led many of them


37 The following materials are useful for some perspectives on the Asian American movement: Amy Tachiki et al., Roots: An Asian American Reader and Emma Gee ed., Counterpoint: Perspectives on Asian America, published by the Asian American Studies Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1971 and 1976 respectively; and a special issue of the Amerasia Journal, "Salute to the 60s and 70s: Legacy of the San Francisco State Strike," Vol. 15, no. 1 (1989). It is a pity that the latest work of William Wei on this multi-faceted movement is not available at the time of writing. The influence of the Asian American movement on the Canadian-born Chinese, especially those at university, is mentioned in Sean Gunn and Paul Yee's editorial to a special issue on Vancouver in The Asianadian Vol. 3, no.2 (1980), p. 2; and Yee,
to re-identify themselves with Chinatown, and some to visit China as well.

The development of a "Chinese Canadian" category was therefore predicated on a complex of local and extralocal forces. It was essentially an outgrowth by the Chinese of a local consciousness and a sense of belonging to a Canadian environment. At the same time, it took the form of an ethnic movement, drawing on an inflated cultural awareness and a burgeoning Chinese pride. Another critical foundation of this cultural phenomenon was the state policy of multiculturalism that ordained a new concept of Canadian identity based on cultural plurality.

It is now necessary for us to study the Chinese articulation of this new identity. At the outset, it should be said that the emergence of this category cannot be visualized as wholesale movement of all Chinese towards a single unified form of self-identification. Nor did it obliterate all existing cultural differences or still the intramural debate about identity among the Chinese. What happened, in a nutshell, was the emergence of a new paradigm for the ongoing Chinese discourse on ethnicity. As the "Chinese Canadian" identity gained ground as a point of reference

"Where Have All the Young People Gone? Vancouver's Chinese Cultural Centre and Its Native-born," in K.V. Ujimoto and G. Hirabayashi eds., Asian Canadians: Regional Perspectives (Published Conference Proceedings of the Asian Canadian Symposium V, 1982), pp. 357-58. My understanding of the junior Canadian-born Chinese has also benefitted from personal interviews with several members of this generation.
for the Chinese minority, it had the potential of bringing various groups together and rekindling a new spirit of community. Paradoxically, it could also be a point of contention where cultural differences and conflicting agendas were disclosed. The early history of the Chinese Cultural Centre, or the CCC, best illustrates this point.

The Chinese Cultural Centre Movement

The progenitor is not known, but the idea of building a kind of cultural or community centre had certainly floated around in the Chinese minority in Vancouver for quite some time. Just like other immigrant groups, Chinese were attracted to this undertaking for some simple reasons. Having such a facility would inspire cooperation and unity, or at least it was thought to do so. Hence, in the mid-1950s when the young local-born and the new immigrants failed to get along with one another, the Chinese Voice suggested the building of a community hall so as to put them under the same roof.\(^{38}\) Based on collective efforts, a project of this kind would further be a tangible accomplishment and a pride for the entire ethnic group. Several other proposals, made by individuals and organizations in the late 1950s and 1960s, for a permanent cultural-cum-community facility in the Chinatown neighbourhood all

\(^{38}\) Chinese Voice 13 June 1955.
argued along this line. At this stage, however, the suggestions were invariably general and the public was not excited.

But the idea of building an ethnic community centre slowly gained momentum. In November 1970 -- that is, right after Canadian recognition of the PRC -- some leftist Chinese youth formed a new group calling itself "Chinese-Canadians for a Better Community," or the CCBC. In an interview with the Da Zhong Bao, the group claimed to have a membership that "consist[s] of all ages and cuts through all sectors of this community -- workers, students, and professionals alike. Of particular importance is that the group consists of both the Chinese speaking sector, as well as the English speaking second and third generation Chinese Canadians." In the same interview, the CCBC made a point of criticizing the "so-called [Chinese] leaders" who "either cannot see or are indifferent to the many problems existing in the community -- the run-down conditions of Chinatown; the exploitation of cheap labour; the lack of social facilities and adequate welfare for the poor; the alienation of the young, resulting in a drift towards narcotics and crime..." As a first step towards rectifying the situation, the group proposed a community centre which, in its own words,

---

39 Chinese Voice 30 April 1958, 15 January 1964, and 21 November 1966. Chinatown News 18 October 1958. When the second stage of the redevelopment plan was still in the air, Douglas Jung had approached the City government, on behalf of the Yin Ping District Association, to acquire a piece of property in Chinatown for the purpose of a community centre. Office of the City Clerk, B1 D7, File on Civic Development, Expropriation, Redevelopment Project II A5 A6 A7.
can serve as an overall umbrella or as a co-ordinating body for various programs and projects which are of benefit to the community. The centre in addition to being a drop-in place for the young and the old alike, will obviously include such programs as day-care, legal aid, language classes, employment and welfare services, and other cultural or social programs that the community wants. We believe that such a centre will serve to establish pride in the community and to enable the young to be proud of our heritage -- to be proud of being a Chinese Canadian.\textsuperscript{40}

Soon afterward, the CCBC attempted but was unable to convene a meeting of interested parties to get the project started.\textsuperscript{41} Most likely, its critical perspectives on Chinatown and the elites had cost its ambitious proposal the much-needed public support. The group itself also vanished in less than a year.

In May 1971, Roy Mah of the Chinatown News offered his thoughts on a Chinese Cultural Centre. According to Mah, the \textit{raison d'etre} of this organization was to serve as an "historic link with the past...[by] preserving the records of Chinese Canadian contributions to this province -- and to Canada." In elaboration,

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Da Zhong Bao} (English edition) December 1970. The English edition was a brief attempt by the Chinese Youth Association to reach the local-born Chinese. However, only a total of four issues were published between September and December 1970.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{New Bridge} Vol. 1, no. 1 (February 1971). This was probably the group's own publication. Only seven issues (from February to September 1971) are available, which may be all that came out.
he likened it to

a treasure-trove of a research library and exhibits depicting the life of our community in Canada. The Centre could be programmed as an educational institution, making available its resources and material to all researchers in ethnic studies... [W]e urge that every encouragement be given to the establishment of this centre where books, periodicals, tape recordings about Chinese Canadians may be preserved. It could be the repository too, for private and organizational records, artifacts of historic value, manuscripts, clippings, photographs and common articles of daily living which can provide historians with details of the every day life of this segment of our ethnic mosaic.\textsuperscript{42}

Coming out in the early years of the 1970s, these two proposals carried their own "Chinese Canadian" flavour. The CCBC wanted to reassert an ethnic pride by means of a self-renewal of community life. It seemed to advocate a revitalized Chinese Benevolent Association strongly committed to a whole range of social services.\textsuperscript{43} Roy Mah, on the other hand, envisaged more or

\textsuperscript{42} Chinatown News 18 May 1971.

\textsuperscript{43} It would not be surprising if these youngsters were aware of, and to some extent influenced by, contemporary developments in American Chinatowns, especially San Francisco and New York, where alienated Chinese youth sought radical changes by openly challenging the Chinatown establishment. See Stanford Lyman, "Red Guard on Grant Avenue: The Rise of Youthful Rebellion in Chinatown," in idem., The Asian in North America (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, Inc., 1977), pp. 177-99; and his chapter, "Alienation, Rebellion, and the New Consciousness," in idem., Chinese Americans (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. 158-85.
less a museum facility that would reclaim the history of the Chinese in Canada. By demonstrating their contributions to the country, Mah's proposal implicitly aimed to uplift Chinese confidence as well as to win approval from outside. The goals of these two propositions were thus noticeably wide apart and such a difference in approach and emphasis was to remain even after the cultural centre project got off the ground.

Events took an interesting turn towards the end of 1972, as the idea of a cultural centre found some new champions. At a Wong's Benevolent Association banquet in October, dignitaries from Ottawa, Victoria, and the City Hall all spoke positively of state support under the new multicultural mandate if the Vancouver Chinese were to build a cultural centre. Kelly Ip, a regional liaison officer of the Citizenship Branch, Department of the Secretary of State, immediately followed up with a letter encouraging the Wong's Benevolent Association to initiate a collective effort to take advantage of the assurance they had received from all three levels of government.44 Being the biggest surname organization, the Wongs, of course, occupied a far more influential position in Chinatown than the backers of earlier cultural centre proposals. On February

44 Both the "unsolicited" official support given at the banquet and Ip's letter were quoted in Chinatown News 3 October 1972. Since then, the former has become part of the founding myth of the CCC. See John Wong, "A Brief History of the Chinese Cultural Centre," (in both Chinese and English) in Zhonghua Wenhua Zhongxin chengli shi zhounian jinian tekan (The Chinese Cultural Centre Tenth Anniversary Souvenir Publication 1973-1983) (1988), pp. 11-17.
11, 1973, 150 representatives from forty-three Chinese organizations met at the Wong's Association headquarters to discuss the issue (See Figure 6.1). Enthusiasm abounded, and a CCC building committee of twenty-two members was elected on the spot. In the following months, the committee made further contact with federal officials to sound out their response, displayed preliminary architectural designs of the CCC building complex for popular input, and drafted a constitution for formal registration. At the same time, the CCC leadership came to define the objectives of the organization broadly as the preservation and celebration of the cultural heritage of the ethnic Chinese in Canada and the interpretation of that heritage to the other members of the Canadian mosaic.45

Just how the CCC strove to realize its "Chinese Canadian" aspirations and complete its multi-million dollar building project would make an intriguing inquiry. For the purpose of this study, my discussion will focus on the social dynamics and cultural negotiation behind the CCC movement.

Soon after Roy Mah and the other members of the building committee were elected, Mah wrote passionately on the CCC as a unifying cause for the local Chinese:

---

Figure 6.1

Organizations Represented at the Founding Meeting of the Chinese Cultural Centre, February 11, 1973

一九七三年二月十一日委派代表出席
成立中華文化中心之全僑大會之僑團名單

民星閱書報社
雲星達禮堂社
文匯學校
雲星洪福公所
雲星洪福體育會
雲星洪福體育會
華星奧運人聯合會
青年聯誼會
滇加雨陽總堂
思平總會會
平星獨立仁同業商會
愛星總公所
振華音楽研究所
海錦會
清觀音楽社
華星安老院
至孝善親公所
中國文化協會
中華基督教會
中加友誼會
週星陽總堂
華星女子青年會
士達孔拿棄主興住客協會
儒學會
永風榮堂
陳星川總堂
林星洪福雲九牧公所
沙堆公所
蔡武威堂
昭倫觀義公所
謝氏宗親會
屈山總公所
至德總堂
伍青山公所
華人長老會
台山崔瑞會館
雲星洪福民主黨支部
龍龍公所
同州總會館
中山獨立同鄉會
馬氏公所
龍城英華總會
黃氏宗親總會

以當日出席會議為順序

Ming Sun Reading Room Company Ltd.
Dart Coon Club
Mon Keang School
Hoy Yin Association
The Vancouver Masonic Athletic Club
Hon Hsing Athletic Club
Chinatown Property Owners and Merchants Association
Chinese Youth Association
Nan Young Tong Association
Yen Ping Association
Lower Mainland Grocers Association
Oyin Kong Show Society
Jin Wah Sing Dramatic Society (Musical Association)
Hai Fung Association
Ching Won Musical Society
Chinese Seniors Home
Gee How Oak Tin Association
Chinese Cultural Society
The Christ Church of China
Chinese Canadian Citizen's Association
Cheng Wing Yeong Tong
Chinatown Y.W.C.A.
Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association
Kiu On Association
Yee Fong Toy Society
Chin Wing Chun Tong
Lim Sai Hor (Kow Mock) Benevolent Association
Shar Doey Mutual Society
Lew Mow Way Tong
Chau Luen Society
Tse Clanmen Association
Yue Shan Society
Chee Dack Gun Tong Society
Ing Suyi Sun Association
Chinese Presbyterian Church
Hoy Sun Nung Yung Benevolent Association
Chinese Freemasons Vancouver Branch
Lung Kung Tien Yee Association
Kong Chow Benevolent Association
Lun Jen Benevolent Association
Man Society
Shon Yee Benevolent Association
Wongs' Benevolent Association

N.B. The organizations were listed according to the order of registration at the meeting. There are slight variations between some English names rendered in this original document and the ones used in this study.

There is an excellent chance that we may just get the Chinese Cultural Centre project off the ground this time...[because] we see young and old, both China-born and Canadian-born, rapping and getting along on the same wave-length. They are sitting down together and planning a program that would redound to mutual benefit... The grand coalition of individuals and groups is noteworthy. In the past little was done to meet the many pressing needs of our community because the gaps -- both generation and political -- were too wide. There are the traditional groups and the youth groups. Also we have the left of centre, right of centre and the middle-of-the-road groups. Every so often attempts would be made to bring these divergent factions together to tackle a common project or to solve some problems affecting the welfare of our community. But nothing lasting came out of these relationships. The groups stood their ground, and the gulf remained as wide as ever. What is needed is something to bring us together -- a catalyst for community action. That something may just be the Chinese Cultural Centre.46

As we will see Mah was too optimistic, but he was not terribly off the mark regarding the potential of the CCC to engender a community movement. On this point the Da Zhong Bao, otherwise Mah's vehement critic, concurred. It argued consistently in a number of articles that the Strathcona struggle against state-initiated redevelopment and especially the recent protest against the firehall proposal had generated a tremendous sense of community, to the benefit of the CCC. If nothing else, they had proved that together Chinese people could get things done, even when they were

at odds with the government. 47

What was the "grand coalition" referred to by Roy Mah? A number of traditional Chinatown associations that formerly represented the older generation of Chinese immigrants supported the CCC from the beginning. By the 1970s their constituency had expanded to encompass not only the elderly Chinese whose number had shrunk seriously for obvious reasons, but also some post-1947 immigrants. As already shown, a few traditional organizations such as the Wong's and the Chinese Freemasons had replenished themselves with newcomers in the 1950s and 1960s. Others were now beginning this stage of succession, as the former immigrant youth reached their thirties and forties and found the organizations useful for social and business networking and other personal purposes. 48 Many of these organizations further derived unexpected financial strength, vitality, and a sense of importance from their real estate investment. Rallying behind the CCC was part of their transition from old-style immigrant associations into more Canadian-oriented and progressive institutions. The objectives of the CCC to preserve Chinese culture and to uphold Chinese pride within the newly-defined Canadian multicultural context were

---


extremely appealing to these organizations that were searching for local commitments and continuing relevance in a changing environment.\textsuperscript{49}

The generation of post-1947 immigrants was the most persistent in its support for the CCC (and remains so to the present). Especially influential were those who previously had been active in the youth auxiliaries or the autonomous youth societies. Their former youthful Chinese pride, enthusiasm in promoting Chinese cultural activities, and organizational expertise made them all the more indispensable for the development of the CCC into a viable vehicle for cultural retention and celebration. Within a couple of years after the CCC was formed the sponsorship of special cultural events such as Chinese festivals and performances, and other regular programmes like the offering of classes in Chinese language and art, had become an integral part of its existence. In a sense, the participation of the post-1947 immigrants in the CCC really marked their cultural triumph. After years of presenting their cultural agendas and negotiating with the established elderly immigrants from the periphery, its members finally saw themselves emerging in the 1970s via the CCC as part of the recognized

\textsuperscript{49} On the reorientation of the traditional organizations in this period, the case of the Chinese Freemasons' is briefly summarized in Harry Con, Zhongguo Hongmen zai Jianada (The Chinese Freemasons in Canada) (Vancouver: Chinese Freemasons Canadian Headquarters, 1989), p. 84.
"mainstream" within the Chinese minority.⁵⁰

The CCC also served as a conduit for various degrees of cultural repositioning for three groups of Canadian-born Chinese. Undergoing the least change were some first and second generation native-born (like the familiar Roy Mah) who had been active in one way or another in Chinatown organizations. Their early involvement in the CCC was largely an extension of their existing interests in the ethnic group. By contrast, the two other groups joined the CCC movement as a turning point in their cultural experiences. Aroused by multiculturalism and the ethnic sentiments of the early seventies, they saw the CCC as a cause for them to "return" to Chinatown and rediscover their cultural pride. One group consisted of a small number of senior Chinese professionals from the older generation who brought to the CCC exceptional leadership skills, respect in the larger society, and the ability to negotiate aggressively with Canadian government authorities.⁵¹ The other was

⁵⁰ Larry Chu, "A Review of the Activities and Special Events Committees," (in both Chinese and English) in Zhonghua Wenhua Zhongxin chengli shi zhounian jinian tekan, pp. 28-31, is a useful summary of the CCC's activities.

⁵¹ The most celebrated example is Dr. S. Wah Leung, the founding dean of the Faculty of Dentistry at U.B.C. He joined the CCC in 1975 and was the chairman of its board of directors from then until 1983. For his personal perspectives, see "The First Ten Years -- A Rocky Road to Success," (in both Chinese and English) in Zhonghua Wenhua Zhongxin chengli shi zhounian jinian tekan, pp. 18-20; idem., "Random Reflections," (in both Chinese and English) in Zhonghua Wenhua Zhongxin chengli shiwu zhounian tekan (The Chinese Cultural Centre Fifteenth Anniversary Souvenir Publication 1973-1988) (1988), pp. 8-10. His biographical information is available in Sophia Leung and Paul Robertson eds., S. Wah Leung: Celebration of a Splendid Life (Vancouver: Faculty of Dentistry, U.B.C., 1992). His personal papers, in the custody of Mrs. Sophia Leung, have been
a larger contingent of college students and young activists from the emergent third generation of "tusheng." The latter were to infuse many of the CCC's popular functions with their youthful creativity and enthusiasm.52

In the early history of the CCC the local-born Chinese left their distinctive imprint in two areas. Given their stronger sense of "rootedness" in Canada than of the immigrant Chinese and their position as the CCC's effective spokesmen to the Canadian state and the general public, the native-born were able to shape the CCC's overall orientation towards integration into Canadian society. To encourage adaptation to the Canadian environment on the part of the immigrant Chinese, one of the first educational services the CCC rendered was English language and citizenship classes. Moreover, the CCC's membership was open to non-Chinese, and many of its activities, especially its highly publicized festival celebration, were directed at a larger, and not exclusively ethnic Chinese, audience. This confident venture into cross-cultural sharing fit the new ethos of multiculturalism. Such an agenda, in turn, was to enhance the status and influence of the Canadian-born within the

useful for this research.

52 Observations on the CCC by the members of this generation are available in "Interview with Bing Thom on China, the Chinese Canadian Movement, and the Vancouver Chinese Cultural Centre," in Garrick Chu, et al., Inalienable Rice: A Chinese and Japanese Anthology (Vancouver: Powell Street Revue and the Chinese Canadian Writers Workshop, 1979), pp. 33-38; and Paul Yee, "Where Do We Go From Here?" in Zhonghua Wenhua Zhongxin chengli shi zhounian jinian tekan, pp. 39-41.
The CCC was also an important arena in which the native-born sought to sharpen the definition of "Chinese Canadian." To preserve Chinese cultural heritage derived from the native country was worthwhile. For the local-born Chinese, however, that culture was rather remote and certainly much less personal than what they perceived as "the Chinese experience" of their forebears in Canada. Some of the CCC's activities were therefore to reconstruct this collective memory. The assembling and occasional display of historical photos and artifacts, and later, in 1979, a series of workshops on the history of the Chinese in Canada are two specific examples. But the most revealing commentary on the perspective of the "tusheng" may be an historical documentary called "Say Yup"

---


Siyi, the four counties in Guangdong where most Chinese immigrants originated). It was made in South China in the summer of 1976 by a group of eighteen young workers from the CCC. According to Garrick Chu, the leader of the group,

the idea behind it [the film] was to show China through the eyes of Chinese-Canadians who were going to China for the first time -- a Chinese-Canadian perspective -- and in particular, to show the areas where we had come from. Also the idea was to portray the reactions and feelings of ourselves, as Chinese-Canadians, to China -- to the country which has had much influence over our lives as we grew up. Furthermore, it was to bring the film back to show the old overseas Chinese, who because of their age, will probably never have a chance to go to China themselves and see the village where they came from... Nothing of this sort has been done by Chinese from the Vancouver community, and probably not in other parts of Canada either... Other films about China have focused on more general aspects of new China; this film is to look specifically at the kind of things that have happened in the villages, and for those who have [an] idea of what things were like before, to show what kind of changes have occurred since. This film traces back to the origins of the Chinese coming to Canada."

As the following section will show, the CCC was but one of the outlets that young Canadian-born Chinese used to explore and articulate their definition of the "Chinese Canadian" identity.

---

Nevertheless, as far as the CCC was concerned, its ability to bring the different groups of Chinese together to express their respective "Chinese Canadian" sensibilities is still noteworthy. Why was it able to do so?

First, there was evidence of a growing awareness and acceptance of internal differences among the Chinese. The item that aroused the most intense discussion at the first CCC workers conference in January 1976 was about the models of Chinese culture they should draw on and promote. Should it be the version from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, or the one locally developed in Canada? It was generally recognized by the participants on that occasion that no single model should prevail at the expense of the others. According to an activist, the underlying principle of the CCC was not to eliminate differences but to provide a "positive focus" for "our diverse Chinese-Canadian community elements." We may not want to take this statement at its face value. However, some activities of the CCC were indeed conscious efforts at transcending differences and inspiring community sentiments. The most spectacular event in this respect was probably the massive celebration of the Spring festival, undertaken annually by the CCC since 1974. The same observer has rendered a succinct summary of the festival, capturing quite adequately the dynamics behind it:

The goal [of the Spring festival] was to transform Pender Street into a three-block long community celebration. Colorful posters (in later years, silk-screened banners) anticipated the event and hundreds of volunteers worked behind the scene to complete the necessary preparations. Street closures and fireworks permits had to be obtained while drum and dance practices, stage construction, parade organization, amusement games for children and innumerable other details were being rushed to completion.

313 East Pender Street, the CCC headquarters from 1974-1979, was a hub for all this activity. For three months prior to the event, this storefront served as an organizational focal point. Participating merchants, family associations, Chinatown organizations, community performing artists, and volunteer workers met to coordinate schedules and contribute their talents.

However, beyond the magnitude of the event, the number of participants, and the visible success of the Festival, was emerging a truly cooperative demonstration of Vancouver Chinese community's desire to showcase its own unique heritage and customs. Collectively, they proved that they could work together to produce the event, and to share in its common aims.\(^5\)

The CCC was also able to incorporate under its "Chinese Canadian" umbrella, albeit partially, the dissimilar proposals of the CCBC and Roy Mah. A museum and library facility was planned as a component of the CCC complex, though this part of the building project is yet to be realized.\(^5\) As regards the CCBC's proposition,


a radical suggestion to topple the leadership position of the CBA surfaced at the founding meeting of the CCC in February 1973 and was shelved only after a heated debate. Nevertheless, the CCC did offer some social services like legal assistance, income tax clinics, and translation service on an ad hoc basis.\textsuperscript{60}

Second, the commitment of the CCC to a wide range of cultural and social activities helped to gain public support from the ethnic group. It was no less instrumental in demonstrating the CCC's capability in delivering ethnic Chinese culture in order to obtain major government funding under multiculturalism. The first official recognition came in the spring of 1976 when the CCC organized a festival for Habitat -- a United Nations Forum on World Housing in Vancouver -- at the request of the municipal government. It is certainly no coincidence that the City Council voted unanimously after Habitat to lease to the CCC at a nominal rent two and a half acres of land in Chinatown for its future building.\textsuperscript{61} The CCC did not hesitate to seize this kind of opportunity to raise its profile as "the Chinese Cultural Centre" and to develop rapport with the politicians. Other examples include the hosting of the Shanghai Ballet Company in 1977 at the invitation of the Canada Council, and the co-sponsorship of the "China Month" programme with the City


\textsuperscript{61} "U.N. Habitat Conference, May-June 1976," and a news release by the CCC, July 28, 1976, on City Council's decision. Both are in S. Wah Leung Papers.
Hall in November 1979. Eventually financial support from the federal and provincial governments also materialized after some delay. The politics of multiculturalism provided great incentives for the CCC to broaden its cultural agenda and social base.

Finally, the coalition at the CCC was sustained by the existence of a common enemy, the Kuomintang and its supporters who firmly controlled the CBA. As indicated, the CCC leadership had chosen at an early stage not to challenge the CBA directly. But as it turned out, the popularity of this new organization and its patronage of Chinese culture from sources other than Taiwan were considered a threat by the pro-Kuomintang faction in Chinatown. Rumours soon spread that a group of communist sympathizers had organized the CCC to promote the PRC's influence. Using its established connections with some Canadian politicians and particularly the Social Credit government, which returned to power in Victoria in 1975, the CBA people started to lobby against official funding for the CCC. In early 1977 they launched an almost identical project -- called the Chinese Canadian Activity Centre Society -- to compete for the same government support. The CCC was therefore catapulted into a contest for the power to represent

---

62 The organizational details of both events can be found in S. Wah Leung Papers.

63 Cf. Stasiulis' observations regarding the effect of multiculturalism on the pyramiding of ethnic organizations -- that is, the forming of umbrella type, broadly representative organizations. "The Political Structuring of Ethnic Community Action," p. 35 and note 23.
"Chinese Canadian" culture and community interest. 64

Realizing the future of the organization was at stake, the CCC took the challenge seriously. While insisting that the CCC alone best represented the Chinese minority in Vancouver, its supporters engineered an expose of the problems at the CBA. The latter was accused of failing to take part in any public issues in Chinatown such as the freeway debates or the firehall protest since the late 1960s. The CCC people further alleged that the CBA had fully preoccupied itself with the support for the Kuomintang regime in Taiwan and that this overseas allegiance had led to its alienation from the rest of the local Chinese population. The so-called Activity Centre Society, argued the chairman of the CCC, represented no one, least of all the "Chinese Canadian." 65 After setting up the Committee to Democratize the CBA, the supporters of the CCC took the CBA to the provincial Supreme Court and won an

64 See the open letter of Sammy Kee, co-chairman of the Chinese Canadian Activity Centre Society, New Republic 28 February 1977 and Chinatown News 3 March 1977. My account of the entire episode draws heavily on the reports in the ethnic Chinese newspapers, and leaflets and propaganda materials distributed by the contenders. Some of these items, including also newspaper clippings from the mainstream media, are available in the subject file, "CBA Reform," file nos. 84-21 and 84-22, in the Chinese Community History Room. S. Wah Leung Papers contain the best information on the CCC's perspectives. The interviews with individuals from both sides were most helpful in ensuring some balance in my assessment.

injunction for the holding of an open election for a new executive committee. During the final showdown in October 1978 when more than four thousand Chinese cast their votes, the CCC group beat its opponents handsomely and gained the control of the CBA. The occasion was a demonstration of popular support for the cause of the CCC.

By 1980, the first chapter of the CCC's history had come to a close. Enough funding was secured to complete the first portion of the construction project, and the CCC relocated from its temporary office into a brand new complex on Pender Street. Between 1973 and 1980, the CCC movement was the centre stage where both the immigrant and the local-born Chinese came to express their "Chinese Canadian" consciousness, and a dramatic struggle for the power of representation took place. Important as the CCC was, articulations of "Chinese Canadian" identity outside its confines can also be discerned.

The Third Generation of Local-born Chinese

As mentioned earlier, the new generation of young local-born Chinese made up a significant component of the CCC movement after it was started in 1973. But towards the end of the decade, just when fund-raising was making good progress, the opposition from the old CBA had been crushed, and the initial phase of the building project was finally within reach, its participation dropped
perceptibly. Statistical evidence is lacking but the situation was striking enough to puzzle some keen observers, including the chairman of the CCC at that time. 66

To account for this development, Paul Yee, a very perceptive and active member of that young generation, wrote a reflective essay in 1981 aptly entitled, "Where Have All the Young People Gone? Vancouver's Chinese Cultural Centre and Its Native-born." He suggests that his peers dropped out of the CCC in the late 1970s for three reasons. First was the personal factor of family life and career goals which had not been much of a concern for former college students and fresh graduates when they initially joined the CCC. Some of them were no doubt burned out, too, after years of intensive volunteer work that entailed seemingly endless rounds of festivals, exhibitions, workshops, language classes, and a multitude of other exciting events.

Secondly, Yee discerns a decline in the idealistic, vital, and inspiring character of what had originally been a popular CCC movement. Giving priority to fund-raising from 1977 on was, to him, a turning point, for this was the activity in which the young activists were least interested, and to which they were least likely to make a substantial contribution. The subsequent transformation of the CCC into an institution administering various programmes inside its new building was found to be at the expense

66 Years later, S. Wah Leung commented on that situation regretfully but was still unable to offer an explanation. "Random Reflections."
of its own dynamism and the enthusiasm of native-born youth. Lastly, this group of "tusheng" had developed their own channels of cultural expression such as the Pender Guy radio programme, a writers' workshop with fellow Sansei, and other publication projects over the years. After the reform of the CBA, which quickly resumed an active role as the spokesman of the ethnic group on some critical social issues, the CCC was no longer as attractive and essential to these local-born.67

This last point is perhaps the most revealing of the three regarding the relationship between the CCC and the young "tusheng." As will be argued, the CCC had come about at a critical juncture, providing local-born youth with a means of retrieving their cultural roots and defining a sense of community. However, this cultural endeavour of young Canadian-born Chinese had a life of its own beyond the CCC.

Within the third generation of native-born Chinese, the idea of searching for a cultural identity first germinated around 1970 among a group of about seventy university students at U.B.C. Influenced by the Asian American movement in the United States, these young English-speaking "tusheng" with minimal experience in Chinatown affairs began to talk about the cultural genocide of assimilation, the pride in one's ethnic background, and the need to re-identify themselves with their ethnic group. Initially, they

67 Paul Yee, "Where have All the Young People Gone?" Especially pp. 355-56, 364-67.
experimented with poetry and photography to express their fledging ethnic consciousness. Soon afterward, they returned to Chinatown by way of joining the popular protests against the freeway and the firehall. Marching side by side with fellow Chinese in what seemed to be a defense of their besieged neighbourhood, these local-born took a major step in the spiritual re-engagement with their ethnic "community."\(^{68}\)

Then came the CCC in 1973 and its vision of a new ethnic pride within the Canadian mosaic. The native-born youth were excited and many soon found themselves participating energetically, as they had never done before, as CCC volunteers in Chinatown activities. By putting them in touch with people and programmes, the CCC movement was, to these youngsters, the focus of an emergent solidarity and a new sense of community.\(^{69}\) Another interesting dimension of their CCC experience was a close encounter with the post-1947 immigrant Chinese and their cultural agenda. Uncomfortable with these fellow workers' predilection with China-derived heritage and cultural forms, the local-born Chinese began very consciously to look for their own definition of the "Chinese Canadian" identity.

In early 1974, the young local-born published a short-lived tabloid called *Gum San Po* (The Gold Mountain News), in which they called for a commitment to "make our concept of a Chinese-Canadian

\(^{68}\) Ibid., pp. 356-58.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., pp. 359-63 ff. Also "Interview with Bing Thom," pp. 37-38.
community a viable one where the needs of the great majority of Chinese-Canadians would be met." That concept, however, remained vague and undefined. Only in the second half of the 1970s did their idea of "Chinese Canadian" take shape progressively. A landmark event was the conference "Identity and Awareness," organized on the U.B.C. campus in May 1975 by a core group of young native-born activists. Drawing more than 130 participants, the conference addressed the problems of racism and assimilation as they affected the Chinese, and discussed the current developments in Chinatown with particular reference to SPOTA and the CCC. A strong sense of orientation was evident on the big question of identity. Instead of nourishing a transplanted and often unfamiliar culture from China, it became clear to the members of this younger generation that a "Chinese Canadian" consciousness must be rooted in the Canadian context and be derived from local experience.

Out of such an awareness came more serious probing. One area that saw an outburst of interest was the doing of "Chinese Canadian" history by organizing study groups, collecting historical photographs, conducting Cantonese language classes, and interviewing elderly Chinese in Chinatown. These efforts were initiated by the Chinese Canadian Youth Workshop, which was set up

---

70 Quoted in Ibid., p. 361. Gum San Po lasted for just a few issues. The only copy I have seen is Vol. 2, no. 1 (February-March 1974).

at the CCC at the end of the 1975 youth conference. Other projects soon developed independently. The Pender Guy radio programme, for instance, produced a number of research-based historical documentaries including "The War Years" series and "The Chinese Canadian Laundry-Worker." In the summer of 1977, a team of its young workers travelled up the Fraser River, taking pictures of old Chinese settlements and interviewing elderly residents along the way. Engaging in similar activities was the West Coast Chinese Canadian Historical Society, formed in mid-1977 by another group of young native-born to promote "community" history on the model of local historical societies founded in the sixties and seventies by American-born Chinese in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle.

The drive to reconstruct such historical memory is not hard to explain, for this was a way of tracing and re-affirming the historical roots of the Chinese in this country. Moreover, this was considered a process of empowerment by the "tusheng" who consciously rejected outsider's representation and sought to become the narrators of their own past. It was a self-validation, too, as

---


they aspired to define their ethnic group's historical experience in Canada.\textsuperscript{74}

While the CCC continued to provide some institutional support and a cultural space for the local-born Chinese youth to articulate their emergent "Chinese Canadian" sensitivity, it was clear that by 1977 the young people's centre of activity had moved elsewhere. For some reason, the Pender Guy radio programme is especially noteworthy. It grew out of the second youth conference "Between Us -- Chinese" in early 1976. Having talked openly about their mutual prejudice and stereotypes on that occasion, a group of local-born and immigrant youth agreed to take part in developing a radio programme to further explore the issues of identity and culture. However, the latter soon dropped out because of differences in language and style. The comparative advantages of the native-born, owing to their Canadian experience and command of English, were obvious.\textsuperscript{75}

The history of the Pender Guy programme from 1976 to 1981 therefore reflected almost exclusively the concerns of the young Canadian-born. Besides local history and internal community issues, it devoted considerable time to covering public affairs like civic elections and equal employment opportunity programmes that affected

\textsuperscript{74} See, for example, Bennett Lee, "Early Casualties, or How to Lose Out to the History Books: The Chinese in British Columbia," in Garrick Chu et al., \textit{Inalienable Rice}, pp. 3-7.

\textsuperscript{75} This is admitted by a local-born member, Donald Yee, "Pender Guy: Are You Listening?" in Garrick Chu, et al., \textit{Inalienable Rice}, pp. 65-67, see p. 65.
the Chinese. Also explored were the subtle effects of racism, the generation gap between immigrant parents and native-born children, the prevalence of sexism, the development of Asian American music and so on. Most remarkable of all was the endeavour to define unequivocally a "Chinese Canadian" identity. As Pender Guy made known repeatedly,

our perspective is NOT Chinese. Nor is it Canadian. It is Chinese-Canadian. And to us on Pender Guy, a Chinese-Canadian is anyone of Chinese descent who has been in Canada long enough for Canada to affect her/him (original emphasis).

For years, Chinese Canadians have thought of their heritage in terms of brush paintings, folkloric dances and things of that nature. But that's the culture of ancient China. As Canadians we need a culture that is relevant -- such as the history, songs and literature about our people.

Chinese-Canadian does not equal "Chinese"...We had an identity and a culture unto ourselves.76

With such self-consciousness and cultural pride, and the experience in broadcasting and media presentation, the young native-born naturally played a leading role in challenging two cases of gross mis-representation of the Chinese by the mainstream media. The first was a 1979 documentary of the National Film Board

76 The quotes are from "Life on Pender Guy," Co-op Radio:102.7 FM Programme Guide November 1980, in Pender Guy Archives; Chinatown News 3 July 1978; and Barry Wong, "Pender Guy: Street History," n.d.
called "Bamboo, Lions and Dragons." Made with minimum consultation with the Chinese, the film was nevertheless intended to provide "an inside look at Vancouver's Chinese community." Confronted by serious objections from the Chinese, including a detailed script critique submitted by two local-born, the film was held up for major revisions.  

The other one was a special feature entitled "Campus Giveaway" shown on the CTV television network's W-5 public affairs programme in September 1979. Associating Chinese appearance with "foreignness" and accusing these "foreign students" of depriving "Canadians" of their rightful place in higher education, the programme aroused a nation-wide protest spearheaded by the Toronto Chinese. In Vancouver, the ad hoc committee of the CBA against W-5 was led by young "tusheng." The controversy was finally settled the following April after a full apology by the CTV. An additional trophy for the native-born in Vancouver was the winning of the Annual Media Human Rights Award for radio by two special programmes of Pender Guy, one of them being its coverage of the "anti-W-5" episode.

77 There is a file of materials on the CBA-CCC joint campaign to demand the withdrawal of the documentary in S.Wah Leung Papers. The script critique by Patrick Chen and Sean Gunn was published in Chinatown News 3 August 1979.


79 Materials on the Vancouver campaign against the W-5 are available in S. Wah Leung Papers. Also Chinatown News 3 March, 3 and 18 April, and 3 May 1980. On the award-winning programmes, see
Hence, the declining interest of the local-born youth in the CCC was in large measure a function of the development of their own cultural enterprises in the second half of the 1970s. Their endeavour was informed by a definition of "Chinese Canadian" identity sufficiently different from, though not necessarily critical of, the one espoused by the CCC. Evolving around the same time was yet another distinct group of Chinese immigrants who represented the new generation of arrivals since the late 1960s. Unlike the young native-born, these newcomers were not working towards a redefinition of "Chinese Canadian" identity. They saw an enormous need for social services within certain sectors of the local Chinese population; and they situated the problem and sought to alleviate it within the context of a multicultural Canada. Theirs can also be construed as another articulation of "Chinese Canadian" ideals in the 1970s.

New Chinese Immigrants of the 1970s

It will be useful to preface this section by looking briefly at Chinese immigration from the late 1960s to about 1980 and some of its repercussions for the Vancouver Chinese. For the ethnic

---

The issues of immigration policy and migration patterns have been pursued by other scholars in some detail. A useful discussion at the national level is provided by David Lai, Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1988), pp. 105-19. A more recent piece is by Graham Johnson, "Ethnic and Racial Communities in Canada and Problems of Adaptation: Chinese Canadians in the Contemporary Period," Ethnic Groups Vol. 9 (1992), pp. 151-74. Another work of
Chinese, Canadian immigration policy took a decisive turn towards a more liberal and equal arrangement in the 1960s. First, in 1962, national origin was largely eliminated as a factor in determining admission. Chinese residents in Canada were then allowed to sponsor a small range of close relatives. Qualified persons with the appropriate educational and professional background could also seek immigrant status as independent applicants. These changes were followed by a total revamping of the immigration programme in 1967, when a universal "points system" was adopted. Thus, after nearly eighty years, the Chinese minority in Canada were finally accorded equal treatment in immigration matters.

It is reasonable to relate the growth of Chinese immigration into Canada from the late sixties on, as shown in Table 6.1, with the above legislative amendments. By themselves alone, however, the latter did not explain the new influx. The roots of this population movement have to be found in places like Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Africa, and various parts of Southeast Asia and Latin America, where political instability, economic and social chaos, racial tensions, state-legislated discrimination, or various combinations of the above drove Chinese settlers and their descendants to re-

Johnson focuses on Hong Kong Chinese in Vancouver, especially in the more recent years, "Hong Kong Immigration and the Chinese Community in Vancouver," in Ronald Skeldon ed., Reluctant Exiles: Hong Kong Communities Overseas (New York: M.E. Sharpe, forthcoming).

Table 6.1

The Number of Chinese Immigrants Entering Canada and British Columbia, 1961-1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>B.C.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1,187</td>
<td>405'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>2,674</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>4,352</td>
<td>1,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>5,178</td>
<td>1,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>6,409</td>
<td>2,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>8,382</td>
<td>3,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>8,272</td>
<td>2,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>5,377</td>
<td>1,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>5,817</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>7,181</td>
<td>2,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>16,094</td>
<td>4,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>14,465</td>
<td>4,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>13,166</td>
<td>4,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>12,736</td>
<td>4,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>8,068</td>
<td>2,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>6,021</td>
<td>1,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>8,731</td>
<td>2,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>12,072</td>
<td>4,070</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Instead of ethnic origin, the figures from 1962 on indicate the numbers of immigrants whose country of last permanent residence was either China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan.

migrate to other countries like Canada. Also, the inflow was augmented by the reinstitution of direct emigration from Mainland China after 1973.

At the local level, the Census of 1981 for the first time provides some indication of the immigration history of the population in Greater Vancouver. The information on the Chinese is summarized in Table 6.2. Of the 83,000 ethnic Chinese, close to one-half had arrived in the 1970s. Another ten per cent likely arrived from 1967 to 1969.\textsuperscript{82} While the same source yields nothing further about this huge segment of the local Chinese population, it seems indisputable that its members originated from more diverse areas, compared with the previous years when almost all Chinese entered as sponsored immigrants from South Guangdong indirectly through Hong Kong. The Chinese immigrant of the 1970s may well have been a long-time settler in South Africa or a Chinese born in the Philippines. Or the person may have been a member of the new generation of Hong Kong immigrants who made up the largest component of this recent influx (See Table 6.3).

Besides geographical origin, another unusual feature of the Chinese immigrants in the 1970s was their socio-economic profile. As we will see later, there were still a substantial number of non-English-speaking, working-class people, especially those originating from the PRC and as refugees from Indo-China. The new

Table 6.2

Time of Arrival in Canada for Chinese in Greater Vancouver, 1981

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>in percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 1945</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946 to 1969</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970 to 1981</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian-born</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Total number)</td>
<td>83,845</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of Canada 1981. 93-934, Table 4.

N.B. There is a discrepancy in the information shown in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 which requires some explanation. Table 6.2 indicates that in 1981 about 40,000 Chinese in Greater Vancouver were immigrants arriving in Canada since 1970. Yet, from Table 6.1 we know that the total number of Chinese entrants in British Columbia during this period did not exceed 35,000. The discrepancy is probably caused by the fact that Table 6.1 relies on the Immigration Statistics which records data at the point of entry to Canada. It does not cover internal migration, which has its bearing on the census data rendered in Table 6.2.
Table 6.3

The Number of Immigrants arriving in Canada from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, 1971-1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>5,009</td>
<td>761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6,297</td>
<td>859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14,662</td>
<td>1,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>12,704</td>
<td>1,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>11,132</td>
<td>1,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>10,725</td>
<td>1,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>6,371</td>
<td>899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>4,740</td>
<td>637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>2,058</td>
<td>5,966</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>4,936</td>
<td>6,309</td>
<td>827</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Immigration Statistics 1971-1980
Canadian immigration policy, however, ensured that an important number of Chinese immigrants gained their admission on the bases of their educational level and occupational skills. In Vancouver, the so-called "Hong Kong millionaires" were most visible. According to numerous reports from late 1967 in the Chinatown News, they bought up properties, sometimes clandestinely, in the local real estate market.  

How did the members of this new generation of immigrants relate to the existing Chinese minority in Vancouver? This ongoing issue can only be pursued satisfactorily in the context of the 1980s and 1990s, but their organizational activities in the 1970s may already provide us with some clues. In general, except for the newcomers from Mainland China who tended to provide a new source of membership for the traditional Chinatown associations, the new immigrants seem to have contributed to the expansion of the ethnic organizational inventory mainly by developing new nexus and networks of their own. These included some old-style regional associations, the most obvious cases being the two separate organizations formed by the Hokkiens and the Cantonese from the Philippines. Representing the business and professional elites from Hong Kong were a number of alumni organizations and the Hong

---


Kong Merchants Association. Serving as an adaptive mechanism for many new immigrants was the group of steadily increasing evangelical Protestant churches whose pastoral staff, lay leadership, and congregations mostly originated from the British colony. Apparently, the sheer number and resourcefulness of these new immigrants enabled them to form an alternative cluster of voluntary associations. In more than one way, these newcomers were to transform the Chinese minority in Vancouver and in Canada as a whole in the 1980s, a fascinating development which can be appreciated only in a separate study.

Given the recency of their arrival in Canada, the new immigrants' relative lack of sensitivity to state multiculturalism and disinterest in the discourse on "Chinese Canadian" identity are to be expected. Nevertheless, this was not the case for their most influential and high profile organization in Vancouver, the United

---


87 The best discussion of the more recent development is given by Johnson, "Ethnic and Racial Communities in Canada and Problems of Adaptation," and "Hong Kong Immigration and the Chinese Community in Vancouver."
Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society, known commonly as SUCCESS. It was established in 1973 by a group of young professionals who came from Hong Kong since the late 1960s. The philosophy behind this social service agency was best expressed by its Chinese name "Zhong Qiao," which was the transliteration of the name of its pilot project, the "Chinese Connection," funded by the federal government from 1974 to 1977. Its target clientele was the group of mainly recent Chinese immigrants who encountered problems of adaptation in their new environment because of language and other cultural barriers. SUCCESS was to bridge the gap between these people and their needs and the social facilities and resources in the larger society to which they were entitled, by serving as what is called by some an "ethnic" or "indigenous support system."  

The major part of SUCCESS's operation involved the running of a drop-in centre in Chinatown to provide immediate assistance in translation, referral, and counselling on wide-ranging issues such as immigration procedures, old age pensions, medical plan, unemployment benefits, and family problems. English language and citizenship classes were regularly held. To promote self-help and to augment the public funding, by 1980 a strong volunteer programme

---

was built on a membership of more than two thousand. The latter would additionally be a base for popular mobilization and social action. Finally, a number of research studies were commissioned to alert the mainstream social service agencies and personnel to the special needs of the immigrant Chinese.\textsuperscript{89}

Because of its stance for integration and the participation of ethnic Chinese in the mainstream society, SUCCESS was self-conscious of its difference from the kind of mutual support furnished by the traditional Chinatown organizations, which was to enhance in-group cohesion. It also guarded jealously its image as a non-partisan, independent body by avoiding any entanglement in Chinatown politics and disputes.\textsuperscript{90} Such posture notwithstanding, the ability of SUCCESS to draw government funding and its popularity as a social service broker soon won the recognition and respect of the Chinese in general. As early as 1975, it participated as one of the leading Chinese organizations in Vancouver to convene a national conference to discuss the Green


\textsuperscript{90} "A Presentation on SUCCESS," p. 12. Nann and To, "Experiences of Chinese Immigrants in Canada," p. 155. Also my interview with the first executive director of SUCCESS, who is a veteran social worker in the Strathcona area.
Paper on Immigration and other issues of Canadian multiculturalism pertinent to the ethnic Chinese.\textsuperscript{91} In 1979, SUCCESS was contracted by the Vietnamese Refugees Assistance Association in Vancouver to operate a local re-settlement programme with the blessing of the CCC, the CBA, and some Chinatown organizations.\textsuperscript{92} The following year, it was named the outstanding organization by the CBA in its Citizenship Award Presentation as part of the celebration of Canada Day.\textsuperscript{93} By the end of the 1970s, SUCCESS had fully emerged together with the reformed CBA and the CCC as the prestigious tripod of ethnic Chinese organizations in Vancouver.

The rapid ascendance of SUCCESS in the 1970s is indicative of a salient aspect of the changing discourse on Chineseness under multiculturalism. "Chinese Canadian" identity was now accessible not just to the local-born Chinese, the existing immigrant settlers, but equally available to recent arrivals as long as they expressed decidedly their commitment to Canada as their new country. Among these newcomers, enterprising individuals with bilingual ability, high social status, and leadership skills could

\textsuperscript{91} Maggie Ip, the chair of SUCCESS, Roy Mah, and Harry Con were the chairpersons of the national conference. The official organizer was the Vancouver Immigration Policy Action Committee which was an ad hoc coalition spearheaded mainly by the CCC people when the Green Paper was released earlier that year. On the conference itself, see Chinatown News 3 and 18 August, 3 and 18 September 1975.


\textsuperscript{93} Chinatown News 3 July 1980.
choose to articulate their own claims as "Chinese Canadians" without partaking in the CCC movement or subscribing to the proposition of the junior native-born Chinese. The diversity of cultural expressions among the Chinese under the umbrella notion of "Chinese Canadian" was once again unveiled.

As a cultural construct, Chinese ethnicity in Vancouver at the beginning of the 1980s continued to mean a myriad of experiences, expectations, and propositions. The popular subscription to a "Chinese Canadian" category notwithstanding, various groups of Chinese invested this new label with different meanings. The early history of the Chinese Cultural Centre offers a valuable vantage point to observe this ongoing process of cultural negotiation within this ethnic group. Immigrants who came in the post-war years and the few remaining pre-exclusion arrivals celebrated their China-derived heritage and cultural skills for the first time as a legitimate part of Canadian culture. "Tusheng" of an older generation saw the new identity as a tribute to what they and their forefathers had contributed to Canada. In their eyes, the work of Chinese labourers for the Canadian Pacific Railway, the wartime records of the Chinese Veterans, and the striving of the Chinese for acculturation and acceptance should have entitled members of this ethnic group to a position in multicultural Canada. By contrast, the new generation of young local-born articulated their "Chinese Canadian" sensibility not simply to claim an ethnic pride
but to affirm their personal roots in Canada. They refused to be characterized as once foreign and exotic Chinese now turned ethnic Canadians.

Different expressions of a "Chinese Canadian" identity can also be discerned outside the CCC. The young "tusheng" had their own channels such as the Pender Guy radio programme, and the new generation of Hong Kong immigrants likewise made known their commitment to multicultural Canada through organizations like the SUCCESS. While the perspectives of the most recent Chinese immigrants can not be fully examined in the context of this discussion, it seems reasonable to surmise that their evolving consciousness as "Chinese Canadian" would be different from the other ethnic Chinese. Their ethnic construction lacked the dimension of Canadian Chinese history from the late nineteenth century that was treasured by the local-born. Compared with the previous Chinese immigrants, their models of Chineseness were not cultural exports directly from Mainland China, or the Taiwan version propagated by the local Kuomintang, but were based on their prior experience in Manila Chinatown, Saigon-Cholon, Singapore, Johannesburg, or most likely Hong Kong.
Conclusion

This study of Chinese ethnicity in Vancouver from 1945 to 1980 has uncovered a diversity of cultural positions articulated by different generations of immigrant and local-born Chinese. In the post-war period the elderly settlers who had entered Canada before 1923, the young immigrants arriving after 1947, and the first two generations of Canadian-born Chinese were engaged in an intramural debate on Chinese identity. The newcomers, for example, refused to subordinate themselves to the cultural norms and social practices in Chinatown defined entirely by the older generation of immigrants. Nor did they want to admit their cultural ineptitude in a Canadian environment compared to the local-born Chinese. Instead, they disparaged the old-timers as backward and the "tusheng" as deculturated. Taking advantage of their own command of Chinese cultural skills and a youthful spirit in organizing wide-ranging cultural events and social activities, they claimed the right to promote new Chinese culture and thus redefine what "Chinese" should be like.

The denigration of the local-born Chinese by the immigrants can be dated back to the beginning of the twentieth century. While it was intensified in the post-war years by the new arrivals, the "tusheng" finally reached their maturity and were more capable than ever of defending their own pride. Far from being "inferior Chinese" as their cultural rivals insisted, the local-born
presented their Canadian skills and experiences as desirable and indispensable qualities if ethnic Chinese were to gain acceptance by the mainstream society.

This competitive process of cultural redefinition highlights an interesting dimension in the construction of Chinese ethnicity. To be sure, Vancouver Chinese were defining themselves with reference to China and Canada, and in the context of racial relationship the role of "others" was performed by non-Chinese. However, evidence presented in the preceding analysis suggests that various groups of Chinese also defined Chineseness in relation to one another, and thus the role of "others" in this ethnic construction was performed by Chinese, or more exactly different kinds of Chinese.

The debate after 1945 can also be understood as a contest for community, as each group vied for the power to define the larger interest of the ethnic group. The existing Chinese settlers were initially the dominant majority sharing a common experience of rejection by Canadian society and a strong identification with the native place and the home country. Their sense of community was best represented by the plethora of traditional organizations which had groomed a Chinese elite, generated an aura of ethnic solidarity, and defended the interests of the minority in a hostile Canadian society. The arrival of the new immigrants and the coming of age of Canadian-born Chinese upset this established arrangement.
Both groups resented being defined as peripheral to the Chinese collectivity and strove for cultural autonomy and their own sphere of social space by setting up separate voluntary organizations. They further advanced competitive claims for the power to redefine the community. The immigrant youth, on the one hand, portrayed themselves as potential leaders who could regenerate the community by infusing new meaning and vitality into local Chinese culture. The native-born, on the other, embedded their community within the larger host society and therefore privileged themselves as the vanguard of acculturation and a bridge between ethnic Chinese and mainstream Canadian.

The dominance of the older Chinese settlers did not survive these challenges. One of the signals was the dwindling popularity of their old-style organizations among the immigrant youth and the Canadian-born Chinese. Nevertheless, the surname, locality, and old-style fraternal organizations were not a spent force, as their critics and some other observers have suggested. The Wong's associations and the Chinese Freemasons, for example, were exceptionally successful in recruiting newcomers. Most instrumental in ensuring the resilience of traditional organizations as a whole was their rich repertoire of collective rituals, which continued to generate living meaning for the participants. Through these congregational performances, the existing settlers celebrated what they considered essential values in Chineseness, such as internal harmony, unity, and filial piety. Further strengthened financially
by the baizi hui investment in real estate, these associations representing the older generation of immigrants in the post-war years remained a vital force in the ongoing debate on cultural identity and community.

That the vision of community was deeply woven into the discourse on Chinese ethnicity well into the 1970s is demonstrated in the early history of the Chinese Cultural Centre. The movement to build the CCC was in effect to inspire a new community as different groups of Chinese came together to celebrate a "Chinese Canadian" identity. Even the third generation local-born youth who had little, if any, prior experience in Chinatown suddenly rediscovered their need for community in their search for personal roots and cultural pride. It is perhaps impossible to say if this close relationship between ethnicity and community as shown in this case study is a historical constant. Some scholars have already suggested that ethnicity, being increasingly recognized in the contemporary world as a personal asset based on portable cultural skills, can survive and even flourish without community.¹ Whether this statement is applicable to the Vancouver Chinese of the 1980s

and 1990s can only be pursued in a future study.

To a very large extent the evolving Chinese discourse on identity and community after 1945 can be related to the changing demographic conditions in this ethnic minority. Under the shadow of exclusion the pre-war Chinese population consisted of a large majority of single migrants, and a relatively small number of families and their junior native-born descendants. This generation of pre-1923 arrivals could have seen themselves alone, with good reason, as the primary component of a "community." The coming of age of succeeding generations of Canadian-born Chinese since the 1940s shattered the older settlers' sense of dominance. The reopening of Canada in 1947 to Chinese immigration brought about the same effect; and the influx since the late 1960s of Chinese from dissimilar backgrounds was to accentuate the cultural diversity of the contemporary Chinese minority.

The diversified cultural expressions of the Vancouver Chinese were also a function of changing Chinese perceptions of their relationship with China and Canada. Obviously, the influence of China in the post-war period was not as encompassing as it had been before, but it kept on informing the negotiation of Chinese identity in some important ways. The immigrants, in particular, continually drew on their own grasp of Chinese culture to formulate their thought on ethnic identity and community. A few political interest groups insisted on associating Chineseness with support
for each of the two contending Chinese governments, despite the general disillusionment with home country politics from the 1950s. Yet another dimension of such a China-orientation was the concern for the native place and the care for remaining families in South China and the nearby British colony of Hong Kong.

In the post-war period this persistent interest in China-related issues was accompanied by an increase in the availability of local opportunity in Canada for the ethnic Chinese. The dismantling of discriminatory legislation and the opening up of the host society to members of this minority altered significantly the historical context within which Chinese people in Canada looked at themselves. Encouraged by these developments, Chinese, especially the local-born, made important progress in nurturing an identification with Canada. The campaign of the 1950s to expand the range of admissible Chinese immigrants, the participation in Canadian electoral politics, and the popular mobilization in defense of neighbourhood interests were three significant episodes in which Chinese articulated their claims as Vancouver residents and as fellow Canadians.

In the 1970s the two different cultural orientations -- towards China and Canada respectively -- were reconciled in some important ways, as the discourse on Chineseness took on a new paradigm. The endorsement of cultural pluralism by the federal government in Ottawa recast the symbolic order of Canadian society
and legitimated a "Chinese Canadian" category. Informed also by a burgeoning ethnic pride and a local consciousness, this new construct advanced the claim of ethnic Chinese as full Canadians and recognized their cultural heritage as part of the officially enshrined Canadian mosaic.

The celebration of a "Chinese Canadian" identity provided a common point of reference for different generations of local-born and immigrant Chinese. The movement to build the Chinese Cultural Centre in the 1970s was the best example of a joint effort at cultural expression. Notwithstanding, different groups tended to invest this new category with meanings specific to themselves and variations of a "Chinese Canadian" sensibility can be discerned both inside and outside the CCC.

In the history of the Chinese diaspora, the ongoing efforts at identity construction and the internal process of cultural negotiation as examined in this study are unlikely to be unique to the Vancouver, or Canadian, Chinese. Cleavages between Chinese dialect groups in their settlements in Southeast Asia, between different generations of immigrants, and between the migrants and the local-born are familiar themes, but scholarly attention on the dynamics of these intramural relationships is uneven. The conflicting political orientations of the peranakan and totok Chinese in twentieth-century Indonesia, the economic competition between the singkehs and mestizos in the late nineteenth-century
Philippines, and the clash of class interest among the traditional Chinatown elite, the young professionals, and the new entrepreneurs among the most recent immigrants in contemporary New York and Toronto are already well told. The realm of cultural conflicts suffused with different ethnic constructions and debates on Chineseness is relatively unexplored. The present study is just beginning to fill in this missing dimension in the scholarship on the overseas Chinese.

---

Selected Bibliography

1. Newspapers, Periodicals, and Magazines
   a. Chinese language
   
   b. English language
      Da Zhong Bao, September - December 1970
      New Bridge, Vol. 1, nos. 1-7 (February - September 1971).
   
   c. Bilingual
      Mirror: Strathcona Community News, Vol. 1, no. 1 (10 June 1977) -
      Vol. 2, no. 8 (6 March 1978).

2. Special Publications and Newsletters of Chinese Organizations
   "A Brief History of the Parish Church of the Good Shepherd," in The
   Chinese Community Library Services Association Twentieth
   thereafter as the Mainstream.
   The Chinese Tennis Club Annals 1939, 1940, and 1946.
Chongyi Qingnian Yanjiu She tekan (A Special Publication of the Shon Yee Youth Society) (1952).

Enping Zong Huiquen Nanping Bieshu lianhe kenginhui tekan (Yin Ping District Association Headquarters Nam Ping Bitsuey Joint Convention Special Publication) (1981).


Jianada Wengehua Yuemianliao Huayi Wuzuo Lianyihui huikan (The Vancouver Indochina Chinese Benevolent Association Publication) (1985?).


Lim Xihe Zongtong Qiumu Gongsuo hebing jinxii jinian tekan (A Special Issue of the Lim Sai Ho Tong Headquarters - Kow Mock Kung So Amalgamation Golden Anniversary) (1980).


The Strathcona Story (1976).


Taishan Ningyang Huiquan liushi zhounian jinian tekan (Hoy Sun Ning Yung Benevolent Association Sixtieth Anniversary Souvenir Publication) (1958).


Yushan Zong Gongsuo luocheng jinian ce (A Commemorative Publication of the New Building of the Yue San Association Headquarters) (1949).


Zhonghua Wenhua Zhongxin chengli shi zhounian jinian tekan (The Chinese Cultural Centre Tenth Anniversary Souvenir Publication


Zhuyun quanjia Kaiping Zong Huiguan tekan (A Special Issue of the Hoy Ping District Association Canadian Headquarters in Vancouver) (1947).


3. Organizational Archives


1 The following items remain in the custody of the respective Chinese organizations unless otherwise stated.
SPOTA Files, Vancouver City Archives, Additional Manuscripts 734.

4. Personal Papers and Collections of Research Materials

Chinese Canadian Research Collections, Special Collections Division, UBC Library.

The Chinese Community History Room Collections, the Chinese Community Library Services Association, Vancouver.


Foon Sien Wong Papers, 1930s-1960s. Special Collections Division, UBC Library.

5. Public Archival Materials


City of Vancouver, Office of the City Clerk, 81 D7, File on Civic Development, Expropriation, Redevelopment Project II A5 A6 A7.

Letter from Andrew Lam to Paul Lacoste, co-secretary, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, June 21, 1965. In PAC RG 33, Series 80, Vol. 121, File 679E.

"Report: Private Meeting with [a] Chinese Canadian Group, Vancouver," in PAC RG 33, Series 80, Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Vol. 120, file 634E.


6. Published Government Documents


City of Vancouver, Planning Department, Chinatown, Vancouver: Design Proposal for Improvement 1964.

__, Planning Department, Chinatown Planning Newsletter November 1976.

__, Planning Department for the Housing Research Committee, Vancouver Redevelopment Study 1957.


__, Technical Planning Board, Strathcona Sub-area Report, Urban Renewal, Scheme 3 1968.

Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Annual Reports 1949-1956.

The Immigration Branch, Department of Mines and Resources, Annual Reports 1946-1949.


7. Books, Monographs, and Theses


Cushman, Jennifer, and Wang Gungwu, eds., *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese since World War II* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1988).


Dou, Jiliang, *Tongxiang zuzhi zhi yanjiu* (Studies on Native Place Organizations) (Chongqing: Zhengzhong, 1943).


Goldberg, Michael, *The Chinese Connection: Getting Plugged into Pacific Rim Real Estate, Trade, and Capital Markets* (Vancouver:
University of British Columbia, 1985).


Lin, Sen, Yimin Jianada bidu (Must-Reading for Emigration to Canada) (Hong Kong: Lin Sen, 1968).

Lyman, Stanford, Chinese Americans (New York: Random House, 1974).


Pendakur, Setty, Cities, Citizens and Freeways (Vancouver, S. Pendakur, 1972)

Porter, John, The Vertical Mosaic (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).


Sien Lok Society of Calgary, National Conference on Urban Renewal as It Affects Chinatown (Calgary: Sien Lok Society, 1969).
Sinn, Elizabeth, Power and Charity: The Early History of the Tung Wah Hospital, Hong Kong (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1990).


___ ed., From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982).


8. Articles


Crossley, Pamela, "Thinking About Ethnicity in Early Modern China," Late Imperial China Vol. 11, no. 1 (1990), pp. 1-35.


Evans, Paul, and Daphne Taras, "Canadian Public Opinion on


__, "Chinese-Canadians in the 1970s: New Wine in New Bottles?" in Jean Elliot, ed., Two Nations, Many Cultures (Scarborough: Prentice


Lee, Carol, "The Road to Enfranchisement: Chinese and japanese in British Columbia," BC Studies no. 30 (Summer, 1976), pp. 44-76.


Leung, S. Wah, "The First Ten Years -- A Rocky Road to Success," Zhonghua Wenhua Zhongxin chengli shi zhounian jinian tekan, pp. 18-20.

__, "Random Reflections," in Zhonghua Wenhua Zhongxin chengli shi shiwu zhounian tekan, pp. 8-10.

Li, Peter "Immigration Laws and Family Patterns: Some Demographic Changes Among Chinese Families in Canada, 1885-1971," Canadian


Rowe, William, "The Public Sphere in Modern China," Modern China Vol. 16, no. 3 (1990), pp. 309-29.


"Interview with Bing Thom on China, the Chinese Canadian Movement, and the Vancouver Chinese Cultural Centre," in Garrick Chu, et al., Inalienable Rice, pp. 33-38.


9. Interviews

Forty individuals of Chinese background were interviewed for the purpose of this research between October 1991 and March 1993. They include members of various generations of immigrant and local-born
Chinese discussed in this study. No definite procedure or questionnaire were followed in the interviews. Informants were usually encouraged to relate some biographical data and to share more extensively his or her views on Chinatown events, personalities, and organizations. No tape recorder was used. For the reason of confidentiality, interview sources are generally not cited unless certain information is indispensable or highly valuable to the understanding of some issues and permission to cite has been specifically requested by the author and granted by the interviewee.