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THE OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS IN  
CANADA WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO HALIFAX, NOVA  
SCOTIA 1885-1923

by

Xiang Cui

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in History

Saint Mary's University

2003

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of Supervisory Committee

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## ABSTRACT

### THE OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, 1858-1923

History Department, Saint Mary's University

Xiang Cui

August 28th 2003

This thesis examines the changing occupational patterns of Chinese immigrants in Canada from 1858 to 1923. The thesis, which is based primarily on a review of the existing historiography of Chinese immigration and Chinese immigration to Canada, argues that after that completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway both external social forces and internal ethnic solidarity affected the occupations of Chinese immigrants. The examination of social, economic and political conditions in both China and Canada suggest that restrictive legislation and institutional discrimination experienced by Chinese immigrants were not the sole reasons for the Chinese clustering in particular occupations, such as laundry and restaurant businesses. The urbanized host society created a job market for such service industries, in which Chinese immigrants could be employed, while the immigrants' ethnic and cultural background, as well as close clan relations helped them to both establish their businesses and foster their concentration in them. In considering the particular case of Halifax, the thesis argues that despite some local variation the experience of this small isolated Chinese population in eastern Canada conforms to the broad pattern of external and internal influences seen more clearly in urban contexts in western Canada.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This manuscript has taken a long time to materialize, and many debts have been incurred in the process. I wish to express sincere appreciation to Dr. Michael Vance and Dr. Lyndan Warner for their supervision in the preparation of this manuscript. I have greatly benefited from a number of general organizational and thematic advice of Dr. Vance. Dr. Warner kindly did all the proofreading and error checking. Naturally, I alone am responsible for whatever errors and omissions remain. In addition, I am grateful to Dr. Peter Twohig whose ideas were helpful during the early programming phase of this undertaking. Special thanks also to Dr. Della Stanley and Dr. James Morrison who gave me invaluable suggestions for revision. Mrs. Marlene Singer at History Department and the staffs of the Patrick Power Library at Saint Mary's University, Dalhousie Killam Library, Nova Scotia Public Archives, Asian Library at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor also deserve sincere thanks. Financial aid for part of the research came from Saint Mary's University's senate grants.

Finally, I would also like to thank my parents and husband. Their support has greatly encouraged me at every stage of the project.

*The turmoil from war and opium and poverty  
made you leave your country.  
Exposed now to lands that will restrict your entry,  
you had traveled long and far to be subject to another's language,  
another's syntax.  
Right away, those rules of grammar were the forgetting of yourself.  
Those letters never pronounced before  
became the subject of your ridicule.  
The bitterness on your tongue became hidden in need for survival  
a proof of assimilation,  
the invisibility of yourself/*

*Now you are here*

*do you remember your syntax, your language  
that which would be the remembering of yourself?*

*Here  
when you are told to go back to where you came from  
tell it back to he who has said it/*

*This land  
where no one could have laid claim  
no one could have possession  
still it happened/*

*Strength comes from a hard-worked life.*

--- Laiwan, *The Imperialism of Syntax*<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Laiwan was born in Harare, Zimbabwe, of parents who had moved there from Taishan in Guangdong, China. She immigrated to Canada in 1977 and graduated from Emily Carr College of Art and Design in 1983.

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## Introduction

Chinese immigrants' experience in Canada was largely different before and after the completion of Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885. Before then, they took all kinds of jobs available in the frontier economies in British Columbia. After then, a great number of Chinese immigrants moved to central and eastern provinces and became engaged in the laundry and restaurant businesses. How and why did these occupational changes occur? Why were Chinese so intensively involved into the laundry and restaurant businesses all across Canada? This unique aspect of Chinese experience reflected not only the Canadian circumstances under which certain social forces encouraged Chinese entering particular business, but also the coping capacities of the Chinese drawing from their culture. This thesis tries to examine how these structural forces and cultural factors combined to form the occupational patterns of the Chinese from 1858 to 1923, particularly after the completion of CPR from the perspective of social history and urban history. It aims to add new insights to the nature of Chinese immigration to Canada in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the development of Chinese ethnic business in this country.

The phenomenon that the Chinese were overwhelmingly engaged in laundry and restaurant businesses is not a new issue to Canadian scholars. On the one hand, the phenomenon that one ethnic group dominated a particular type of occupation has been reported by sociologists using census data at the macro-level. In Canada, in particular, this kind of study is the basis of the work done by John Porter, B.R. Blishen, A.H. Richmond and D. Hall.<sup>2</sup> To date, few studies have been done regarding Chinese

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<sup>2</sup> John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969); B.R. Blishen, "Social Class and Opportunity in Canada," in *Social Stratification: Canada*, eds J.E. Curtis and W.G. Scott,

immigrants' dominance in urban services occupations in Canada. On the other hand, the fact that the Chinese immigrants were subject to structural racism has always been addressed as the dark side of Canadian immigration policy. Most Canadian scholarly research suggested that the Chinese were driven out of the core industries by "institutional" racism, they "clustered" in service occupations due to discriminatory policies by government and open hostility from the society in addition to language and cultural barriers.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, they could not compete with the white labourers in the open market. As a matter of fact, the Chinese were perceived as a "yellow peril" that would undermine the quality, integrity and character of Anglo-Saxon society in western Canada. To bar further Chinese immigration, the federal government imposed a head tax on the Chinese of \$50 in 1885. The tax was increased twice in 1901 to \$100 and 1904 to \$500. Finally in 1923, a Chinese Exclusion Act was passed to prohibit Chinese entry. Ironically, the act was enacted on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1923. From then on, for almost half a century, Dominion Day was so-called "Humiliation Day" to the Chinese in Canada. The act remained in effect until 1947. During these two decades, only a handful of Chinese people came to Canada. It bespoke a state tolerant of hatred where racism was a part of, or supported by, all social institutions. In this thesis, racism is defined as a doctrine that consists of a complex of ideas and actions that involves mixture of stereotype, ethnocentrism, prejudice, and discrimination.<sup>4</sup> "Institutional racism" is referring to "systemic racism"

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(Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1973); Hall D. "The Canadian Division of Labour Revisited," *ibid*; Anthony H. Richard, "Social Mobility of Immigrants in Canada," in *Canadian Society*, eds B. Blishen, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1964).

<sup>3</sup> The argument is particularly held by two scholars, David Chenyuan Lai, Peter S. Li.

<sup>4</sup> Canadian scholars have tried to define "racism" in many ways. A classic interpretation from a historical perspective is Howard Palmer, *Patters of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta*, (Toronto: McClelland and Steward Limited, 1982); For more recently updated discussion of racism, see Christine

and “structural racism” --- those practices in laws promoting racial segregation or restriction. Those institutions could be the Canadian government or local government and labour organization which launched and enacted a series of anti-Chinese practices.

However, to attribute all the reasons to racism would easily fall into single-sided interpretation. Labour historian Donald Avery suggested that since the Chinese immigrants were “imported” in a contract system, they were cast in a long period of indentured labour with little opportunity for independent action. “They were a pawn in this fierce confrontation between capital and labour.”<sup>5</sup> This analysis sheds light on the economic and political aspects of the situation, but still neglects the cultural factors. More recently, Peter S. Li has proposed to consider both structural and cultural factors for the Chinese immigrants’ engagement in particular types of business.<sup>6</sup> Sociologists like Ivan Light have even established a framework to investigate minority enterprise in North America.<sup>7</sup> To modify the interpretation on Chinese immigrants’ occupational changes in Canada, this thesis attempts to first examine the existing scholarly research; second, the overall Chinese immigration progress from mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century; third, to bring sociologists’ framework on ethnic enterprise in America into Canadian context to analyze the factors that affected occupation changes; fourth, to

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Boyle, *Race, Racism and the Law* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, Faculty of Law, 2000); *Race and Racism: Canada's Challenge*, edited by Leo Driedger and Shiva S. Halli, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Donald H. Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994* (Toronto: MacClelland & Stewart Inc., 1995).

<sup>6</sup> Peter S Li, “Chinese Investment and Business in Canada: Ethnic Entrepreneurship Reconsidered,” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 66, Issue 2 (Summer 1993), p.219.

<sup>7</sup> Ivan Light and Edna Bonacich, *Immigrant Entrepreneurs* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); Robin Ward and Richard Jenkins, eds., *Ethnic Communities in Business* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and Roger Waldinger, et al., *Ethnic Entrepreneurs: Immigrant Business in Industrial Societies* (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1990).

conduct a case study to see to what extent the factors influenced Chinese immigrants' occupations in a particular historic settings of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Prior to doing any research, a complete historiographical review on Chinese immigration to Canada in the period of 1858 to 1923 is necessary.<sup>8</sup> This thesis develops a whole chapter in this effort to comprehend scholars' approaches in studying Chinese immigration as well as set a global context to understand the Chinese diaspora.<sup>9</sup>

Geographically, this chapter chooses to examine the scholarship in Canada, the U.S., Australia and New Zealand as they are all English-speaking countries and once British colonies. Methodologically, this chapter defines five approaches that scholars have employed, including social history, ethnic studies, political history, labour history, and urban history. The difference between Western and Chinese scholarship is also addressed in this chapter.

The settlement of immigrants in a host society was deeply tied with the immigration process. Kerby Miller's book *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* offers invaluable insights that migrants' background at home greatly affected the migration process and immigrant settlement in the host society. Therefore, I decided to go deep in the background in China prior to their migration as well to make it clear why there was continuous migration despite strong anti-Chinese

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<sup>8</sup> This period is classified according to Canadian immigration legislation. In 1858, the first group of Chinese immigrants came to Canada and in 1923 the Exclusion Act was passed to prohibit Chinese entry. Scholars have suggested that there are several stages in the history of the Chinese in Canada based on immigration legislation and the development of Chinese community organization. For example, W. E. Willmott categorized five stages: the prehistory up to 1858: the origins of Chinese community in the gold rush, 1858-80; the railroad era, 1880-1900; reaction, 1900-23; consolidation, 1923-47; and growth and conflict, 1947 to the present. See W.E. Willmott, "Approaches to the Study of the Chinese in British Columbia," *BC Studies*, No. 4, (Spring 1970), p.43.

<sup>9</sup> The term 'Chinese diaspora' has become a common way of denoting the widespread migration of Chinese people. See for example, Guangwu Wang, "Upgrading the Migrant: Neither *Huaqiao* nor *Huaren*," *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, 1996, pp.1-18; Pan Lynn, *Sons of the Yellow Emperor: A History of the Chinese diaspora* (Boston, Little Brown, 1990).

sentiments in Canada and why more and more newcomers were also engaged in particular occupations. This constitutes the second chapter which examines the overall history of Chinese immigration, especially the social, economic and political conditions in China prior to the migration to Canada.

One of another two books that greatly influenced me is Sucheng Chan's successful work, *This Bittersweet Soil, the Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* which examines how the Chinese immigrants who left China as peasants became successful agricultural capitalists in California. She convincingly pointed out that Chinese workers played an integral role in the agricultural history of the western United States. Inspired by Chan's approach, I try to explore how the host society's circumstances produced opportunities for the Chinese to become "laundrymen" and restaurant keepers and to what extent the Chinese contributed to the urban development of Canadian cities in turn. The other classic book of Paul Siu, *The Chinese Laundrymen: A Study of Social Isolation* encouraged me to investigate the ethnic culture of the Chinese community itself, which played an important role in ethnic businesses. Thus, the third chapter is based on the framework including both structural and cultural factors. It tries to delineate the social context --- the configuration of social, economic, and political forces, as well as the role of ethnicity to analyze the changing occupational patterns of Chinese immigrants.

Saint Mary's University's location in Halifax brought me the chance to do a case study and primary research on the Chinese experience in this city. Therefore, the fourth chapter aims to use this case study to exemplify the occupational changes of Chinese immigrants in a particular historical setting and shed light on their roles in Atlantic Canada in the meantime. The Chinese population in Halifax was far smaller than many

other cities in Canada. The percentage of Chinese laundry and restaurant business in the entire urban area in Halifax offers a contrasting setting to explain the occupational concentration. This chapter also studies whether the Chinese encountered the same prejudice as on the West coast, compares the attitudes of local society towards Chinese immigrants from region to region, and thus relates the detailed history to a wider context.

In terms of sources, first, to summarize the overall history of Chinese immigration to Canada, I put some efforts in searching for primary Chinese literature, such as Taishan gazetteers, yearbooks and some biographical materials. Those helped me to draw a picture of migrants' situation in their homeland prior to migration. The demographic figures of Chinese immigrants occupations come from various resources. Some are directly compiled from *The Royal Commission* in 1885 and 1902; some are from secondary resources. Unfortunately, few documents regarding pioneer Chinese immigrants were kept in Nova Scotia's public archives. There is not even a single article regarding Chinese in the *Journal of Halifax Historical Society* around 1900. But two unpublished papers compiled some of the existing available resources, which gave me a good hint to trace down both the newspaper articles around 1900 and contemporary interviews. Some other government reports such as *Royal Commission on Hours of Labour* and the "Immigration Report" in *Journal and Proceeding of the House of Assembly of the Prince of Nova Scotia* from 1910-1923 are also very helpful. However, more in-depth research still needs to be put forward in order to draw a complete picture of Chinese experience in Halifax.

In summary, this thesis examines both external social forces and internal ethnic solidarity to interpret the occupational changes of Chinese immigrants in Canada. It

delineates the structural and cultural factors to analyze the influence of them on Chinese immigrants. In the meantime, it also emphasizes the role of Chinese businesses in the development of Canadian urban history.

## Operational Definitions

There are many variations in the transliteration of Chinese personal names and place-names. The Pinyin system will be employed in this thesis except in cases where the names have been commonly spelled in a different romanization system, such as Hong Kong instead of Xianggang and Canton instead of Guangzhou.<sup>10</sup> Some Chinese association names are also identified using the Pinyin system, but their alternative names will be captioned. When using a person's Chinese name, the surname will be given first according to the Chinese practice unless his or her name appeared in other publications.

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<sup>10</sup> See the definition of Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. xxv-xxvii. And Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), p. xxxi.

## **Chapter I**

### **A Selected Historiographical Study of Chinese Immigration to Canada: 1858-1923**

The spread of Chinese people across the globe has created one of the greatest movements of people in human history. The numbers speak for themselves: tens of millions of people left China since the sixteenth century. Today about fifty million Chinese in over a hundred countries are the products of this emigration.<sup>11</sup> Studies of the overseas Chinese have taken the form of books, conferences, government reports, and films which have been paid a great deal of attention by historians, anthropologists, sociologists, economists and journalists. The history of Chinese immigration to Canada is one of the most significant parts of this area since it reflects the distinctive experience of Chinese people in the changing context of North America.

This chapter will examine what approaches have been taken in the scholarship on Chinese immigration to Canada in the period of 1858 to 1923, and to what extent the scholarship has reflected the approaches taken by scholars in other British colonies by referring to the literature of Chinese immigration to the United States, Australia and New Zealand. In addition, this paper also will address some of the differences between Chinese-language and English-language scholarship, thus giving a complete survey of the literature on Chinese immigration to Canada.

Five types of approaches can be identified in understanding Chinese immigration to Canada. These are social history, ethnic studies, political history, labour history, and urban history. Historians' views are changing over time. Patricia Roy argued that there are three generations of studies of the Chinese in British Columbia.<sup>12</sup> More broadly, this

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<sup>11</sup> Guangwu Wang, "Patterns of Chinese Migration in Historical Perspective," in *China and The Chinese Overseas*, ed. Guangwu Wang (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1991), p.6.

<sup>12</sup> Patricia E. Roy, "'Active Voices': A Third Generation of Studies of the Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia," *BC Studies*, No. 117, (Spring 1998), p.51; see also Patricia Roy, "'White Canada Forever': Two Generations of Studies," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1979), pp.97-109.

classification fits in the whole body of the Chinese studies in Canada. The first generation included pre-war journal pieces and volumes of anti-Asian propaganda and sympathetic first-hand observations by social scientists. By 1970, a second generation of books began to appear, as Chinese questions received a more in-depth investigation via examining archival sources. W. Peter Ward, Patricia Roy and Kay J. Anderson are the representatives of this generation who contributed a lot to understanding and reconsidering the Chinese past in Canada more objectively and neutrally.<sup>13</sup> Increasing academic interest on Chinese issues and multiculturalism brought out the third generation of scholarship dominated by Chinese-Canadian scholars, including Anthony Chan, David Chenyuan Lai and Peter S. Li.<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, there is a roughly chronological sequence to these scholarly approaches although each approach continues to produce scholarship. This is tied to contemporary politics, the socioeconomic context and the identities and social positioning of the scholars themselves. The categories outlined here are only broadly descriptive and sometimes overlap each other.

First, from the perspective of social history, literature can be found on the history of the overall Chinese immigration experience, regional studies focusing on Chinese

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<sup>13</sup> Three fine studies of the second generation are: W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978); Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989); Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> Three typical volumes of the third generation are: Anthony Chan, *Gold Mountain: the Chinese in the New World* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1983); David Chenyuan Lai, *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988); Peter S Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988).

communities and some particular aspects of the Chinese immigrants' experience in Canada, such as Chinese family studies. Affected by government policy, Canadian universities tended to focus on Canadian and European affairs before the 1960s.<sup>15</sup> For a long time, in the eyes of the Canadian public, Canadians were usually assumed to be Caucasian, while Chinese Canadians and other non-white Canadians were seen as foreigners.<sup>16</sup> Such a feeling was reflected in the pre-war literature focusing on Chinese communities which sum up the first generation of scholarship on Chinese immigration to Canada.

From the mid-nineteenth century onward, a plentiful anti-Orientalism flourished on the western coast. As early as in 1878, the Workingmen's Protective Association was established as an association "organized on the spur of the moment" against Chinese labour in Victoria. Its members included many transients who failed to find permanent employment in Victoria or were unsuccessful miners who had "to fall back into the ranks of the laborers" and who "would rather starve than go to work alongside a Chinaman".<sup>17</sup> Later in 1879, the Anti-Chinese Association replaced WPA as a workingmen union opposed to Chinese employment and immigration. Such anti-Chinese sentiments could also be found in local government and legislative assembly.<sup>18</sup> In 1885, *Royal Commission*

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<sup>15</sup> Graham E Johnson, "The True North Strong: Contemporary Chinese Studies in Canada", *China Quarterly*, No. 143 (1995), pp.852-3.

<sup>16</sup> Peter S Li, "The Chinese Minority in Canada" in *Chinese Canadians: Voices from a Community* ed. Evelyn Huang (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992), p.264.

<sup>17</sup> Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989), p.48. Originally quote from F.J. Bernard in *Select Committee*, 1879. p.39.

<sup>18</sup> For a detail discussion on anti-Chinese movements in B.C. see Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province*, pp.13-63.

on *Chinese Immigration* was conducted to investigate "Oriental Questions".<sup>19</sup> Although this report included positive testimonials by factory owners and employers about Chinese labourers, people generally felt threatened by Chinese immigrants. British Columbian journalists frequently placed articles about it in local and national magazines.<sup>20</sup> Some book-length volumes further helped to fuel Anti-Orientalism throughout Canada.<sup>21</sup> For example, Tom MacInnes argued in his volume *Oriental Occupation of British Columbia*:

If there be no policy of Oriental Exclusion, rigidly enforced, then British Columbia and much of Alberta, before this century ends, will be largely occupied and controlled by Orientals; and Canada as a Nordic nation will be spoiled at its best end.<sup>22</sup>

Not until the 1930s did social scientists begin their survey on "Oriental Questions" based on personal observations and investigation.<sup>23</sup> Given the high dependency on published government reports and newspapers at that time, those scholars recognized Asian immigrants' low living standards and their suffering from the prejudice, but these volumes did not go beyond the statistics and description to deeper causes of the

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<sup>19</sup> "Oriental Questions" first concerned that the entry of Chinese would "injure" the population of the province and then went on to discourage the immigration from Asia including Japan, Korea and India. See the analysis of Ken Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc. 1991), pp.34-62.

<sup>20</sup> Some examples are: E. R. Gosnell, "British Columbia and British International Relations," American Academy of Political and Social Science, *The Annals*, Vol. XLV (January 1913), pp.1-13; Lukin Johnston, "The Case of the Oriental in B.C.," *The Canadian Magazine*, Vol. LVII (August 1929); Charles Lugin Shaw, "The Rising Sun's Dark Shadow over Canada," *Liberty*, November 11, 1939.

<sup>21</sup> The volumes are: Hilda Glynn-Ward, *The Writing on the Wall* (Vancouver: Sun Publishing, 1921); Tom MacInnes, *Oriental Occupation of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Sun Publishing, 1927).

<sup>22</sup> MacInnes, *Oriental Occupation of British Columbia*, p.80.

<sup>23</sup> Tien-Fang Cheng, *Oriental Immigration in Canada* (Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1931); Charles H Young, *The Japanese Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1939) [Published under the auspices of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, the Canadian Institute of International Affairs.]; Charles J. Woodsworth, *Canada and the Orient: A Study in International Relations* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1941). [Published under the auspices of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs.].

prejudice.<sup>24</sup> However, their use of interviews and descriptions of the scene at the time are still valuable to historians today. In part, these social scientists' works revealed a conciliatory attitude towards the Oriental problem.

There are many parallels between immigration in Canada and those in Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. To begin with, there was strong anti-Chinese sentiment in all these four countries from the mid-nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century. According to Sucheng Chan, the pre-WWII literature on Chinese immigration to the U.S. was also combined with anti-Chinese propaganda and "partisan" sociological works in which the Chinese presence was almost invariably framed as a "problem".<sup>25</sup> The literature in Australia and New Zealand was much similar at that time.<sup>26</sup>

The years after WWII saw the repeal of most of the discriminatory laws that had been specially enacted against the Chinese in North America. In Canada, the major turning point for Chinese immigration was the changes in immigration policy in the

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<sup>24</sup> Patricia Roy, " 'White Canada Forever', " pp.97-8.

<sup>25</sup> Sucheng Chan, "Asian American Historiography," in Franklin Ng eds, *The History and Immigration of Asian Americans*, (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), p.364.  
The anti-Chinese writing include: M.B. Starr, *The Coming Struggle* (San Francisco, 1873); Pierton W. Dooner, *Last Days of the Republic* (San Francisco, 1880); and Robert Wolter, *A Short and Truthful History of the Taking of Oregon and California by the Chinese in the Year A.D. 1899* (San Francisco, 1882).  
The positive writings on Chinese immigrants include: William Speer, *The Oldest and Newest Empire* (Cincinnati, 1870); Otis Gibson, *The Chinese in America* (Cincinnati, 1877); and George F. Seward, *Chinese Immigration in Its Social and Economic Aspects* (New York, 1881).

<sup>26</sup> Ouyang Yu, "Australian Invention of Chinese Invasion: A Century of Paranoia, 1888-1988," *Australian Literary Studies*, Vol.17 Issue 1, (May 1995), pp.74-84.  
The anti-Chinese literature in Australia include: Anon, *The Battle of the Mordialloc or How We Lost Australia* (Melbourne: Samuel Mullen, 1888); Fleetwood Chidell, *Australia --- White or Yellow?* (London: Heinemann, 1926).  
For more writings on Chinese immigrants see, J.W. Cushman, "A 'Colonial Casualty': The Chinese Community in Australian Historiography," *Asian Studies of Australia*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (1984); and a complete informative guide by Julie Stacker & Peri Stewart, *Chinese Immigrants and Chinese-Australians in New South Wales* (National Archives of Australia, 1996).  
For the anti-Chinese literature and positive writings on the Chinese in New Zealand, see Brian Moloughney, and John Stenhouse, " 'Drug-Besotten, Sin-Begotten Fiends of Filth': New Zealanders and the Oriental Other, 1850-1920," *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (1999), pp.43-64.

1960s. Although the Exclusion Act was repealed in 1947, it was not until 1967, when Canada adopted a universal point system of assessing potential immigrants, that Chinese were admitted under the same criteria as people of other origins.<sup>27</sup> In academic fields, when the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF) was established in the 1960s at San Francisco State University and the University of California, Berkeley, Chinese studies attracted further scholarly interest. Later, when *Pacific Affairs* --- formerly the journal of the Institute of Pacific Relations --- moved to Canada, they opened a forum for Canadian-Chinese scholarship, thus promoting Chinese studies across all of Canada.<sup>28</sup> By 1970, the second generation of scholarship on Chinese immigration to Canada appeared.

From a social history perspective, scholars among the second generation of scholarship on Chinese immigration began to reexamine the overall history of Chinese immigrant experience in Canada. The first major English-language study “to present a view of Chinese Canadian History from what is at least in part of Chinese perspective” was *From China to Canada*.<sup>29</sup> It summarized the development of the Chinese political community by exploring its creation, sustenance, and continuation. This thorough volume has been seen as an excellent reference to Chinese immigration to North America. Other volumes on the overall history are from some Chinese Canadian scholars of the third generation. As a Chinese merchant descendant, Anthony Chan openly sympathized with Chinese immigrants and sought to counter the hostile views of Asians that prevailed in North America at the turn of twentieth century. Chan’s *Gold Mountain: the Chinese in*

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<sup>27</sup> Peter Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, p.91.

<sup>28</sup> Graham E Johnson, “The True North Strong: Contemporary Chinese Studies in Canada”, *China Quarterly*, No. 143 (1995), pp.856-7.

<sup>29</sup> Edgar Wickberg, et. al., *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p.2.

*the New World* was the first book-length attempt to relate Chinese-Canadian history to China's history in a systemic way.<sup>30</sup> Another concise, but integrated and complete overview of Chinese immigration to Canada is Peter Li's *The Chinese in Canada*. It provides more insightful analysis of Chinese Canadian society by approaching the subject from a perspective of institutional racism.<sup>31</sup> Chan and Li's books are seen as the turn toward social history in Chinese Canadian historical scholarship. These works added "active voices" to Chinese studies and provided glimpses into Chinese communities within Canada from the perspective of Chinese, thus, providing an insider's view to complete the stories of Chinese immigrations.<sup>32</sup>

In American scholarship, Mary Coolidge's study of the Chinese question has long been recognized as a forerunner of critical research on this topic. She set up a social-historical structure of approaching overall Chinese immigration --- dividing it into several periods according to the legislation against the Chinese and addressing the origin, emigration background, chain migration pattern, "push" and "pull" factors, settlement and assimilation to the host society.<sup>33</sup> This methodology encouraged many other American as well as Australian and New Zealand scholars of Chinese immigration.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Edgar Wickberg, "Review of Gold Mountain: the Chinese in the New World", *American Historic Review*, Vol.99 (June 1984), p.886. Chan's attempts and framework could be traced back to the 1909 *Chinese Immigration* by sociologist Mary Coolidge, see discussion below.

<sup>31</sup> Roberto Perin, Review of *The Chinese in Canada*, *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 70 Issue 3, (Sep1989), p.447.

<sup>32</sup> Patricia E. Roy, " 'Active Voices', " p.51.

<sup>33</sup> Mary Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1909).

<sup>34</sup> In a chronological order, The scholarship in the U.S. includes: Betty Lee Sung, *Mountain of Gold: The Story of the Chinese in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1967); Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *The Chinese Experience in America*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Jack Chen, *The Chinese of America* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980); Him Mark Lai, Joe Huang, and Don Wong, *The Chinese of America, 1785-1980* (San Francisco: Chinese Culture Center, 1980); Roger Daniels, *Asian America*:

In terms of assimilation, scholarship from China took a very different slant.<sup>35</sup>

Both historians and government officials focused on the loyalty of those who emigrated.<sup>36</sup> Topics of inquiry include how well the Chinese in Canada remained loyal to their hometown, to the Chinese culture and to the nation-state.<sup>37</sup> L. Ling-chi Wang argued that in the eyes of Chinese scholars, the fact that Chinese immigrants often dwelled together was the evidence of loyalty to China. Although immigrants were in a foreign country, they still maintained their life-style in order to keep a connection with home. Instead of assimilating, they formed an extension of their homeland.<sup>38</sup> In brief, Western and Chinese scholarships come from very different perspectives. Chinese scholars are more focused on emigration background, cultural continuity and enduring identity.

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*Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988); Benson Tong, *The Chinese Americans* (Westport, Connecticut & London: Greenwood Press, 2000). The scholarship in Australia includes: Arthur Huck, *The Chinese in Australia* (Longmans Green and Co. Ltd, 1968); Kee Poo-Kong, *Chinese Immigrants in Australia: Construction of a Socio-Economic Profile* (Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, University of Melbourne, September, 1988); Jan Ryan, *Ancestors: Chinese in Colonial Australia* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1995); and Jan Ryan eds, *Chinese in Australia and New Zealand: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (New Dehil: New Age Internaitonal Ltd, 1995). Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors: the story of Sydney's Chinese* (State Library of NSW Press 1997); C. Y. Choi, *Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia* (Sydney University Press, 1975); Jane Lydon, *Many Inventions: The Chinese in the Rocks 1890-1930* (Monash Publications in History, 1999). The scholarship in New Zealand includes: N.G. Fong, *The Chinese New Zealand: A Study in Assimilation*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1959); W. Friesen, & M. Ip, *New Chinese New Zealanders: Profile of a Transnational Community in Auckland* (Albany: Asia-Pacific Migration Research Network, Massey University, 1997).

<sup>35</sup> Chinese-language scholarship see, David Tung-hai Lee, *Jianadai Huaqiao Shi*. (A History of the Chinese in Canada) (Taipei: Zhonghua Dadian Bianyinhui, 1967); Shao-ru Wang et al. eds, *Jindai Chuyang Shihua*, (*History of the Chinese Abroad*)(Shanghai: Xuelin Chubanshe, 1989); Jian-xiong Wu, *Haiwai Yimin yu Huaren Shehui*, (*Chinese Emigrants and Huaren Society*) (Taipei: Yun-chen Wenhua Gongsi, 1993); Guo-hong Zhu, *Zhongguo de Haiwai Yimin: Yixiang Guoji Qianyi de Lishi*, (*Chinese Emigration: A Historical Study of the International Migration*) (Shanghai: Fudan Dexue Chubanshe, 1994); Guo-zhen Yang, *Mingqing Zhongguo Yanhai Shehui yu Haiwai Yimin*, (*The Maritime Society of China and Chinese Emigrants in Ming and Qing Dynasty*) (Beijing: High-Education Press, 1997).

<sup>36</sup> L. Ling-Chi Wang, "The Structure of Dual Domination: Toward a Paradigm for the Study of the Chinese Diaspora in the United States," *Amerasia Journal*, Vol. 21, No.1&2 (1995), p.151.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*, p.152.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, p.152.

Chinese scholarship's emphasis reflected the concern of exiled people with their role and place in the world. By contrast, the Western scholarship focuses on whether immigrants could merge into the mainstream culture of a foreign country.

From the aspect of Canadian immigration as a whole, Chinese issues have played an important role and have been included in larger national histories in various publications.<sup>39</sup> In the recently published *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s*, Chinese communities in Canada have been given a detailed investigation.<sup>40</sup> This is similar to the scholarship on Chinese immigration to the United States.<sup>41</sup> Whereas, it is not until recently, that national histories in Australia and New Zealand began to shed light on the Chinese experience.<sup>42</sup> Jan Ryan has pointed out that for a long time, the Chinese remained excluded from discussions of national identity, although mistreatment and discrimination have been addressed in some

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<sup>39</sup> The literature includes: Ungerleider Charles S., "Immigration, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship: The Development of the Canadian Social Justice," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 24, Issue 3 (1992), pp.7-23; Ninette Kelly and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Shiva S. Halli and Leo Dridger eds, *Immigrant Canada: Demographic, Economic, and Social Challenges* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Dirk Hoerder, *Creating Societies: Immigrant Lives in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Chan, "Bachelor Workers," in Franca Iacovetta, eds. *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp.231-250.

<sup>41</sup> For example, Keith Fitzgerald, *The Face Of The Nation: Immigration, The State, And The National Identity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996); Desmond S. King, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, And The Origins Of The Diverse Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>42</sup> Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.141-142; Greif, S.W. "Introduction: The interweaving of Themes of New Zealand Immigration" and Manying Ip, "Chinese New Zealanders: Old Settlers and New Migrants," in S.W. Greif eds, *Immigration and National Identity in New Zealand: One People, Two Peoples, Many Peoples*, (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1995).

studies.<sup>43</sup> For example, volume four (1901-1942) of *The Oxford History of Australia*, published in 1988, has not a single Chinese indexed.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, the myth of Chinese “invasion” to New Zealand was not publicly debunked in social history until the late 1980s.<sup>45</sup> Only since then, various discussions concerning the Chinese presence have largely come into academic circles.<sup>46</sup> Before the 1980s, a few studies on Asian immigration comprised the segments of Chinese experience.<sup>47</sup>

In short, the general studies on Chinese immigration to Canada, as elsewhere, provide a portrait of the Chinese experience and explore the interrelationship between

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<sup>43</sup> Jan Ryan, “Chinese Australian History,” in Wayne Hudson and Geoffrey Bolton ed, *Creating Australia: Changing Australia History* (St. Leonards, N.S.W., Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1997), p.71. Jan Ryan made the argument based on examining *The Oxford History of Australia* (Melbourne; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); John Richard’s *Culture History of Australia* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1988); Curthoys et al. eds, *Australians from 1939* (Sydney: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon, 1987); and Grimshaw et al. *Creating a Nation* (Melbourne: Penguin, 1994).

<sup>44</sup> Jan Ryan, “Chinese Australian History,” p.71.

<sup>45</sup> Augie Fleras, Paul Spoonley, *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand*, (Auckland, New Zealand: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.154.

<sup>46</sup> Manying Ip, “Chinese New Zealanders: Old Settlers and New Migrants,” in S.W. Greif eds, *Immigration & National Identity* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1995); M. McKinnon, *Immigrants and Citizens: New Zealanders and Asian Immigration in Historical Context* (Wellington: Institute of Policy Studies, Asia 2000, 1996); J.M. Lidgard, *East Asian Migration to Aotearoa/New Zealand: Perspectives of Some New Arrivals* (Hamilton: discussion paper no.12, Population Studies Centre, University of Waikato, 1996); R. Vasil, & H-K Yoon, *New Zealanders of Asian Origin*, (Wellington: Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, 1996); A.D. Trlin, & P. Spoonley eds, *New Zealand and International Migration: A Digest and Bibliography*, (Palmerston North: Department of Sociology Massey University, 1997); A.V. Zodgekar, *Immigrants in New Zealand Society* (Wellington: occasional paper no.10 in the Sociology and Social Work series, Victoria University of Wellington, 1997); Manying Ip, “Asian Migrants--the Myth and the Reality,” *New Zealand Herald*, 29 October, 1997; W. Friesen, & Manying Ip, *New Chinese New Zealanders: Profile of a Transnational Community in Auckland* (Albany: Asia-Pacific Migration Research network, Massey University, 1997); Manying Ip, “Gender, Racism, and the Politics of Chinese Immigration,” in R. du Plessis and L. Alice eds, *Feminist Thought in Aotearoa* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>47</sup> Richard Thompson, *Race Relations In New Zealand: A Review Of The Literature* (Christchurch: National Council of Churches, 1963); A.T. Yarwood, *Asian Migration to Australia: The Background to Exclusion, 1896-1923* (Melbourne, 1964); Keith Westhead Thomson, *Immigrants in New Zealand* (Palmerston North, Massey University, 1970).

Chinese and the larger society.<sup>48</sup> They are characterized by their focus on the difficulty of transition from the homeland to a new life and their concern with Chinese efforts to assimilate and contribute to the host country. They also demonstrate that Chinese communities were not homogeneous.

On the level of regional studies, there is voluminous literature on the Chinese in British Columbia, which had the largest Chinese population within Canada and where "Oriental Questions" were first raised.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, in the U.S., regional studies are concentrated on large cities such as New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles where there were relatively more Chinese immigrants.<sup>50</sup>

Since the 1970s, in metropolitan centers such as Vancouver and Toronto, there is renewed concern about the Chinese presence. Resentment is building toward Chinese economic success, especially as more affluent Chinese, mainly from Hong Kong, have begun to immigrate to Canada after changes in immigration policy that favour business immigrants. Accordingly, more issues and regional case studies regarding Chinese

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<sup>48</sup> Some other volumes see: Jin Tan and Patricia Roy, *The Chinese in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1985); Stanislaw Andracki, *Immigration of Orientals into Canada, with Special Reference to Chinese* (New York: Arno Press, 1978); Persia C Campbell, *Chinese Coolies Emigration within the British Empire* (New York: Negro University Press, 1969).

<sup>49</sup> Some journal articles and volumes regarding the Chinese in British Columbia see, Patricia Roy, "The Oriental in British Columbia" in SM. Trofimenkoff ed, *The Twenties in Western Canada: Papers of the Western Canadian Studies Conference, March 1972* (Ottawa: History Division, National Museum of Man, National Museums of Canada, 1972); Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province*; Paul Lee, *An Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1988); Carol Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement: Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia," *BC Studies*, Vol.30, (Summer 1976) pp.44-76; Wing Chong Ng, *The Chinese in Vancouver* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999).

<sup>50</sup> There are too many publications to address here, for the historiographical assessments in American scholarship see, Roger Daniels, "Westerners from the East: Oriental Immigrants Appraised," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. XXXV, (1966), pp.373-383; Daniels, "American Historians and East Asian Immigrants," *ibid.*, Vol. XLIII, (1974), pp.449-472; Shirley Hune, *Pacific Migration to the United States: trends and Themes in Historical and Sociological Literature* (Washington, D.C.: 1977); Hyung-chan Kim eds, *Asian American Studies: An Annotated Bibliography and Research Guide* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989); and Sucheng Chan, "Asian American Historiography," pp.1-36.

immigration have come into academic research. For example, there are discussions concerning Chinese business in Canada,<sup>51</sup> the Chinese immigrant children's cross-cultural adaptation,<sup>52</sup> and the Chinese traditional culture in Canadian society.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, there are also some particular discussions touching schooling,<sup>54</sup> Chinese nationalism and merchants,<sup>55</sup> residential settlements<sup>56</sup> and the Chinese in the airforce.<sup>57</sup>

There is no doubt that Chinese communities before WWII were dominated by males. Studies have shown that from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, there was a serious gender imbalance and lack of family among Chinese in Canada, the U.S., Australia and New Zealand. Despite the fact that the racialized discourse, practice and legislation directly affected the produce of a "bachelor society",<sup>58</sup> a survey of Chinese women as well as Chinese family in the host society might offer

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<sup>51</sup> Peter S Li, "Chinese Investment and Business in Canada: Ethnic Entrepreneurship Reconsidered," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 66, Issue 2 (Summer 1993), p.219.

<sup>52</sup> Betty K Lee and Ling Chen, "Cultural Communication Competence and Psychological Adjustment," *Communication Research*, Vol. 27, Issue 6 (Dec 2000), p.764.

<sup>53</sup> Ban Seng Hoe, *Beyond the Golden Mountain: Chinese Cultural Traditions in Canada* (Hull, Quebec : Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1989).

<sup>54</sup> Timothy Stanley, "Schooling, White Supremacy and the Formation of a Chinese Merchant Public in British Columbia," *BC Studies*, Vol.107, (Autumn 1995), pp. 3-29.

<sup>55</sup> "'Chinaman, Wherever We Go': Chinese Nationalism and Guangdong Merchants in British Columbia, 1871-1911," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol.77, No.4 (December 1996), pp.475-503; Brian Thornton, "Exceptions to The Rule: Chinese Merchants and the Exclusion Laws, 1890-1894," *Pacific North West Forum* Vol.6, No.1 (1992) pp. 50-59.

<sup>56</sup> Georges Cho and Roger Leigh, "Patterns of Residence of the Chinese in Vancouver," in *Peoples of the Living Land: Geography of Cultural Diversity in British Columbia*, ed. J. Minghi (Vancouver: Tantalus Research. 1972).

<sup>57</sup> Ray H Crone, "The Unknown Airforce," *Saskatchewan History*, Vol.30, No.1 (1977), pp.1-17.

<sup>58</sup> Anthony B. Chan, "Orientalism and Image Making: The Sojourner in Canadian History," *The Journal of Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 9 (1981), pp.37-46; and Peter S. Li, "Immigration Laws And Family Patterns: Some Demographic Changes Among Chinese Families In Canada, 1885-1971," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol.12, No.1 (1980), pp. 58-73.

some alternative explanation to the Chinese migration pattern and settlement.<sup>59</sup> Thus, the academic interest in gender analysis has shifted attention to the analysis of Chinese women and family.<sup>60</sup> In this respect, the Australian and New Zealand's scholarship are just taking shape,<sup>61</sup> whereas, American scholarship seems to have developed more than Canadian scholarship in the area of Chinese women.<sup>62</sup> Canadian scholars are keen to see how Chinese immigrants adapted themselves under the special socioeconomic circumstance of an area, and to look at how they were subject to discrimination and racism which leads into the second general approach --- ethnic studies.

Ethnic studies have been widespread throughout North America since the 1960s.

In Canada, the 1960s and 1970s have witnessed significant advances, methodologically

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<sup>59</sup> Adam Mackeown, "Transnational Chinese Families and Chinese Exclusion, 1875-1943," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol.18, Issue 2 (Winter 1999), pp.73-110.

<sup>60</sup> For a discussion on Chinese women in Canada, see Tamara Adilman, "A Preliminary Sketch of Chinese Women and Work in British Columbia, 1858-1950," in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia*, ed. B. Latham et. al (Victoria: Camosun College Press, 1984); Dora Nipp, " 'But Women Did Come': Working Chinese Women in the Interwar Years," in Jean Burnet eds, *Looking into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History* (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986); May Yee, "Chinese Canadian Women: Our Common Struggle," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* Vol.19, No.3 (1987), pp. 174-184; *Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1992); Constance Backhouse, " White Female Help And Chinese-Canadian Employers: Race, Class, Gender And Law In The Case Of Yee Chun, 1924," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol.26, No.3 (1994), pp. 34-52.

For a discussion on Chinese family in Canada, see Graham E Johnson, "Chinese Family and Community in Canada," in *Two Nations, Many Cultures: Ethnic Groups in Canada*, ed. Jean Leonard Elliott (Scarborough, Ont. : Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1978); Peter S Li, "Immigration Laws And Family Patterns: Some Demographic Changes Among Chinese Families In Canada, 1885-1971," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol.12, No.1 (1980), pp. 58-73; A recent novel, Denise Chong, *The Concubine Children: Portrait of a Family Divided* (New York; Toronto: Viking, 1995).

<sup>61</sup> Manying Ip, *New Away From Home: Life Stories of Chinese Women in New Zealand*, (Auckland: New Women's Press, 1990); E. Ho, R. Bedford, & J. Goodwin, " 'Astronaut' Families: A Contemporary Migration Phenomenon," *Asia-Pacific Migration Research Network*, (Albany: Massey University, 1997).

<sup>62</sup> Some fine volumes from American scholarship are: George Anthony Pfeffer, *If They don't Bring their Women Here: Chinese Female Immigration before Exclusion* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Sharon K. Hom ed, *Chinese Women Traversing Diaspora: Memoirs, Essays, and Poetry* (New York: Garland Pub., 1999).

and substantively, in research on ethnicity. The parallel growth of the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association as a vigorous community of scholars from all disciplines attests to and reflects those advances.<sup>63</sup> The general interest in ethnic studies generated lots of articles and books on the studies of the Chinese in Canada.

In the first place, scholars struggled to identify the Chinese who came to Canada in the nineteenth century. Much ink has been spilled on whether or not the Chinese migrants to North America were immigrants or “sojourners,” that is, persons who did not really intend to stay.<sup>64</sup> This debate was first raised in the American scholarship. In the 1960s, some scholars such as Gunther Barth viewed the Chinese as voluntarily isolated “sojourners”, which means the Chinese refused to become involved with the host society and instead, they were draining wealth from the U.S.<sup>65</sup> The debate involved not only ethnic studies scholars, but also labour historians and urban historians. For example, in *Chinatown: Economic Adaptation and Ethnic Identity of the Chinese*, Bernard Wong identified old overseas Chinese as isolated foreigners.

This ghetto-like environment gives them a sense of separation. They read only the Chinese newspaper, listen to Chinese music, eat Chinese foods, and socialize with other Chinese. They are highly ethnocentric and see no worthwhile reason to assimilate into American society. ... The Chinese living in ghetto-like Chinatown, they are in America, but exist as Chinese.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Jay E. Goldstein and Rita M. Bienvenue eds, *Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations in Canada: A Book of Readings*, (Toronto: Butterworths, 1980), p.1-5.

<sup>64</sup> For a discussion on the concept of “sojourners”, see Franklin Ng, “The Sojourner, Return Migration, and Immigration History.” *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*. (1987), pp. 53-71; Paul Siu, “The Sojourner,” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 58, Issue 1 (July 1952), pp.34-44.

<sup>65</sup> Gunther Barth, *Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States, 1850-1870* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1964).

<sup>66</sup> Bernard Wong, *Chinatown, Economic Adaptation and Ethnic Identity of The Chinese* (New York, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), p.77.

More radical arguments developed in some studies in the 1970s. By employing Milton Gordon's stage-theory of assimilation, they claimed that, although the Chinese have achieved "behavioral assimilation" (acculturation to Anglo-American values) and a good measure of "structural assimilation" (integration into the dominant society's occupation), they continue to maintain a Chinese or Chinese-Anglo identity which serves to mark off a distinct ethnic boundary.<sup>67</sup> Thus, they further put the Chinese in the place of "Aliens".

On the other side of the debate, scholars argued that the Chinese migrants did want to settle as other migrants from Europe. It was white racism that forced the Chinese into involuntary sojourning in the U.S.<sup>68</sup>

In the 1980s, the debate spilled over into Canadian academic circles. As Yuen-fong Woon argued, "[t]he intensity of the debate has been fanned by the fact that Canadian politicians and anti-Chinese pressure groups, like those in the U.S., had often used the sojourning behavior of the Chinese as an argument to propose or justify anti-Chinese legislation".<sup>69</sup> Major representatives of this historiography include Peter Ward's

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<sup>67</sup> Vivien Lai, "The New Chinese immigration in Toronto," in Jean Leonard Elliott, eds., *Minority Canadians*, Vol. II. (Scarborouh, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1973), pp.120-140; Melford S. Weiss, *Valley City: A Chinese Community in America* (Cambridge: Schenkman. 1973).

<sup>68</sup> The strongest critique to Barth came from Linda Shin in her review of *Bitter Strength*, in Emma Gee, et al. eds., *Counterpoint: Perspectives on Asian America*, (Los Angeles: Asian American Studies Center, University of California,) pp.36-38; Shirley Hune, "Asian American Studies in the First Decades: Trends and Themes; Failures and Revisions, 1960s-1970s," in Hyung-chan Kim eds, *Asian American Studies: An Annotated Bibliography and Research Guide* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), p.242.

<sup>69</sup> Yuen-fong Woo, "The Voluntary Sojourner among the Overseas Chinese: Myth or Reality?" *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 56, Issue 4 (Winter, 1983-84), p.674.

*White Canada Forever* and Patricia Roy's *A White Man's Province*.<sup>70</sup> Dealing with the "anti-oriental attitudes" and policies, Peter Ward's *White Canada Forever*, interprets the stereotype of the Chinese and its deep influence on the treatment of them in western society. Ward argued that "the fact of segmentation in west coast society profoundly influenced patterns of racial perception within the dominant white community. Pluralism heightened its awareness of race and thus encouraged the circulation of negative Asian stereotypes."<sup>71</sup>

When John Porter's concept of "vertical mosaic" came into influence the Canadian academic world,<sup>72</sup> scholars began to propose several alternatives on the ethnic identity of the Chinese. Deploying an impressive array of Western social theorists, K. Jay Anderson argued that "Chinatown" and "Chinese" were racial categories constructed by European Canadians through the use of state machinery. Thus, it was the host society that perpetually defined ethnic Chinese as "others" and "outsiders".<sup>73</sup> Some Canadian-Chinese scholars such as Anthony Chan and David Chenyuan Lai sought to highlight the Chinese contribution to Canadian life. Lai pointed out that although there were cultural barriers, language disadvantage and the clannish character influenced by traditional Chinese culture, it was white racism that made them willing to live within the enclave inside which they could "enjoy" life. The "isolation" was both voluntary and involuntary. To some point, the debate ended here.

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<sup>70</sup> Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989).

<sup>71</sup> W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever*, p.21.

<sup>72</sup> John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).

<sup>73</sup> K. Jay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown*, p.3.

In short, since the 1980s, scholars have been trying to break the stereotype of Chinese as "John Chinaman" or "unassimilable aliens," "perpetual foreigners" and come up with a more objective image under the auspices of multiculturalism. Ronald Takaki and Wing Chung Ng's works best reflect the shift in scholarship from viewing Chinese immigrants as isolated foreigners to emphasizing their integral role in North America.<sup>74</sup> The Chinese as a minority have gained social acceptance and full-fledged citizenship in Canadian society since the 1960s.<sup>75</sup> Looking back, the history of the Chinese minority in Canada could be seen as a quest for citizenship and equality.<sup>76</sup>

In Australia and New Zealand, the problem of defining Chinese identity still remains today. Jan Ryan has pointed out that by 1997, some works still retained the Chinese as a homogenous "race", a detached entity.<sup>77</sup> Recently a lot of effort has been taken to "provide practical step-by-step guides to help individuals and communities around Australia identify our Chinese heritage places".<sup>78</sup> The Australian Heritage Commission has issued a valuable volume and an Internet guide regarding the Chinese Australian heritage.<sup>79</sup> This shows that the establishment of the Chinese place in the Australian history is taking place.

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<sup>74</sup> Ronald T. Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1993); Wing Chung Ng, *The Chinese in Vancouver, 1945-80: the Pursuit of Identity and Power* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999).

<sup>75</sup> Peter S Li, "The Chinese Minority in Canada," p.266.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, p267.

<sup>77</sup> Jan Ryan, "Chinese Australian History," p.71.

<sup>78</sup> The Hon Dr David Kemp, MP, Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, "New Approach to Chinese Australian Heritage Places," (Media Release, Embargo 12 noon, 13 February), text available, <http://www.ea.gov.au/minister/env/2002/mr13feb02.html>

<sup>79</sup> The Australian Heritage Commission, *Tracking the Dragon - A Guide for Finding and Assessing Chinese Australian Heritage Places*, available online, <http://www.ahc.gov.au/infores/publications/chineseheritage/trackingthedragon/index.html>

The Canadian scholars also dedicated to examine the Chinese immigrants' reaction to and coping with racial discrimination.<sup>80</sup> In 1987, *Canadian Ethnic Studies* published a special issue "Coping with Racism: The Chinese Experience in Canada".<sup>81</sup> These studies highlighted the Chinese immigrants' active involvement in fighting against the mistreatment rather than viewed them as "victims". In this sense, this literature contributed remarkably to the understanding of the Chinese immigrants' settlement.

Another notable issue is that a relatively large proportion of the existing literature in Canada on Chinese racial issues was produced either by the government or by government-affiliated organizations, often in the form of commissions, or in-house research. An example was the series of Royal Commission inquiries on "Chinese question" in 1885, 1902 and 1908.<sup>82</sup> The motives of these commissions originally might have been generating information to justify and rationalize racism against the Chinese in the West Coast, rather than formulating federal policies. Ironically, even though they suggested prohibiting Chinese entry, the commissions remain today as the most comprehensive testimony of personal and systemic racism against the Chinese.

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see also an Internet Guide, *A Toolkit for Researching and Assessing Chinese Australian Heritage Places*, available online, <http://www.ahc.gov.au/infores/publications/chineseheritage/toolkit/index.html>

<sup>80</sup> For example see, Howard Hiroshi Sugimoto, "The Vancouver Riots of 1907: A Canadian Episode," in *East Across the Pacific: Historical & Sociologic Studies of Japanese Immigration & Assimilation*, (Santa Barbara, Calif.: American Bibliographical Center California Press, 1972); D. R. Hughes and E. Kallen, *The Anatomy of Racism: Canadian Dimensions*, (Montreal: Harvest-House, 1974); Guang Tian, *Chinese Canadians, Canadians Chinese: Coping and Adapting in North America* (1999).

<sup>81</sup> Special Issue "Coping with Racism: The Chinese Experience in Canada," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (1987).

<sup>82</sup> The three Royal Commission inquiries are: (1) *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration* (Ottawa: Printed by Order of the Commission, 1885); (2) *Report of the Royal Commission on Oriental Immigration* (Ottawa: Printed by S.E. Dawson, 1902); (3) *Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Methods by which Oriental Labourers have been Induced to Come to Canada* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1908).

Although Canadian historians continually suggest reassessing discrimination against Chinese immigrants and the relation between Chinese community and the host society,<sup>83</sup> many Canadians find it hard to talk about immigration because they are afraid to be called racists or bigots. A *Maclean's* article about the Canadian immigration policy published in the early 1990s claimed that:

Nice, Polite, open-minded --- Canadians wear these stereotypes of civility like a badge of honor. And according to the results of a national poll on attitudes towards racial and ethnic minorities ... The Canadian predilection for good manners may extend into the murky realm of racism. Of 1,200 people polled by Decima Research two-thirds declared that one of the best things about Canada is its acceptance of people from all races and ethnic backgrounds. At the same time, however, more than half of the respondents admitted that they harbor negative views of some minorities --- even though they insisted that they would never act on or express those views.<sup>84</sup>

As Aprodicio and Eleanor Laquian argued, "[T]he issues of racism and its possible links to Asian immigration is extremely difficult for Canadians to discuss openly because it goes against the moral philosophies and official policies that are considered basic to the Canadian liberal idea."<sup>85</sup> However, a closer look at the history of Canadian immigration policies reveals outright racism. K.W. Taylor argued: "Canada's immigration law from 1885 until 1962 was explicitly racist in wording and intent: non-white, non-European

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<sup>83</sup> For example, see Gunter Baureiss, "Ethnic Resilience and Discrimination: Two Chinese Communities in Canada," *The Journal of Ethnic Studies*, Vol.10, No.1, (1982), pp.69-87; R. A. Httenback, *Racism and Empire: White Settlers and Coloered Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies, 1830-1910* (Cornell Univeristy Press, 1976); Richard Thompson, "Ethnicity Versus Class: AN Analysis of Conflict in a North American Chinese Community," *Ethnicity*, Vol.4, No. 4 (1979), pp.306-26; Peter S. Li, "Prejudice Against Asians in a Canadian City," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol.11, No. 2 (1979), pp.70-7; Shelia McManus, "Mapping the Alberta-Montana Borderlands: Race, Ethnicity and Gender in the Later 19<sup>th</sup> Century," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (2001), pp. 71-88.

<sup>84</sup> Brian Bergman, "A Nation of Polite Bigots?" *Maclean's* 106 (52) (December 27), 1993, p.42.

<sup>85</sup> Aprodicio Laquian and Eleanor Laquian, "Asian Immigration and Racism in Canada --- A Search for Policy Options," in *The Silent Debate: Asian Immigration and Racism in Canada*, ed. Aprodicio Laquian and Eleanor Laquian (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia, 1997), p.12.

immigration was openly discouraged and /or prohibited.”<sup>86</sup> In this respect, an examination of political history is necessary to fully consider the immigrants’ experience. Thus, the third way that Canadian scholars have approached Chinese immigration is through political history.

A volume which reflected the interplay of politics, power and ethnicity in 1979, is *Visible Minorities and Political Participation*. It includes a paper discussing how Chinese political associations strove for franchise, how provincial and federal legislation came into practice and the reason why Chinese were discriminated against politically.<sup>87</sup> Most Canadian scholarship from a political perspective concentrated on explaining Chinese organizational growth and its influence on the host society.<sup>88</sup> An example is *From China to Canada*, which examines the public policy and immigration acts on Chinese immigration, Chinese organization and association. It places Chinese immigration in a wider context by including Chinese issues, such as the political situation in China.

The consideration of immigration policies and racism cannot be dealt with by Canadian policies alone. The experience of other receiving countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. provide valuable alternatives.<sup>89</sup> During the last half-century,

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<sup>86</sup> K.W. Taylor, “Racism in Canadian Immigration Policy,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol.23, No.1 (1991), p.1.

<sup>87</sup> Patricia Roy, “Citizens without Votes: East Asians in British Columbia, 1872-1947” in Jorgen Dahlie, Tissa Fernando, eds., *Ethnicity, power and politics in Canada* (Toronto : Methuen, 1981).

<sup>88</sup> A specialist in political history of the Chinese is Edgar Wickberg. See Edgar Wickberg, “Some Problems in Chinese Organizational Development in Canada, 1923-1937,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XI, Issue.1 (1979), p.88; “Chinese and Canadian Influences on Chinese politics in Vancouver, 1900-1947,” *BC Studies*, No.45 (Spring 1980), p.37-55; “Chinese Organizations and the Canadian Political Progress: Two Case Studies” in *Ethnicity, Power and Politics in Canada*, ed. Jorgen Dahlie and Tissa Fernada (Toronto: Methuen, 1981).

<sup>89</sup> Aprodicio and Eleanor Laquian, “Asian Immigration and Racism in Canada,” p.21.

immigration policies in these English-speaking countries have been substantially changed. In seeking an understanding of these changes, there are a number of surveys on the issue of race and restrictive immigration from a political perspective, and particularly in American and Australian scholarship since the 1970s. Scholars in New Zealand similarly have examined the effect immigration policy changes have had upon Chinese immigration since the late 1980s.<sup>90</sup>

Two insightful analyses on immigration and racism are R.A. Huttenback's and C.A.Price's volumes.<sup>91</sup> Huttenback provides voluminous evidence supporting his view of the dominance of racism over British liberal imperial philosophy. He agrees that racist motivated laws discriminating against the colored residents of the four countries he considers. Similar to Huttenback, Price, in his examination of North America and Australia, argues that notions of racial superiority were partly responsible for the opposition to Asian immigration, whereas, the degree of cultural difference between Asians and the white settlers should also be noted. In general, these two volumes called for more investigation on the forces behind changing immigration policies.

More recent studies from Constance Backhouse contributed to Canadian scholarship on this subject. In a 1994 article, Backhouse presents a documented case study of a discriminatory statute passed in Saskatchewan in 1924 restricting the rights of Chinese-Canadians in order to show how the legal institution has played a key role in

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<sup>90</sup> J. Poot et al., *International Migration and the New Zealand Economy: A Long-run Perspective* (Wellington: Victoria University Press for the Institute of Policy Studies, 1988); W. Kasper, *Populate or Languish? Rethinking New Zealand's Immigration Policy* (Wellington: New Zealand Business Roundtable, 1990); Enterprise Auckland, *Asian Immigrants: Economic and Social Survey* (Auckland: Enterprise Auckland, Auckland Marketing, 1996).

<sup>91</sup> R.A. Huttenback, *Racism and Empire: White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in the British Self-governing Colonies, 1830-1910*, (Ithaca: Cornell university Press, 1976); C.A.Price, *The Great White Walls are Built: Restrictive Immigration to North America and Australia, 1836-1888*, (Canberra: Australian Institute of International Affairs in association with Australian National University Press, 1974).

creating and maintaining racial stereotypes.<sup>92</sup> She points out that the “white women's labour law” was originally intended to prohibit Chinese men from participating freely in the economic and social communities in which they lived. The deep causes of racial discrimination came from economic factors. By using historical case studies, Backhouse's work in 1999,<sup>93</sup> together with James Walker's *Race, Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies*, further demonstrates that racism both influenced lawmaking by legislators and judges and was influenced by economic factors.<sup>94</sup> Although these two volumes received some critical reviews, at least they opened up “the silent debate” on issues related to Asian immigration and racism, which was described in *The Silent Debate: Asian Immigration and Racism in Canada*.<sup>95</sup>

As an important scholarly contribution to the exploration of inter-ethnic relations and policy options, *The Silent Debate* is a work published by the Institute of Asian Research at the University of British Columbia. Comprised of twenty papers originally presented at a 1997 Vancouver Conference on racism and immigration, this work gathers research by geographers, sociologists, political scientists, economists, and immigration specialists. It contributes to a greater understanding of immigration issues leading to a more tolerant and mutually respectful society in B.C. and Canada. More importantly, this volume suggests discussing racism and immigration from both the perspective of Canada

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<sup>92</sup> Constance Backhouse, “White Female Help and Chinese-Canadian Employers: Race, Class, Gender and Law in the Case of Yee...,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 26, Issue 3 (1994), pp.34-53.

<sup>93</sup> Constance Backhouse, *Color-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

<sup>94</sup> James Walker, *Race, Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada: Historical Case Studies* (Waterloo: The Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History and Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1997).

<sup>95</sup> Aprodicio and Eleanor Laquian, “Asian Immigration and Racism in Canada,” p.21.

as a receiving country, and from the perspective of the Asian countries of origin.<sup>96</sup> In the case of Chinese immigration, there are not many North American scholars who consider the issues from the viewpoint of China's politics.<sup>97</sup> However, a fresh perspective is provided in L. Eve Armentrout Ma's *Revolutionaries, Monarchists, and Chinatowns: Chinese Politics in the Americas and the 1911 Revolution*.<sup>98</sup> This work concerns itself with general issues around diaspora politics. Ma argued that Chinese communities in the Americas (Ma's treatment includes Mexico and Peru as well as the United States and Canada) began to be politicized in the last decade of the nineteenth century. In particular, the Chinese Revolution of 1911 played an important role in immigrants changing response to their environment. In sum, Ma's study and the existing literature on Chinese immigration from political perspective suggests that much work remains in this area.<sup>99</sup>

One of the most common forms of racism that visible minorities continue to encounter in Canada is discrimination in the labour market.<sup>100</sup> The earliest attempts at restricting Chinese immigration were partly stimulated by sudden increases in the number of Chinese participating in gold rushes. Numbers, alone, however, cannot explain the reaction. The policies were in response to economic factors and class struggle between

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<sup>96</sup> Shirley Chan, "Foreword," in *The Silent Debate: Asian Immigration and Racism in Canada*, xiv.

<sup>97</sup> As mentioned before on page 20, a volume that includes Chinese political situation is *From China to Canada*.

<sup>98</sup> L. Eve Armentrout Ma, *Revolutionaries, Monarchists, and Chinatowns: Chinese Politics in the Americas and the 1911 Revolution* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990).

<sup>99</sup> It should be noted here that in the United States, some political historians once were interested in viewing Asian immigration as an international problem and referring it to foreign relations. This might be called diplomatic history. See Payson Treat, *Japan and the United States, 1853-1921*, (Stanford, 1928); Thomas A. Bailey, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese-American Crisis: An Account of the International Consequences Arising from the Race Problem on the Pacific Coast*, (Stanford, 1934).

<sup>100</sup> Gillian Creese, "Organizing Against Racism in the Workplace: Chinese Workers in Vancouver Before the Second World War," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XIX, No. 3 (1987), pp.35-46.

business interests and working class. The Chinese first came as contract labourers in the context of booms in Canadian frontier economies. Clearly, without Chinese labour, the completion of the CPR would have been delayed with the possible result of B.C.'s secession, and many industries in British Columbia not have been developed.<sup>101</sup> To further explore the role Chinese immigrants played in Canadian economy, scholars took the approach from the view of labour history.

In the nineteenth century the Chinese held many occupations and were involved in industries such as fishing, milling, lumbering, mining, gardening (fruit and vegetable), domestic service, laundry and cooking. From 1880 to 1885, a large number of Chinese immigrants engaged in building the Canadian Pacific Railway. However, they were always in the lower section of the labour market and monopolized specific occupations for which it was next to impossible to secure white labour.<sup>102</sup> Thus, the discussion on Chinese labourers is mainly around the issues how they were employed, why they were discarded, the relation between Canadian immigration policy towards the Chinese and the need for cheap labour.<sup>103</sup> These studies are characterized by their emphasis on the

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<sup>101</sup> Gunter Baureiss, "Chinese Immigration, Chinese Stereotypes, and Chinese Labour," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, (1987), p.25.

<sup>102</sup> Peter S. Li, "A Historical Approach to Ethnic Stratification: The Case of the Chinese in Canada, 1858-1930," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol.16, No.3 (1979), pp.320-332.

<sup>103</sup> Voluminous literature can be found on such discussion. see James S. Woodworth, *Strangers within Our Gates, or Coming Canadian* (Toronto: F.C. Stephenson, Methodist Mission, 1909); John Munro, "British Columbia and the Chinese Evil: Canada's First Anti-Asiatic Law," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol.6 (1971), pp.42-51; Anthony Chan, Chap. 3 "Bachelor Workers" in *Gold Mountain*, pp.38-47; Paul Yee, "The Chinese in British Columbia's Salmon Canning Industry," in G.Chu et. al (ed.), *Inalienable Rice: A Chinese & Japanese Canadian Anthology*, (Vancouver: Chinese Canadian Writers Workshop, 9-11. 1979); Chap 4, "Rising White Opposition" in Edgar Wichberg eds, *From China to Canada*, pp.31-40; Jin Tan, "Chinese Labour and the Reconstituted Social Order of British Columbia," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XIX, No.3, (1987), pp.68-88.

coalescence of racism and “capitalism” in the fashioning of a segmented labour market.<sup>104</sup>

Because the situation of Chinese workers was similar in Canada and the U.S., both Canadian and American historians’ views do not vary much over time. As early as 1909, Mary Coolidge had given her insightful investigation on the competition between the Chinese and the whites in California. She argued that Chinese immigrants could not compete with the whites at all because of various limitations and discrimination. In addition, the fluidity of Chinese labour and the patient nature, capability of Chinese people also decided that they did not concern about the competition, whereas they took any other jobs available.<sup>105</sup> Since then, historians have long agreed with Coolidge’s argument and just provided more detailed evidence. A more in-depth analysis is Peter S Li’s *The Chinese in Canada*. Li points out that Chinese were pushed out of “core” occupations into marginal ones because of the racial hostility. He argues that the marginal position in Canadian society of the Chinese who were brought here to fill labour shortages was maintained through institutional racism. The Chinese largely engaged in laundry and restaurant business because these occupations did not compete with white labour. In the recent works of Donald H. Avery, Chinese labour history in Canada is given a brief insightful survey. Avery convincingly argued that because the Chinese workers were first “imported” in a contract system they were cast in a long period of indentured labour with little opportunity for independent action. “They were a pawn in

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<sup>104</sup> Rennie Warburton, “The Workingmen’s Protective Association, Victoria, B.C., 1878: Racism, Intersectionality and Status Politics,” *Labour*, Vol. 43 (Spring 1999), p.107.

<sup>105</sup> Mary Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, pp.389-400.

this fierce confrontation between capital and labour.”<sup>106</sup> As far as the literature reviewed in this paper, there is no other argument challenging this view.

In terms of the contribution of Chinese labour to Canadian economy, various works have mentioned the Chinese immigrants' contribution to the CPR construction. Indeed the CBC website reinforces the point made in the scholarship:

As well as seekers after gold, they were builders of the daunting B.C. section of the Canadian Pacific Railway; 700 of them died in the process. The 17,000 Chinese who helped build the railway were paid half as much as white workers. ...The Chinese were tolerated when they were a useful source of cheap labour.<sup>107</sup>

On the one hand, this reflects that the Chinese contribution to the national railway has been confirmed and widely accepted. On the other hand, as American scholarship has done, it suggests that further exploring needs to be conducted on their participation in some other frontier economy such as fishing, canning and agriculture, plus particular “Chinese type business” --- laundry and restaurant business, a point recognized at the CBC website.<sup>108</sup>

In this era of discrimination, many Chinese created opportunities for self-employment. Family-run businesses, such as restaurants and laundries, sprang up both in small towns and in the Chinatowns that had emerged in the bigger cities across Canada. These small businesses became havens for Chinese people, both to operate and to work in.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Donald H. Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994* (Toronto: MacClelland & Stewart Inc., 1995)

<sup>107</sup> Kelly Haggart, CBC news online, <http://cbc.ca/news/indepth/chinese/migrants3.html>

<sup>108</sup> Some book-length volumes are focusing on various Chinese workers' occupations. For example, Suncheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986); Paul C. P. Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation* (New York: New York University Press, 1987); Renqiu Yu, *To Save China, to Save Ourselves: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York* (Philadelphia, 1992); Liping Zhu, *A Chinaman's Chance: The Chinese On The Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* (Niwot, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 1997). Some journal articles in Canadian scholarship, see Paul Yee, “The Chinese in British Columbia's Salmon Canning Industry,” in G.Chu et. al (ed.), *Inalienable Rice: A Chinese & Japanese Canadian Anthology*, (Vancouver: Chinese Canadian Writers Workshop, 9-11. 1979).

<sup>109</sup> Kelly Haggart, CBC news online, <http://cbc.ca/news/indepth/chinese/migrants3.html>

Why did this particular type of business “spring up” among Chinese immigrants? Why did the Chinese remain and develop business in their ethnic ghettos? Such questions brought scholars to the face of Chinatown --- to some extent, the Chinese “enclave”.

Chinese immigration history is closely linked to the development of Chinatowns. As a social-geographical dwelling area of Chinese immigrants, Chinatown was once regarded by the white community as a segregated, mysterious ghetto of prostitution, gambling, opium-smoking and other vices. Nevertheless, today’s Chinatown forms one of the most distinctive landscapes within North American cities. The huge changes of Chinatown have raised great interest among geographers and historians. Thus the fifth prevailing perspective on Chinese immigration is urban history through which Chinatown is examined.

A classic study is D.Y. Lai’s *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada*.<sup>110</sup> Lai sets up a stage-development model to clarify the evolution of Chinatowns and presents a vivid portrait of them. In the view of Lai, old Chinatowns were historically “original residential shelters”; they served as an economic base for those Chinese people to make a living, functioned as home to support the workers in an alien environment. Lai also traces the origin of Chinese immigrants and revealed the importance of clan network both in their departure and settlement. But more of his emphases lie in Chinatowns’ geographical locations and demographic features. From a territorial and ecological standpoint, Lai’s work remains a classic study. However, Lai does not point out the nature of social segregation of Chinatown. The answer can be found in K.J. Anderson’s *Vancouver’s*

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<sup>110</sup> David Chenyuan Lai, *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988).

*Chinatown*. Anderson differs with Lai when she argues that the Chinatowns do not exist as “extension of an innate ‘Chineseness’”; they have been “created” by host societies in Western countries as a device to contain Chinese populations. She observes that, whether the Chinese were being vilified or praised, they were being classified on the basis of race, which, she argues, is wrong.<sup>111</sup> Although these two volumes are from different perspectives, Chinese and Western, they represent an approach that stresses the formation of Chinese enclaves in response to discriminatory Canadian conditions.<sup>112</sup> The combinations of these two works provide a comprehensive view of Chinatown in Canada, from the creation, evolution, and function. They are also seen as classic studies in American scholarship. A young generation's view has been influenced by these two studies.

Some American historians addressed Chinatown's significance from a different perspective. Min Zhou argued that Chinatown was an immigrant enclave with strong socioeconomic potential for channeling immigrant Chinese into the mainstream U.S. society.<sup>113</sup> She built up an enclave-economy model to interpret New York City's Chinatown from ethnic business perspective, and thus challenged Lai's argument that Chinatown will disappear over time. Zhou suggests that ethnic business in Chinatown could be promoted and developed and Chinatown should exist as a potential for urban

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<sup>111</sup> Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada 1875-1980* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), p.3.

<sup>112</sup> Some journal articles on Chinatowns in Canada, see Gunter Baureiss, “Ethnic Resilience and Discrimination: Two Chinese Communities in Canada,” *The Journal of Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 10, No.1, (1982) pp.69-87; Gunter Baureiss and Leo Driedger, “Winnipeg Chinatown: Demographic, Ecological and Organizational Change, 1900-1980,” *Urban History Review*, Vol. 10, No.3, (1982), pp.11-24; Kwok B. Chan, “Ethnic Urban Space, Urban Displacement and Forced Relocation: The Case of Chinatown in Montreal,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 18, No.2 (1986), pp.65-78; Richard Thompson, *Toronto's Chinatown: The Changing Organization of an Ethnic Community* (New York: AMS Press, 1989).

<sup>113</sup> Min Zhou, *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), XVII.

economic growth. Lai approaches the subject from a landscape perspective, whereas Zhou sets up an economic model with less emphasis on architecture. Indeed, the old Chinatowns established in early period have become tourist sites rather than enclaves.

Generally, the works focusing on Chinatowns reflect a keen awareness of the culture, language and relevant issues regarding Chinese groups in Canadian society.

### Summary

Chinese immigration to the British colonies was inextricably entwined with the bitter experience of Chinese labour from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1930s in the complex political, economic, racist and ideological contexts. The fictional personification of "John Chinaman" stereotyped the Chinese either as indigent coolies destined for economic exploitation or as passive victims of racial violence. By examining the Chinese experience in the British Columbia and the Canadian west, scholars have generally told a dark story of oppression.

In terms of the approaches that Canadian scholars have taken to Chinese immigration, the five perspectives identified here include social, ethnic, political, labour, and urban historical perspectives. There is no exact boundary of each approach employed by scholars. Some of them intersect each other. For example, influenced by ethnic studies, historians in the domain of labour history are concerned about and try to criticize racist hostility within the working class. Chinese immigration was used as an example to criticize the exploitative labour market at the turn of twentieth century.

Historians' views are changing over time. However, the main theme throughout the whole scholarship is the discrimination towards the Chinese and the assimilation of the Chinese immigrants into the host society. All the three generations of scholars,

despite their differing perspectives, regard discrimination as very important in the Chinese experience in Canada. By contrast, Chinese scholars are concerned with questions of homeland loyalty which manifests themselves in ideology, theory, and public policy in both Mainland China and Taiwan. To one point, as L. Ling-chi Wang argued, both the assimilation paradigm used in Western countries and the loyalty paradigm used in China are chauvinistic and ethnocentric. Both are highly institutionalized and structurally integrated into the legal, political, economic, and cultural systems of their respective countries, sustained by their respective dominant ideologies.<sup>114</sup>

In general, the Chinese history in Canada has been well studied. Canadian scholarship has contributed more in the domain of social history and urban history compared to the scholarship elsewhere in British colonies. However, despite the similar situation that the Chinese confronted in the U.S., there are still some gaps between Canadian and American scholarship. For example, the experience of Chinese women in Canada remains almost untouched. By contrast, it has been given lots of attention in American scholarship, perhaps somehow associated with the increasing academic interests on women studies in the U.S.

In the case of the Chinese in Australia and New Zealand, the scholarship does not mark a large proportion of these two nations' academic activity. However, the non-Chinese are more likely to be aware of the involuntary role played by Chinese settlers in the evolution of Australian national identity through racism and the "White Australia" policy. The impact of anti-Chinese law and discriminatory behavior, particularly issues regarding Chinese labour has been told. In short, less researched is the basis in Chinese

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<sup>114</sup> L. Ling-Chi Wang, "The Structure of Dual Domination," p.155.

culture and history of such practices as work habits, the non-emigration of women and returns to China that were often the pretexts for anti-Chinese prejudice and actions. The assessment of the Chinese experience in New Zealand is characterized by its concern on new Chinese business in New Zealand's economy.

As a whole, the existing scholarship in all these four countries has shed light on the different aspects of Chinese migration and their experience in the host society. By all means Chinese immigration into Canada was, and still is, part of a larger regional and then global movement of the Chinese population outside of China. Thus, in order to better understand changing Chinese occupational patterns in Canada, the following chapter will examine how Chinese immigration to Canada was a fraction of this global movement and how the immigration process was related to the homeland situation.

## **Chapter II**

### **A Brief History of Chinese Immigration to Canada: 1858-1923**

The greatest waves of Chinese emigration began in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with more than two million people moving from their homeland to the Malay peninsula, Indochina, Sumatra, Java, the Philippines, Hawaii, the West Indies, America, Canada and Australia.<sup>115</sup> These nineteenth-century migrations represented a new stage in the long history of Chinese emigration. The Chinese who came to Canada were one of the branches of this much larger migration stream.

The first wave of Chinese immigration to North America took a most dramatic form with the discovery of gold in the 1850s when numerous Chinese people rushed into California and British Columbia.<sup>116</sup> Most of the Chinese immigrants in Canada came from Guangdong province in South China.<sup>117</sup> Except for a few years after the arrival of the Chinese in 1858, anti-Chinese sentiments were widespread along the west coast in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Eventually, the Canadian government passed the prohibitory immigration act against Chinese immigration in 1923. The experience of early Chinese immigrants has long been told as one of tragedy and determination.

What was the nature of Chinese immigration to Canada? Why did the immigrants from Guangdong province outnumber those from other regions of China? Why did immigrants continue to come to Canada despite the restrictive immigration policy? By examining late imperial China's economy, politics, culture and foreign relations and in

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<sup>115</sup> Lynn Pan, *Sons of the Yellow Emperor, A History of the Chinese Diaspora* (New York: Kodansha America Inc, 1990), p.43.

<sup>116</sup> Mary Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1909), p.17. See also Geoffrey Sherington, *Australia's Immigrants: 1788-1978* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd, 1980), p.65.

<sup>117</sup> Edgar Wickberg, eds, *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (McClelland and Stewart Limited The Canadian Publishers, 1982), p.3.

particular, South China's circumstance during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, this chapter will address the background and reason for this vast emigration. This chapter will also look at the socioeconomic climate as well as labour and immigration policy in Canada at the time of arrival to set the context for Chinese immigration.

### **Context for Emigration and Immigration**

Chinese emigration can be divided broadly into two historical phases according to which groups emigrated and what motivated them to go abroad. Before the nineteenth century, Kejia (Hokkie) and Chaozhou (Teochiu) religious pilgrims, merchants and artisans predominated among the migrant groups. From the early nineteenth century onward, Cantonese labourers played a prominent part in the emigration.<sup>118</sup>

From 1840 to 1900 approximately more than two million Chinese went abroad.<sup>119</sup> Such a vast flow was of great historical significance. As Kerby Miller pointed out in his analysis of Irish immigration to North America, "emigration was at once a barometer of the economic and social changes taking place on both sides of the Atlantic and itself a major determinant of the modern shapes of North American and Irish societies."<sup>120</sup> Mass emigration from China also immediately reflected bad times at home as well as good and new opportunities abroad.

The late Qing dynasty (1840-1911) in China was a period of drastic transformation as a result of wars with European countries, political reforms, uprisings

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<sup>118</sup> Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p.8.

<sup>119</sup> Sing-wu Wang, *The Organization of Chinese Emigration: 1848-1888, with Special Reference to Chinese Emigration to Australia* (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, INC., 1978), p.11.

<sup>120</sup> Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.3.

and great changes in intellectual, social and economic life. The problems were also compounded by natural calamities of unprecedented proportions, including droughts, famines, floods, and exacerbated by government neglect of public works. By 1800 the foundations of the Qing Empire had been badly weakened by the administrative inefficiency, intellectual irresponsibility, widespread corruption, and campaigns against secret societies.<sup>121</sup> After the Opium War (1839-1842), the economy further declined as a series of “unequal treaties” were imposed on China. The Opium War introduced a century of humiliation for the Chinese people.<sup>122</sup> However, the war did not shock the Chinese people into realizing their backwardness. The Qing government refused to acknowledge China’s military political inferiority.<sup>123</sup> It was not until the 1860s that the government began the restoration and “Self-Strengthening Movement”. Nonetheless, its understanding of the West was limited; the movement failed to renovate China.<sup>124</sup> The dynasty was waning under the old order.

Consequently, economic tensions, military defeats at Western hands, anti-Manchu sentiments and a population explosion all combined to produce widespread unrest, especially in the south. Hosea B. Morse, a scholarly English chronicler stated in his writing that in the fourteen years after 1821, “there had not been one prosperous year; inundations, droughts, famines, risings, insurrections, and other calamities were

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<sup>121</sup> Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.126-127.

<sup>122</sup> *ibid*, p.192.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid*, p.193.

<sup>124</sup> Ranbir Vohra, *China's Path to Modernization: A Historical Review From 1800 to the Present* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1987), p.76-81.

constantly occurring in one province or another".<sup>125</sup> Southern China, the last area to yield to the Qing conquerors, was the first to be exposed to Western influence.<sup>126</sup> During the eighty-five years preceding China's opening to the West in 1842, Guangzhou (Canton) was the only port open to foreign trade. Immanuel Hsu has argued that "[t]he Chinese attitude toward foreign trade was an outgrowth of their tributary mentality. It postulated that the bountiful Middle kingdom had no need for things foreign, but that the benevolent emperor allowed trade as a mark of favour to foreigners and as a means of retaining their gratitude".<sup>127</sup> As a result, Canton had grown into a metropolis controlling most of China's trade. In the meantime, the separation of peasants from the land was increasing and numbers of labourers were growing.<sup>128</sup> The farming population in nearby agricultural areas was drawn to Canton to seek employment as porters, compradors, and boatmen and other forms of labour related to the trade.<sup>129</sup> Those working people of coastal province were brought into regular contact with foreign-bound ships and persons presenting opportunities to go abroad.

A series of internal uprisings, including the Taiping Rebellion (1851-64) and the Red Turban uprisings (1854-1864), highlighted the economic desperation. A leader of a rebel band in western Guangdong province explained why he and his followers had joined a revolt:

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<sup>125</sup> Quoted in Loren W. Fessler, eds., (compiled by China Institute in America, Inc), *Chinese in America: Stereotyped Past, Changing Present* (New York: Vantage Press, 1983), p.21.

<sup>126</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1999), p.239.

<sup>127</sup> Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, p.142.

<sup>128</sup> June Mei, "Socioeconomic Origins of Emigration: Guangdong to California, 1850 to 1882," in Lucie Cheng and Edna Bonacich eds, *Labor Immigration Under Capitalism: Asian Workers in the United States before World War II* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1984), p.219.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid*, p.219.

Owing to a succession of rainy seasons, the farmers were unable to save the crops, and we had no capital for our business, so that people of all occupations were obliged to join the bandits. We came into the west province seeking a place to remain, when we met fellow-townsmen in the same trouble as ourselves, So that we were forced to become bandits to save ourselves from starvation.<sup>130</sup>

As Loren Fessler argued, “[F]or many a villager on the South China coast in those years, the most likely chance of saving himself and family from starvation may have lain in one of two risky choices: allegiance to, and service under, a rebel leader, or migration to, and possibly indentured service in, a foreign land”.<sup>131</sup>

Until 1893, Qing’s law prohibited Chinese from going overseas and if they did go, they were threatened with severe punishment on their return.<sup>132</sup> However, after the Opium War (1842), a series of treaties that Qing government signed with western countries allowed the “coolie trade” or the trafficking of contract laborers.<sup>133</sup> Britain and China signed the Treaty of Nanjing (Nanking) in 1842 by which “their [British and Chinese] respective subjects...should enjoy full security and protection for their persons and their property within the Dominions of the other”.<sup>134</sup> Although emigration was not openly allowed, in 1860 China passed a law which stated, “[C]hinese choosing to take service in the British Colonies or other parts beyond the sea, are at perfect liberty to enter into engagements with British subjects for that purpose, and to ship themselves and their

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<sup>130</sup> Quoted from Loren W. Fessler, *Chinese in America*, p.21. Original source is from Gongquan Xiao, *Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1960).

<sup>131</sup> Loren W. Fessler, *Chinese in America*, p.21.

<sup>132</sup> Guangwu Wang, *China and the Chinese Overseas* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1991), p.243.

<sup>133</sup> Zhu Guohong, *Chinese Emigration: A Historical Study of the International Migration* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1994), p.143. 朱国宏, 《中国的海外移民》, 复旦大学出版社 1994 年.

<sup>134</sup> *The Treaty of Nanking*, (Nanking, August 29, 1842). Text available online <http://nanking.com/>

families on board any British vessel at any of the open ports of China.”<sup>135</sup> In 1868 the Burlingame Treaty between China and the United States recognized, “[T]he inherent and inalienable right of man to change his home and allegiance[sic], and also the mutual advantage of free migration and emigration of their citizens and subjects, respectively, from the one country to the other, for purposes of curiosity, of trade, or as permanent residents”.<sup>136</sup> At the same time, the foreigners in the open ports encouraged the Chinese to emigrate overseas. The tide of Chinese emigration thus became a flood beyond the power of the government to control.

Aside from the millions of Chinese people who migrated to Southeast Asia, large numbers of them poured into the New World.<sup>137</sup> According to Confucian thought, the social philosophy emphasized a person's moral commitment and concrete responsibility to the cosmos, to the community, family, fellow human beings, and to oneself.<sup>138</sup> “The doctrine of piety refers in general to conscientiousness in the performance of duties naturally owed to one's parents in particular and other relatives more generally.”<sup>139</sup> Thus, it was seen as unfilial behavior for a son to leave his ancestral home and aged parents for any prolonged length of time. Therefore, each emigrant made the journey in the anticipation of bettering their fortunes and usually with the hope of making an impressive return to the ancestral village. This kind of migration was called “sojourning.” Chinese

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<sup>135</sup> Charles J. McClain, *In Search of Equality: the Chinese Struggle against Discrimination in Nineteenth-century America* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994), p.30.

<sup>136</sup> *Royal Commission*, (1902), p.315.

<sup>137</sup> Chinese migration to Southeast Asia and Chinese identity in Southeast Asia have been well studied. See for example, Guangwu Wang, *China and the Chinese Overseas* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1991).

<sup>138</sup> Lee-Beng Chua, *Psycho-social Adaptation and the Meaning of Achievement for Chinese Immigrants*, (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC, 2002), p.27.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid*, p.29.

migrants had a tradition of sojourning, especially those who went to Southeast Asia.<sup>140</sup>

However, in the eyes of Canadian policymakers, such a tradition was seen as a barrier to assimilation and led to anti-Chinese policies.

From an immigrant's point of view, Canada was open for business in the mid-nineteenth century. During the peak immigration years, 1846 to 1854, over 400,000 people set sail from Britain for British North America.<sup>141</sup> When China confronted the most dramatic turmoil in history, Canada was experiencing the rapid growth of a new frontier economy. It was not until 1849 that Britain formally established the colony of Vancouver Island in order to maintain sovereignty in the West. The fur trade controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was the dominant industry. The settlers were mainly from Britain and the British Isles. The Fraser River gold rush of 1858 changed drastically the character of the region.<sup>142</sup> Between April and September of that year, as many as 30, 000 people arrived in the region, among them American, European and Chinese men as well as a small number of women.<sup>143</sup> The economy of British Columbia was not quite stable in the decades of gold rushes. The population and economic activity

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<sup>140</sup> For a discussion on "sojourning" see Guangwu Wang, "Sojourning: The Chinese Experience in Southeast Asia," in Anthony Reid ed, *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1996), pp.1-14; Yuen-fong Woon, "The Voluntary Sojourner among the Overseas Chinese: Myth or Reality?" *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 56, Issue 4 (Winter, 1983-1984), pp.673-690; Anthony Chan, "The Myth of the Chinese Sojourner in Canada", in K. Victor Ujimoto and Gordon Hirabayashi eds., *Visible Minorities and Multiculturalism: Asians in Canada* (Toronto, Ontario: Butterworth and Company Canada Limited, 1980), pp.33-42; Paul Siu, "The Sojourner", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 58, Issue 1 (July, 1952), pp.34-44.

<sup>141</sup> Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-1990* (Toronto & Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1992), pp.43-44.

<sup>142</sup> James Morton, *In The Sea of Sterile Mountains: The Chinese in British Columbia* (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas Ltd. 1974), pp.1-4.

<sup>143</sup> *ibid*, p.4.

intensively increased when a new field was discovered, but declined quickly as the mining area petered out. Other industries, such as agriculture and lumbering, expanded to meet local needs. The lumber industry, like coal-mining, also developed an export trade, and by the 1870s it was replacing gold as the economic base of British Columbia.<sup>144</sup> Thus by the late 1800s, there were more economic opportunities along the western coast. The population was booming; technological advances were opening new resources; transportation developments were reducing the “friction of distance” and making goods cheaper and more readily available; new regional landscapes were beginning to take form. British Columbia had become the destination for men and women who sought new opportunities and better life.<sup>145</sup> At the same time, British culture, created by the overwhelmingly British population, dominated the whole country. A sense of racial uniqueness – Anglo-Saxon – was developed throughout Canada which made the settlement of Asian and many other “coloured” immigrants more difficult.<sup>146</sup>

Scholars generally agree that, on the one hand, the demand in British Columbia and other western territories for labour was the most important motivation for Chinese immigration.<sup>147</sup> The Chinese were needed for mining, canning, lumbering and other labour requirements in the frontier communities. On the other hand, Chinese emigrants

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<sup>144</sup> Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989), p.3.

<sup>145</sup> Dirk Hoerder, *Creating Societies: Immigrant Lives in Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), p.206.

<sup>146</sup> Robert A Huttenback, *The Asian Immigration Question In Recent Canadian History --- Occasional Paper No. 1 on Studies in National and International Issues* (Halifax: St Mary's university, 1977), p.1.

<sup>147</sup> See Peter S Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, (Toronto: Osford University Press Canada, 1988), p.9; Anthony Chan, *Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World* (Vancouver: new Star Book, 1983), p.45; Edgar Wickberg eds, *From China to Canada*, p.19; K. J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

from Taishan County in Guangdong Province and its neighbors in the Pearl River delta were particularly attracted and encouraged by the tales of wealth in America.

It was Taishan, a tiny district of Guangdong in southern China that first responded to the news of the discovery of gold in California. It remained for the Taishanese and those in the nearby areas to be dominant in a steady stream of emigration to Canada.<sup>148</sup> It is necessary to examine this region's resources, industries, occupations of the people, and the customs to understand why the Taishanese --- while few from other parts of China ---

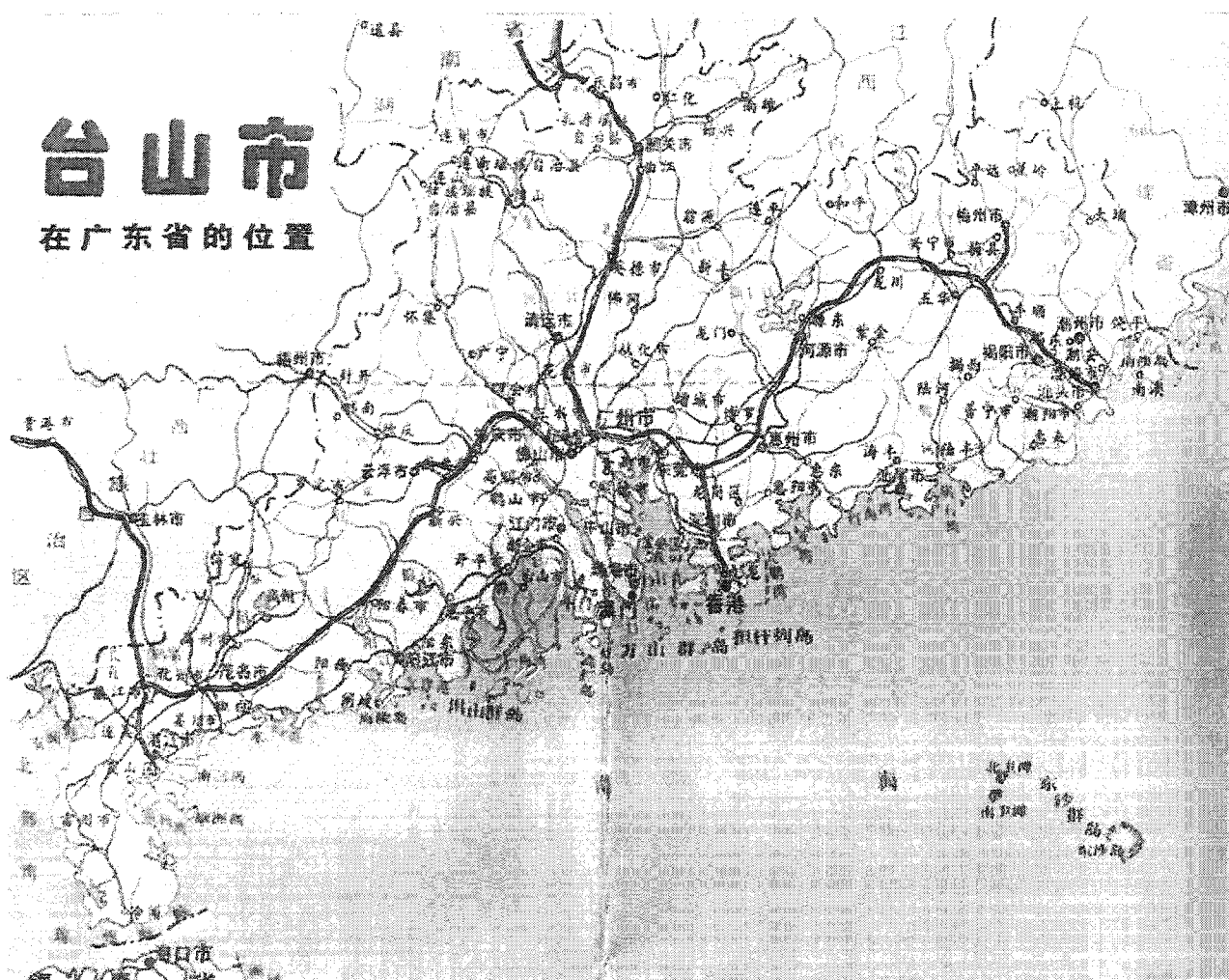


Figure 2.1 Map of Taishan County in Guangdong Province.  
Source: Taishan Zhaoshang Wang, [www.gdts.gov.cn](http://www.gdts.gov.cn)

<sup>148</sup> *From China to Canada*, p.7.

chose to emigrate to North America.

As one of 98 districts in the province of Guangdong, Taishan is a well-known *qiaoxiang* (emigrant homeland) of the Chinese who went abroad.<sup>149</sup> From the early decades in 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the Taishanese always suffered from the pressure of the limited food supply and natural disasters. From 1851 to 1908, Taishan experienced 14 floods, 7 hurricanes, 4 earthquakes, 2 droughts, 4 plagues and 5 famines.<sup>150</sup> In order to contend for the limited land, “armed fighting” often happened between villagers. The longest “armed fighting” lasted 14 years from 1854 to 1868 between local settlers (*turen*) and migrants from other provinces (*kejia ren*), was so-called *tuke xiedou* (armed fighting).<sup>151</sup> According to the *Chixi Xianzhi* (*Chixi Gazette*), “[D]ue to the *tuke xiedou*, about 10,000 people were dead or fled away”.<sup>152</sup> Some twenty thousand captives were escorted to Hong Kong and Macao to be sold as “coolies” and about ten thousand Taishanese chose to go abroad in the 1870s.<sup>153</sup>

Although agriculture was the main means of subsistence for Taishanese, the handicraft industries such as iron casting and textiles played significant roles in local economies. It is suggested that in the 1890s at least half of Taishan’s population made its

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<sup>149</sup> Wu Xingci and Li Zhen, “Cum San Haak in the 1980s: A Study on Chinese Emigrants who Return to Taishan County for Marriage.” *Amerasia Journal*, Vol. 14 No. 2, (1988), p.21.

<sup>150</sup> As quoted in Sun Qian, *Qingdai Huaqiao yu Minque Shehui Bianqian* (*Chinese Overseas and Social Changes of Guangdong and Fujian provinces in Qing Dynasty*), (Xiamen: Xiamen University Press, 1999), p.25. 孙谦, 《清代华侨与闽粤社会变迁》, 厦门大学出版社 1999 年. The original source is from *Fujian Nanan Xian Fengshan Zupu* (*Ancestry of Nanan County in Fujian Province*). 福建南安县丰山族谱.

<sup>151</sup> *Taishan Xianzhi*, (*Taishan Gazetteer*) (1995), p.127. 台山县志, 1995 年.

<sup>152</sup> *ibid*, p.127. (My translation, the original text is 《赤溪志》, 死于械斗或逃亡者十万众).

<sup>153</sup> *ibid*, p.127.

living by combining farming with other pursuits.<sup>154</sup> Many Taishanese also participated in trade, acting as middlemen between buyers and sellers. Taishan's location made it more convenient for the villagers to trade with westerners as it was very close to Hong Kong, which was the major port of the entire Southeast Asian region by Great Britain after the Opium War in 1842. Canton, the only trading center under Chinese control before 1842, was also within the Pearl River delta. On the one hand, the Taishanese were exposed to frequent contact with Europeans. On the other hand, an overabundance of cheap, mass-produced, foreign goods flooded into the domestic market and limited the demands for products of the Chinese handicraft industries. Thousands of workmen were thrown out of jobs.<sup>155</sup> Thus, the pressures of poverty and population in Guangdong were relatively severe, but not the worst. For example, in 1851, the density of population per square kilometer was 448 in Jiangsu, 310 in Zhangjiang, 232 in Anhui, whereas it was only 122 in Guangdong.<sup>156</sup> However, more and more Taishanese joined in the group of emigration. In 1870, there were 4,200 Taishanese in Southeast Asia and 800 in America (including North America and Latin America). By 1900, there had been 40,000 Taishanese in Southeast Asia and 120,000 in America.<sup>157</sup> In 1894's *Xinning Xianzhi* (*Xinning Gazetteer*), it stated: "at the time of 'Westernization Movement', the able-bodied men all

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<sup>154</sup> Zheng Dehua and Cheng Luxi, *Taishan qiaoxiang yu Xinning tielu*, (*Taishanese Overseas Chinese and the Xinning Railroad*), (Guangzhou, Sanlian Shudian, 1989), p.86. 郑德华, 成露西合著, 《台山侨乡与新宁铁路》, 广州三联书店, 1989年。

<sup>155</sup> Cao Shuji, *Chinese Migration History, Late Qing and Republic Period*, VOL 6, (Fuzhou: Fujian Renmin Chubanshe, 1997), p.518. 曹树基, 《中国移民史》, 第六卷(晚清与民国时期), 福建人民出版社, 1997年。

<sup>156</sup> Wu Shen-yuan, *The Historical Review of Chinese Population* (China Social Science Press, 1986), p.184. 吴申元, 《中国人口思想史稿》, 中国社会科学出版社 1986年。

<sup>157</sup> *Taishan Xianzhi*, (1995) p.136.

went abroad with bleak and desolate lands left behind”.<sup>158</sup> It could be argued here that the proximity and contact with Europeans made the Taishanese more receptive to the news about the discovery of gold in California in 1845 and later in British Columbia in 1858. They were pushed by the poverty at home and pulled by the new opportunities abroad. Furthermore, the merchants and missionaries helped spread the news of gold which made the experience of getting rich in North America more convincing. After the Opium War, the zealous, dedicated Christian missionaries as well as the Western European merchants were brought to China’s shores, particularly in Guangdong and Fujian provinces. Their presentation of Western culture and technology were widely spread across the South and Southwest China.<sup>159</sup> Soon the Taishanese followed the clamor to go to the Gold Mountain and the mass emigration began.

Generally speaking, in the latter half of the nineteenth century there were two sorts of Chinese emigrants. Contract labourers bound themselves to work for a contractor for a period of time. The emigration agent on behalf of the foreign company or employer signed a contract with the emigrant. The employer paid for the contract labourer’s trip. The second type of emigrant was a free emigrant, such as the rich merchant, artisan and physician, who paid his passage money himself. However, most so-called “free” emigrants were poor and had to borrow money from friends and relatives or enter into agreements with the passage brokers. They were obliged to pay back the money after they arrived of their destinations.<sup>160</sup> The first group of Chinese from Guangdong to

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<sup>158</sup> *Taishan Xianzhi*, (1995), p.136. (My translation, the original text is 光緒十九年版《新寧縣志》：“適洋者大，壯者走外國，四野荒。”)

<sup>159</sup> Cao Shuji, *Chinese Migration History*, pp.564-568;

<sup>160</sup> Sing-wu Wang, *The Organization of Chinese Emigration*, p.89. & pp.303-304.

Canada rushed into gold mining as contract labourers. Others found employment in lumbering, salmon canning and service occupations such as laundering, cooking, and market gardening as “free emigrants”.<sup>161</sup>

It should be noted here that the Chinese immigration to Canada was roughly contemporaneous with the infamous “coolie trade” (1847-74). However, the Chinese who came to Canada under the contract system were considerably different from those who were sent to Latin America and South Africa under the “coolie trade” system. After the slavery trade became illegal, the coolie system became increasingly important.<sup>162</sup> In the early period of “coolie trade”, the Chinese were often kidnapped or forced to sign the contract and indeed, most of them were “sold” to Peru and Cuba.<sup>163</sup> The “writer-modernizer” in late Qing period Zheng Guanying pointed out in his *Shengshi Weiyan* (*Warning to the Seemingly Prosperous Age*) that as a matter of fact the Chinese were abducted to America.

When North America, Latin America and Southeast Asia began to establish coal mining industry and open new land, the Native people were not enough for the huge task. Thus the cheap labourers were in great demand. Who is willing to take such low-paid job? So, [the Westerners] began to inveigle after they failed to recruit [Chinese men]. When inveigling did not work, they began to abduct.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, p.23.

<sup>162</sup> Cao Shuji, *Chinese Migration History*, p.518.

<sup>163</sup> Chen Hansheng, *Huagong Chuguoo Shiliao Huibian*, (Collection of Historical Materials of Overseas Chinese Labour) Vol.3, (Shanghai: Zhonghua Shuju, 1984), pp.153-162. 陈翰笙主编, 《华工出国史料汇编》(第三册), 中华书局, 1984年.

<sup>164</sup> Zheng Guanying, *Shengshi Weiyan*, (*Warning to the Seemingly Prosperous Age*), in Xia Dongyuan eds. *Zheng Guanying Ji*, (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1982), pp.413-414. (My translation, the original text is 盖美, 阿两洲及南洋各日汲汲然, 荒, 土著寥寥不能集事, 故不得不招工, 但工低, 人往? 于是招之不来, 出之以; 之不能, 出之以掠。) , 《盛世危言》, 夏元: 《集》上册, 上海人民出版社 1982 年.

It might even be true that the Canadian government and the employers did have connections with the brokers of “coolie trade” in order to bring cheap labour. Whereas, the Chinese were “voluntary” emigrants in the sense that they were not taken by force from their home. No matter whether the Chinese emigrant came as a contract labourer or as a “free emigrant”, most were engaged in low-paying jobs that white labourers were reluctant to take in Canada.

To the Chinese and other Asian immigration groups including the Japanese, Indians and Koreans, the gold rushes as well as other frontier economies in Canada were attractive opportunities. To the Canadian government and the employers, those “Orientals” were “living machines” to fill up the large demand for cheap labourers.<sup>165</sup> Neither Chinese poverty nor Canadian opportunity was alone sufficient to stimulate mass migration across the Pacific Ocean. The Chinese were “pushed” by the disturbances in the homeland and “pulled” by the new opportunities in North America.

### **Chain Migration**

The first group of Chinese immigrants to Canada in 1858 moved north from California making their way to the new gold fields on the Fraser River in British Columbia. Soon after, the Chinese began emigrating directly from the Guangdong province.<sup>166</sup> Dreaming of *Jin Shan* --- indeed, the first name in Chinese for San Francisco, meaning “Gold Mountain” --- some two thousand Chinese came to Canada in the first two years of the gold rushes, 1858-59, and as many as six or seven thousand in

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<sup>165</sup> *Report of Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, 1885*, xxi.

<sup>166</sup> W. E. Willmott, “Approaches to the Study of the Chinese in British Columbia,” *BC Studies* No. 4 (Spring 1970), p.38.

the early 1860s.<sup>167</sup> In the eyes of poor Chinese peasants, “Gold Mountain” was synonymous with hope, prosperity and stability.<sup>168</sup>

Generally, when immigrants move to a new society, they must involve themselves in the social and economic conditions of their new home. Nevertheless, the norms and values by which they interpret their new surroundings are influenced by their socialization within the culture of their previous society.<sup>169</sup> New immigrants tend to band together to provide mutual support and assistance, and to allow them to retain much of their own customs and culture. It has been especially common for the overseas Chinese to associate with people who share the same dialect, locality of origin, and family name. The Chinese in Canada in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were no exception. Because of the cultural and language barriers, as well as the mistrust, suspicion and race hatred that had been their experience in California, the Chinese immigrants gathered together to seek protection and assistance. In the gold mining areas, they soon formed their own small community within the town. The Chinese community quickly expanded into Chinatown with its own restaurants, grocery and herb stores in cities like Victoria and Barkerville.<sup>170</sup> Chinatowns provided residential shelter, but also served as an economic base for Chinese people to make a living and they functioned as home to support the workers in an alien

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<sup>167</sup> *From China to Canada*, p.14.

<sup>168</sup> Anthony Chan, *Gold Mountain*, p.32.

<sup>169</sup> Ivan Light, *Ethnic Enterprise in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp.10-18.

<sup>170</sup> David Chenyuan Lai, *Chinatowns, Towns Within Cities in Canada*, p.36.

environment.<sup>171</sup> The kinship that developed within Chinese communities, especially in Chinatowns helped more Chinese migrants come to Canada in a chain migration pattern.

According to J.S. Macdonald and L. D. Macdonald, chain migration is a process by which “prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary special relationships with previous migrants”.<sup>172</sup> For most of migrant communities, kinship is especially important in the process of chain migration. The prospective migrants are often from the traditional paternal family or extended family through marriage. For example, in studying Irish emigration to North America, Kerby Miller has found that “[there were] many post-Famine emigrants, often farmers’ adolescent sons and daughters, who left home in large measure because relatives already in America persuaded or enabled them to do so; indeed, without expectations of family and communal shelter and assistance overseas, many would not have dared to emigrate as individuals.”<sup>173</sup> Similarly, the Chinese immigrants already working in Canada helped to bring their sons, brothers, male cousins or intimate friends in the same clan to join them in Canada. Such migration followed the same pattern as that to Southeast Asia.<sup>174</sup> It was usually single males who first went abroad for new opportunities and sent back remittances to families in China.<sup>175</sup> Although many of the jobs available to Chinese before World War II were unskilled and

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<sup>171</sup> Bernard P. Wang, *Chinatown: Economic Adaptation and Ethnic Identity of the Chinese* (New York: CBS College publishing, 1982), p.14.

<sup>172</sup> J.S. Macdonald and L. D. Macdonald, “Chain Migration, Ethnic Neighborhood Formation and Social Networks,” *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, Vol.42, (1964), pp.82-91.

<sup>173</sup> Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, p.134.

<sup>174</sup> *From China to Canada*, p.26.

<sup>175</sup> *ibid.* p.26.

the wages were very low, they enabled men to elevate their families in China to a middle class symbolized by land ownership, new houses, and education for the young. "To their standard, these families in China were well-off," said George F. Woo, when being interviewed by Southern California Chinese American Oral History Project. He also claimed that in his home village about 30 families had had connections to railroad workers in the nineteenth century.<sup>176</sup> The Chinese in Canada also maintained their ties to the homeland through remittances and periodic visits. Remittances became an increasingly important part of Taishan's economy and considerably changed migrant families' life. According to rough estimates of local Taishan historians, yearly remittances from America to Taishan from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to 1949 (exclusive of the war years, 1937-1944) exceeded the annual values of the county's agricultural output.<sup>177</sup> In the 1920s and the early 1930s, remittances to Taishan from America constituted one-eighth of the national remittances which China received from abroad.<sup>178</sup>

In 1893's *Xinning Xianzhi* (*Xinning Gazetteer*), it says:

[T]his year the remittances from overseas Taishanese has been used in establishing schools and child day-care places, donating hospitals and building public places, among others. However, the local customs also turned to be luxurious. The wedding ritual expenses are rising dramatically and often more than hundreds of dollars.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Quoted from Madeline Yuan-yin Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home*, p.30. Original source is from interview of Southern California Chinese Oral History Project, p.9.

<sup>177</sup> Renqiu Yu, "Chinese American Contribution to the Educational Development of Toisan 1910-1940," *Amerisia Journal*, Vol. 10, No.1, (1983), p.48.

<sup>178</sup> *ibid*, p.48.

<sup>179</sup> *Taishan Nianjian* (*Taishan Yearbook*), (1985), p.7. (My translation, the original text is 光緒十九年(1893)纂修的《新寧縣志》：“今年籍外洋，宣堂，育堂，醫院，方便所，壯善學，所在多有。但民入奢靡，冠婚之，數百金。”)。《台山年鑑》，1985年。

In writing 1896-1897's *Ningyang Cundu* (*Ningyang Local Memorandum*), the Magistrate Li Pingshu described:

[N]ingyang's land is meager since the ancient time. Local people tended to be prudent. Whereas, since the 1860s many overseas Taishanese returned rich. They built new houses and advocated grandiose consumption, especially on the wedding ritual. The local customs changed significantly.<sup>180</sup>

By 1885 most of these employments were closed to Chinese in British Columbia, but by working as laundrymen, cooks and waiters, and domestic servants, and by selling groceries to fellow Chinese, men in Canada could still provide their families back in China with good lives.<sup>181</sup> Thus, the life in Canada became more attractive and more poor Chinese men in southern China would join their fellows in Canada in spite of the restrictive immigration policy against them. How they managed to come might be difficult to account, but once they arrived in Canada, they would get all kinds of assistance from their relatives and from the associations in Chinatowns.

In addition to kinship, the transporting centers also played an important role in assisting chain migration. The large-scale nineteenth century Chinese migration required sophisticated transportation system and global networks of trade. In analyzing transnationalism and migration between the United States and South China, Madeline Yuan-yin Hsu argued:

Such facilities developed in Hong Kong after it came under British rule. Hong Kong supplied links in the chain between Chinese in China and Chinese overseas

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<sup>180</sup> *Taishan Nianjian* (*Taishan Yearbook*), (1985), p.7. (My translation, the original text is 光 〃 廿一年至廿二年新宁知 〃 李平 〃 著的《宁阳存 〃 》：“宁邑地本脊苦， 〃 俗素 〃 〃 朴。自同治初以来，出洋之人多 〃 〃 回 〃 ， 〃 造屋宇， 〃 然一新，服御 〃 食， 〃 尚 〃 美，婚之事，尤斗靡誇奢， 〃 气大 〃 。”)

<sup>181</sup> William Hoy, *The Chinese Six Companies* (San Francisco: Consolidated Chinese Benevolent Association, 1942), p.17.

by providing a secure and reliable channel for the back-and-forth flow of people, remittances, information, capital, political ideals, Chinese groceries, and technology. As Taishan became increasingly dependent on foreign sources of money, the evolution of Hong Kong into an entreport was essential to enabling Taishanese to go overseas and yet stay in touch with people, places, events, and way of life left behind in China.<sup>182</sup>

Without a doubt, Hong Kong was the most important port acting as a bridge between the Chinese in China and the Chinese overseas. In 1888, on one of most popular newspapers in Hong Kong, *Shen Bo* reported:

Since the opening of the three ports, San Francisco, Honolulu, and Melbourne, more and more Chinese have gone for Gold Rushes and new opportunities. Hong Kong became a bridging center with flourishing businesses. ... Hong Kong never experienced depression.<sup>183</sup>

As early as 1891, the famous diplomat and intellectual Xue Fucheng had noted that:

In the year of 1890, 47,000 Chinese labourers went abroad from Hong Kong, among whom most went to Southeast Asia. In the meantime, 99,000 overseas Chinese landed in Hong Kong to return their home village. Although Hong Kong has relatively small local production, its location is extremely significant, thus it became a big port of commerce and transportation.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Madeline Yuan-yin Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000), p.32.

<sup>183</sup> "Lu Huaan gongsi chengdi Xianggang huamin zhengwusi gao", 1888, 12, 23., *Shen Bo*, Vol. 34. p.118. (My translation, the original text is "自旧金山, 檀香山与新金山三埠, 人往彼生者, 年多一年. 而香港即通衢之路, 易日隆. .... 而香港景市未有不条者矣。") 《录华安公司呈递香港华民政务司稿》, 申报合订本, 第34册.

<sup>184</sup> Xue Fucheng, *Chushi Ying, Fa, Yi, Bi, Si Guo Riji, Chushi Riji Xuke, 1891*. (*Diaries of diplomatic service in England, France, Italy and Belgium, the Continuous Part, 1891*) in Zhong Shuhe eds, *Zouxiang Shijie Congshu*, Vol. 1, (Changsha: yuelu shushe chubanshe, 1985), p.428. (My translation, the original text is 光十六年, 由香港出洋工四万七千多名, 往南洋者最多; 由外香港回者九万九千人. 香港土少, 而地当津要, 商之区。) 薛福成(清), 《出使英法比四国日记》, 叔河. 《走向世界》. 沙: 岳麓出版社, 1985.

Along with Hong Kong, there were opened ports such as Canton, Amoy (Xiamen) and Foochow (Fuzhou), which were also acting as transportation centers.<sup>185</sup> Chinese immigrants in Canada could undoubtedly maintain contact with their families in China.

Furthermore, as Robin Cohen argues, cheaper and denser transport and communications enabled people to move not just once, but again and again, to settle and re-migrate, to move as small groups, families, or individuals, and to sell their skills to the highest global bidder.<sup>186</sup> Thus the Chinese migration to the New World could be continued throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century despite the spreading discrimination in the host society.

### **The Second Wave of Chinese Immigration**

The second major influx of Chinese to Canada began in 1880 when work commenced on the CPR. Many of the early Chinese immigrants found employment with the railway. When it was discovered that they were willing to work hard for less than half the standard labourer's pay, the Canadian government granted permission to the Onderdonk Construction Company to bring in 15,000 Chinese workers to fill the labour demand. As contract labourers, those Chinese were assigned to the most backbreaking and dangerous work and only received half the wage rates of white workers. However, the completion of the CPR in November 1885 threw large numbers of Chinese out of work when the promise of a return fare did not materialize. Some Chinese returned to China with their hard-earned savings or went to the United States. Others ferried themselves on the trains of hope to places further east in search of their fortunes. Since

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<sup>185</sup> Madeline Yuan-yin Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, p.32.

<sup>186</sup> See Robin Cohen, "Diasporas, the Nation-state, and Globalisation" in Guangwu Wang eds, *Global History and Migrants* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), p.117.

then, a large number of Chinese immigrants transferred their occupations into marginal economic sectors especially in domestic service, restaurant and laundry businesses. How and why the occupational changes of Chinese immigrants occurred after the completion of CPR and to what extent it was associated with Canadian labour and immigration policy will be discussed in the third chapter.

## **Chapter III**

### **Occupational Changes of Chinese Immigrants, 1885-1923**

The years from 1880 to 1914 marked the economic take-off of the country.<sup>187</sup> The period was also highly significant in terms of the occupational changes of Chinese immigrants. After the completion of CPR in 1885, more and more Chinese immigrants were engaged in laundry and restaurant businesses. The role of business activity in Chinese immigration experience bears more study as it lies at the heart of migrants' New World experience. This chapter reviews both external social forces and internal ethnic solidarity that were relevant to the development of Chinese ethnic business.

From 1858 to 1880, the Chinese largely dwelled in British Columbia, while later they gradually spread into other provinces as Table 3.1 shows. By the census of 1880-81 the total population of Chinese in Canada is given as 4,383, of which 4,350 resided in British Columbia, 22 in Ontario, 7 in Quebec and 4 in Manitoba.<sup>188</sup> British Columbia held the largest Chinese population because of the large-scale gold rush and during the period from 1881 to 1884 the construction of Canadian Pacific railway commenced and large numbers of Chinese were brought over by contract to work on the railway. "According to a Chinese compilation made in 1884 there were in the province of British Columbia 9,629 Chinese labourers; of these 3,510 were engaged on railway construction. Victoria is credited with 1,767, new Westminster 1,680, and Nanaimo 168."<sup>189</sup> However, after the completion of railway in 1885 the Chinese labourers were totally discarded and they had to look for jobs all across the country because most employment opportunities

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<sup>187</sup> J. Brian Dawson, Patricia M. Dawson, *Moon Cakes in Gold Mountain: From China to the Canadian Plains*, (Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1991), p. 25.

<sup>188</sup> *Census of Canada*, 1881.

<sup>189</sup> Royal Commission, (1902), p.7.

closed to them in British Columbia. Big occupational changes happened to most Chinese immigrants at that time. Table 3.2 and 3.3 show that before 1885, Chinese

Table 3.1. Distribution of Chinese in Canada, 1881-1921

| Distribution by percentage of national total |                  |         |                   |        |                 |       |
|--|------------------|---------|-------------------|--------|-----------------|-------|
| Census year                                  | British Columbia | Ontario | Prairie provinces | Quebec | Other provinces | Total |
| 1881   | 99.2             | 0.5     | 0.1               | 0.2    | 0               | 100   |
| 1891   | 97.6             | 1.1     | 0.3               | 0.4    | 0.6             | 100   |
| 1901   | 86.0             | 4.2     | 2.8               | 6.0    | 1.0             | 100   |
| 1911   | 70.5             | 10.0    | 10.0              | 5.7    | 3.8             | 100   |
| 1921   | 59.4             | 14.2    | 19.0              | 5.9    | 1.5             | 100   |

Source: *Censuses of Canada*, 1881- 1921.

Table 3.2. Occupations of Chinese in British Columbia, 1879

| Occupation                   | No. of persons | % of Total |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------|
| Gold miners, fishermen       | 1,100          | 26.5       |
| Gold miners                  | 874            | 21.0       |
| Cooks, servants              | 434            | 10.5       |
| Storekeepers, employees      | 383            | 9.2        |
| Coal miners                  | 347            | 8.4        |
| Gardeners, farm labourers    | 125            | 3.0        |
| Washermen                    | 121            | 2.9        |
| Tailors                      | 61             | 1.5        |
| Barbers                      | 29             | 0.7        |
| Butchers                     | 10             | 0.2        |
| Females, various occupations | 44             | 1.0        |
| Other labourers              | 286            | 6.9        |
| Unspecified                  | 340            | 8.2        |
| Total                        | 4,154          | 100.0      |

Source: David Chenyuan Lai, *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada*, p.26.<sup>190</sup>

immigrants took all kinds of occupations. In 1879, for example, gold miners constituted the largest proportion of Chinese immigrants in British Columbia (Table 3.2). In 1884, railway workers became the largest group, representing 27.6% of the Chinese in B.C. People engaged in fishery, farming, lumbering and milling, which were considered the frontier industries, also made up almost 20% of the population. For example, in the beginning of salmon canning industry around the late 1870s, "Chinese, hired on contract

<sup>190</sup> Original source: compiled from reports submitted to T.B Humphries, Provincial Secretary of British Columbia, by various polling district officers, Oct. 1879-Feb.1880.

through a boss-Chinese, were the backbone of the canning of operation – cutting, slitting, firing the retorts and during the winter, even making cans”.<sup>191</sup> However, after 1885,

Table 3.3. Occupations of Chinese in British Columbia, 1884

| Occupation              | No. of persons | % of total   |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>LABOURERS</b>        |                |              |
| Railway workers         | 2,900          | 27.6         |
| Gold miners             | 1,709          | 16.3         |
| Coal miners             | 727            | 6.9          |
| Fish hands              | 700            | 6.7          |
| Farm labourers          | 686            | 6.5          |
| Store employees         | 302            | 2.9          |
| Cooks and servants      | 279            | 2.7          |
| Sawmill workers         | 267            | 2.5          |
| Wood-cutters            | 230            | 2.2          |
| Washermen               | 156            | 1.5          |
| Ditch diggers           | 156            | 1.5          |
| Fuel cutters            | 147            | 1.2          |
| Boot-makers             | 130            | 1.1          |
| Vegetable gardener      | 114            | 0.8          |
| Other labourers         | 519            | 4.9          |
| <b>NON-LABOURERS</b>    |                |              |
| Merchants               | 120            | 1.1          |
| Restaurant keepers      | 11             | 0.1          |
| Doctors                 | 42             | 0.4          |
| Teachers                | 8              | 0.1          |
| <b>OTHERS</b>           |                |              |
| Prostitutes             | 70             | 0.7          |
| Married women and girls | 88             | 0.8          |
| Boys under 17           | 529            | 5.0          |
| New arrivals            | 602            | 5.7          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>10,492</b>  | <b>100.0</b> |

Source: *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration*, (Ottawa: 1885), pp.363-365.

a large number of Chinese immigrants transferred into marginal economic sectors especially domestic service, restaurant and laundry businesses. The proportion of Chinese engaged in laundry and restaurant work in 1885 was less than 5 per cent in British Columbia. By 1921, servants, cooks, waiters, and laundry workers made up 32 percent of

<sup>191</sup> E.K. Debeck, quoted in Norman W. Lidster, “Fraser Teemed with Salmon, the Language was Chinook,” *Columbian*, 11 March, 1972.

the Chinese population in Canada.<sup>192</sup> According to the 1902 *Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration*, “in Victoria there are [were] 40 Chinese wash houses, giving employment to 197 Chinamen, in Vancouver 35, employing 192; in new Westminster 9, employing 38; in Rossland 20, employing 60 Chinamen, and other towns and villages in proportion”.<sup>193</sup> By 1909, there were 102 Chinese in Lethbridge most of whom were employed in the five Chinese laundries, two Chinese restaurants, and two Chinese stores.<sup>194</sup> By the early 1910s, some 130 Chinese lived in Edmonton, running laundries, restaurants and second-hand stores.<sup>195</sup> In Saskatchewan, a small Chinatown had emerged in Regina with a population of about 150 and a few restaurants and stores.<sup>196</sup> According to David Chenyuan Lai, the same thing happened in Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. Plus, in the three Atlantic provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, the small Chinese populations were almost all laundrymen and cooks.<sup>197</sup> Table 3.4 demonstrates how the Chinese were largely engaged in the laundry, restaurant and grocery businesses in Calgary. Since the 1880s and for about one century, the laundry and restaurant trade formed a “mainstay” of the Chinese economy in North America.<sup>198</sup> “Family-run businesses, such as restaurants and laundries,

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<sup>192</sup> Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 1988), p.49.

<sup>193</sup> *Royal Commission*, (1902), p.175.

<sup>194</sup> David Chenyuan Lai, *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities in Canada*, (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia Press, 1988.), p.90.

<sup>195</sup> *ibid*, p.92.

<sup>196</sup> *ibid*, p.93.

<sup>197</sup> *ibid*, p.101.

<sup>198</sup> Ivan Light, *Ethnic Enterprise in America: Business and Welfare among Chinese, Japanese, and Blacks* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1972), p.93.

sprang up both in small towns and in the Chinatowns that had emerged in the bigger cities across Canada.”<sup>199</sup> However, the Chinese did not “by nature” gravitate

Table 3.4. Chinese Businesses in Calgary, 1902-1920

| Type of Businesses |         | 1902        | 1906 | 1911        | 1915 | 1920 |
|--------------------|---------|-------------|------|-------------|------|------|
| Grocery Stores     | Chinese | Unavailable | 7    | Unavailable | 13   | 7    |
|                    | Other   | 16          | 38   | Unavailable | 149  | 142  |
|                    | Total   | 16 or more  | 45   | 104         | 162  | 149  |
| Restaurants        | Chinese | 3           | 7    | 22          | 26   | 22   |
|                    | Other   | 2           | 12   | 43          | 37   | 42   |
|                    | Total   | 5           | 19   | 65          | 63   | 64   |
| Laundries          | Chinese | 10          | 17   | 28          | 61   | 34   |
|                    | Other   | 3           | 6    | 3           | 6    | 4    |
|                    | Total   | 13          | 23   | 31          | 67   | 38   |

Source: J. Brian Dawson, Patricia M. Dawson, *Moon Cakes in Gold Mountain: From China to the Canadian Plains*, pp.230-231.<sup>200</sup>

into those businesses.<sup>201</sup> Scholars have developed a framework for understanding the ethnic enterprise of immigrant by taking account of both structural and cultural factors.<sup>202</sup> In the case of Chinese ethnic business, most of the studies are based on the examination of the Chinese in the United States. In Canadian scholarship, since the 1970s, in metropolitan centers such as Vancouver and Toronto, there is renewed concern about the Chinese presence. Resentment grew toward Chinese economic success, especially as more affluent Chinese, mainly from Hong Kong, began to immigrate to Canada after

<sup>199</sup> Kelly Haggart, CBC news online, *Chinese Immigration*, text available online <http://cbc.ca/news/indepth/chinese/migrants3.html>

<sup>200</sup> Original source: *Gronlund's 1902 Directory*, *Henderson's Alberta Directory* for 1906 and 1911. City of Calgary License Records for 1902, 1906 and 1911. *Henderson's Alberta Directory* for 1915 and 1920.

<sup>201</sup> Ivan Light, *Ethnic Enterprise in America*, p.7.

<sup>202</sup> Ivan Light and Edna Bonacich, *Immigrant Entrepreneurs* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); Robin Ward and Richard Jenkins, eds., *Ethnic Communities in Business* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and Roger Waldinger, et al., *Ethnic Entrepreneurs: Immigrant Business in Industrial Societies* (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1990).

changes in immigration policy that favoured business immigrants.<sup>203</sup> As for the initial emergences of the Chinese immigrants' engagement in particular types of business, Peter S. Li has suggested that one must consider both structural and cultural factors, but he did not develop an explanation of how the factors influenced it.<sup>204</sup> This chapter tries to examine these factors between 1885 and 1923 and situate these businesses in the intersecting contexts of Canadian sociopolitical structure and race relations.

There appear to be several areas of consideration. One is the structural context, the emergence of a racially and hierarchically segmented labour market in an industrializing urban society. The second is the immigration policy and legislation towards the Chinese in Canada. The third is the social ties that transformed these businesses into an ethnic niche. Finally, ethnic culture also played an important role.

In the first place, the immigration policy during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century played an important role in determining Chinese immigrants' occupations. Canada experienced the Industrial Revolution in the years between 1849 and 1896 and the economic opportunities attracted numbers of ethnic immigrant groups.<sup>205</sup> Charles Ungerleider pointed out that Canada's growth and development as a nation are closely linked with immigration. However, throughout its history, Canada has often used

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<sup>203</sup> Lloyd L. Wong and Michele Ng, "Chinese Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Vancouver: A Case Study of Ethnic Business Development," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 30 Issue 1, (1998), pp.64-86; Peter S. Li, "Chinese Investment and Business in Canada: Ethnic Entrepreneurship Reconsidered," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 66, Issue 2 (Summer 1993), p.219.

<sup>204</sup> Peter S. Li, "Chinese Investment and Business in Canada: Ethnic Entrepreneurship Reconsidered," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 66, Issue 2 (Summer 1993), p.222.

<sup>205</sup> Michael S. Cross, Gergory S. Kealy, eds., "Introduction", *Canada's Age of Industry, 1849-1896*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1982.), pp.9-12.

immigrants to fill national needs while ignoring their rights.<sup>206</sup> Gunter Baureiss argued that Canada's emergence from a colony to an advanced capitalist state resulted in changing immigration patterns.

The patterns served to expand the West, and provided a major avenue for securing wage labour. In an attempt to keep Canada's a "White man's country", preference was given to immigrants with similar experiences of the market system: the British, the French, and northern and western Europeans. Periodically, however, Canada has attracted large numbers of immigrants with distinct cultural and/or physical characteristics (among them, Chinese) in order to reduce internal tension.<sup>207</sup>

Here the "internal tension" lies in the huge demand for cheap labour. From an economic perspective, cheap labour was necessary at that time, especially for infant industries and CPR constructions with few needs for high skills. Cheap Chinese labour was also crucial for reducing the labour costs to compete in foreign markets. Therefore, large numbers of Chinese immigrants were concentrated in labour-intensive industries. In the early years of their settlement, Chinese workers were welcomed and known as industrious and hard-working men. The CPR employers and factory managers were in favour of Chinese workers' intelligence, reliability, stability, and attitude and the most important --- their willingness to accept lower wages. As a matter of fact, by employing Chinese workers, Onderdonk's company saved more than \$5 million and sped the construction at least twelve years.<sup>208</sup>

The Chinese were also hired as strikebreakers. In 1883, for instance, there was a great strike at the Wellington mine during which Dunsmuir hired Chinese from Victoria,

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<sup>206</sup> Charles Ungerleider, "Immigration, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship: The Development of the Canadian Social Justice," *Canadian ethnic Studies*, Vol. 24, Issue 3, (1992), p.8.

<sup>207</sup> Gunter Baureiss, "Discrimination and Response: The Chinese in Canada," in *Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations in Canada, A Book of Readings*, Second Edition, eds by Rita Bienvenue and Jay Goldstein, (Toronto: The Butterworth Group of Companies, 1985), p.243.

<sup>208</sup> Brian Willer, "Years of Shame," *MacLean's*, 6/1/92, Vol.105, Issue 22, p.8.

who knew nothing about the issues, as scab labour to break the strike.<sup>209</sup> Indeed, as a bank manager of British Columbia noted that within the first few years of their coming, “their [Chinese] labour was welcome, in the absence of white immigrants, and especially in filling the place of domestic servants and as factory hands.”<sup>210</sup>

However, the influx of Chinese stirred xenophobic fears in the mostly white population of British Columbia. The politicians and local labourers showed their hatred towards the “Chinaman” saying “they are lazy and turbulent, only working when compelled to for the want of rice or food to eat.”<sup>211</sup> “They hoard all their money up and send it home to China; and they buy all their food and clothing from China... They break the law more than the white people.”<sup>212</sup> At the end of the 1883 Wellington strike, the striking workers made only one demand: that Chinese be excluded from mining coal.<sup>213</sup> Such popular protests from organized labour, merchants and farmers against the Chinese immigrants led to the creation of many restricting laws, especially in British Columbia.<sup>214</sup> Some political parties also expressed their concern about the dangers of “Orientalization”.<sup>215</sup> Patricia Roy has argued that this hostility was rooted in a concern of Asian economic dominance:

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<sup>209</sup> Paul Philips, *No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia*, (Vancouver, B.C.: Federation of Labour [and] Boag Foundation, 1967), p.8.

<sup>210</sup> *Royal Commission* (1885), p.103.

<sup>211</sup> *Royal Commission*, (1885), p.98.

<sup>212</sup> *Royal Commission*, (1885), p.83.

<sup>213</sup> Paul Philips, *No Power Greater*, p.8.

<sup>214</sup> W. E. Willmott, “Approaches to the Study of the Chinese in British Columbia”, p.45.

<sup>215</sup> R. Craig Brown and G. R. Cook, *Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed*, (Toronto: McClelland And Steward Limited, 1974), p.69.

Although many British Columbians' attitudes can be explained in terms of social psychology, and many fears were grossly exaggerated even to the point of irrationality. Asians provided sufficient, effective competition in the fishing grounds, in the fields, in the marketplaces, in the classroom and on the battlefield to warrant deep fears about the ability of white British Columbians to maintain their dominant position in the province.<sup>216</sup>

The discrimination against the Chinese immigrants could be explained on economic terms. Chinese workers were cheap and brought down the average salary in the labour market. Therefore, their employment was considered as an injury and at the same time degraded labour. In addition, for a long time, Chinese men in Canada far outnumbered Chinese women since they could hardly bring their wives and children into Canada. Ironically, this "bachelor society", which remained until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was seen as an indication that few Chinese immigrants intended to settle in Canada.

In a period of promoting prairie settlement from 1896 to 1914, the profile of the preferred immigrant was white as stated by Minister Clifford Sifton, "stalwart peasants in sheepskin coats". If British immigrants were not available, other white immigrants would do, but black and Asian immigration was discouraged.<sup>217</sup> Not surprisingly, the federal government passed three Chinese Immigration Acts to introduce a head tax on Chinese immigrants right after the completion of CPR in 1885 and raised the head tax ten times in eight years from \$50 to a total of \$500 to restrict Chinese immigration.

It is quite controversial that the policy maker believed that because "Oriental" immigrants, especially the Chinese came neither to settle on prairie homesteads nor to stay permanently in Canada; they belonged to a class of whose entry Minister Clifford

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<sup>216</sup> Patricia Roy, "British Columbia's fear of Asians, 1900-1950," in P Wand & R McDonald eds, *British Columbia: Historical Readings* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1981), p.657.

<sup>217</sup> Department of Justice, Canada, *The Plight of immigrants*, available online <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/justice2000/cyb00imm>.

Sifton disapproved.<sup>218</sup> Again, the discussion goes back to the debate of “sojourning.” According to Paul Siu and Rose Hum Lee, who first used the concept of the “sojourner” in their analysis of the Chinese in the United States, the sojourner is “a migrant who is mentally oriented towards the home community”.<sup>219</sup> The sojourner might spend a major portion of his lifetime in the host society, engaging in a job that he may not like, he is in fact surviving with hope to return his home and upgrade his own and his family’s status at home. As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, there is a longstanding debate in scholarship that questions whether Asian immigrants were “voluntary sojourners” who kept the host society at arms’ length or whether they wished to become part of it but were rejected on racist grounds, thus becoming involuntarily sojourners.

One suggests that the phenomenon of sojourning often happens in migrant groups. It is not the Chinese who first came to Canada as “sojourners”. For example, a study of Italians in Algoma’s early employment records revealed a general pattern of the Italian migrants: most stayed no more than five years and often worked for only a few months or even a few days at a time; of 252 Italians listed on the payroll in the last quarter of 1905, only twenty-five were still there by 1910. Before the war it was customary for many Italians and other Europeans to return home for winter.<sup>220</sup> They moved back and forth across the Atlantic in response to economic opportunities.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Mabel F. Timlin, “Canada’s Immigration Policy, 1896-1910,” p.519.

<sup>219</sup> Yuen-fong Woon, “The Voluntary Sojourner among the Overseas Chinese: Myth or Reality?” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 56, Issue 4 (Winter, 1983-1984), p.673.

<sup>220</sup> Craig Heron, *Working in Steel*, p79

<sup>221</sup> Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994*, (Toronto : McClelland & Stewart, c1995) p.64.

It should be mentioned here that most Chinese people in Canada could go back home at the end of their contracts as they came as contract labourers rather than immigrants. Indeed, the government and the railway employers welcomed the Chinese for the very reasons that they were traditional sojourners and cheap labour. In spite of strong anti-Chinese sentiment Prime Minister Macdonald claimed in 1882: "if you wish to have the railway finished within any reasonable time, there must be no such step against Chinese labour. At present it is simply a question of alternatives --- either you must have this labour or you cannot have the railway."<sup>222</sup> Later in 1883, he addressed again that a Chinese was "a sojourner in a strange land ... and he has no common interest with us. ... [He] gives us his labour and is paid for it, and is valuable, the same as a threshing machine or any other agricultural implement which we may borrow from the United States or hire and return to its owner."<sup>223</sup> In fleeing hard times at home, it was necessity rather than choice that caused Chinese immigrants to stay in Canada. The socioeconomic circumstances in Canada were more important than Chinese immigrants' motivation in determining their settlement.

The anti-Chinese sentiment was further developed when head tax measures did not actually restrict Chinese immigration. It is not difficult to understand why both the Royal Commission of 1885 and 1902 acknowledged the contribution of Chinese immigrants, but went on to suggest prohibiting the entry of Chinese. The 1902 Royal Commission concluded:

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<sup>222</sup> As quoted in David Chenyuan Lai, *Chinatowns*, p.33.

<sup>223</sup> Quoted in Patricia Roy, "A Choice between Evils: the Chinese and the Construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in British Columbia," in *The CPR West: The Iron Road and the Making of a Nation* (Vancouver & Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984), pp.30-31.

It is incredible that British Columbia, admittedly one of the richest countries in the world in natural resources, --- with its vast forests, unsurpassed fisheries, minerals of all kinds, and large tracts of delta and other lands suitable for agriculture, --- cannot be developed without the assistance of Chinese labour. From a Canadian standpoint it is injurious, and in the interest of the nation any further immigration ought to be prohibited.<sup>224</sup>

Eventually, in 1923, an Exclusion Chinese Immigration Act was passed which only allowed the Chinese “merchants” and “students” to enter Canada.<sup>225</sup>

The Chinese supplied a need of labour demand and were seen as valuable members of the community throughout the 1860s, yet were discarded when they were viewed as members of an immoral, inferior race.<sup>226</sup> This change was significantly affected by the conditions in labour market. At the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Canada had developed as an industrializing urban society. Old staple industries faced dislocation and adjustment, and new ones appeared. The manufacturing and service sectors grew.<sup>227</sup> There was a surplus of the lower class of labour at that time ready to enter any avenue of unskilled labour that may open. Chinese workers were considered as an injury to the white nation and largely “unassimilable” and therefore undesired.<sup>228</sup> The discrimination and prohibition immigration policy against the Chinese immigrants effectively drove the Chinese out of both the staples industries and manufacturing sectors. They were forced to confine their economic activities to certain less desirable fields of a non-competitive

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<sup>224</sup> *Royal Commission*, (1902), p.278.

<sup>225</sup> Paul Philips, *No Power Greater*, pp.78-85.

<sup>226</sup> Patricia Roy, *White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989), p.4.

<sup>227</sup> Kenneth Norrie, Douglas Owsam, *A History of the Canadian Economy*, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Canada, 1991), p.290.

<sup>228</sup> R. Craig Brown and G. R. Cook, *Canada 1896-1921*, p.68.

nature. Paradoxically, such racist attitudes and institutional discrimination served to tighten the bonds within Chinese communities.

First, the urban ethnic community absorbed a number of Chinese immigrants with employment in an “ethnic enclave economy”. Facing hard times, the Chinese soon formed their own community as an “economic accommodative mechanism” in response to prejudice and discrimination.<sup>229</sup> Chinatowns expanded with successes in fulfilling their inhabitants’ certain basic needs such as mutual aid, civil protection, and supply of ethnic foods.<sup>230</sup> The organizations and associations in Chinatowns are known to have been particularly authoritative and influential in exerting effective control over individual members and community affairs. For example, as early as 1884, the Chinese Benevolent Association was formed in Victoria to help immigrants in need and to develop ethnic business. These associations sprang up in every Chinese community across Canada at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

According to Ivan Light and Steven J. Gold, the groceries, restaurants and herb stores established within Chinatowns could belong to “the ethnic enclave economy” --- an ethnic economy that is clustered around a territorial core.<sup>231</sup> It emphasizes the economic advantages of “locational clustering”.<sup>232</sup> “Economic advantage means the ability of the enclave economy to generate more money for participants than the participants would have been able to obtain without that enclave structure to support

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<sup>229</sup> Haitung King, and Frances Locke, “Chinese in the United States: A Century of Occupational Transition,” *International Migration Review*, Vol. 14, No.1 (Spring 1980), p.32.

<sup>230</sup> Haitung King, and Frances Locke, “Chinese in the United States”, p.33.

<sup>231</sup> Ivan Light, and Steven J. Gold, *Ethnic Economies*, (San Diego, California: Academic Press, 2000), p.23.

<sup>232</sup> Ivan Light, and Steven J. Gold, *Ethnic Economies*, p.15.

them.”<sup>233</sup> How the Chinese immigrants could capture these economic advantages has been well studied by sociologists. One agrees with these scholars that the Chinese immigrants inside Chinatowns did capture a higher proportion of sales that would not be possible from unclustered firms. From perspective of social history, Chinatowns provided the “territorial core” that supported many Chinese immigrants into ethnic businesses especially when open labour market closed to them. It also played an important role in Chinese immigrants’ occupational changes. Chinatown served as a base for supplying certain merchandise and service to Chinese residing both inside and outside its territory. Thus, Chinatowns gave employments to a number of Chinese immigrants in their “ethnic enclave economy”, such as groceries, restaurants and herb stores.

Outside Chinatowns, more Chinese had to join a continuing influx of new immigrants in search of work. Lack of capital and language and culture barriers limited their opportunities. They could only engage in other labour-intensive work where competition with Whites was minimal.<sup>234</sup> Under these circumstances, many Chinese established hand laundries and restaurants when the frontier economies created large demand for these services. The laundry business was not strange to the Chinese immigrants. As early as 1879, there were 129 “washermen” in British Columbia, which made 2.5% of the population (Table 3.1). In writing a social history of English laundresses, Patricia E. Malcolmson pointed out:

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<sup>233</sup> *ibid*, p.15.

<sup>234</sup> Paul Ong, “An Ethnic Trade: The Chinese Laundries in Early California”, *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 8 (Winder 1981), p.101.

The laundry industry was an important part of the nineteenth-century shift in the economy toward services. Like department stores, chain stores, restaurants and other service industries, the laundry trade was labor intensive. The majority of its jobs were unskilled or readily learned, especially so after mechanization. They were usually filled by women and frequently performed in a part-time or episodic fashion. Another mark of the industry's status as a service trade was its sensitivity to small fluctuations in fashion, taste, or economic well-being.<sup>235</sup>

Without a doubt, Canada also was experiencing rapid industrial and economic growth during the second half of nineteenth century and there was "a shift in the economy toward services".<sup>236</sup> First, the metropolis came into being and reinforced the concentration of population in urban areas. In turn, urbanization and the new life patterns imposed by industry increased the demand for household and personal services. Second, division of labour and especially the creation of new occupations made room for unskilled labourers, many of whom were immigrants.<sup>237</sup> Third, there was an unequal sex ratio of a high percentage of males to females in Chinese community. The lack of women created the demand for services such as laundry work, cooking, hotel and restaurant keeping.<sup>238</sup> Indeed, in Victoria and Vancouver, the early home to a large number of Chinese immigrants, several hundreds of whom worked as house boys because the middle-class relied on Chinese servants when female domestic help was scarce. A Victoria matron was so grateful that she wrote a friend, "God, I'm sure sends such

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<sup>235</sup> Patricia E Malcolmson, *English Laundresses – A Social History, 1850-1930*, (University Illinois Press, 1986), p.5.

<sup>236</sup> *ibid*, p.5

<sup>237</sup> For example, the large number of Catholic Irish immigrants did the dirty work of digging canals and building railways during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. See P. M. Toner, "Occupational and Ethnicity: The Irish in New Brunswick," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 20, Issue 3, (1988), p.155. Also, Macedonians and Greek immigrants went into restaurant business; see Harry Vjekoslav Herman, *Men in White Apron: A Study of Ethnicity and Occupation*, (P. Martin Associates, 1988), p.76.

<sup>238</sup> Paul Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation*, (University of Chicago, 1988), p.45.

Chinamen as all good things come from Him.”<sup>239</sup> Another’s comment was similar: “Life here for a woman depends, my dear, a good deal up the Chinese ... If you are lucky, and treat your Celstial well, he seems to me to be a treasure beyond price.”<sup>240</sup> Thus, it could be said that there were demands on service industry in urbanized Canadian society during the last few decades in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Under the certain socioeconomic circumstances the Chinese entered the laundry and restaurant businesses. Without the support from non-Chinese customers, those businesses could hardly develop.

The laundries did not need much capital nor training to operate; only a small outlay was necessary to go into business. Many hand-laundries in Canada were owned and operated by a single man at that time. There was greater business stability through opening up a restaurant. In terms of capital investment, it was much more substantial. Working on a restaurant was more “lucrative and creative” than ironing shirts day after day.<sup>241</sup> It provided an environment in which the Chinese workers could speak their own dialect as most of them were from Guangdong Province. The white communities had no objection to such types of service that were seen as women’s work, undesirable to white male workers. Therefore, Chinese presence in the cities was less noticeable and they were subject to less racial attacks. In Alberta, for example, hand laundry was the primary type of business established by Chinese. Mr. June Jay Chang operated a laundry in High River, Alberta for fifty-five years, usually with a partner. From 1914 until about 1944, as he

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<sup>239</sup> Sarah Crease, 1864, cited in Peter A. Baskerville, *Beyond the Island: An Illustrated History of Victoria*, (Burlington: Windsor, 1986), p.45.

<sup>240</sup> Mrs. Clive Phillipps-Wolley to Lena, Victoria, September 1887, cited in Phillipps-Wolley, *Sportsman's Eden*, (London: Richard Bentley, 1888), pp.181-182.

<sup>241</sup> Thomas Tsu-wee Tan, *Your Chinese Roots: The Overseas Chinese Story*, (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1986), pp.76-78.

related, “the laundry business was pretty good; we [often] had two people working for us at thirty dollars per month.”<sup>242</sup> To the Chinese immigrants, these types of work were a means to earn a living within the existing economic niches of Canadian society. The life as a laundryman will be discussed in the next chapter.

The social ties among the Chinese immigrants also played an important role in transforming these businesses into an ethnic niche. In other words, as Ivan Light has argued, the traditional Chinese extended “familism” enabled overseas Chinese in North America to use kinship and clanship ties as a basis for forming rotating credit associations, from which the needed capital for business was raised.<sup>243</sup> Since the membership of a clan was determined by blood, members were thereby encouraged to contribute to the wealth and status of the lineage in whatever they could.<sup>244</sup> In the overseas Chinese community, the rotating credit association was an ideal method by which to begin or expand a business, typically used for enterprises such as laundries and restaurants.<sup>245</sup> For example, as early as 1876 in Cariboo mining towns, an organization named *Zhigongtang* was established to “maintain a friendly relationship among our [Chinese] countrymen and to accumulate wealth through proper business methods for the benefit of all members”.<sup>246</sup> One of the regulations of *Zhigongtang* is “When new businesses are opened by the Society and helpers are needed, only members who have

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<sup>242</sup> Interview with June Jay Chang, 1974, cited in J. Brian Dawson, *Moon Cakes in Gold Mountain*, p.203.

<sup>243</sup> Ivan Light, *Ethnic Enterprise in America*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>244</sup> Frederic Wakeman, *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China 1839-1861* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), III.

<sup>245</sup> Anthony Chan, *Gold Mountain*, p. 94.

<sup>246</sup> Quoted in *From China to Canada*, p.31.

paid dues and have seniority in the Society are qualified for these posts”.<sup>247</sup> To explain in a simple way, that is: members paid a certain amount to form a money pool. In return, a member could borrow money from the pool for his own business.<sup>248</sup> This peculiar method of obtaining funds without going to commercial banks had been a long tradition in Cantonese culture.<sup>249</sup> The Chinese immigrants in Canada came from an agrarian but highly commercialized economy; hence, such methods were employed widely among the Chinese communities in Canada. Almost all the scholarship on Chinese immigration recognized the economic importance of such associations. As Gor Yun Leong observed about the Chinese-American small business economy, “without such societies, very few businesses could be started.”<sup>250</sup>

The kinship network, instrumental in assisting the immigrant to come to Canada, remained useful to Chinese immigrants as a basis for forming partnerships. Peter S. Li pointed out that “[t]he absence of immediate family members in Canada also compelled many to rely to more distant relatives for hope.”<sup>251</sup> The broadly defined kinship network provided additional resources for supporting a partnership.<sup>252</sup> It could be argued that the social ties among Chinese immigrants channeled the fellow immigrants into these

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<sup>247</sup> *ibid*, p.31.

<sup>248</sup> Ivan Light, *Ethnic Enterprise in America*, pp.23-27.

<sup>249</sup> For how these various mechanisms and how they functioned and in the context of an unreceptive host society in Canada, see Paul Yee, “Business Devices from Two Worlds: The Chinese in Early Vancouver,” *BC Studies*, no.62, (Summer 1984), pp.48-67.

<sup>250</sup> Gor Yun Leong, *Chinatown Inside Out*, (New York: Barrows Mussey, 1936), pp.177-178.

<sup>251</sup> Peter S. Li, “Constructing Immigrants’ Work Worlds from Oral Testimonies,” *Work, Ethnicity, and Oral History Proceedings of a Conference at Beddeck, Nova Scotia*, eds., Dorothy E. Moore, and James H. Morrison, (Halifax: N.S.: International Education Centre, Saint Mary’s University, 1988), pp.152-153.

<sup>252</sup> *ibid*, p.153.

particular occupations. The old immigrant helped new immigrants with opportunities to participate in their business. But on the other hand, new immigrants were seldom exposed to other ideas and possibilities. For example, San Eng mentioned in an interview his occupation choice in the early 1910s,

It [restaurant business] was the only business I know, it was the only business I understand. I hired people, cheap labour from my own country, brought them over from China, sometimes relatives too.<sup>253</sup>

The kinship further fostered the Chinese immigrants in these particular occupations.

The Chinese, however, did not participate in the laundry trade just to escape racial hostility.<sup>254</sup> They deemed the laundry work as an opportunity for self-employment. As a matter of fact, many Chinese immigrants were peasants before they emigrated from China. Laundries were one of the pioneering businesses for the early Chinese immigrants in Canada. The commissioner specially noted in the 1902 Royal Commission that many Chinese laundrymen learned their trade only after they had migrated to Canada.<sup>255</sup> Traditionally, ownership of a small and independent business was considered a worthwhile occupation. Such ethnic businesses provided some Chinese with an opportunity for upward mobility that was not available on the open market.<sup>256</sup> However, their engagement in those ethnic businesses was limited by circumstance rather than choice.

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<sup>253</sup> Evelyn Huang, *Chinese Canadians: Voices from a Community*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992), p.17, The interviewee paid the head tax to enter Canada in 1905.

<sup>254</sup> Paul Ong, "An Ethnic Trade", p.101.

<sup>255</sup> *Royal Commission*, (1902), p.343.

<sup>256</sup> Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, p.53.

## Summary

Immigration policy and institutional racism against the Chinese played a major role in shaping the occupational structure of this minority. The unequal measures aimed to control social relationships across race lines as well as to build the white nation. The head tax reflected the extent to which Chinese were considered inferior and undesirable settlers. Such legislation against Chinese significantly influenced the employment of Chinese immigrants. As a result, the Chinese were excluded from the core of economy and were relegated to the low end of the socio-economic ladder. However, in response to such restrictive practices, the Chinese accommodated themselves at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century through withdrawal from mining and CPR construction to less competitive economic activities such as laundry and restaurant services. The immigrants' ethnic and cultural background, as well as close clanship fostered their concentration in these particular occupations.

## **Chapter IV**

### **The Chinese in Halifax, 1895-1923**

Much of the literature on early Chinese immigrants to Canada focuses on their experiences in western and central Canada as gold miners and railroad construction labourers of the late nineteenth century. Their role in Atlantic Canada, however, has been largely neglected and bears deeper examination. Historians and sociologists of race relations in Nova Scotia have almost all concentrated on the pitiful settlement experience of Europeans between the 1780s and the 1830s.<sup>257</sup> Existing studies provide little insight into Nova Scotia's Chinese community. During the last two decades, only two small investigations gave brief pictures of the Chinese in the Maritimes and New Brunswick.<sup>258</sup> Despite a growing national hostility and discrimination towards Asians, one scholar characterized the immigrant experience in Halifax as generally good throughout the period 1881-1931.<sup>259</sup> However, such a claim might be based on an absence of evidence. This chapter examines Chinese immigrants' experiences in early twentieth century Halifax, Nova Scotia to see whether the Chinese encountered the same prejudice as on the west coast and to shed light on their role in Atlantic Canada. This chapter specifically focuses on the Chinese laundry and restaurant, as ethnic enterprises, in the social, economic, and demographic context of Halifax.

After the completion of the CPR, Chinese labour was totally discarded. Ironically, the railroad they had helped to construct enabled them to escape persecution on the western coast and brought them to less developed and populated territories. Despite the

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<sup>257</sup> Judith Fingard, "Race and Respectability in Victorian Halifax", *The Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History*, Vol. 20, No.2, May 1992, p.169.

<sup>258</sup> Larry N. Shyu, *Peoples of the Maritimes, The Chinese*, (Halifax, Nimbus Publishing Limited, 1997); William Seto, and Larry N. Shyu. *The Chinese Experience in New Brunswick: A Historical Perspective*, (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Chinese Cultural Association of New Brunswick, 1986).

<sup>259</sup> D. Owen Carrigan, "The Immigrant Experience in Halifax, 1881-1931," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XX, No. 3 (1988), p.28.

small numbers, some Chinese came to and settled in the Atlantic Provinces, with Nova Scotia attracting the majority of them.

The earliest Chinese settlers came to Halifax in 1895 when the city was experiencing dramatic industrial growth. They had reached a land of frontier opportunities and values, where the Anglo segment was becoming numerically dominant. Halifax, from the days of its founding in 1749, was built into an "Imperial base", and remained a British naval outpost until 1907.<sup>260</sup> As a port city, particularly when it was designated an official port of entry in 1881, Halifax had received significant number of immigrants, mostly from Europe.<sup>261</sup> Pride in "Britishness" was part of the imperial fervour of the age shared by all upwardly mobile elements of the ethnic communities.<sup>262</sup> The provincial government put all kinds of efforts in attracting British Island immigrants. In 1910, the Secretary of Industries and Immigration of Nova Scotia, Arthur S. Barnstead stated in his report:

We have as yet scarcely scratched the surface of our agricultural resources. ... As we seek to let others know of the opportunities here that await the willing worker, let us not fear to give voice to a greater confidence in the future of Nova Scotia. Let us emulate a little more that Western Spirit of which we have heard so much, and devote our energies to the development of these great natural resources and the securing of a class of people who will be able to help us in this worthy effort.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> "Introduction" in *Ethnicity in Atlantic Canada*, (Saint John, N.B.: the Division of Social Science University of New Brunswick, 1985), p.9.

<sup>261</sup> D. Owen Carrigan, "The Immigrant Experience in Halifax, 1881-1931," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XX, No. 3 (1988), p.29.

<sup>262</sup> Judith Fingard, "Race and Respectability in Victorian Halifax", *The Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History*, Vol. 20, No.2, May 1992, p.169.

<sup>263</sup> "Report of The Secretary of Industries and Immigration," in *Journal and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia*, Session 1910, Part II. (Halifax, N.S., The Commissioner of Public Works and Mines, King's Printer, 1910), pp.53-54.

Obviously, this “class of people” did not include Asian immigrants as the anti-Oriental sentiments were widespread throughout the country. However, “some [Chinese] immigrants settled in Halifax and took advantage of the entrepreneurial opportunities of a port city. They opened restaurants and laundries, creating a dynamic Chinese community.”<sup>264</sup> The Chinese experience in this “British” city could be divided into two periods between which the outbreak of WWI in 1914 was a watershed. As the following discussion will show, the Chinese community was perceived differently before and after WWI.

Although Halifax received large numbers of immigrants ever since its establishment, out-migration was such a significant phenomena from the 1870s to the 1920s in Atlantic Canada that historians have tended to pay less attention to immigration.<sup>265</sup> The majority of newcomers from the British Isles found a hospitable climate of language, religion, social mores, and economic opportunity, but still they went on the journey to Ontario, Quebec or west coast for further fortune.<sup>266</sup> Nonetheless, as a port city, Halifax did have various ethnic communities. Table 4.1 shows that the city held sizeable populations of Scots, Irish and Newfoundlanders. The Chinese population just constituted a tiny part. Indeed, the Chinese population in Nova Scotia was far smaller

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<sup>264</sup> News Release, Government of Nova Scotia, *Growing Up Chinese in Halifax Exhibit*, Nov. 4, 1997. <http://www.gov.ns.ca/cmns/msrv/nr-1997/nr97-11/97110401.htm>

<sup>265</sup> Out-migration in Atlantic Canada has been well studied, see Alan Brookes, “Out-Migration from the Maritime Provinces, 1860-1900: Some Preliminary Considerations” in P.A. Buckner and David Frank eds, *The Acadiensis Reader Two: Atlantic Canada after Confederation* (Fredericton, N.B.: Acadiensis Press, 1985); Patricia Thornton, “The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada, 1871-1921: A New Look”, *Acadiensis*, XV, 1 (Autumn 1985), pp.3-34.

<sup>266</sup> D. Owen Carrigan, “The Immigrant Experience in Halifax, 1881-1931,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 20, No 3, (1988), p.29 and p.39.

Table 4.1: Population in Halifax Region, 1881-1921

| Census year | Canada Born | Chinese | England | Scotland | Ireland | Newfoundland | Total  |
|-------------|-------------|---------|---------|----------|---------|--------------|--------|
| 1891        | 30,756      | 2       | 2,617   | 621      | 1,557   | 1,639        | 38,556 |
| 1901        | 67,576      | 29      | 2,154   | 582      | 1,006   | 1,898        | 74,662 |
| 1911        | 39,665      | 43      | 2,720   | 573      | 683     | 1,580        | 46,169 |
| 1921        | 49,376      | 141     | 2,885   | 598      | 478     | 2,719        | 58,372 |

Source: *Censuses of Canada*, 1881-1921.

Table 4.2: Immigrants in Nova Scotia, 1881-1921

|              | Before 1900 | 1900-1910 | 1911-1914 | 1915-1918 | 1919-1921 | Total in 1921 |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| Foreign Born | 2,436       | 4,244     | 3,837     | 1,512     | 1,670     | 13,986        |
| From Asia    | 166         | 273       | 173       | 102       | 33        | 752           |
| From China   | 32          | 91        | 93        | 83        | 16        | 317           |

Source: *Censuses of Canada*, 1881-1921.

than that in western and central Canadian provinces. In census data there were 138 Chinese people and in 1921, 317 in Nova Scotia, with the majority living in the city of Halifax.<sup>267</sup> The Chinese population in all of the Atlantic provinces made up less than 5% of the whole in Canada during the period from 1881 to 1921. Before WWI, the Chinese were accommodated within a similarly restrictive, but far less hostile, social and political atmosphere. Their small numbers did shelter them from suffering the attacks and indignities common elsewhere, particularly in British Columbia.<sup>268</sup>

The early Chinese immigrants to Halifax were not directly from China. Their settlement revolved around the family of entrepreneur Fong Choy. Leaving his village in Enping district of Guangdong province, Fong set out for England in the 1880s. After another few years living in Montreal, he moved to Halifax, where he and a relative opened a laundry in 1895. Since then, immigrants with surname of Fong began arriving

<sup>267</sup> *Census of Canada*, 1911, 1921. Douglas F. Campbell, *Banked Fires: the Ethnics of Nova Scotia* (Port Credit, Ont.: The Scribblers' Press, 1978), pp.2-9.

<sup>268</sup> D. Owen Carrigan, "The Immigrant Experience in Halifax, 1881-1931," p.38. See also the analysis below.

in Halifax by way of Victoria, Toronto and Montreal.<sup>269</sup> Due to the restrictive Canadian legislation the Chinese could hardly bring their wives with them. So the Chinese immigrants in Halifax before 1919 were all males.<sup>270</sup> Most of them were connected to each other through fraternity or paternity. For example, Chuck Lee, who came to Canada in 1909, was brought by his father. And they chose to settle in Halifax because they “have some connection” meaning they were related to the Fongs through marriage in their homeland village in Guangdong Province.<sup>271</sup> This reinforced the fact that clanship played an important role in aiding Chinese immigrants to seek employment in Canada. However, this kind of help from the same ethnic group limited a newcomer’s choices for occupations. They were seldom exposed to other ideas and possibilities. The cultural background as well as close clanship fostered the rationalization of ethnic businesses. Moreover, the choices were hardly well informed. One respondent mentioned that he was told to come from China to work in a clothing store. He entertained visions of parading around well stocked rows of suits and shirts serving fine gentlemen. Upon landing in Nova Scotia the clothing store turned out to be his cousin’s laundry.<sup>272</sup>

In addition to clanship, the Chinese immigrants mainly dwelled in Halifax because it had relatively more economic opportunities than rural areas. This was also reflected in other Atlantic provinces. The majority of the Chinese were concentrated in

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<sup>269</sup> Anthony Chan, *Gold Mountain*, pp.71-72. Information compiled from interview with Chuck Lee, *Minority Perspective*, Channel 10, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

<sup>270</sup> According to Chuck Lee, his mother was the first Chinese woman in Halifax, who came in 1919. Information taken from Chuck Lee, Interview by Lynn Murphy, 14 February 1984, typescript.

<sup>271</sup> Interview with Chuck Lee, 1984.

<sup>272</sup> Thompson, Chai-Chu. “Chinese Community of the Halifax-Dartmouth Area.” *Your World*, Vol. 3 No. 1 (1981), pp.22-3.

cities, such as Saint John and Moncton, which had a rapid increase in population and overseas commerce at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>273</sup> Industrial Cape Breton held the second largest Chinese population in Nova Scotia. In 1901, of the 107 Chinese and Japanese immigrants, there were 33 Chinese in Cape Breton, 16 in Sydney, 29 in Halifax.<sup>274</sup> In 1921, 311 Chinese immigrants resided in urban areas, which represents 98.11% of the Chinese population in Nova Scotia.<sup>275</sup> An old joke states: "What were the first three establishments to appear in any Canadian town? A church, a jail and a Chinese restaurant".<sup>276</sup> This reflects that the Chinese immigrants largely dwelled in towns and cities rather than rural areas. As a metropolis, Halifax offers a good example to explain this phenomenon.

The Maritimes experienced a great industrial growth in the period of 1880-1910 during which the growth rates of Nova Scotia outstripped all other provinces in eastern Canada.<sup>277</sup> As stated in the *Report of Secretary of Industries and Immigration* of 1910, "[w]e [Nova Scotia] have magnificent resources in the coal, the gold, the iron ore, the stone, the sand and various mineral products, that are capable of much greater exploitation. The development of all these will make our many harbors and bays the

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<sup>273</sup> *The Chinese in New Brunswick*, p.26.

<sup>274</sup> *Census of Canada*, 1901.

<sup>275</sup> *Census of Canada*, 1921.

<sup>276</sup> Noreen Golfman, "Under the 'Golden Mountain': Uncovering the Chinese Canadian Past", *Canadian Forum*, (December 1994), p.20.

<sup>277</sup> T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes, 1880-1910", *Acadiensis*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 1972), p.3.

natural outlets for an extensive commerce”.<sup>278</sup> Indeed, Halifax was an important commercial center of Maritime provinces during the last few decades of the 19th century. Protected by tariffs, Maritime entrepreneurs embarked on “a binge of industrial investment”, hoping to capture a national market.<sup>279</sup> Although the region failed to complete its industrial transformation, Halifax did benefit greatly from the West Indies trade and the new industries of sugar and cotton as Table 4.3 shows.<sup>280</sup> Not only did the population increase by 6.4%, but the industrial capital also doubled. Halifax grew into the biggest port city across the Maritimes. Undoubtedly, Chinese immigrants were attracted by Halifax’s economic opportunities, especially when it grew into a metropolitan center with great demands for domestic service. Although the Chinese in Halifax just represented 0.2% of the city’s population till 1921 and amounted to a tiny fraction of their numbers within Canada, they quickly established laundries in the main business district of the city and gradually dominated this business.<sup>281</sup>

Table 4.3: Industrial Development in Halifax, 1880-1890

|                  | Population | Industrial Capital | Employees | Average Annual Wages | Output      | Industry by Output (1891)                 |
|------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------|---|
| Halifax (1880)   | 39,886     | \$2,975,000        | 3,551     | \$303                | \$6,128,000 | Sugar<br>Rope                             |
| Dartmouth (1890) | 43,132     | \$6,346,000        | 4,654     | \$280                | \$8,235,000 | Cotton<br>Confectionary<br>Paint<br>Lamps |

Source: T.W. Acheson, “The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes, 1880-1910.”<sup>282</sup>

<sup>278</sup> “Report of The Secretary of Industries and Immigration,” in *Journal and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia*, Session 1910, Part II, p.53.

<sup>279</sup> Margrest R. Conrad, Jame K. Hiller, *Atlantic Canada: A region in the Making*, (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.139.

<sup>280</sup> T.W. Acheson, “The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes, 1880-1910”, p.7.

<sup>281</sup> *Census of Canada*, 1921, Vol. I, pp. 392-3.

<sup>282</sup> Original source: *Census of Canada* (1891), III, Table I; *ibid.*, (1901), III, Tables XX,XXI.

As early as 1891, there was a Chinese laundry, “Kee Wah”, at 80 Bedford Row.<sup>283</sup> According to Chuck Lee, this could possibly have been a Fong.<sup>284</sup> The Chinese laundry businesses began to prosper as more and more immigrants came to the city. In 1895, among the ten laundries listed in the city directory, four were operated by the Chinese.<sup>285</sup> By 1910, the “Chinese Laundries” had been singled out as a category in the business directory, under which twenty-eight were listed.<sup>286</sup> Whereas, at the same time, there were only four laundries opened by non-Chinese.<sup>287</sup> By 1919, among the 45 laundries in Halifax, 38 were “Chinese laundries”.<sup>288</sup> Although the census data did not give out the numbers of Chinese immigrants engaged in laundry and restaurant businesses, Table 4.5 still could indicate that male immigrants engaged in laundry business represented 25% of

Table 4.5: People engaged in laundry and restaurant Businesses in Halifax, 1911.

|                    | Total |        | Canadian Born |        | Immigrants |        |
|--------------------|-------|--------|---------------|--------|------------|--------|
|                    | Male  | Female | Male          | Female | Male       | Female |
| Launders           | 82    | 128    | 28            | 111    | 54         | 17     |
| Restaurant keepers | 30    | 53     | 20            | 53     | 10         | --     |

Source: *Census of Canada*, 1911.

the launderers in Halifax, 1911, who were likely almost all Chinese men.<sup>289</sup>

Life as a “laundryman” was not easy at all. In Halifax, most white-run laundries were steam ones which employed women. According to the *Report of Commission on*

<sup>283</sup> *Halifax and Dartmouth City Directory*, 1891.

<sup>284</sup> Interview with Chuck Lee, 1984.

<sup>285</sup> *City Directory*, 1895.

<sup>286</sup> *City Directory*, 1910.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>288</sup> *City Directory*, 1919.

<sup>289</sup> In 1911, there were almost 30 Chinese laundries in Halifax. Each laundry would be operated by one or two Chinese men. Hence, the 54 male immigrants launders (Table 5) could be almost all Chinese.

*Hours of Labour, Wages, and Working Conditions of Women Employed in Industrial Occupations*, the women generally worked an eight-hour day, except on Friday nights when they were kept extra time to make up for the Saturday “half-holiday”.<sup>290</sup> For an average workweek of 48 hours, women received between \$5 and \$8.<sup>291</sup> However, at that time “a minimum wage should be and the figures most frequently given were from \$10.00 to \$12.00 a week”.<sup>292</sup> Obviously, the women’s wages were less than the minimum one which indicated that they were highly exploited. There seems no source showing the wages of a Chinese laundryman, but undoubtedly, if a Chinese laundry could compete with a steam laundry, the operator had to work for more hours and charge for less. According to the description of Paul Siu who investigated the Chinese laundries in Chicago, the worker must work almost 15-20 hours a day to earn enough for livelihood.<sup>293</sup> “The laundryman gained economic security but lost his individuality and normal home life.”<sup>294</sup>

Little information was given regarding conditions in the laundries; a single comment by the foreman of Globe Laundry stated that the work in steam laundry was both tedious and heavy. He explained that “the nine pound irons were harder to handle than the 32 pound irons, since they had to be lifted.”<sup>295</sup> As far as the sources examined in

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<sup>290</sup> *Report of Commission on Hours of labour, Wages, and Working Conditions of Women Employed in Industrial Occupations*, (Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1920), p.16.

<sup>291</sup> *ibid*, p.16.

<sup>292</sup> *ibid*, p.16.

<sup>293</sup> Paul Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation* (New York & London: New York Vail Press, 1987), p.367.

<sup>294</sup> *ibid*, p.122.

<sup>295</sup> *The Halifax Herald*, March 23, 1920.

this chapter, there was no report concerning the working conditions of Chinese laundries in Halifax. One report on Toronto's Chinese hand laundry might shed some light on it.

In the first room, Chow irons side by side with his wife at a broad counter called in Chinese an "ironing bed. [They] had to use their beds as ironing boards... Chow's consists of a wooden counter with ventilation holes drilled through, padded with four layers of wool blankets bound with a clean white sheet. The second room is the washing room. Against one wall is a wooden trough, lined with galvanized steel. His father once scrubbed laundry in it, using a washboard.<sup>296</sup>

Such scenes of a Chinese laundry were quite common all across North America. Within such isolated working environment, they became the boss of their own. They often hired or shared with their cousins or relatives from the same clan to operate this kind of independent business out of the open labour market. In 1978, the last Chinese laundry in Halifax closed down. It was owned and operated by Charlie Hong, who immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong in 1923.<sup>297</sup> During his fifty-five year career as a laundryman, Hong first worked for his father's laundry in Woodstock, N.B. and then opened one in Halifax himself in 1955. It was his father who taught him the laundry trade after he was brought to Canada. He recalled, "the choice of jobs was limited, you either worked in a laundry or a restaurant."<sup>298</sup> This story is the best example illustrating that a family connection was the important factor that shaped the Chinese immigrant's occupation choice. The new immigrant was brought to Canada through chain migration based on clanship or network of family. As a newcomer to a foreign country, he had no other

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<sup>296</sup> Jan Wong, " 'No tickee', No More: Chow Keong and the Chinese Hand Laundry Story," *The Globe and Mail*, June 30, 2001.

<sup>297</sup> Doris Saunders, "End of Line on Saturday," *Mail Star*, 23 November 1978, p.17.

<sup>298</sup> *ibid*, p.17.

choice than follow his contacts into the existing businesses which could provide a livelihood.

Restaurants were the second occupational trademark of the Chinese in Halifax. They did not enter the restaurant business as early as the laundry business. It was difficult to trace the exact date of the first restaurant operated by the Chinese. By 1919, there were at least nine restaurants and cafes that were operated by or hired the Chinese in the city.<sup>299</sup>

To many Chinese immigrants, laundry and restaurant work were considered a job to do for the time being. Among the immigrants, many had experience in both laundry and restaurant work. For example, Mr. Fong, who first came to Halifax and opened a laundry, in later years opened a restaurant in downtown area which became today's Garden View Restaurant.<sup>300</sup> In writing Halifax's local history, Thomas H. Raddall argued:

Chinese who had set up small laundries here and there about the city during the 1900s were now joined in force by their brothers the restaurant keepers [in the 1910s]. A rash of Chinese restaurants broke over the city's face during the war. These, too, had come to stay, and before long a small Chinese quarter had come into being on Granville Street. All of these restaurants appeared at the same time, evidently financed if not operated by a single hand; and a city newspaper astonished its readers by stating flatly that the richest man in Halifax --- at the moment, anyhow --- was a Chinaman living quietly at the Queen Hotel.<sup>301</sup>

It should be noted that the names of early Chinese restaurants gave no clue as to their Chinese origins. In contrast, it was quite common for Chinese cafes in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to use patriotic names associated with the British Empire such as: King, Royal,

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<sup>299</sup> Information taken from *Halifax Dartmouth City Directory*, 1919, and *The Halifax Herald*, February 19, 1919. the restaurants were mainly opened in the downtown area including: Crown Café, the Busy Bee, Nova Scotia Café, Allies Café, Victory Café, Frisco Café, Criterion Café, Mari-Dal Café, and Silver Grill.

<sup>300</sup> *Your World*, p.22.

<sup>301</sup> Thomas H. Raddall, *Halifax: Warden of the North*, p.265.

Dominion and Union. Those cafes had initially specialized in Western style meals but began offering a wide selection of Chinese foods customized to Western tastes.<sup>302</sup> Unlike the laundry business, Chinese restaurants continue to flourish in the city.

Several reasons account for the Chinese concentration in laundry and restaurant businesses. First, it was common in North America that the first generation of Chinese immigrants lacked skills and English-language proficiency; therefore, they had been used to seek assistance within the same clan. Besides, the sense of developing a business of one's own played an important role in channeling more and more Chinese immigrants into such occupations. The Chinese made the long journey across the ocean in search of "Gold Mountain" to make a fortune and gain higher social status. Working in a laundry or restaurant was still in manual labour, but it was better than working as "coolie". Therefore, when the choice for jobs was limited in the open labour market, operating a laundry or simple restaurant seemed acceptable and feasible. It could be seen as an occupational strategy for the Chinese to cope with overt racism. Moreover, as Paul Siu pointed out, the newcomer, before and after his arrival in the host country, was a member of the immigrant group rather than an individual.<sup>303</sup> Although laundry was not the kind of job they were familiar with at home, it could serve as a means for livelihood. When a person found that the laundry business was relatively easy to handle, fellow immigrants would follow him into the business.

The economic development in Halifax also must be taken into consideration. The increase in population brought an increase in business for laundries and restaurants. At

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<sup>302</sup> Larry No. Shyu, *Peoples of the Maritimes: The Chinese*, p.18.

<sup>303</sup> Paul Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman*, p.107.

the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century, Halifax remained the largest city in Nova Scotia and had become a thriving seaport.<sup>304</sup> The waterfront economic setting created a great need for small restaurants and cafes. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the Halifax waterfront contained various urban activities related to wholesale-trading such as “the packaging and processing of staples, transportation services, and the provisioning and repair activities associated with freight shipment”.<sup>305</sup> It was also a major military base. Such an urban concentration of male workers and the new life patterns imposed by industry increased the demand for eating-places outside of the home as well as laundry services. In addition, as a port city, Halifax also attracted large numbers of travellers. Therefore, many small restaurants or “lunchrooms” as well as laundries, including Chinese ones, were established in the main business district of the city to serve the working-class and travellers.

Finally, the receiving society, with its acceptance of Chinese in these occupations facilitated their occupational choice. The Chinese immigrants in Halifax were, for the most part, discarded labourers after the completion of CPR construction. Having experienced the hostility and strong discrimination in British Columbia, they came to realize that to make a living, the best way was not to compete with the whites, but to take on some of the “marginal” jobs available. An example is that one of the pioneer Chinese immigrants, Ngoon Lee, who traveled along the railway from Vancouver to Halifax, opened his first laundry on Edward Street around 1910 with the support of the Fongs.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Thomas H. Raddall, *Halifax: Warden of the North*, p.246.

<sup>305</sup> L.D. McCANN, “Staples and the new Industrialism in the Growth of Post-Confederation Halifax,” p.94.

<sup>306</sup> Interview with Chuck Lee, 1984.

Lacking capital and aware of the limited chances of working in an industrial factory, he had no other choices and did not know other business except to accept his brother-in-law's support to open a laundry.<sup>307</sup> Although he did not know the laundry trade, at least he could have financial support and start to work. Meanwhile, working in a laundry seemed less troublesome as the host society could tolerate the Chinese presence as long as they were isolated in their own sphere. A Chinese restaurant also could hire some non-union workers from other ethnic groups. It would not be seen as a threat unless the Chinese businesses hired white workers or girls. Therefore, it could be argued that under certain historical circumstances the Chinese became laundry or restaurant workers through necessity, not by preference.

However, to what extent the host society could tolerate a Chinese presence decided whether the Chinese could live a relative peaceful and stable life. When the small Chinese population demonstrated no serious threat to the labour market, no severe anti-Chinese movements arose. However, the Chinese did subsequently suffer physical attacks and were targeted as criminals when Halifax entered the interwar period.

Halifax has long been a city with a diversity of ethnic groups, but in the interwar period local "alien" communities presented a greater cultural challenge to white society.<sup>308</sup> From 1918 onwards, reports began to appear in newspapers that the Chinese were attacked or involved criminal things. On September 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 1918, two race

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<sup>307</sup> Ngoon Lee was Chuck Lee's father. According to Chuck Lee, Mr. Fong helped his father to establish the laundry. Interview with Chuck Lee, 1984.

<sup>308</sup> Michael S. Boudreau, Ph.D. Thesis. *Crime and Society in a City of Order: Halifax, 1918-1935* (Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University, 1996), p. 417.

riots happened at the Williams Show.<sup>309</sup> A Chinese laundry on Agricola Street was attacked and a “Chinaman” engaged in a fight was badly bruised and cut.<sup>310</sup> On Feb 20, 1919, a report on the first page of *The Halifax Herald*, “So The Police May Know”, astonished the whole city. Six Chinese restaurants encountered severe damage by a group of returned soldiers and civilians on the night of February 18, 1919.<sup>311</sup>

The race riots and raids on the Chinese restaurants in Halifax Tuesday Night [February 18, 1919], and last night [February 19, 1919] were most flagrant violations of justice and law and an utter disgrace to the capital of Nova Scotia. Let our people remember, Chinese restaurant proprietors are not only law abiding, but also are showing a degree of business enterprise that the native born might well emulate or imitate. Therefore, as law abiding aliens who are increasing business in Halifax, the Chinese deserve the best protection that the laws and statutes can or should guarantee them. The voice and hand of every English-speaking or native born decent citizen of Halifax should be raised against the hooligans who, without provocation, but on their own devilish initiative, wantonly destroyed rightfully owned property. For in Canada the rights of property are almost as sacred as the rights of person. The law abiding Chinese must be protected, public order must be maintained at any price. Goods citizens should, therefore, do all in their power to have these vandals who committed the crime against the Chinese **ROUNDED UP AND PUNISHED**.<sup>312</sup>

The media reaction to this devastation illustrated that the Chinese were still seen as “aliens” in the city. However, they were deemed “law abiding” and deserved “the best protection”. Three days after the riot, Chief of Police Frank Hanraha “is assured of the support of the entire community, as well as of the press of the city in his efforts to cope with what is perhaps the most difficult situation which has ever confronted the police

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<sup>309</sup> The Williams Show was a show of British Cultural and Commercial Products. *The Morning Chronicle*, September, 16, 1918

<sup>310</sup> Halifax, *The Morning Chronicle*, September, 16, 1918; September, 17, 1918; Halifax, *The Evening Mail*, September, 16 1918.

<sup>311</sup> Those restaurants damaged included the Crown Café, the Busy Bee, Nova Scotia Café, Allies Café, Victory Café, and the Frisco Café, all located in the city’s downtown core. *The Halifax Herald*, February 19, 1919.

<sup>312</sup> *The Halifax Herald*, February 20, 1919.

force of Halifax”.<sup>313</sup> Such attitudes from media and police were much more moderate and neutral than that along the west coast. For example, during the weekend of September 7 and 8, 1907, an anti-Oriental riot broke out in Vancouver. Considerable damage occurred to Chinese and Japanese property. The *Colonist* of Victoria carried a headline “Vancouver Hoodlums Disgrace Their City”, but the Vancouver *World* brushed the whole matter as “a few thousand dollars worth of broken glass”.<sup>314</sup> Other newspapers, including Toronto’s *Globe*, London’s *Morning Post*, and *Telegraph* placed blame on American rowdies but showed less sympathy to the Chinese sufferers.<sup>315</sup> One year later, in his letter sent to all Treaty Ports of China, Federal investigator Mackenzie King said,

On September 1<sup>st</sup> ... [w]e were forced to stop business for several days...[a]t present many of our people are out of employment.... Although our Countrymen [Chinese] have not as yet reached that stage, but we fear that that will come, and therefore take the precaution to warn you that unless you have a position provided for you before you come, do not come here to take any chance.<sup>316</sup>

Because white workers and small businessmen were threatened by the low wages and consequent low standards of living of Chinese workers, King emphasized their fear as the “Law of Competing Standards” in his negotiations with the Chinese government to restrict Chinese immigration. The 1907 Vancouver riot turned out to be an example that Chinese immigrants degraded the labour market, rather than a case of the suffering of Chinese workers. Such different attitudes of the media were largely originated from the

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<sup>313</sup> *The Halifax Herald*, February 21, 1919.

<sup>314</sup> Robert E. Wynne, “American Labor Leaders and the Vancouver Anti-Oriental Riot,” *Anti-Chinese Violence in North America*, eds. Roger Daniels, (New York: Arno Press, 1978), p.172. Original source is from Vancouver *World*, September 9, 1907.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid, p.172. Original source is from Toronto *Globe*, September 10, 1907; London *Morning Post*, September 10, 1907; London *Telegraph*, September 10, 1907.

<sup>316</sup> Mackenzie King, “Competing Standards: Asian Immigrants to B.C.,” (1908), in Irving Abella, David Millar eds. *The Canadian Worker in the Twentieth Century*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.29. original source is from Public Archives of Canada, King Papers, MG26, J4, Vol.13.

different situation when riots happened. In the after-war period, Halifax's local society treated the Chinese with sympathy and blamed the "hooligans" because they were aware that veterans who were unable or unsuccessful to find a job or fit into the society were the origin of such social problems and the Chinese and other ethnic minorities were sufferers. In contrast, in 1907's Vancouver riot, the Chinese along with the Japanese were directly targeted as undesirable immigrants when large numbers of "Asiatic" people continued flux into local labour market as cheap labourers. It highly challenged the idea of "a white man's country" and therefore such violence was a sign of climax of anti-Chinese movements along the west coast. However, the moderate response from the local society did not mean that the Chinese were not subject to popular racism. In 1919, one of the provincial congresses suggested to the Provincial Labor Federation an exclusion of "Asiatic labor".

"Total exclusion of Asiatic Labor" is one of the eight chief points in the platform of principles adopted by the congress, and upon which the new Provincial Labor Federation will base its energies in its initiative efforts to influence further legislation in the Province [Nova Scotia].<sup>317</sup>

It could be argued that because of their growing population and increasingly dominant roles in laundry and restaurant businesses in Halifax, Chinese immigrants soon became targets for legislators as well as nativism followers who advocated "a white Canada". As early as 1910, when Chinese laundries began to quickly expand in the city, it had raised the attention of the government. The 1910 *Report of the Royal Commission of Hours of Labour* reported:

There are three classes of laundries in the Province, the Chinese, the Institution, and the ordinary Commercial laundries. Of the Chinese and Institution laundries the Commission had no information. ... [T]he Chinese and Institution laundries

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<sup>317</sup> *Halifax Herald*, March 3, 1919.

are strong competitors with the Commercial firms. They appear to have already certain advantage.<sup>318</sup>

Considering the feasibility of an eight-hour law, the Report warned if it was passed, “and if the law were not strictly enforced in all the laundries, it would simply amount to a handicap imposed by the State upon the commercial firms, and an advantage of their competitors”.<sup>319</sup> This could be seen as the first sign of that Chinese businesses were regarded as “strong competitors” in Halifax. In 1918, the Halifax committee in wartime asserted that “alien” business should not be allowed to open on Sundays, among which Chinese laundries and restaurants were included.<sup>320</sup> From 1918 until 1923, the police occasionally launched a series of raids on Chinese laundries, cafes, and homes to seize opium, break up gambling rings, and rescue “girls” from the clutches of evil. For example, on May 18, 1921, five Chinamen were arrested and charged \$500 each after the police raided a shop on Sackville St. and found a quantity of opium.<sup>321</sup> Three days later, police raided another Chinese farm and arrested two “Celestials” for they were having liquor in their possession in a place other than their dwellings under the N.S. Temperance Act.<sup>322</sup> In so doing, they helped to entrench the belief that the Chinese, not whites, could be blamed for the spread of vice.<sup>323</sup> However, the evidence in Halifax suggested that the Chinese were not subject to institutional racism, compared to other cities such as

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<sup>318</sup> Commissioner of Public Works and Mines, *Report of the Royal Commission of Hours of Labour* (Halifax, N.S.: King’s Printer, 1910), p.87.

<sup>319</sup> *ibid*, p.87.

<sup>320</sup> *The Halifax Herald*, July 6, 1918.

<sup>321</sup> Halifax, *The Morning Chronicle*, May 18, 1921.

<sup>322</sup> Halifax, *The Morning Chronicle*, May 21, 1921.

<sup>323</sup> Michael S. Boudreau, *Crime and Society in a City of Order*, p.149.

Vancouver and Toronto, which had passed by-laws to restrict Chinese laundry business. For example, in 1900 Vancouver passed by-law No. 373 prohibiting Chinese laundrymen from using mouth water to spray clothing while ironing.<sup>324</sup> In 1903 Kamloops city government declared Chinese laundries a public nuisance and forced a Chinese laundryman, Ah Mee, to sell his property.<sup>325</sup> In 1912, the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada reported that the Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta governments had passed legislation, "prohibiting the employment of white girls or females by Orientals in restaurants, laundries, etc."<sup>326</sup> The evidence in those areas revealed that at that time the Chinese were subject to institutional racism and anti-Asian prejudice was deeply rooted and a white nation sentiment was strongly advocated. It also reinforced the fact that Chinese could not integrate into the host society in Canada, not only because of their self-isolation and entirely different culture, but also because of such racial-oriented policies. The Chinese were driven out of the core industries, but were still subject to hatred in the less competitive businesses.

During the period 1918 to 1923, not only Chinese, but also "blacks" were regarded as criminal targets. Other minority groups such as Jews, Japanese, and even Newfoundlanders were also racially treated. This could be explained on economic and cultural terms. After WWI, the industrial economy in the Maritimes collapsed and with few exceptions, "primary industries throughout the region languished".<sup>327</sup> Halifax experienced a recession, especially after the explosion in 1917 and when thousands of

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<sup>324</sup> Lee Wai-Ma, "Dance No More: Chinese Hand Laundries in Toronto," *Polyphony*, (Summer 1984), p33.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid, p.33.

<sup>326</sup> *ibid*, p.33.

<sup>327</sup> Margaret R. Conrad, *Atlantic Canada*, p.161.

military returnees who could hardly find jobs. Thus, any other ethnic group with the potential to enter into local labour market constituted a menace to the host society. In addition, the social and cultural geography of Halifax contributed to this formation of racial “others”.<sup>328</sup> The Chinese in Halifax tended to reside together in the downtown core by the 1920s and a small Chinatown appeared. According to Chuck Lee, there was a grocery store at 33 Granville Street opened by his father and another owned by Man Wo, stood on the corner of Granville and Salter Streets and in between them the Lee Society and the Chinese Freemasons had their offices. As a clan association, the Lee Society “looked after the charitable needs of some members, made small loans to people in business, cared for the sick” as it functioned elsewhere in Canada.<sup>329</sup> The Chinese Freemasons or Chi Kung Tang was an overseas Chinese organization of Chinese Nationalists, which acted as significant supporter for Sun Yat-sen’s revolution to establish a Republic government in China. Moreover, many Chinese cafes, laundries, and corner stores were located along the adjacent streets of Grafton, Hollis, and Sackville in the 1920s. Many of these businesses doubled as the owners’ residences.<sup>330</sup> As the small Chinatown developed as an enclave within the city, it helped white Halifax, and the police in particular, aim at the Chinese as a source of crime and gambling and opium use.<sup>331</sup> But on the other hand, such a small ethnic area did help the Chinese in coping with discrimination and provide them a home-like space and employment opportunities.

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<sup>328</sup> Michael S. Boudreau, *Crime and Society in a City of Order*, p.149.

<sup>329</sup> Interview with Chuck Lee (1984).

<sup>330</sup> Interview with Chuck Lee (1984). For a visual sense of where “Chinatown” was situated, see the map of Halifax’s downtown.

<sup>331</sup> Michael S. Boudreau, *Crime and Society in a City of Order*, p.149.

Some associations also were organized in coping with the discrimination and racial treatment like in other big cities. For example, on May 18, 1921, when five Chinese immigrants were arrested by the police, it “created much excitement among the Chinese population of the city. Large numbers of them hastened to the Station, eager to go bail for their countrymen”.<sup>332</sup> This illustrated that most Chinese immigrants were well organized and ready to help each other any time.

However, the Chinese community in Halifax was still very small compared to other western or prairie cities. Voices from this minority were hardly heard in public. An example is that when 1911 Revolution in China overthrew the Qing dynasty --- the last imperial government, the newspapers in Halifax reported how the Chinese immigrants in New York paraded on streets celebrating the victory without any clue regarding how the local Chinese community responded to such an event.<sup>333</sup> A single article, “Impressions of the Chinese”, published in Halifax in 1945 could be the first one expressing the appreciation of the Chinese race as “a very human people”.<sup>334</sup>

### Summary

There were two stages of Chinese settlement in Halifax. From their arrival in 1895 until the early 1910s, they were accommodated within a restrictive, but far less hostile, social and political atmosphere than the West coast. The Chinese became laundry or restaurant workers through necessity, not by preference. Lack of language skills, cultural difference, close clanship and the great demand for a service industry in Halifax’s frontier economy all contributed to Chinese immigrants’ concentration in

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<sup>332</sup> Halifax, *The Morning Chronicle*, May 18, 1921.

<sup>333</sup> Halifax, *The Morning Chronicle*, October – November, 1911.

<sup>334</sup> Diana Skala, “Impression of the Chinese”, *Dalhousie Review*, Vol. 24, No.4, (Jan 1945), pp.393-397.

laundry and restaurant businesses. No severe anti-Chinese movements arose before 1918. From 1918 to 1923, a series of race riots showed that the Chinese did suffer physical attacks and were targeted as criminals. Although there was no official provincial restriction applied to Chinese immigrants in Halifax, they did have a hard time operating business. In coping with the discrimination and racial treatment, a small Chinatown came into being for the Chinese immigrants to dwell together and protect each other.

As a whole, the experience of Chinese immigrants in Halifax was typical of Canada at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century. It reflected that only when there were small numbers of them and when they demonstrated no serious threat to the labour market, they could lead a relatively peaceful life. Once their population grew and their businesses expanded quickly enough to compete with the whites, the host society would not accept them. Regardless, for almost a century Chinese laundries and restaurants had become distinct character of urban development and contributed to the services and urban economy of the city. In other words, the Chinese experienced the important transformations associated with the emergence and consolidation of industrial capitalism in Canada. They shared the industrialization and urbanization of the region and therefore have become part of Canadian history.

Figure 4.1 Map of the city of Halifax, Circa 1930 (Source: Public Archives of Nova Scotia)

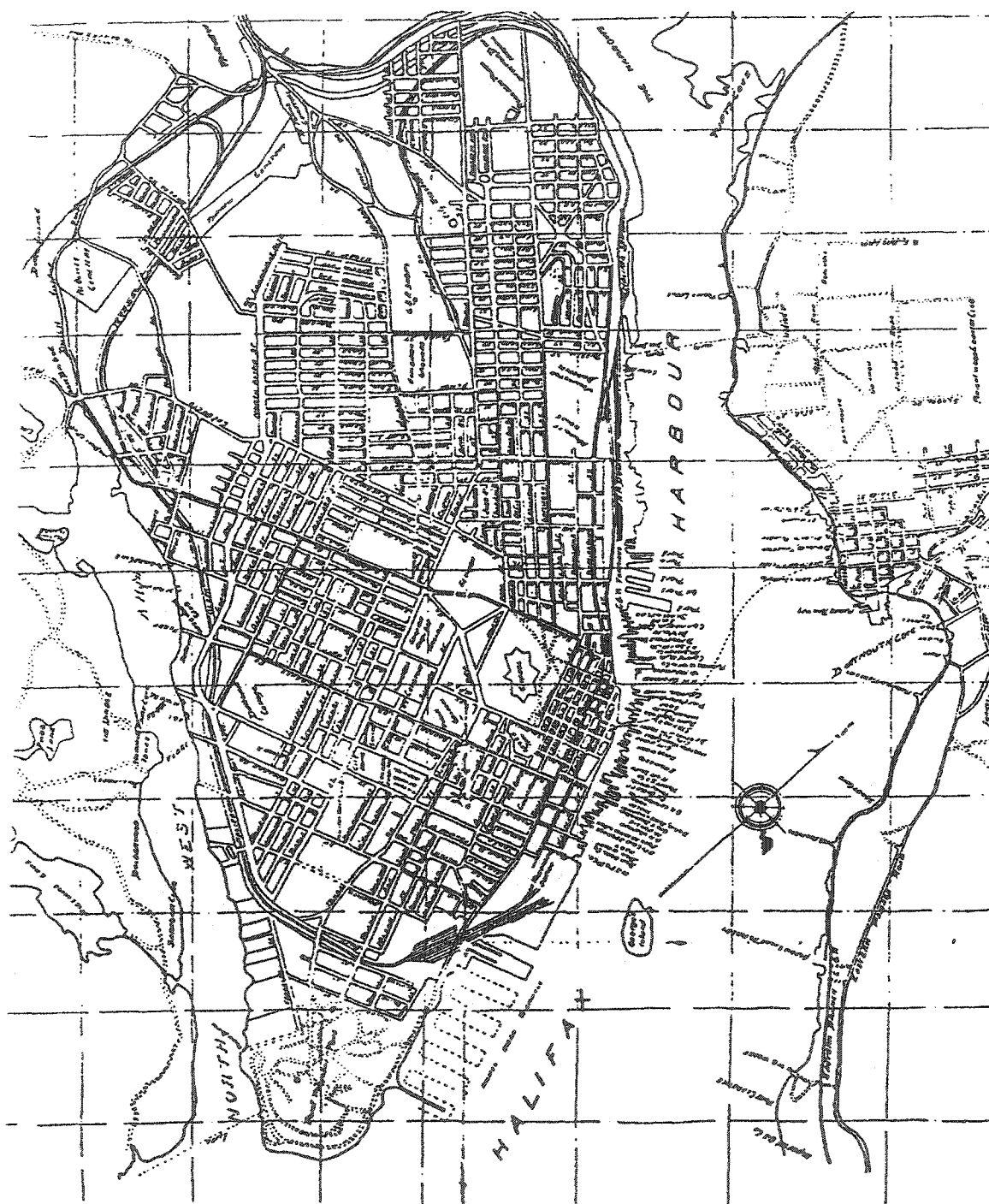


Figure 4.2 Picture of 1919 race riot attacks on a Chinese store, Halifax.

Source: *The Halifax Herald*, 20 February, 1919



## Conclusion

Becoming and being a laundryman or a restaurant worker: few Chinese people in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century expected this to be their experiences in Canada. All the existing scholarship acknowledged that the Chinese who migrated from China to Southeast Asia, North America, Australia and New Zealand were seeking a better livelihood, more fortune and higher social status. This vast migration itself and the Chinese experience in a host society have been studied from different perspectives, including social history, ethnic studies, political history, labour history, and urban history. In the domain of social history and urban history, Canadian scholarship has played a leading role among these four English-speaking countries, although the scholarship focuses primarily on the west and on the urban centers. Employing a cross-disciplinary approach of social history, urban history and sociology, this thesis argues that the occupational changes of Chinese immigrants after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway resulted from both external social forces and internal ethnic solidarity.

Because they were cheap labourers, the earlier Chinese immigrants could participate in various frontier economic activities. On the one hand, the demand in British Columbia and other western territories for labour was the most important motivation for importing Chinese immigrants. The Chinese workers were needed for mining, canning, lumbering and other labour requirements in the frontier communities, but women were not needed. Thus, the Chinese community remained a “bachelor society” for almost one century. On the other hand, Chinese emigrants from Taishan County in Guangdong Province and its neighbors in the Pearl River delta were pushed by the poverty at home and attracted and encouraged by the tales of wealth in America. Thus, despite strong anti-

Chinese sentiments widespread along the west coast, the Chinese could still continue immigrate to Canada as they could fulfill the great labour demands in the frontiers. In addition, close kinship and developed transporting centers, such as Hong Kong and Macao, played important roles in assisting Chinese migrants to come to Canada in a chain pattern.

However, the Chinese were excluded from the core economy and were relegated to the low end of the socio-economic ladder after the completion of CPR in 1885. As a matter of fact, the immigration policy and institutional racism against the Chinese played a major role in shaping the occupation structure of this minority. Nonetheless, institutional racism could not be the only contextual explanation for the concentration of Chinese immigrants in these businesses. The Chinese clustering in these service occupations resulted from the social, economic, and demographic transformation of urban settings in Canada. The labour surplus made the tension between White and non-White groups more striking, and the anti-Chinese sentiments stronger than before. The Chinese were restricted to share the major opportunities in local industrial employment. But in the meantime, the quick urbanization of Canadian cities in the industrial period created large demands for urban services. The Chinese therefore accommodated themselves into the service economy rather than struggle in the open labour market. When they found that by operating laundry and restaurant they could avoid racial attacks, maintain livelihood and even send remittance back to home, such businesses became “the ethnic enclave economy”. In other words, such particular occupations became their logical choices with the help from their clan association or family network. The immigrants’ ethnic and cultural background, as well as close clanship helped them to establish the same

businesses, but further fostered their concentration in them. Although the 1907 Vancouver riot and the anti-Asian movements afterwards succeeded in their demands for the exclusion of Chinese immigrants in 1923 and the evacuation of the Japanese in 1942, for a short period right after the riot, the Chinese effectively demonstrated their unhappiness by withdrawing their services as domestic servants and as hotel, restaurant, and laundry workers for several days. They showed their importance to the local economy.<sup>335</sup> Therefore, it could be argued that the expansion of the Chinese laundry and restaurant businesses in Canada at the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century represented their coping capacities against institutional racism and their participation in Canada's urban economic activities. Such ethnic businesses contributed to the urban development of Canadian cities, as mirrored elsewhere in North America.

The experience of Chinese immigrants in Halifax was typical in Canada at the turn of 20th century. It reflected that only when there were small numbers of them and when they demonstrated no serious threat to the labour market, they could maintain their livelihood by operating a laundry or restaurant. Once their population grew a certain amount and their businesses expanded enough to compete with the Whites, the host society would show their discontent via different ways sometimes violent, sometimes subtle. This reinforced the fact that prejudice and discrimination were deeply rooted in Canadian society and the Chinese immigrants were significantly affected by the nationwide racism that favored White immigrants.

In the process of becoming and being a laundryman or restaurant worker, the Chinese immigrants learned to accommodate themselves in a harsh environment by withdrawing from the core industrial economy and transferring their labour into marginal

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<sup>335</sup> Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Country*, p.193.

services sectors. They sought help from their clan or family association and tried to establish independent businesses out of the core economy to avoid competition with White workers. The expansion of the Chinese laundry and restaurant business reflected how the Chinese shared in the industrialization and urbanization of Canada from region to region and moved beyond the shadow of institutional racism.

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