

A Preliminary Sketch of Chinese Women and Work in British Columbia 1858-1950

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In the study of Chinese-Canadians in general, and in the British Columbia case specifically, Chinese women have been largely ignored. For the most part invisible in the formal record, women have been treated as an afterthought, or as only a demographic statistic. However, Chinese women's settlement in the province is significant, especially when their labour, whether paid or unpaid, is considered.

From the earliest days of settlement here women participated in both wage work and unpaid labour. In the Chinese woman's historical setting in British Columbia these familiar categories of work need to be redefined: *unpaid work in the home* was labour performed in the home generally related to its functioning. Responsibilities included food preparation, cleaning, childbearing, childrearing, the manufacture of clothing, as well as many other varied and time-consuming tasks. The majority of Chinese women were primarily responsible for these tasks even when they were also involved in additional work. *Unpaid work* was labour performed for money, although women did not directly receive money for their labour. Instead, a male in control of a family business or a male "owner" or "contractor" of women benefited economically from and controlled the money earned by women. *Paid work* was labour for which women received money. This category included women who received payment for work at home such as home sewing or laundry. It also included other women who worked for wages in the work force and in family-owned businesses.

Given these definitions of work, it is clear that only women who had all labour performed for them were exempt from work. However, in Canada, almost all Chinese women worked in the home. A majority of these were also either in the second category of unpaid labourer who earned a profit for male family members, bosses, or owners, or were wage workers in the labour force.

Therefore, Chinese women's paid and unpaid labour was indispensable to the maintenance and continuance of many of the Chinese businesses in which they worked, and for the economic survival of those few Chinese families who first settled here.

It is well known that the Chinese people in Canada and in British Columbia have been subjected to a long history of repressive government legislation and administrative policy. What usually goes unsaid is that this legislation and policy severely deterred most Chinese women from coming to Canada as permanent settlers. That single or independent Chinese women seldom came to Canada in a period of high demand in the West for women is entirely overlooked. Yet public policy restricted Chinese women's entrance to Canada from the 1880s until 1950. Beginning in the 1880s, attempts were made to restrict Chinese immigration by using a series of head taxes. In 1923, the passing of the Chinese Immigration Act completely barred the Chinese from entering Canada as permanent settlers for nearly twenty-five years. Also known as the Exclusion Act, this legislation culminated a period of intense discrimination. Between 1920 and 1923, government bodies which became concerned with the increasing presence of Chinese women in British Columbia created new policies which affected women after 1923. Finally, since Chinese women remained in British Columbia after 1923, their work patterns are of considerable interest. As the first generation of Chinese-Canadian women grew up, they continued to work as wage labourers, but in somewhat different occupations from their mothers.

This history of Chinese women has been gathered from primary documents, secondary sources, and oral histories.¹ The oral history will be used to enliven information contained in the primary documents.² Oral history also provides authoritative accounts of the past. This aspect of it is especially important when public archives and secondary sources have few if any documents pertaining to the subjects.

A stereotype of Chinese women and their work suggests that Chinese women were essentially *Nei-jen* or "inside people."³ This stereotype emanates from centuries of Confucian prescriptive literature which defines women's ideal place in the domestic sphere. This has influenced adversely the study of women's work in North America. Recent studies of women's work in China in questioning the traditional stereotype have much to contribute to an examination of Chinese women's work in Canada.

For example, recent studies by Elisabeth Croll, Marjorie Topley, Elizabeth Johnson and Delia Davin⁴ conclude that, in addition to work in the home, southern Chinese women in particular laboured in other spheres. The importance of woman's labour in agriculture and manufacturing may account for the relative rarity of bound feet, for the lower suicide rate among southern women, and for the unusually progressive labour organizations, such as the marriage resistance movement which centred around silk manufacturing in the south of China.

Chinese women who settled in British Columbia came from these southern Chinese provinces. Failure to examine their work in their adopted home is to ignore an essential aspect of their heritage. While Chinese women did not come to British Columbia specifically to farm or to work in silk

manufacture, nevertheless they continued to perform essential work both inside and outside the home.

From its beginning in British Columbia in 1858, Chinese settlement characteristically did not include women. Instead, the first settlers were single men who migrated here from the southern Chinese provinces of Guangdong and Fujian. In 1859, they were followed by larger groups who came from Hong Kong. Most Chinese male migrants initially came as miners in search of gold during the Fraser River Gold Rush; few brought their wives.⁵ The first Chinese community was established by 1862 in Barkerville, a northern interior British Columbia community, where the population reached 3,000 Chinese.⁶ Later, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway provided the largest influx of Chinese labourers, who initially came up from San Francisco and Portland. After Onderdonk imported 2,000 Chinese labourers from Hong Kong in 1881, large-scale migration from China to Canada was well under way. The centre of the migration was the port of Victoria. From Victoria, the men travelled to the interior of British Columbia to construct the railroad.⁷ In 1880, there were 3,000 Chinese in Victoria,⁸ and, in a period of three and one-half months in 1882, another 8,000 Chinese entered British Columbia.⁹ Between 1876 and 1884, 17,028 Chinese were admitted to British Columbia. Approximately 17,000 came for the express purpose of working on the construction of the railway.¹⁰

The Canadian government believed that Chinese men came for work in British Columbia and would eventually return to their homeland. Anthony Chan has pointed out that

...Prime Minister John A. MacDonald...in 1882 told his colleagues in Parliament that the Chinese were unlikely to remain as permanent settlers because they brought neither their wives nor children. He said they were transients or sojourners whose only role in Canada was to use their muscle and strong backs in the aid of frontier progress.¹¹

The belief that Chinese men were merely temporary workers in British Columbia remained in the minds of the policy makers until 1923. Such a view presupposed that single and married Chinese women would remain in China while Chinese men, both single and married, laboured in British Columbia. Restrictive policies enshrined this belief to ensure that the majority of Chinese men would never be able to bring their wives, let alone single women, to British Columbia. For the most part, even married women were to remain in China until after 1950.

Perhaps the most important constraint on women's entry to Canada was the "head tax." The Chinese were the only ethnic group in Canadian history who had to pay a fee to enter the country. Effectively, the fee predetermined that the majority of the first Chinese population would be male. Many men eventually paid the tax for male relatives such as sons or nephews since they would enter the paid labour force and be able to repay the head tax to their sponsors. Generally, women were not viewed as productive workers who would be able to repay the head tax; instead, they were thought to be expensive economic liabilities. So the majority of Chinese men who came to

British Columbia neither brought women with them nor later sent for them because of the money involved. The few women for whom the head tax was paid were single women contracted to come to British Columbia to work in the paid labour force. Their entry seemed feasible. When the women had repaid the men who brought them to the province, their period of indenture was over. It could take ten or more years to repay the interest and the head tax. In other cases, like those of prostitutes and "slave girls", the situation was different since they did not have the option of paying off their head tax: they were "owned" unpaid labourers, until they were sold into marriage.

Beginning in 1886, a Chinese immigrant was required to pay a fee to come to Canada. The ten dollar head tax was increased to fifty dollars from 1896 to 1900, to one hundred dollars from 1900 to 1903, and to five hundred dollars from 1904 to 1923. In effect, most Chinese men could not bring their wives or female relatives because of the burdensome head tax. The first exception occurred in 1887, when a Chinese woman was allowed to enter without paying the tax if her husband was not of Chinese origin.¹² This legislation probably did not enable many women to immigrate because few would have been married to non-Chinese men.

Before 1900, the government enabled some Chinese men to enter Canada without paying a head tax. This created an "exempt" classification. Merchants entered free. By 1900, the federal government included under the class of "exempt Chinese" the "wives and children of clergymen and merchants."¹³ Clearly the government believed that the willingness of Chinese men to do business in Canada would be dependent on their ability to bring their families without being taxed. So the opportunity for a wife to come to Canada depended upon her husband's financial status and occupational classification.

However, the "exempt" category of merchant wives and children was used to bring many single women to British Columbia. While many legitimate wives and children entered, the exemption was also used illegally. For example, young girls who were purchased to be servants to merchant families were easily disguised as daughters of merchants,¹⁴ and tearoom waitresses¹⁵ who were indentured labourers sometimes entered described as merchants' wives. Due to cultural mores and economic barriers, no single women could have come to British Columbia independently.

Probably the first women to arrive in British Columbia were truly merchants' wives. The largest merchant in Victoria, Kwong Lee (Lee Chang), brought his wife and children sometime before 1860.¹⁶ Around the same time, Won Alexander Comyow's parents arrived.¹⁷ One of the oral history respondents, Evelyn, traced her family to the arrival of her grandparents in Yale in 1854. Another respondent, Ho Gee, believed her mother came to British Columbia by 1890.¹⁸ All of these women were merchant's wives whose husbands had established stores or were traders in the Chinese areas of the towns or cities where they settled. By 1871, with the census counted, fifty-three Chinese women were reported in the province. The ratio was thirty-five women to every one thousand Chinese men.¹⁹ Consequently, "women formed less than one percent of the population."²⁰ By 1885, small numbers of Chinese women were scattered throughout the province.²¹ Many small towns such as

Quesnel Forks, Soda Creek and Clinton had Chinese prostitutes, who usually numbered less than five. In addition, both prostitutes and merchant wives had settled in larger towns such as Victoria, New Westminster and Nanaimo.²²

No matter who they were or when they came, Chinese women participated in paid and unpaid work. As paid labourers, they worked mainly as home sewers. Evidence suggests that Chinese women also worked as paid domestics.²³ However, until the 1920s, Chinese women's unpaid work was more central to their experience in British Columbia.

If Chinese women who came to British Columbia were not merchant wives who performed unpaid labour in the domestic realm, then they were usually prostitutes or "slave girls," neither of whom realized any monetary return for their labour.

In the 1885 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, the discussion of Chinese women is dominated by the subject of prostitution in British Columbia, especially in Victoria. The prostitutes who arrived in the province were initially brought from San Francisco. From Victoria they might travel to cities and towns throughout the province. By 1886, young women from ...poverty-stricken peasant and workers' families in Guangdong, Jiansi and Zheijiang provinces were arriving in Victoria and Vancouver direct from overseas. The most coveted prostitutes were children, ranging from six years old to the late teens.²⁴

The practice of buying and selling women into prostitution was transferred from China to Canada.²⁵ The women were owned by Chinese men and brought to the province in large numbers in these early years.²⁶ At least 100 to 200 Chinese women were imported annually from 1887 until the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁷ The women were bought and sold for prices ranging from \$500 to \$2,000. "Some Chinese merchants quickly realized that profits could be made from the sexual needs of Chinese workers and the curiosity of white pleasure seekers."²⁸

There were different classes of prostitutes. Those who worked in parlors catered to merchants and white men. Those who worked as "crib prostitutes" were by far the poorest, living in the worst conditions in Chinatown. Anthony Chan vividly described the environment in which these women lived:

The "cribs," each of which held up to six women, were slatted crates, often located out of doors, measuring approximately 12 feet by 14 feet with a curtain, pallet, wash basin, mirror and usually two chairs. A woman forced into crib prostitution would work for six to eight years; at the end of her usefulness, when she was ravaged by disease, physical abuse or starvation, she was allowed to escape to the Salvation Army, the hospital, or the gutter. Typically, she would be dead within six months.²⁹

In addition to prostitutes, "slave girls" or female servants were imported to Canada to work as unpaid labourers. The buying and selling of young

women refers to those who were bought in China and then brought to Canada to work as maids in the homes of Chinese families who usually were well-to-do merchants. When Ho Gee was just a girl her family bought two young women and brought them over from China. These women performed the household chores and were responsible for childcare duties yet they were unpaid. Ho Gee recalled "many rich families" in Vancouver's Chinatown had "slave girls" working for them.³⁰

The *Annual Reports* of the Women's Missionary Society, which managed a hostel for Chinese women and girls in Victoria in this period, frequently referred to the presence and work of young female servants. The 1902-03 *Annual Report* made no attempt to include in its informal survey the number of servants, although it was anxious to tabulate the number of Chinese women in Victoria: "In Victoria there are about 125 women besides slave girls."³¹ Although there were several cases of servants seeking shelter in the hostel, the maids were not uniformly mistreated: "Several of the homes refuse me admittance principally because they keep slave girls. But many of these girls are quite as well cared for, if not better treated, than many domestics in European homes."³² In the *Annual Report* of 1900 the responsibilities of one such servant were described:

One of these little servant girls came into the school a few weeks ago. She had with her a couple of two-year-old babies. I asked her if she would like to learn to read English. She shook her head and said, "m tak han," (no time). I told her if she could find time to come in for a little while each day, I would try and give her a lesson. She came the next day, but brought the two babies. As may be supposed, her lesson was given and recieved under difficulties, and with alternate laughing, crawing and screaming of the babies the school was in a high state of chaos. She came in once or twice afterwards, bringing her young charges with her, but I could not induce her to attempt a lesson again.³³

Other entries in the Society's *Record Book* identify less happy situations for the servants:

Age: 23. 1901. Ran away from her master, came to the Home asking for protection as the "old man" was cruel. This man bought her four years ago for \$900.00 and her former mistress had returned to China wealthy. Slave and prostitute to Chue Cheung. "Committed to Essondale."

Ages: 15 and 13. 1903. Slave girls belonging to Yuen Sung. Merchant on Cormorant St. Ran away to Chon Kong's store asking for the Home...

Age: 17, 1904. Came to Home of her own accord, master's son showed her the way.³⁴

The women who ran the Chinese Rescue Home included in their missionary work some training which would allow the women who came to them to earn a living. The kind of training they provided was very much

women's work, but it was understood that to earn money was necessary and respectable. The *Annual Report* of 1895-96 noted that one of the Chinese women at the Home who was being trained in dress-making was living with an English family for whom she worked as a domestic.³⁵ The report records that out of eight women resident in the Home "two have gone out to service." The *Annual Report* of the Home is proof that as early as 1896 some Chinese women were doing work similar to male domestic servants. The *Missionary Record Book* of the time notes that one Chinese woman was forced into employment to support her family because her husband was not "strong" enough to work in 1889.³⁶

Before 1900, the majority of Chinese women who were paid labourers worked as home sewers. In this period woman's sweated labour was common in Eastern Canada, but it is often supposed that British Columbia was free of it. Christine Stansell referred to home workers as outside workers, a term commonly used in the nineteenth century. They were called outside workers because they "worked for wages in their own households, outside a shop or factory."³⁷ Home work enabled women "to do their jobs as wives, mothers and daughters"³⁸ while also shutting them "away from the comprehension of the economy equal to that of the men with whom they lived."³⁹ Stansell concluded:

The system masked women's involvement in wage labour; they appeared to be peripheral to industrial production and their identity as workers seemed secondary to their roles as wives and mothers. In actuality their wage work was not marginal, either in their own lives or in the development of metropolitan industry.⁴⁰

Chinese women and girls worked long hours for low pay for Chinese tailors in urban centres. The actual number of females who participated in home sewing is not known, but the evidence overwhelmingly suggests that many did.

Although Chinese women's work as home sewers probably began before 1900, the *Women's Missionary Annual Reports* of the Chinese Rescue Home discussed it for the first time in 1902-03: "Many of the boys attend public school, but few of the girls; they remain home to sew buttonholes."⁴¹

Female sewers were obviously in high demand in Chinese areas made up mostly of men. Sing Lim, in an article printed in *The Sun* in 1979, recalled that his sister

...was a great help to mother. She cleaned the house, shopped and picked up clothing from the local tailor shops for mother to alter or mend. Mother used her Singer sewing machine when she could, but did most of the work by hand. The extra income helped feed the family.⁴²

In a 1910 newspaper article, the interviewer discussed women in Vancouver's Chinatown working as home sewers:

As well as making their own clothes--and how cleverly

embroidered were the Oriental patterns on their simple print coats--they do the button holes and much of the handwork for their own tailors. In this way they earn a considerable amount of pocket money.⁴³

Finally, Ho Gee recollected that her mother sewed in their home which was located above their tailor shop. She was paid 10¢ per buttonhole which required feather-stitching. She thought her mother began sewing before 1900. Ho Gee remembered their "slave girls" would have to do the housework and look after the children so her mother could sew constantly. Although her family had these servants, Ho Gee confided that her family was not "rich." Her mother's labour was a necessity in the family business.⁴⁴ Because there was no language barrier, women were able to work for Chinese tailors who would pay them for piecework. While many women spent much of their time sewing buttonholes, the sewing trade included other occupations such as seamstresses, tailoresses, and dressmakers.

Between 1906 and 1910, Chinese women took up jobs in other areas. They worked as general labourers, clerks, and in unclassified capacities.⁴⁵ Although the specific jobs these women performed, their working conditions, and pay are not known, it is clear that Chinese women were working for wages.

It is difficult to attach numbers to groups of Chinese women in British Columbia in this early period, desirable though that would be and revealing as that might be. The Women's Missionary Society through 1902, 1903, and 1904 tabulated numbers of women in Victoria, Vancouver, New Westminster, Steveston, and Nanaimo, but after recording numbers such as 125, 30, 14, 2, and 10, the *Reports* invariably concluded that such numbers were merely rough guesses since "there is no way at present of obtaining correct statistics as to the number of Chinese women..."⁴⁶ Not even the figures provided by the Immigration Department Records and the Canada Census are useful since they do not resemble each other in their estimates of the number of Chinese women arriving in the province and the number of resident Chinese females.⁴⁷ Since it is impossible to trust the figures, all that can be said is the obvious: the ratio between the sexes remained highly unbalanced. Women were a tiny, tiny minority in a male society. Wickberg may say that "After 1911 there were many more women, and with them, many more small children,"⁴⁸ but this influx of women brought only *relatively* more women. The imbalance between the sexes was not even remotely righted.

The history of Chinese women's arrival in British Columbia is, in some ways, a history of the "exempt" merchant status. Women and children who were not family members still entered as dependents of merchants but, in addition, because "the qualifications for 'merchant' status were not clearly defined,"⁴⁹ Chinese men who wanted to bring women to Canada defined themselves as "merchants" for that very purpose. Because of the ambiguity of the definition of "merchant," women entered the province as "merchant wives" even though their husbands operated very small businesses. The operators of tailor shops, laundries, restaurants and small grocery stores were not the "merchants" originally intended to be provided with exemptions. Women often worked in these family-run businesses. Oral histories indicated

that female family members were unpaid workers in these operations.⁵⁰

In the years prior to the passing of the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act, government officials took up the subject of Chinese women's labour and reproduction. The Department of Immigration, the House of Commons and the Senate determined policy about the Chinese in Canada, yet in its concerns the Department of Immigration differed from Parliament. The Immigration Department was concerned that Chinese women were coming to the province illegally as labourers. However, MPs and Senators believed that Chinese women's exclusion from Canada was necessary to contain the growth of the Chinese population and also to discourage polygamous practices among what was thought to have been a large proportion of the Chinese merchant community. Although the Immigration Branch was explicitly concerned with women's labour and Parliament with population control, the Exclusion Act was the outcome of both views.

The subject of Chinese women restaurant workers was important in the Immigration Reports of the federal government from 1919 to 1922. More than any other issue relating to Chinese women, it received serious consideration by government officials. By 1919, Chinese women were coming to British Columbia to take up labouring occupations in the province. Yet their work in such capacities was illegal. The federal government in 1919 passed an Order-in-Council (P.C. 1202) which excluded all skilled and unskilled labourers from entering Canada.⁵¹ Although male and female labourers were excluded from entering Canada from 1919 onward, wives of labourers in Canada were still legally admitted upon payment of the \$500.00 head tax. Labourers wives could enter only as "wives," not as labourers.

In a letter dated May 20, 1922, the Assistant Chief Controller of Immigration, Percy Reid, wrote that "a percentage" of women admitted to Canada in the past few years had been found working as "labourers."⁵² Some of the women who were refused admission appealed to the court under a writ of Habeas Corpus.⁵³ It seems clear that the women were being refused entry because the Immigration Department thought that the women were not legally married and the Controller of Immigration had the power to decide which women could enter. The women had to prove that they were in fact "housewives" rather than labourers. Women had to be "dependents" of men. Chinese women seeking to enter Canada were, by government decree, to be relegated to the home and its functions.

In 1925, N.L. Ward, in a book entitled *The Oriental Missions in B.C.*, confirmed that the Immigration Department made very sure that women were the legal or "bona fide" wives of the men they came to join:

Young women coming over to Canada to be married went through the ceremony at the Immigration offices before being allowed to leave. Careful investigation was made into each case, to ensure that the man wanted the woman as a "bona fide" wife, and was not merely going through the ceremony in order to secure admission for her to be engaged in some other manner. There have been cases where this has been done, and the girl has been merely a slave, hired out by the man as

a waitress or professional entertainer, and turning over her wages to him.⁵⁴

In a 1922 letter, Percy Reid discussed one woman, Jew Shee, who took out Habeas Corpus proceedings.⁵⁵ He explained that she was granted "exempt entry" by the court because she was considered married by the court and her husband, a "restaurant keeper," was classified under the merchant category.⁵⁶ However, after the court case, Jew Shee

...laid a criminal charge against her alleged husband and told our officials that the man had compelled her to work in a labouring occupation in restaurants, and in addition, was trying to force her into a life of shame.⁵⁷

The *Immigration Records* indicated that a restaurant was a common place of work for Chinese women. A letter of May 12, 1922 referred to women at work: "Chinese labourers ... in the guise of housewives ... have secured admission to Canada and have subsequently been found working in restaurants and laundries."⁵⁸ Several of the oral history respondents discussed Chinese women working in restaurants. They differentiated between the women who worked in the restaurants and those who worked in the teahouses. Teahouse work was not respectable since, as one woman said, the workers were "to serve men." Ying went on to say that

...they have to be able to carry a good conversation and of course ladies in those days didn't get all painted up and these ladies were all painted up and we could tell the difference...some would have been brought over just to make the dollars because the gentlemen would have the foresight to know that they could make money off the ladies. Some were prostitutes; some weren't. There were many classes of them, and you could see from their mannerisms. They were bad because they were there especially to cater to the whims of men and they have to live by their wits to get their earnings from the men and this is known as bad.

Whether they were totally prostitutes or just earning a living working as a waitress it makes no difference at that time.⁵⁹

The lengths to which people went to circumvent the law suggest that women's labour had the ability to affect the survival or success of Chinese businesses. The number of unpaid and poorly paid women who performed essential labour in laundries, restaurants and tailoring shops can only be surmised, but a 1922 letter from the Immigration Department revealed that Chinese businessmen attempted to keep the possibility of immigration to Canada open:

The present enforcement of the regulations is being systematically opposed by a certain element of Chinese in Canada, and money is being spent...in an endeavour to break down the barriers now preventing the admission of coolie labour, both male and female.⁶⁰

Wong Shee was a Chinese woman who entered British Columbia from the United States in 1921. She was refused admission on the grounds that she came within the labouring class. Because of Wong Shee's test case, the Immigration Act was amended. She was brought before a Board of Inquiry under the jurisdiction of the Department of Immigration, where evidence was declared by "Miss Cameron, Superintendent of the Chinese Mission Home in San Francisco, that Wong Shee had been an inmate of a Chinese house of ill repute and that she was a woman of very low moral character."⁶¹ After a writ of Habeus Corpus was heard before Chief Justice Hunter, Wong Shee was released and allowed to remain in British Columbia, "...the decision being that under the Chinese Immigration Act we can only deport to place from which the person came to Canada. It is, of course, impossible to return Wong Shee to the United States as she is a citizen of China."⁶² Chief Justice Hunter, deciding she was the wife of a merchant, and not a labourer herself, as was alleged by the Immigration Department, admitted her exempt from the head tax. The Immigration Department became increasingly concerned that the courts had jurisdiction in this area. The decision was appealed. The British Columbia Court of Appeal was asked to decide "whether the immigration officials or the courts ... decide who is, or who is not, to be admitted to Canada..."⁶³ Hunter's decision was overturned in favour of the Department of Immigration.

The Chinese Immigration Act was amended to prevent recurrence of the situation. The amendment required that immigrants establish their identity and marital status to the Controller of Immigration so the courts were not to have any power to decide who was or who was not eligible to enter the country. Now the courts were unable to interfere with the Board of Inquiry's decision *if* the immigrant did not have Canadian domicile or citizenship. In the case of Chinese women trying to enter, the Immigration Controller would have the only say. Because the Board of Inquiry had deemed the marriage of Wong Shee to her "alleged" husband to be "untrue," and because the BC Court of Appeal had upheld the Immigration Department ruling she was not eligible to remain in Canada under any circumstances.⁶⁴ After a brief stay, she was deported.

In 1923, after many attempts at restricting Chinese immigration, the federal government denied the Chinese entry to Canada. According to Mackenzie King, then Prime Minister, the Act was a necessary solution to a problem of labour competition: "...oriental labour come[s] into competition with our labour."⁶⁵ But a closer look at the Parliamentary debates revealed that many MPs and Senators were motivated by more pernicious attitudes than fear of labour competition. While Mackenzie King said Chinese exclusion was necessary to limit labour competition, the general debate really revolved around racist attitudes which were probably intensified because of British Columbia's economic/labour difficulties resulting from war's end. Certainly Chinese women were not discussed in terms of labour competition. Instead, women were discussed solely in terms of polygamy and population control.

A major concern of the white population in British Columbia was that "...if Chinese were allowed, without restriction, to bring their wives to

Canada, they would reproduce at an alarming rate and [might] eventually out-number whites..."⁶⁶ Interestingly, as Sampat-Mehta points out in *International Barriers*, although whites did not want the Chinese population to increase, the fact that most Chinese men did not have families here was considered immoral. Yet white Canadians would not alleviate what they themselves considered to be the problem. Similarly, Charles J. Woodsworth noted:

Far more drastic than any measures which had preceded it, the proposed Act excluded wives and children of Chinese residents... The House of Commons, however, found little to criticize in it ...From the moral and humanitarian standpoint, one or two members argued that the exclusion of wives and children of Chinese would create a serious social situation, but, on the whole, little attention was paid to this aspect.⁶⁷

It is clear that a kind of "hysteria" prevailed among much of the white population in the province. This fear dominated discussions of Asian immigration. For example, Mr. McBride, an MP from British Columbia stated, "In my opinion their [Chinese] object is to get control of the Pacific coast, including all British Columbia."⁶⁸ So a remedy for the existent hysteria was to end all Chinese immigration to Canada and to control the growth of resident Chinese populations by limiting reproduction, which meant that Chinese women in particular had to be excluded. Only four classes of immigrants could enter Canada; all were categorized as temporary settlers:

1. University students.
2. Merchants - clearly defined and included only those engaged in large scale trade.
3. Native borns - returning from several years of education in China.
4. Diplomatic personnel.⁶⁹

No women were likely to be in any of these categories.

It is important to point out that in the House of Commons debates women were not central to the discussion about the Chinese. In fact, the subject of women was mostly ignored. Only "merchant wives" were discussed and even then the debate was only whether or not Chinese merchants should be granted the "privilege" of bringing their wives. Mackenzie King believed that only those merchants who came under the new definition of "merchant" should be allowed to bring wives. He stated:

I do not think we should take the position that we will allow a merchant, a man of high business standing, to come to our country and start up in business, and subject him to the indignity of not being permitted to bring his wife and children with him.⁷⁰

The opposition which greeted King's opinion centred on the supposed polygamous practices of Chinese merchants. Mr. McBride responded:

...there are very few Chinese merchants in Canada that have not two or three wives. Would the Prime

Minister admit to Canada only the children of the merchant by one wife, or would he let in the whole of them?⁷¹

The discussion of polygamy obscured the facts of the matter. Very few women would fall under the “merchant wife” category, since not many men would be eligible as merchants. Such small numbers of women and children would hardly be a threat to white supremacy or labour security. However, in implicitly excluding all Chinese women from Canada, it is clear that the Bill’s intent was to control the reproductive life of the Chinese population. Chinese families in British Columbia were large; many had from six to ten children.⁷² Any influx of women meant the real possibility of many more Chinese. The myth that Chinese merchants *as a rule* had more than one wife only provided a convenient excuse for the exclusion of women.

No real defense of Chinese women in their own right was raised, although Labour Member of Parliament, J.S. Woodsworth, argued on behalf of Chinese family life. Unlike Mackenzie King, he thought all the Chinese men who resided in the province should have the right to bring their wives. He stated:

...it seems to me we are nothing less than hypocritical if we talk about the immoralities of the Chinese and yet permit them to come under conditions that would breed immorality. We object to their coming because they make poor citizens, and then take from them the very things that are necessary to make them good citizens--that is, the presence of their wives and children with them.⁷³

Woodsworth was the only one to expose the racial antagonism so prevalent among MPs:

...there is an immense amount of prejudice towards the orientals. For example, not only on the floor of the House but in the West we have complaints about the low sanitary standards of the Chinese, and yet a year or two ago the oriental nurses or girls who wished to train as nurses were excluded from the Vancouver General Hospital.⁷⁴

Woodsworth was quick to see the contradictory attitudes which the House would not address. No one remarked upon Woodsworth’s plea and the discussion ended with the passing of the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act.

The Senate Debates were more explicit on the subject of women. An enlightened Senator from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, A.B. Willoughby, moved that the Bill be amended to allow the admittance of any wife and minor children of any merchant legally in Canada and of any naturalized Canadian citizen. Some Senators believed that the majority of women would not be “legal wives.” Rather, as the Hon. Mr. Crowe stated, they believed that Chinese men would bring “...the best-looking and the youngest and perhaps those that can best bear children...”⁷⁵ Such a prejudiced view was commonly accepted among both the policy makers and the general white population. By limiting male access to fecund women, policy makers clearly saw their role as

having to subvert the intent of the Chinese who they believed were systematically striving to outnumber and inevitably overpower white Canadians.

The topic of polygamous practices rose again in the Senate. Because the common notion was that most Chinese men had more than one wife, the question of which wife might be eligible to enter Canada posed a difficulty. As this aspect of the subject was discussed, two speakers clearly identified that they were concerned only about women's fertility. Needless to say, birth control information and practices were not taken for granted. The Hon. Mr. Dandurand suggested that only wives of fifty and over be admitted, because "there would be less danger of the Chinese population increasing."⁷⁶ The Hon. Mr. Fowler agreed:

Here we have a population largely adult, and largely male, who are without wives, and in the interest of social purity and morality would it not be better to allow the wives to come in? Following out the honourable leader's idea, we might restrict those wives to the age of 50--and I think that is a safe age--and say that wives of 50 or over should be permitted to come into the country. I think that would be a good suggestion, and would prevent the unnecessary increase of the population to which the honourable members from British Columbia object, and would also fulfill the ideas of the social uplift and moral reform element of this country, which is very strong.⁷⁷

Clearly, young women's reproductive capacities made them the subject of exclusion. Older women might gain entry because their childbearing years were over. Women's labour was not at issue here. Fowler's proposition was supposed to solve two problems. First, the population would not increase, and secondly, the white population would no longer feel guilty about restraining Chinese family life since older Chinese men would be allowed to have wives. Also, controls on the number of young women might have been interpreted to mean that polygamous practices would end too since young female marriage partners would be ineligible for entry to British Columbia.

The topic of women labourers was only briefly brought up in the Senate. The Hon. Mr. Dandurand stated as fact that "... a number of those women who have been brought in have simply gone into service to earn money for themselves, or have really come in as bona fide wives, or they come under that cloak to obtain entry into Canada."⁷⁸ Dandurand's matter-of-factness about Chinese women's illegal entry suggests it was common knowledge. The women who he said were earning money for themselves were probably paying back "loans" to males who brought them here as indentured workers. His alluding in passing to women coming here to work was probably to remind the Senators that women had been entering the province not as "housewives" but as workers.

Members of Parliament did not discuss women's labour. They did not have to since women were not to be admitted unless they fell into the four exempt categories and that was exceedingly unlikely. By excluding merchant

wives and children (and by tightening the definition of "merchant"), they closed loopholes by which many more women and girls might have entered. Since Chinese women would no longer have the possibility of coming to British Columbia, their labour was a non-issue. Merchant wives, the only women considered for exemption, were denied it because of the determination on the part of the legislators to control the Chinese population.

Finally, an aspect of population control which was not discussed but most certainly must have been in the minds of policy makers was the possibility that young men deprived of wives would leave Canada. As long as Chinese women could not come as permanent settlers to Canada, single Chinese men might go back to China. Then the "problem" ultimately would be solved. Despite the lack of women, the majority of Chinese men remained in Canada.

The Chinese Labour Association of Vancouver was one of many Chinese organizations to oppose the Chinese Immigration Act. They proposed a five-point response to the government's intention of excluding all Chinese from Canada. Implicit in their opposition was that all Chinese now in Canada should have the right to bring their families from China.⁷⁹ Their opposition went unheeded. From 1923-1947, the Exclusion Act was in effect.

The 1923 Act contained the Chinese population and the imbalance between the sexes was further reinforced. Population figures which can be cited provide only a rough estimate of the actual number of Chinese women in the province. According to the *Report on Oriental Activities in the Province* (1927), in 1921, out of a total Chinese population of 39,587 there were 2,424 females in the whole of Canada.⁸⁰ Of these women, 1,713 lived in British Columbia, where the Chinese population was 23,533.⁸¹ By 1941, the number of females rose only to 2,399. This is hardly a striking increase. By 1925, Chinese family settlement in British Columbia was not substantially different from the previous decade. Of 1,000 Chinese families in all of Canada, the majority were located in British Columbia.⁸² In Vancouver alone there were about 200 Chinese families.⁸³ In 1921, 173 births were reported by Chinese women in British Columbia.⁸⁴ By 1931, in spite of the high birth rate among Chinese women, the number of births was small, averaging less than 200 per year and steadily decreasing.⁸⁵ The ultimate goal of the 1923 Exclusion Act of stopping the Chinese population from substantially increasing was effectively reached. It is clear from the demographic data that the Chinese population could not propagate because of the lack of Chinese women in the province.

It remains to be seen what effects the 1923 Act had on several generations of Chinese women. Did they have to work harder than ever? Was a marriageable woman more valuable to her family as a worker or more valuable to her community as a mother? Did scarcity raise her status and free her from restrictions or lower it and bring about new constraints?

After 1924, Chinese women's participation in the labour force increased and much of their work experience changed as the first generation of Canadian-born Chinese women entered new fields of work while their mothers worked in past spheres of activity. Like their mothers, the first generation of Canadian-born Chinese girls generally remained in Chinese-operated businesses, although some entered fields run by white employers.

Due to cultural antagonism, Chinese businesses would seem the most likely place for Chinese women to work. Cultural norms of what was considered acceptable work for Chinese women in terms of their social role also influenced this positioning.

Commonly, Chinese women worked as clerks in vegetable and fruit businesses.⁸⁶ Their work in this area continued until 1950 and remains today an area of employment for Chinese women. Ward discussed this kind of employment for Chinese women in 1925:

Within the last year or two there have been signs that ... the opening of the shops ... will provide employment for ... as many girls as are available. This is a tremendous advantage for the girls especially, as they are no longer considered a liability, a profitless source of expense to their parents, to be married off as soon as possible, but as a financial asset; a fact which increases their self-respect and greatly improves their position.⁸⁷

His comment is interesting. He believed Chinese women's work as clerks in shops was a trend which effectively improved their position in the family. He indicated that their earning capacity raised their status: a seeming liability to the family was now considered a financial asset. Needless to say, his view overlooked the fact that Chinese women had long been an economic asset to their families since they regularly performed both paid and unpaid labour.

Discrimination defined work opportunities. Ward reported that due to racial discrimination, Chinese women at this time were not accepted into the professions which included teachers and nurses.⁸⁸ The Women's Missionary Society *Annual Report* for 1926, however, did record that one Chinese woman from the Home was training as a nurse.⁸⁹ Jan, an oral history respondent, recalled the difficulty of women gaining access to jobs in white-owned businesses at this time. She said, "Well, I knew that the type of work Chinese women had available to them was all we could get. Thinking of going elsewhere or doing other things was just a little bit beyond our thinking. Like, we would never go apply for a job at Woodward's [department store] say. They wouldn't even look at you."⁹⁰

However, wages were welcome in most families. Young women regularly turned over their earnings as clerks to their mothers. Their wages added to the combined family incomes. The shops employed large numbers of Canadian-born Chinese females who worked both full- and part-time. In their work, the women were responsible for many functions related to the stores. One woman recalled: "When I was 17 [1935] .. I was working in a vegetable market selling fruits and vegetables... them days... you don't say what you were, like a sales clerk or a cashier, it was all rolled into one. You looked after the store, your boss brings in the vegetables and you hose them and then you bring them up to the front and you display them and then the people come in and you serve them and you take their money."⁹¹

Another recalled her work as a clerk: "We have to lift the vegetables by the cases and you wash them. They have laundry tubs that you wash your vegetables to keep 'em nice and and fresh, 'cause ones that come from the farm, they just spray it with water and it's still dirty. So you'd put it in the tub

and wash it off nice and fresh and in winter time your fingers are almost frozen. Some of the girls wore two or three pairs of socks because the floors are wet, on cement floors, and washing the vegetables, it's icy cold while you wash. That's why the Chinese vegetable store looks so tempting, the vegetables nice and clean and piled so nicely and all arranged."⁹²

Although many women were paid workers in Chinese stores not run by their families, Waiking Lee worked in her family's store. She recounted how important her labour was to the store. In fact, her labour was so needed that her mother tried her hardest to stop her from marrying because her fiance could not pay Waiking Lee's mother \$600.00 for the privilege: "I work for ten years and all I get was \$250.00 from my dad. I worked until I got married for them, but then I had to run away. My mom was the one who ran the whole house. If I get married, there was no one helping her. Then I come to thinking about myself...there's no future for me because I know my mother would tie me down for the rest of my life to the store and the house chores."⁹³

From the *BC Department of Labour's Annual Report*, it is apparent that from 1923 Chinese women began entering the industrial sector of the work force even though their total numbers remained low.⁹⁴ Until the late 1930s, Chinese women were most represented in only three main industries: the manufacture of food products; laundries, cleaning and dyeing; and garment making. During the war years, Chinese women, like many other women in British Columbia, increasingly entered occupations other than those in which they had been previously employed.

Industry probably employed the least number of Chinese women workers, but the statistics for it are unreliable because the numbers reflect only full-time workers.⁹⁵ Furthermore, domestic labour and farm labour and unpaid workers in family businesses were also not included. A woman who worked in a garment factory which was one of the few, if not the only, Chinese-owned factory in Vancouver remembered that "In 1941, I worked in a garment factory where they made men's shirts and work pants. Mostly Chinese women worked there. We were paid by piecework and I would roughly earn about \$25.00 per month and I worked hard, too. The job that I had at the garment factory entailed just sitting constantly at the machine and there was always this lint that was flying around."⁹⁶

Also, Chinese women worked as seasonal farm labourers between 1924 and 1950. References to this do not exist in primary sources, but many of the oral history respondents discussed the experiences of Chinese women working on farms. The majority of oral history respondents verified that Chinese women who laboured as seasonal farm-workers always worked on farms owned by the Chinese. The women went to the farms together, never alone, and then travelled home together at the end of the day. Ruth said, "The women used to take me to the farms when I was four or five in the summers. My mom weeded for 10¢ an hour in the 1920s." While Ruth went with the women to the farms, Ying laboured on the farms when she was a teenager with others her own age. She recalled: "When I was about 14[1938] these uncles [what "bachelors" were called] who operate farms and they know people that was bringing children down to pick beans and I remember working two summers picking beans. We get up at 5:00. We stand at a certain corner and

the truck would come up and pick us up and we'd go down and pick beans. It was for 3¢ a pound. I was able to pick 100 pounds at least per day. I remember feeling very proud being able to carry that sack to the end of the road so they could pick it up. We'd make roughly \$3-\$5 per day."⁹⁷

Restaurant work for women continued into the 1920s and 1930s. Some women employed in this area objected to poor working conditions and the pressure of prostitution that was sometimes part of the job. In a 1925 letter to the Women's Missionary Society, a woman told of her experience as a restaurant worker: "you have asked me to drop my work and ask my husband to work because where I am working is a place of temptations...besides, I don't like working in this old chop suey houses ... my only hope now is to be a nurse."⁹⁸ Her dream points out the lack of opportunities for many Chinese women.

The *Women's Missionary Annual Reports* discussed women in restaurant work. Three lengthy excerpts follow. An example from 1929 read: "Another case was a Chinese girl brought in to serve in a restaurant. She entering illegally and the man who brought her in, to cover up his crime, married her by Canadian law, although he already had two wives, one here and one in China, to whom he was married by Chinese custom."

A second restaurant worker's case: "1931-32 - Early in March our Immigration authorities telephoned, asking if we could take a Chinese girl of 17 years who had been brought from China, as they believed, illegally, and for restaurant work. With no money and little education or training, it was not easy for her to find a way of earning a living."

A third case was of "... a bright Chinese girl of eighteen years [who] rang our doorbell and asked to be admitted. She readily told us she was from the Peking Restaurant, but disliked the life and wanted to leave it... She had come from China when sixteen years of age. The man who brought her in had forced her to sign a contract to pay him \$3,000 with interest at 12 percent. Later he seemed to relent and promised to free her from paying interest. Another man had put in a claim for money, too, and two men quarreled over it. This helped to intensify her dislike for the whole situation and led her to decide to leave everything and come to the Home for help."⁹⁹

In 1939 and 1941 there were references to Chinese women still having difficulty gaining entry into professions. A 1934 newspaper article recorded that

Professional opportunities for the Chinese girl in Vancouver are limited. However, there is one Chinese nurse on the staff of the Vancouver General Hospital, while St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital for Chinese patients is staffed by the Catholic Sisters.¹⁰⁰

In 1941, the missionary women reported a similar trend:

Only the occasional girl is fortunate enough to be able to train as a nurse or teacher, partly because of the expense involved, and partly because public opinion is not yet educated to the place of accepting the Orientals in the professional world.¹⁰¹

By the mid-1940s the situation had marginally improved. According to

Carol Lee, "Toward the end of the war, for the first time a college-educated Chinese-Canadian woman in Vancouver could obtain a job in an office rather than a fruit and vegetable store."¹⁰²

Discrimination continued, however, so women continued to work under the constraints which limited their job opportunities greatly. Chinese women were not readily accepted as skilled workers. As Lee points out, perhaps a Chinese woman could gain entry into an office by the mid-1940s, but this was the exception rather than the rule. Not until the 1950s and 1960s were Chinese women more fully accepted in white-dominated and white-run businesses and government bureaucracies.

Finally, the federal government repealed the 1923 Chinese Immigration Act. There was much support for the repeal which included the National Council of Women.¹⁰³ However, the new legislation still contained implied restriction on women. The government, instead of allowing any Chinese resident in Canada to bring his dependents, which was the case for other immigrants, allowed only those Chinese men who were Canadian citizens to bring their wives and children. Once again, the number of women eligible to enter the country was contained. The "Committee for Repeal" of the 1923 law publicly opposed the discriminatory nature of the new law:

...the law says on the one hand--you can bring your wife and children into Canada provided that you are of European, South American, or United States parentage, so long as you are a resident of the country (Order in Council 695). And, on the other hand--you must be a Canadian citizen before you can bring your wife and children into the country if you are of the Chinese or Asiatic race (Order in Council 2115).¹⁰⁴

The Committee went on to explain why many Chinese men were not citizens; namely, the discriminatory policies of the Canadian government made it difficult for them to become citizens. The protests were in vain: the government's policy was not changed. The 1951 *Canada Yearbook* still reported that Chinese men had to be Canadian citizens in order to bring their families to Canada.¹⁰⁵ In 1956 this policy was finally abandoned so that Chinese men who were not Canadian citizens could bring their families to Canada.¹⁰⁶

Chinese women settled in British Columbia over one hundred years ago. Yet, compared to the proportion of Chinese men in the province, their numbers remained small well into the 1950s. What consequences this had for women and for the development of the Chinese community remains to be closely studied. However, since women were in high demand as both paid labourers and unpaid workers in the home, family business, or non-family business, they were certainly economically indispensable to the settlement of the Chinese. Their contribution as workers enabled the men they worked for, or with, to survive and succeed economically.

Footnotes

1. Chinese history is a new area of study for me. In addition, as a non-Chinese woman, I have had some difficulties doing Chinese history. Because it is new and I am outside of Chinese culture, I may have failed to see both historical processes and cultural codes which are relevant to this discussion. It is vital for Chinese women to do their own history. (Dora Nip has begun this search at the University of Toronto. She is presently at the University of Hong Kong continuing her doctoral studies.) And yet, I feel I too have something to offer. As a feminist, I want to trace, interpret and recognize aspects of women's life experiences which up until now most male historians have missed. Several Chinese women who participated in my oral history research told me they would never talk to Chinese male researchers about the things they openly and candidly discussed with me. They were willing to share with me aspects of their lives they had not shared with any one before and to all of them I remain gratefully indebted. Others too numerous to mention were also of material assistance, for which I am appreciative.

2. I conducted ten oral histories with Chinese-Canadian women who were born in British Columbia between 1895 and 1924. Whenever I discuss my oral history material, I state the woman's name to whom I am referring. The names are either pseudonyms or their proper Chinese names. They are:

Ho Gee, born in Vancouver, 1895
 Waiking Lee, born in Ladysmith, 1909
 Ruth, born in Vancouver, 1912
 May, born in Ladysmith, 1913
 Doris, born in Vancouver, 1918
 April, born in New Westminster, 1920
 Evelyn, born in Vernon, 1920
 Jan, born in Vancouver, 1921
 Nancy, born in Victoria, 1921
 Ying, born in Vancouver, 1924

All oral history tapes are being held permanently at the BC Provincial Archives in the Sound and Moving Images Section.

3. I wish to acknowledge Louise May's contribution for her work on women in China for this essay.

4. Elisabeth Croll, *Feminism & Socialism in China*, (New York: Schocken, 1978): 12-44.

Marjorie Topley, "Marriage Resistance in Rural Kwangtang," in *Women in Chinese Society*. Edited by Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke, (California: Stanford University Press, 1975): 67-89.

Elizabeth Johnson, "Women and Childbearing in Kwan Mun Hau Village: A Study of Social Change." in *Women in Chinese Society*. Edited by Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke. (California: Stanford University Press, 1975): 215-242.

Delia Davin, "Women in the Countryside of China," in *Women in Chinese Society*. Edited by Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke. (California: Stanford University Press, 1975): 243-276.

5. Anne M. Davison, "An Analysis of the Significant Factors in the Patterns of Toronto Chinese Family Life as a Result of the Recent Changes in Immigration Law Which Permitted the Wives of Canadian Citizens to Enter Canada." M.A. Thesis. University of Toronto, 1952.

6. Edgar Wickberg, *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982): 7.

7. *Ibid.* : 13.

8. *Ibid.*: 25.

9. R. Sampat-Mehta, *International Barriers* (Ottawa: Harpell's Press, 1973): 28.
10. Peter S. Li, "Immigration Laws and Family Patterns: Some Demographic Changes Among Chinese Families in Canada, 1885-1971," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. XXI, No. 1, 1980: 61.
11. Anthony Chan, *Gold Mountain* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1982): 127-28.
12. Davison : 4.
13. *Ibid.* : 5.
14. Letter by Rev. Starr to Mrs. E.S. Strachen, President of the Women's Missionary Society, September, 1887. United Church Archives, Vancouver School of Theology, U.B.C.
15. *Immigration Records*, Ottawa, RG File, B—828, Telegram May 11, 1922.
16. Wickberg : 14.
17. *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, 1902,* : 234.
18. Oral history, see footnote 2.
19. Wickberg : 14.
20. Chan : 50.
21. *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration 1885*, pp. 363-365.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Annual Report of the Women's Missionary Society, 1896*, p. 23. United Church Archives, Vancouver School of Theology. U.B.C.
24. Chan : 82.
25. It is clear that prostitution as it was in China was transplanted to both British Columbia and California. That is, poor Chinese girls and women were bought and sold as sexual commodities to work as servants and prostitutes in China. For a comprehensive study of prostitution in China, see Sue Gronewold, "Beautiful Merchandise: Prostitution in China, 1860-1936," in *Women and History*, Number One, 1982. For a discussion of Chinese prostitution in California, see Lucie Cheng Hirata, "Chinese Immigrant women in Nineteenth-Century California," in *Women in America: A History*, Edited by Carol Ruth Berkin and Mary Beth Norton, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979): 223-224.
26. H.C. Pratt, *The Story of the Years 1881-1906*, 1908, p. 106.
27. Chan : 81.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. Oral history, see footnote 2.
31. *Annual Report of the Women's Missionary Society, 1902-03*.
32. *Ibid.*, 1903-04 : xxvii-xv.
33. *Ibid.*, 1900 : xcvi.
34. From the *Oriental Home Record Book and Register*. Vancouver: United Church Archives.
35. *Annual Report of the Women's Missionary Society, 1895-96*, p. 23. United Church Archives, Vancouver School of Theology, U.B.C.
36. From the "Oriental Home Record Book and Register 1889." United Church Archives, Vancouver School of Theology, UBC.
37. Christine Stansell, "The Origins of the Sweatshop: Women and Early Industrialization in New York City." in *Working Class America: Essay on Labor Community and American Society*. Edited by Michael H. Frisch and Daniel J. Walkowicz. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983): 78. See also Laura Johnson, *The Seam Allowance; Industrial Home Sewing in Canada* (Toronto: Women's Educational press, 1982).

38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.* : 96.
40. *Ibid.* : 95.
41. *Women's Missionary Society Annual Reports, 1902-03.* United Church Archives, Vancouver School of Theology, U.B.C.
42. *The Vancouver Sun*, December 6, 1979, clipping.
43. *The Vancouver Province*, February 5, 1910, p. 4.
44. Oral history, see footnote 2.
45. W.A. Carrothers, "Oriental Standards of Living," in *Japanese Canadians*. Edited by H.A. Innes. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1938): 264-265.
46. *Annual Report of the Women's Missionary Society, 1902-03.*
47. Probably the most frustrating aspect of my research was the vast discrepancies in statistics given by different sources. For example, the Department of the Interior and Immigration and Colonization assessed the number of women who arrived from China to be close to nine hundred between 1911 and 1923. This is cited in WA Carrothers, 1938, pp. 264-265. In contrast, the Canada Census from 1931, records less than four hundred Chinese women arriving for the same period. So it is difficult to accurately identify the Chinese female population in B.C. However, a *rough estimate* is that in 1911, there were 2,790 men to every one hundred Chinese women. See Peter S. Li, 1980, p.63.
48. Wickberg : 94.
49. *Ibid.* : 136.
50. Oral history, see footnote 2.
51. *Immigration Records*, Ottawa, RG 76, B-828, February 7, 1922.
52. *Ibid.*, May 20, 1922.
53. *Ibid.*
54. N.L. Ward, *The Oriental Missions in British Columbia* , (Aberdeen: University Press, 1925): 49.
55. *Immigration Records*, May 20, 1922.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*, Telegram May 11, 1922.
59. Oral history, see footnote 2.
60. *Immigration Records*, Ottawa, February 7, 1922.
61. *Ibid.*, May 23, 1921.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*, February 20, 1922.
64. *B.C. Reports: Reports of Cases Determined in Supreme and County Courts of Appeal, 1922-1923*, p. 145: 152 Vol. 31.
65. *Debates of the House of Commons, 1923*, Vol. 3 pp. 2312-2313.
66. Sampat-Mehta : 74.
67. C.J. Woodsworth, *Canada and the Orient*. (Toronto: MacMillan, 1941): 108.
68. *Debates of the House of Commons, Ibid.* : 2326.
69. Wickberg : 141.
70. *Debates*, : 2314.

71. *Ibid.* : 2318.
72. Oral history, see footnote 2.
73. *Debates*, : 2384-2385.
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Debates of the Senate, 1923* : 1123.
76. *Ibid.* : 1125.
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Ibid.*
79. Wickberg : 139.
80. *Report on Oriental Activities in the Province, 1927*: 9.
81. *Ibid.*
82. Cheng, Tien Fang, *Oriental Immigration in Canada*, (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1906).
83. Ward : 66.
84. *Report on Oriental Activities in the Province, 1927* : 8.
85. Woodsworth : 125.
86. Cheng : 196.
87. Ward : 70.
88. *Ibid.* : 69.
89. *Women's Missionary Society Annual Report, 1926* : 341. United Church Archives, Vancouver School of Theology, U.B.C.
90. Oral history, see note 2.
91. WMS. *Annual Report, 1926*.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*
94. *B.C. Department of Labour Annual Report: 1920-1934*.
95. *Ibid.*
96. Oral history, see note 2.
97. *BC Department of Labour Annual Report: 1920-1934*.
98. A letter in the Women's Missionary Records. United Church Archives. Vancouver School of Theology, UBC.
99. *Women's Missionary Society Annual Reports. 1929, 1931-32*. United Church Archives. Vancouver School of Theology, UBC.
100. *The Vancouver Sun*, February 9, 1936. Mamie Moloney, "Mother-in-Law Trouble Not Known in Chinese Families."
101. *The Women's Missionary Annual Reports, 1941-42*, p. 115. United Church Archives. Vancouver School of Theology, UBC.
102. Carol Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement: Chinese and Japanese in B.C." *BC Studies*, 30(Summer, 1976): 51.
103. Wickberg : 206.
104. Immigration Records, RG 76, B-829, "Minutes of Evidence, Standing Committee," May 10, 1948.
105. *Canada Yearbook, 1951* : 51.
106. Wickberg: 212.

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