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**"His Dominion" and the "Yellow Peril":
Protestant Missions to the Chinese Immigrants
in Canada, 1859-1967**

by

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
History of Religions in Canada

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ABSTRACT

This is a historical study of Protestant missions to the Chinese immigrants in Canada from 1859 to 1967. It will describe and analyze, against the relevant historical background, Protestant clergy's attitudes to the Chinese, the motivation that led them to work among the Chinese, and the activities and results of the missions. It will also analyze the Chinese response to the missions, and the impact of the missions on Chinese immigrants' lives in Canada.

The consensus of wanting to keep Canada's white Anglo-Saxon heritage provided the Canadian Protestant churches with a strong impetus to instill into all other ethnic groups the ideals and standards of white Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. Thus, the history of Protestant missions to the Chinese immigrants in Canada is also the history of the encounter between two different cultures and the history of a minority group's survival in a hostile society. In this sense, this history goes beyond the Chinese context and includes the interethnic relations with the dominant white English-speaking group.

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Introduction

This is a historical study of Protestant missions to the Chinese immigrants in Canada during a period of more than one century from 1859 to 1967. It will describe and analyze, against the relevant historical background, Protestant clergy's attitudes to the Chinese, the motivation that led them to work among the Chinese, and the activities and results of the missions. It will also analyze the Chinese response to the missions, and the impact of the missions on Chinese lives in Canada.

Chinese were among the earliest non-white immigrants to enter Canada. The first influx of Chinese immigrants occurred into British Columbia between 1858 and 1866. These people were attracted to Canada by the opening of the Cariboo gold fields. In the early 1880s, the building of the Canadian Pacific railway brought more Chinese from China to the province. Following this second wave of mass immigration, Chinese immigrants began to move east and settled in most provinces across the country. The Chinese population in Canada continued to grow steadily in the following years, except the years between the 1920s and 1940s when Chinese immigration to Canada was totally stopped under the regulations of the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923.

Most Chinese brought their traditional religions with them when they immigrated to Canada. However, the Chinese soon

became the special targets of Christian missions. Protestant missionaries, mainly those from the Methodist Church of Canada, began their efforts to evangelize Chinese immigrants in the late 1850s. In 1885, the Methodist Church launched the first organized mission to the Chinese immigrants in Victoria, British Columbia. A few years later, the Presbyterian Church also started its organized missionary work among the Chinese in Montreal, Toronto, and Victoria. Following these pioneer missionary activities, other Protestant denominations or organizations, such as Anglican, Baptist, and YMCA, entered the field of missions to Chinese immigrants. The Protestants' endeavor in converting the Chinese bore considerable fruit in the following years. According to the Census of Canada in 1961, over half of 58,197 Chinese immigrants in Canada had become affiliated with a Canadian Protestant denomination.

Protestant missions to Chinese immigrants were unique in the Canadian experience. While anti-Chinese sentiment was broadly shared among other white Canadians, Protestant clergy, mainly those from Methodist, Presbyterian, and Anglican churches challenged public hostility to the Chinese. They not only brought the Chinese more favorable views than did most other Canadians, but also began to work directly among Chinese immigrants. Yet, like many of their contemporaries, most Protestant clergy were influenced by unflattering Chinese stereotypes. They believed that the presence of the Chinese in Canada was a threat to the realization of their vision of Canada as "His Dominion". They all saw the missionary work

among Chinese as part of a campaign to remove the Yellow Peril from the country. Thus, contradictions were always apparent in Protestant clergy's thought and missionary activities. On the one hand, the clergy shared the anti-Chinese sentiment with other white Canadians, and joined their campaign for removing the Yellow Peril. On the other hand, their sense of Christian humanitarianism and enthusiasm for evangelizing the world significantly influenced their response to the Chinese immigrants in Canada. Instead of excluding the Chinese from the country, Protestant clergy attempted to convert them to Christianity and strove hard to bring them into Canadian society.

Since most Protestant clergy were preoccupied by racial prejudices when they worked on evangelizing Chinese immigrants, certain of their actions worked to isolate the Chinese from the larger society instead of bringing the Chinese into the Protestant community. As a result of this cultural conflict, tensions were generated between the Chinese immigrant and the missionary. Some questions, therefore, can be raised: How did those missionaries transmit God's love to the Chinese? How did the missionary make the Chinese believe that they were equal to their white brothers and sisters before God, when all they saw around them was hostility? What was the Chinese response to the message sent by the missionary when these Chinese were deeply rooted in a totally different cultural tradition that had a more than four-thousand-year history?

It is worth noting that racial prejudice against the Chinese always undermined the evangelical concern of the Protestant churches in the Chinese. As a result, mission work was seriously handicapped for many years. Indeed, Protestant mission work among the Chinese immigrants in Canada appeared more disappointing than encouraging during those years when anti-Chinese sentiment was high among white Canadians. For example, in the early 1920s, following almost four decades of work after the first Protestant organized missionary activities started, the Methodist church, one of the major players in the Chinese mission field in Canada, received only two hundred and forty three Chinese members to its mission churches across the country. The total number of Chinese Protestants was less than one thousand, while the Chinese population at the time was almost forty thousand.¹ However, when racial discrimination against Chinese immigrants was considerably weakened in the 1950s, Protestant missions received more favorable responses from Chinese immigrants. According to the Census of Canada in 1961, the number of Chinese Protestants had almost doubled in that decade.²

The impetus for the Protestant mission to the Chinese immigrants in Canada was both religious and secular. On the one hand, Protestant enthusiasm to make Canada a white Protestant country brought the Protestant missionary to every

¹ See chapter 5 for the detail.

² The figures of the Census of Canada in 1961 show that there were 31,222 Chinese who claimed to affiliate with four major Canadian Protestant denominations, namely, the United, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Baptist, compared to 16,242 in 1951.

corner of the country to save all immigrants from heathenism, no matter the racial origin of these people, what their cultural background was, and even what language they spoke. On the other hand, the consensus of keeping Canada's white Anglo-Saxon heritage provided the Protestant missionary with a strong impetus to instill into all other ethnic groups the ideals and standards of Canadian white Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. Thus, the history of Protestant missions to the Chinese in Canada was also the history of the encounter between two different cultures, and the history of a minority group's survival in a hostile society. In this sense, Chinese Canadian history goes beyond the Chinese context and includes interethnic relations with the dominant English speaking community.

Starting from the rich well of Canadian history, this study will present the story of Protestant missionary work among Chinese immigrants in different periods and from different perspectives. First, it aims to analyze the motivations, strategies, methods, and effects of this mission. The gains and losses of the mission are also to be examined. Chinese responses to the mission will then be carefully considered. In particular, Chinese reactions to the conflict between the pull to maintain their old way of life and the push to change to new ways are to be explored in a broader Canadian social context. More specifically, this entails the following steps:

- (1) Describing, analyzing, and comparing Protestant attitudes to the Chinese with that of their contemporaries,

and indicating the factors that led the missionaries to work among the Chinese. For this purpose, the attitude of the general public to Chinese immigrants will be briefly explored.

(2) Examining the missionary work of major Protestant denominations in different areas and periods. The change of Chinese religious affiliation during the time is also to be described.

(3) Tracing the history of Chinese immigration to Canada, introducing briefly their religious beliefs, and examining the role those beliefs played in their lives in Canada. Based on this description and examination, the Chinese response to the Protestant mission will be analyzed.

(4) Analyzing the gains and losses of the Protestant mission to the Chinese and the characteristics of the Chinese immigrant's religious affiliation during the time of the study.

In other words, this study attempts both to tell the story about individual missionaries and their senders and to describe the course of events and the factors leading to these events. It seeks to analyze the multifaceted complexity of the missions and to identify the ambiguities of the work and the motivations of the people involved. The study also examines Chinese responses to the missions and the results of missionary work, which often accentuated the complexities and the ambiguities of the work.

Much research has been done on Protestant home mission work. Such research analyzes a wide section of this work,

including missions among Indians, missions among non-English speaking immigrants, missions among the believers of other religions, and social missions. Generally speaking, two approaches characterized the research so far: (1) telling the story of missions and depicting the deeds of missionaries, which focus on the missionaries and their senders; and (2) studying how new immigrants were assimilated into a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture, paying more attention to the strategies of reaching those who presented totally different cultural traditions. Regardless of the approach, most of the studies of Protestant home missions have viewed the mission as evangelistic movements spreading the Christian gospel, driven by motives of bringing glory to God and of extending the church of Christ, and patriotic crusades to Canadianize new immigrants, stimulated by the desire of keeping Canada's white Anglo-Saxon heritage and the enthusiasm of making Canada "His Dominion."

While the studies are focused on "telling stories," they were mostly written to record the triumphs and the accomplishments of the missionaries and of the denominations and agencies that supported them. They most often took the form of missionary biographies or of histories of denominational missions and other mission agencies.³ Although

³ For example, Hugh McKellar's *Presbyterian Pioneer Missionaries in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia* (Toronto: Murray Print. Co., 1924), and Alexander Sutherland's *The Methodist Church and Missions in Canada and Newfoundland: A Brief Account of the Methodist Church in Canada, What It Is and What It Has Done* (Toronto: The Department of Missionary Literature of the Methodist Church, Canada, 1906).

these studies told the story in a wide Canadian historical context, and made people aware of much of the country's past and the pioneering life of the people who built this country, they were basically designed to serve sub-fields of theology or missiology. In other words, in this mission historiography, the history of missions was greatly restricted to a context of denominational identity; it focuses on the missionaries and the expansion of their denominations in given areas and periods. It discussed more the Christian dedication of the missionaries, and identified mostly the theological ideas and spiritual motivations of the missionaries and their denominations. It mainly considered the work of the missions as religious in character. It did not examine the reception of the missionaries or the impact of the missionaries on the peoples who were being evangelized; it did not analyze the missions as encounters between cultures, as relations of ethnic groups, and as modes of social, political, economic conflict.

However, with the influx of immigration since the 1880s, the issue of new immigrants received attention in several studies of Protestant missions. These studies focus on the introduction of these newcomers and their cultures and discussion of Protestant churches' responses to the immigrants as well as their strategies for converting these people.⁴ In

⁴ For example, James S Woodsworth's *Strangers within Our Gates, or Coming Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), and Edmund Oliver's *His Dominion of Canada: A Study on the Background, Development and Challenge of the Missions of the United Church of Canada* (Toronto: United Church of Canada, 1932).

the earlier studies of this question, more attention was given to discussing the church's responsibilities in the process of assimilating the new immigrant and seeking a best way to achieve the goal. All these studies presented the Protestant mindset of the time, that is, Canada should be a homogenous Anglo-Saxon Protestant country, and the new immigrant was an alien force in this country; therefore, it was not only necessary to assimilate these newcomers into the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture, but also urgent to reach the goal. These studies reflected Protestant consensus of the time—a desire to make Canada "His Dominion." Some recent studies give evidence that the main characteristic of earlier studies on immigrant issues was theories of how to integrate immigrants into the larger society.⁵

Against this context, John Webster Grant contributed in 1968 a new historiography to the study of Canadian mission history. His book *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* presents new perspectives on the question. It traces the history of the encounter between Christianity and the Indians since the sixteenth century. It also examines both the aims and activities of the missionaries of all denominations and the varying responses of Indians at different times and under different circumstances. The book displays the whole picture of Christian missions to the Indians of Canada and discusses

⁵ For example N.K. Clifford's "His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis" in *Studies in Religion* II, 4 (1973): 315-326.

various issues related to the missionary movement, issues such as the interplay between Indian missions and colonial expansion, the relation of Christianity and civilization, the pattern of Indian missions, and the response of the Indians to Christianity. In this book, missionary activities are also interspersed with background information on the parties involved and with discussion of issues peculiar to that time and place. It can be said that Grant's study exemplifies the characteristics of a new approach to the study of Canadian mission history.

Much research has been done on the Chinese in Canada as they attempted to make their way in Canada, but no research focusing on the history of Protestant missions to the Chinese in Canada has been conducted. This dissertation is therefore to be the first major study on the issue. In the past years, there were a few studies of the missions to Chinese Canadians, but these studies were restricted to either certain denominational missions among Asian immigrants or regional work.⁶ Only Osterhout surveys the mission work among the Chinese in the whole country, but his study was restricted to the denomination of the United Church of Canada, and it was done more than a half century ago.⁷ Moreover, as already mentioned, the earlier studies were mainly written to depict

⁶ For example, Mary M.C. Lavell's *Oriental Missions in British Columbia* (Toronto: Woman's Missionary Society, Methodist Church, 191-?).

⁷ See S. S. Osterhout's *Oriental Missions in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Committee on Literature, General Publicity and Missionary Education, 1929).

the actual work of missionaries from a missiologial point of view. They rarely address what the missionaries thought about the Chinese and how they sent their message to them and what the Chinese response to the mission was. Even Ward, who has done helpful research on the relation between the Chinese and Protestant clergy during 1858-1925, focuses more in his 1974 study on the analysis of Protestant missionaries' attitudes to the Chinese; there is nothing about the Chinese themselves.⁸

By contrast, this research is cast in a two-part theoretical framework oriented toward the historically interpretation of the encounter between the Protestant missionary and the Chinese from the perspective of both sides. First, I will explore the history of Protestant missions to the Chinese in Canada, based upon a general model of the development of Canadian Protestantism since the late nineteenth century. This model was first developed by N.K. Clifford in his article "His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis".⁹ According to this model, the vision of Canada after Confederation as "His Dominion" provided an inner dynamic for the Protestant movement in Canada for nearly one hundred years. According to Clifford, this vision implied a definition of Canadian culture as a homogeneous white Anglo-Saxon culture that shared a heritage of political democracy, evangelical Protestant Christianity, and the Canadian nation as God's

⁸ See W. Peter Ward, "The Oriental Immigrant and Canada's Protestant Clergy, 1858-1925," *BC Studies*, 22 (1974): 40-55.

⁹ N.K. Clifford, "His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis," *Studies in Religion*, II, 4 (1973): 315-326.

vehicle for the establishment of "His Dominion".¹⁰ Canadian Protestants, based on this vision, formed their consensus and coalition. They used this vision as a framework for determining their task within the nation, for shaping their conceptions of the ideal society, and for directing their relations with other ethnic groups. Thus, the history of Canadian Protestantism from the late nineteenth century to the first half of this century is written in the framework of producing through the religion of Christianity a homogenous white Anglo-Saxon Protestant country.

The missionary work among the Chinese, without doubt, was also guided by this vision of Canada as "His Dominion". Christianizing the Chinese, for Protestants, was, in fact, a means towards removing the yellow peril from this country. Its ultimate aim was to Canadianize the Chinese, that is, to have them conform them to the ideals and standards of Canadian white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. At this point, the sense of Anglo-conformity framed the mindset of Protestants, and racial prejudices preoccupied Protestants' thought when they made their judgment on the Chinese. This study in its historical part is to follow Clifford's model to assess Protestant missions to the Chinese and the impact of the missions on Chinese life in Canada. It is hoped that this type of approach will permit a better understanding of the history of the missions.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 315.

Secondly, I will analyze the impact of the missions on Chinese lives in Canada. Conflict theory supplies the terms needed to analyze the Chinese response to the mission. Conflict theory assumes that differences in the value system among different ethnic groups will lead to interethnic conflict, especially when it so happens that one group systematically attempts to dominate and exploit the other in a society.¹¹ And while "the dominant group mobilizes its power through force, ideology, or both to assure its dominance, minority groups will respond with counterforce, accommodation, or submission."¹² Along this theoretical line, the study will explain how Chinese immigrants utilized their traditional religion to respond to the missionary's message; and what role Chinese religion played in the consolidation of the Chinese ethnic identity when the group was in racial and cultural conflict with the dominant group in Canadian society.

It is assumed here that the research into the history of the Chinese mission can be grounded in both a historical perspective which reflects the development of Canadian Protestantism since the second half of the nineteenth century, and in theories of interethnic group relations. The history of the missions reflects the encounter between two cultures, and the development of interethnic group relations in Canada.

¹¹ John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, 2nd, ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 121.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 114.

This study has eight chapters in addition to introduction and conclusion.

Chapter 1: Chinese Immigrants and Their Lives in Canada. This chapter describes the history of Chinese immigration to Canada. Its aim is to provide a historical background of the Chinese Canadian. The emphasis is on analyzing the social status of the Chinese in Canada, and the social environment in which the Chinese made their living.

Chapter 2: The Religion of Early Chinese Immigrants. This chapter introduces the traditional Chinese religions brought to Canada by Chinese immigrants. Emphasis is placed on the analyzing of the impact of traditional religions on the Chinese way of life from a historical perspective. Such an approach, it is hoped, should provide sufficient cultural depth to interpret the history of Protestant missions to the Chinese in Canada.

Chapter 3: The Response to the Chinese Immigrants in Canada. Against the historical background of Canadian immigration, this chapter describes and analyzes Canadians' common attitudes toward Chinese immigrants. Special attention will be paid to the attitudes of the Protestant clergy to the Chinese, and to a comparison between their attitudes and that of other Canadians. The aim is to give a clear picture of the social environment of the missionaries as they worked among the Chinese.

Chapter 4: The Individual Missionary Efforts to Reach the Chinese Immigrants in Canada since 1859. This chapter

describes Protestant pioneering missionary work in British Columbia and other provinces. The description is to proceed denomination by denomination. Some important events of the mission work will be described in detail. The emphasis of the chapter is on analyzing the characteristics of the early missionary work, its difficulties and gains.

Chapter 5: The Establishment of the Missions: the Organized Work among the Chinese from 1885 to 1923. This chapter describes the early stage of the organized Protestant missionary work among the Chinese immigrants along denominational lines. The emphasis is on the history of how the Protestant churches established and maintained their missions in the Chinese community.

Chapter 6: Crisis and Development: The Missions during the Period of 1923 to 1967. This chapter describes the missionary work in its broad social environment. The emphasis of the description of the missionary work is on analyzing how the missionaries dealt with racial tensions and continued to win the Chinese to their side.

Chapter 7: An Analysis of the Motives and Methods of the Protestant Missions. This chapter analyzes the results of the missions and the methods used by the missionary. The gains and losses of the missionary work are also analyzed. The examination of the reasons for the losses is given special attention.

Chapter 8: The Chinese Response to the Protestant Missions. This chapter analyzes the effects of the missions

from another angle, namely, the Chinese experience. The change of Chinese religious affiliation is also examined. The conflict theory directs the analysis of the encounter between two different cultures. Special attention is given to the analysis of the Chinese response to the mission.

Most previous studies of the Chinese mission have been done by only using English sources, and therefore more from the white perspective. I have, in addition, attempted to present the history of the Chinese mission by using more Chinese sources. However, lack of Chinese materials, printed and archival, prevented me from making a thorough study of the subject, especially in the Chinese response to the mission. Although I have made extensive use of the materials found in a leading Chinese community newspaper, the materials themselves were rare throughout the daily newspaper's almost five-decade publishing history. Since no Chinese materials were found in church archives, the situation became worse. In Chapter 8, I had to use more second hand sources to discuss the subject of the Chinese response to the mission. I particularly regret that.

CHAPTER 1

Chinese Immigrants and Their Life in Canada

The history of Protestant missions to the Chinese in Canada is, in all important respects, related to the history of Chinese immigrants—their immigration to this country and their life in a strange land. On the one hand, what the Chinese experienced in Canada significantly influenced their response to Protestant missions because of the hostility of the society. On the other hand, racial prejudice against the Chinese—the unflattering stereotypes that the Chinese were uncivilized and unassimilated influenced the missionary work. The history of the missions, therefore, can be understood only in reference to the larger Canadian context, especially to the history of Chinese immigration to Canada and the life of those Chinese immigrants in this country.

In this chapter, the history of Chinese immigration to Canada will be described from its beginnings in the middle of the nineteenth century to the 1960s. This is a period during which the Chinese immigrant struggled to survive in a discriminatory social environment, characterized by legal restriction, racial prejudice, and public hostility. Chinese immigration to Canada and their life in this country have been

fully documented by numerous authors;¹ therefore no attempt is made here to trace the complete history of the Chinese in Canada. A more important purpose for this chapter is to introduce early Chinese immigrants' life in Canada. Emphasis is placed on analyzing the impact of the Canadian government's immigration policy and the hostile social environment on the Chinese way of life from a historical perspective. Through such an approach, it is hoped to provide sufficient historical depth by which to interpret Protestant missions to the Chinese in Canada.

1.1 Chinese Immigration to Canada

Before the 1960s, most Chinese immigrants to Canada were from a small and distinctive region of Guangdong province in south China.² This was not accidental considering the fact that the people in that region had had a long history of immigration to Southeast Asian nations since the fifteenth century.³ And before the Opium War of 1840, the city of Guangzhou, which is the capital of the province and located in

¹ Among others, the most important studies on the subject are Tien-Fang Cheng, *Oriental Immigration in Canada* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1931); Edgar Wickberg ed., *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1982); James Morton, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains: The Chinese in British Columbia* (Vancouver: J. J. Douglas, 1974); Tung-hai Lee, *Jianada Huaqiao Shi (A History of the Chinese in Canada)*. Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967); and Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988).

² According to Chuen-yan D. Lai, nearly sixty four percent of early Chinese immigrants came from so-called *Si Yi*—four rural counties near the city of Guangzhou, the capital of the province, twenty three percent from *San Yi*—three counties near Guangzhou, and about twelve percent from another seven counties. See Chuen-yan D. Lai, "Home County and Clan Origins of Overseas Chinese in Canada in the Early 1880s," *B. C. Studies* 27 (Autumn 1975): 5-6.

³ Tien-Fang Cheng, *Oriental Immigration in Canada* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1931), p. 10.

the center of the region, was the only port open to Western countries. Being at the center of trade with Westerners, the Chinese in the region were more open to the outside world, compared to their contemporary compatriots, and more ready to adopt Western commercial ideas and the spirit of adventure.

However, Chinese immigration to Canada in the nineteenth century was mainly impelled by the pressure of population on land resources, political disorder and natural catastrophes like flood and drought.⁴ The population of Guangdong province almost doubled from 15.5 million in 1780 to about 30 million in 1850. And the annual growth rate of the population in the province was over 10 percent.⁵ The population density of the thirteen counties around Guangzhou, from which region most Chinese immigrants to Canada came, was 900 per square kilometer. As for the *Si Yi*, the four counties that provided more than half of the immigrants, the population density even reached as high as 1,560 per square kilometer.⁶ As the population grew, land became less available; poverty and hunger increased. Desperation among the people eventually spawned rebellious, anti-dynastic secret societies, which in turn led to a civil rebellion — the Taiping Rebellion in southern China from 1850 to 1864. In this peasant revolt, many

⁴ Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 12-15; and Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), pp. 53-56.

⁵ Tien-Fang Cheng, *Oriental Immigration in Canada* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1931), p. 11, and Richard T. Wright, *In a Strange Land: A Pictorial Record of the Chinese in Canada 1788-1923* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1988), p. 3.

⁶ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 54.

of the participants were the peasants of Guangdong province. According to local county annuals, in some villages nine houses out of ten were stripped bare during the rebellion.⁷ In addition, a local war between clans, from 1856 to 1864, was directly responsible for the death of twenty to thirty thousand people in the region.⁸ Meanwhile, due to unscientific methods in farming and building dikes, and carelessness in cutting down forests, floods and famines became common in the middle of the nineteenth century. For example, the county of Taishan suffered fourteen major floods, seven typhoons, four earthquakes, two droughts, four plagues, and five famines between 1851 and 1908.⁹ Thus, overpopulation, poverty on the farms, and changes in the social structure combined to encourage Chinese to emigrate.

The first wave of Chinese immigrants to settle in Canada dates back to the gold rush of British Columbia during the 1850s. In 1858, gold was discovered along the Fraser River in British Columbia. The news soon reached the Chinese community in California, where the Chinese had worked as laborers and miners since the gold rush of 1849.¹⁰ After a Chinese businessman returned to San Francisco from his trip to British Columbia, his optimistic report about the new country, especially his experience of being offered high wages as a

⁷ Ibid., pp. 51-53.

⁸ Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 15.

⁹ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁰ Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 11.

cook, created much excitement among the local Chinese.¹¹ Many of them, lured by the prospect of "striking it rich" in Gold Mountain, rushed northward from California to British Columbia in the summer of that year. According to Tung-hai Lee, the leading Chinese writer on the subject of the history of the Chinese in Canada, the first group of Chinese disembarked at Fort Victoria on June 28, 1858.¹² In addition to those who journeyed north from San Francisco, some Chinese crossed the Pacific Ocean and came to British Columbia directly from Hong Kong in the spring of 1859.¹³ This wave of immigration brought about 2,000 Chinese to British Columbia in the first two years of the gold rush.¹⁴ In the early 1860s, while more gold was found in the Cariboo region, more Chinese immigrants were attracted to British Columbia from China to join the venture of the gold rush. According to the *Victoria Daily Colonist*, there were 4,000 Chinese who arrived in Victoria in 1860 alone.¹⁵ By 1864, the Chinese population in the province rose rapidly to 6,000. This number was about a fifth of the whole population of the province at that time.¹⁶ And it was

¹¹ According to Tien-Fang Cheng, this Chinese was offered twenty dollars a day plus board as cook when he was in British Columbia. See Tien-Fang Cheng, *Oriental Immigration in Canada* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1931), p. 35.

¹² Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 59.

¹³ James Morton, *In the Sea of Sterile Mountains: The Chinese in British Columbia* (Vancouver: J. J. Douglas, 1974), p. 7.

¹⁴ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 60.

¹⁵ The *Victoria Daily Colonist*, March 28, 1861.

¹⁶ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 62.

estimated that at its height at least 10,000 Chinese joined the venture of the gold rush during the period of 1858-1868.¹⁷

Among the first Chinese immigrants, the vast majority went up the Fraser River into the gold fields in Yale and Hope. On January 26, 1860, the *Victoria Daily Colonist* mentioned 1,175 Chinese miners operating around the lower Fraser. The mining records show that the Chinese miners were even in the majority in a gold field located at Yale in 1860.¹⁸ When Barkerville suddenly burgeoned in 1862, many Chinese were brought into this new gold mining area. One year later, the population of the Chinese in Barkerville rose rapidly to about 4,000.¹⁹ At the same time, since most white miners gave over the original diggings along the lower Fraser to the Chinese and moved further into the Cariboo and up the various tributaries of the Fraser, Chinese miners took up almost all the abandoned diggings in the area. By 1864, it was estimated that there had been more than 5,000 Chinese who worked in the gold fields in British Columbia.²⁰ However, before 1865, the vast majority of Chinese remained to work in the lower portions of the Fraser River, around Yale, Lytton, Lillooet, and along the Thompson and Tranquille River. From 1865, Chinese miners began to move to Cariboo. This movement remarkably increased the Chinese population in the area.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

¹⁸ Tien-Fang Cheng, *Oriental Immigration in Canada* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1931), p. 36.

¹⁹ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 482.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

Although the actual number fluctuated, the percentage of Chinese in Cariboo increased to almost forty percent in 1868, and by the 1870s, Quesnel Forks, with a population of about 300, was almost exclusively Chinese.²¹

While most Chinese immigrants sought gold along the Fraser River, there were also some who found work to do other than mining, particularly after 1861, by which time the Chinese came mainly from China and therefore had no mining experience. In 1863, Governor Douglas commissioned a wagon road into the Cariboo region to provide easier access for the growing mining industry. This so-called Cariboo Wagon Road was 385 kilometers long. It ran from Yale, via Lytton, Lillooet, Williams Lake, and Quesnel Mouth, to Barkerville. It has been estimated that about 1,000 Chinese were hired during the construction of the road.²² In 1866, 500 Chinese were hired by Western Union to string the telegraph wires from New Westminster to Quesnel.²³ There were also many Chinese who were hired by coal mining companies and copper mining companies.²⁴ Meanwhile, with the increase of the predominantly male population in various mining areas, laborers in service occupations became greatly in need. The most obvious were washing and cooking, and because of the white males' distaste

²¹ Jin Tan, "Chinese Labour and the Reconstituted Social Order of British Columbia," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 19, 3 (1987): 80.

²² Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 444.

²³ Edgar Wickberg ed., *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p. 19.

²⁴ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 448.

for these jobs, the Chinese were allowed to fill the occupations that were traditionally performed by women. With the minimal capital earned from mining, the Chinese soon opened laundries, bathhouses and, to lesser degree, restaurants, in every small mining camp. The Chinese also supplied a want deeply felt by all householders as domestic servants and cooks. They were welcomed in all other businesses, such as the fishery, lumbering, and manufacturing.

However, in the following decade, Chinese immigration to Canada dramatically slowed down. This was mainly caused by the fact that the gold had become exhausted after 1866, and therefore many Chinese miners went to the United States. When this news was brought to China, many Chinese became cautious when they made their decision to emigrate to Canada, since they knew little other than mining about Canada. As a result, there were only 1,548 Chinese who still lived in Canada in 1871 (Table 1.1). In the decade of the 1870s, Chinese began to come as contract laborers to work in salmon fisheries and build the roads of the quickly expanding province.²⁵ This caused the Chinese population gradually to increase to 4,383 in 1881 (Table 1.1). However, this number still just reached nearly half of the Chinese population at its height during the influx of Chinese immigrants in the 1860s. And Chinese immigration to Canada was still slow. For example, during a

²⁵ W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), p. 16.

period of five years from 1876 to 1880, only 2,326 Chinese from China entered the port of Victoria.²⁶

Table 1.1 Numerical and Percentage Distribution of Chinese Population for Canada, 1871-1967

Year	Total Population	Chinese Population	Percentage of Chinese
1871	3,689,257	1,548	0.42
1881	4,324,810	4,383	0.1
1891	4,833,239	9,129	0.19
1901	5,371,315	17,312	0.32
1911	7,204,838	27,774	0.39
1921	8,788,949	39,587	0.45
1931	10,376,786	46,519	0.45
1941	11,506,655	34,627	0.3
1951	14,009,429	32,528	0.2
1961	18,238,247	58,197	0.3
1967	—	79,000 ¹	—

Source: Censuses of Canada, 1871-1961.

1. Estimated number. See Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 441.

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway brought the second wave of Chinese immigration to Canada during the period of 1881-1885. The railway was chartered in 1880 and the construction was immediately begun on the western end of the line. Having found that Canada's labor force was not large enough to meet the demand of building the railway, the federal government granted Andrew Onderdonk, the contractor for the railway, the permission to import Chinese laborers for the construction. Although the decision alarmed the people in British Columbia, who believed that the coming influx of Chinese would crowd white laborers out of work, most

²⁶ Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration: Report and Evidence* (Ottawa: Printed by order of the Commission, 1885), p.398.

politicians in Ottawa still believed that either there would be Chinese labor or there would be no railway.²⁷ Convinced that only single Chinese males would be brought into Canada for the sole purpose of providing cheap labor for railway construction, the most radical agitators against the Chinese felt a kind of relief. They believed that these Chinese were not likely to leave their families behind and permanently settle in Canada after the railway was completed. Under this circumstance, in the summer of 1880, a Chinese agent who represented Onderdonk's construction company brought the first 1,500 Chinese laborers into British Columbia from Portland.²⁸ Most of these Chinese were experienced railway construction workers who had joined the construction of the Northern Pacific Railway in Oregon. In the following four years, 15,701 Chinese laborers were imported from China and the United States.²⁹ Among these Chinese laborers, nearly seventy five percent came directly from China, and more than half arrived in the year 1882 when the demand for labor was at its height.³⁰ However, not all these Chinese laborers were hired by Onderdonk's company. There were about 6,500 Chinese who directly joined the construction work of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Others went to construction campsites to open various

²⁷ House of Commons, *Debates*, 1882, p. 1476.

²⁸ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 127; and Pierre Berton, *The National Dream: The Great Railway* (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1970), p. 204.

²⁹ Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, *Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration: Report and Evidence* (Ottawa: Printed by order of the Commission, 1885), p.398.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

small businesses, such as laundries, restaurants, groceries, and even bars.³¹

In 1884, when the Canadian Pacific Railroad was almost finished, many Chinese construction workers were dismissed. These out-of-work Chinese did not go back to China as most Canadians assumed that they would do. Instead, they just roamed to any place that they could reach and attempted to find their fortune there. It was from this time on, that the Chinese began to migrate to other provinces of Canada. The Chinese usually moved along the railway line to the east. They moved to Calgary, Moose Jaw, Winnipeg, Montreal, Toronto, and even St. John.³² In all the cities the Chinese reached, these single men became a large reservoir of cheap labor, in potential or actual competition with whites. They were good workers, and, in order to survive, they were willing to take jobs at almost any wage. Indeed, their occupations included railway workers, coal miners, cannery workers, farm laborers, wood cutters, servants, cooks, and barbers.³³ These facts generated bitter resentment among white organized laborers, who saw the Chinese as enemies, snatching away employment and undercutting wage agreements.

In November of 1885, when the Canadian Pacific Railway

³¹ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 128.

³² Until the first years of the 1880s, the overwhelming majority of Chinese immigrants lived in British Columbia, for example, the Canadian census of 1881 shows, among 4,383 Chinese who lived in Canada, 4,350 in British Columbia, 22 in Ontario, 7 in Quebec, 4 in Manitoba.

³³ Edgar Wickberg, ed., *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p. 309.

was completed, almost all Chinese workers lost their jobs in the railroad company. Since most Chinese did not make enough money for their return fare to China at that time, and neither the railroad company nor the government was willing to pay the money for them, about 8,000 unemployed Chinese flooded into the city of Victoria. They wandered the streets, and had nothing to live on.³⁴ With the help of the Chinese community in Victoria, about 2,000 to 3,000 old or ill Chinese were sent back to China.³⁵ Among those who left, about 400 Chinese were hired by a construction company and went to Mexico to build railways. Others thought that they had not made the fortune they expected, therefore remained in Canada and went to gold or coal mines in the north of British Columbia, and some continued to move to other provinces of Canada.³⁶ By the year 1885, it was estimated that there were about 27,000 Chinese who had entered Canada,³⁷ but, at that time, the population of the Chinese in Canada was probably about 14,000 to 15,000.³⁸

As resentment against the Chinese grew, restrictions on Chinese immigrants were sought in immigration legislation to discourage further immigration from China. In 1885, the

³⁴ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 486.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 135.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 135, 486.

³⁷ See Tien-Fang Cheng, *Oriental Immigration in Canada* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1931), p. 36.

³⁸ According to the records kept in the Chinese Community Center of Victoria, the population of the Chinese in Canada was around 16,000 to 17,000. And, according to the record of the Canadian government, 221 Chinese entered Canada in 1885. Meanwhile, as mentioned above, in 1885, there were about 2,000 to 3,000 who left Canada. Putting these numbers together, the population of the Chinese in Canada was around 14,000 to 15,000. See Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), pp. 416-417.

federal government introduced a head tax of \$50 imposed on every Chinese who wanted to enter Canada.³⁹ This head tax was quite effective in restricting Chinese immigration at first. From 1886 to 1890, only 2,684 Chinese entered Canada (Table 1.2). However, the head tax finally failed to block Chinese immigrants from entering Canada, even though it was raised to \$100 in 1902 and \$500 in 1904.⁴⁰ In the following two decades, almost fifty thousand Chinese immigrated to Canada (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2 The Number of Chinese Immigrants Admitted to Canada, 1862-1967¹

Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number	Year	Number
1862-1885 ²	27,000	1901	2,544	1918	769	1935	0	1952	2,320
1886	212	1902	3,587	1919	4,333	1936	0	1953	1,936
1887	124	1903	5,329	1920	544	1937	1	1954	1,958
1888	290	1904	4,847	1921	2,435	1938	0	1955	2,602
1889	894	1905	77	1922	1,746	1939	0	1956	2,103
1890	1,166	1906	168	1923	711	1940	0	1957	1,686
		1907	291	1924	674	1941	0	1958	2,630
1891	2,126	1908	2,234	1925	0	1942	0	1959	2,586
1892	3,278	1909	2,106	1926	0	1943	0	1960	1,402
1893	2,258	1910	2,302	1927	2	1944	0	1961	894
1894	2,109	1911	5,320	1928	1	1945	0	1962	876
1895	1,462	1912	6,581	1929	1	1946	8	1963	1,571
1896	1,786	1913	7,445	1930	0	1947	21	1964	3,210
1897	2,471	1914	5,512	1931	0	1948	76	1965	5,234
1898	2,192	1915	1,258	1932	1	1949	803	1966	5,178
1899	4,402	1916	89	1933	1	1950	1,746	1967	6,753 ³
1900	4,257	1917	393	1934	1	1951	2,708		

Sources: Canada Yearbook, 1887, 1894—1968.

Immigration Statistics, Department of Manpower and Immigration, 1967—1968.

Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics

Publishing House, 1967), pp. 414-441.

1. Chinese immigrants refer to those whose ethnic origin is Chinese. Fiscal years from 1886 to 1907, and calendar years from 1908 to 1967.

³⁹ Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 29.

⁴⁰ However, the \$500 head tax of 1905 did dramatically reduce the number of Chinese immigrants from 4,847 of 1904 to 77 of 1905, and this situation continued until 1907 during which time only 536 Chinese entered Canada (Table 1.2).

2. There were no official statistics during these years; the number was estimated according to the figure in *Oriental Immigration in Canada* (Tien-Fang Cheng, 1931, p. 36), and the figure in the Report of Royal Commission in Chinese Immigration, 1885.

3. The figure refers to the immigrants whose birthplace is China or Hong Kong (China: 4,142; Hong Kong: 2,611).

On 4 May 1923, the House of Commons passed the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, also known as the "Chinese Exclusion Act".⁴¹ Under the Chinese Immigration Act, most persons of Chinese origin or descent were entirely forbidden to enter to or land in Canada. Thus, Chinese immigration to Canada stopped until 1947 when the act was repealed. During the period between 1924 and 1947, only 711 Chinese immigrants were allowed to enter Canada legally (Table 1.2). Meanwhile, since there was no hope of bringing their families to Canada under the Chinese Exclusion Act, many Chinese immigrants had to give up their immigrant status and returned to China.⁴² As a result, Chinese population in Canada declined during the decades of the 1930s and 1940s.⁴³

While the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 was repealed in 1947, Canadian citizens of Chinese origin were eventually allowed to sponsor their wives and unmarried children under the age of 18 to immigrate to Canada.⁴⁴ On December 28, 1950, another order in council amended previous orders restricting

⁴¹ Tien-Fang Cheng, *Oriental Immigration in Canada* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1931), pp. 90-92.

⁴² According to the act, any Chinese who wished to keep his immigrant status after he left Canada must return to this country within two years. See Tien-Fang Cheng, *Oriental Immigration in Canada* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1931), p. 92.

⁴³ The Chinese population decreased from 46,519 in 1931 to 34,627 in 1941, and 32,528 in 1951. See Table 1.1 on page 25.

⁴⁴ Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972), pp. 90-91.

Asian immigrants and allowed, in addition to wives of Canadian citizens, the admission of husbands of Asian racial origin and raised the age limit for unmarried children from 18 to 21 years of age.⁴⁵ Thus, the gate of immigration was opened to the Chinese again, and it became wider and wider in the following years.

In 1957, an amendment of the Immigration Act of 1952 allowed the Chinese who were not Canadian citizens to sponsor their spouses, unmarried children and aged parents to immigrate to Canada.⁴⁶ This amendment was important to those Chinese who immigrated to Canada after 1947 because few of them qualified for citizenship status at that time. Now more Chinese in Canada were able to sponsor the immigration of their immediate dependents in China.

In October 1967, Canada adopted a universal point system in its immigration assessment. This point system applied the same standards in selecting all prospective immigrants regardless of country of origin or racial background.⁴⁷ This was the most significant change in the government policy of Chinese immigration, for Chinese were admitted under the same criteria as other immigrants.

It took twenty years after the Chinese Immigration Act was repealed for a nonracial standard of immigration assessment to begin to apply to Chinese. During these two

⁴⁵ Warren E. Kalbach, *The Impact of Immigration on Canada's Population* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1970), p. 21.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁷ Freda Hawkins, *Canada and Immigration* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972), p. 374.

decades, Chinese immigration was mainly characterized by the limited immigration of wives and unmarried children less than 21 years of age. And most of these wives and children had been separated from their husbands and fathers for a long time since the Chinese Immigration Act took effect in 1923. Table 1.3 shows that, in many individual years during the period of 1949 to 1967, among those Chinese immigrants who were admitted to Canada, more than seventy per cent were wives and children. And the number was always near or over 50 per cent (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3 Chinese Immigrants Admitted to Canada by Male, Female, Wives, and Children, 1949—1967¹

Year	Total Chinese	Male	%	Female	%	Wives	%	Children	%
1949	114	23	20.2	91	79.8	79	69.3	18	15.8
1950	1,036	615	59.4	421	40.6	329	31.8	617	59.6
1951	2,182	1,451	66.5	731	33.5	555	25.4	1,319	60.5
1952	2,757	1,981	71.9	776	28.1	569	20.6	969	35.2
1953	1,965	1,343	68.4	622	31.6	450	22.9	445	22.7
1954	2,037	1,243	61.0	794	39.0	554	27.2	437	21.5
1955	2,602	—	—	—	—	737	28.3	449	17.3
1956	2,093	1,070	51.1	1,023	48.9	773	36.9	385	18.4
1957	1,662	511	30.7	1,151	69.3	913	54.9	304	18.3
1958	2,615	802	30.7	1,813	69.3	1,439	55.0	681	26.0
1959	2,561	875	34.2	1,686	65.8	1,243	48.5	742	29
1960	1,370	389	28.4	981	71.6	744	54.3	331	24.2
1961	861	222	25.8	639	74.2	494	57.4	156	18.1
1962	670	306	45.7	364	54.3	240	35.8	130	19.4
1963	1,187	452	38.1	735	61.9	428	36.1	294	24.8
1964	2,674	944	35.3	1,730	64.7	737	27.6	984	36.8
1965	4,352	1,741	40.0	2,611	60	970	22.3	1,602	36.8
1966	4,094	1,767	43.2	2,327	56.8	862	21.1	1,161	28.4
1967	6,409	2,938	45.8	3,471	54.2	1,254	19.6	1,796	28.0

Sources: Annual Report, Department of Mines and Resources, Canada, 1949.

Annual Reports, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Canada, 1950—1956.

Immigration Statistics, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Canada, 1956—1967.

1. Fiscal year for 1949—1954, calendar year for 1955—1967.

Chinese immigrants refer to the Chinese who came from China and Hong Kong.

This wave of Chinese immigration produced tremendous effects on the Chinese community in Canada. Chinese population in Canada, after a two-decade decline, again began to show signs of increase. By 1961, it had risen to 58,197, and, by the end of 1967, it was estimated that there had been about 79,000 Chinese who lived in Canada.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, for the first time, in Canada Chinese women and children were present in sufficient numbers to re-establish family life. According to the Census of Canada in 1951, the sex ratio among 32,528 Chinese was 374 men to 100 women, but a decade previously the ratio was 785 to 100. And by 1961, the sex ratio of Chinese population in Canada had been reaching its normal level: 163 men to 100 women (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4 Ratio of Female and Male for the Chinese in Canada, 1885-1961

Year	Chinese Population	Male	Female	Males per 100 Females	Native-born %
1871	1,548	—	—	—	—
1880 ²	4,744	4615	129	3,578	0
1885 ³	10,181	10,023	158	6,344	—
1891	9,129	—	—	—	0
1901	17,312	—	—	—	—
1911	27,774	26,813	961	2,790	3
1921	39,587	37,163	2,424	1,533	7
1931	46,519	43,051	3,468	1,241	12
1941	34,627	30,713	3,914	785	20
1951	32,528	25,669	6,859	374	31
1961	58,197	36,075	22,122	163	40

Source: Censuses of Canada, 1881—1961.

Royal Commission Report on Chinese Immigration, 1885.

Chinese Statistics, 1879, 1880 (Provincial Archives of British Columbia, British Columbia, Government Agencies, cc30.14 C44).

1. Figures from Chinese Statistics, and the number of Chinese refers to the Chinese in British Columbia.
2. Figures from Royal Commission Report, 1885.

⁴⁸ See Table 1 on page 25.

Despite all the changes of Canadian immigration policy, Chinese immigration to Canada was not a prominent factor in the broad sweep of post-war immigration before 1967. In fact, Chinese immigrants were only a small proportion relative to all other immigrants, about one and a half per cent of all immigrants to Canada were of Chinese origin (Table 1.5).

Table 1.5 Chinese Immigration to Canada, 1947 - 1967

Year	Chinese Immigrants ¹	Total Immigrants All Origins	% Chinese Immigrants
1947	21	64,127	0.03
1948	76	125,414	0.06
1949	803	95,217	0.84
1950	1,746	73,912	2.36
1951	2,708	194,391	1.39
1952	2,320	164,498	1.41
1953	1,936	168,868	1.15
1954	1,956	154,227	1.27
1955	2,602	109,946	2.37
1956	2,103	164,857	1.28
1957	1,686	282,164	0.60
1958	2,630	124,851	2.11
1959	2,586	106,928	2.42
1960	1,402	104,111	1.35
1961	894	71,689	1.25
1962	876	74,586	1.17
1963	1,571	93,151	1.69
1964	3,210	112,606	2.85
1965	5,234	146,758	3.57
1966	5,178	194,743	2.66
1967	6,753 ²	222,876	3.03
Total	48,291	2,921,639	1.65

Sources: Canada Year Book, 1947 - 1968.

Immigration Statistics, 1967 - 1968, Department of Manpower and Immigration.

1. Refer to those whose ethnic origin is Chinese.

2. The figure refers to the immigrants whose birthplace is China or Hong Kong (China: 4,142; Hong Kong: 2,611).

By 1901, Chinese immigrants could be found in every province of Canada. However, most Chinese immigrants still lived in British Columbia until the 1920s. In the following

years, Ontario became another destination to which Chinese immigrants went. And the figures from the Census of Canada show that over 67 percent of Chinese immigrants lived in these two provinces in 1961 (Table 1.6 and 1.7).

Table 1.6 Geographical Distribution of Chinese Population by Provinces, 1881—1961

Province	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961
Maritimes ¹	—	14	169	233	514	602	569	865	1,399
Quebec	7	36	1,037	1,578	2,335	2,750	2,378	1,904	4,794
Ontario	22	97	732	2,766	5,625	6,919	6,143	6,997	15,155
Manitoba	4	31	206	885	1,331	1,732	1,248	1,175	1,936
Saskatchewan	—	—	41	957	2,667	3,501	2,545	2,144	3,660
Alberta	—	31	235	1,787	3,581	3,875	3,122	3,451	6,937
B. C.	4,350	8,910	14,885	19,568	23,533	27,139	18,619	15,933	24,277
Territories ²	—	10	7	—	1	1	3	41	134
Total	4,383	9,129	17,312	27,774	39,587	46,519	34,627	32,528	58,197

Source: Censuses of Canada, 1881-1961

1. Includes Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

2. Includes Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Table 1.7 Percentage Distribution of Chinese Population by Provinces, 1881—1961

Province	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961
Maritimes ¹	—	0.15	0.98	0.84	1.3	1.3	1.6	2.7	2.4
Quebec	0.2	0.38	6	5.7	5.9	5.9	6.9	5.8	8.2
Ontario	0.5	1	4.2	10	14.2	14.9	17.7	21.5	26.0
Manitoba	0.1	0.33	1.2	3.2	3.4	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.3
Saskatchewan	—	—	0.24	3.5	6.7	7.5	7.3	6.6	6.3
Alberta	—	0.33	1.36	6.4	9.1	8.3	9.0	10.6	11.9
B. C.	99	98	86	70	59.5	58.3	53.8	49.0	41.6
Territories ²	—	0.11	—	—	—	—	—	0.1	0.2
Total	99.8	100.3	99.98	99.64	100.1	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9

Source: Censuses of Canada, 1881-1961

1. Includes Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

2. Includes Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Prejudice and discrimination marked the history of Chinese immigration to Canada before 1967. Hostility towards the Chinese was apparent from the beginning of their presence

in British Columbia. Proposals were advanced to restrict or hinder Chinese immigration, even though the Chinese played an undeniably crucial role in building the economy of western Canada. Anti-Chinese agitation pressured the Dominion government to pass its first discriminatory Chinese Immigration Act in 1885. A head tax of \$50 was levied on all Chinese who entered Canada and imposed restrictions on the number of Chinese passengers that ships could bring to Canada's ports. Subsequent immigration regulations in 1900 and 1903 raised the head tax first to \$100 and then to \$500. When the head tax failed to prevent Chinese immigration to Canada, the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 finally excluded Chinese from entering Canada. Having suffered a long period of being excluded from entering Canada and denied many civil rights, the Chinese in Canada were still highly restricted to sponsor the immigration of their dependents in China in the 1950s.

The Canadian government's immigration laws and policies had a definite effect on the life of Chinese immigrants in Canada. Since Chinese were allowed to enter Canada as cheap laborers, almost all early Chinese immigrants were single males, and many of whom were "married bachelors". They had to maintain their families in China by remitting money for their support, and enjoy conjugal relationships at intervals of only several years. In Canada, these "homeless" Chinese men were commonly denied access to the general social life and were frequently segregated residentially. They were isolated from the host society, and became part of an ethnically stratified

system, occupying one of the lowest positions and statuses within the society. This marginal position of Chinese immigrants was then used as the evidence of resisting assimilation against Chinese, and thereby more discriminatory laws were passed to block the integration of Chinese immigrants into Canadian society.

1.2 The Isolated Life of Early Chinese Immigrants

Although the people in Guangdong province deeply felt Western influence on the Chinese way of life in the nineteenth century, in many respects, they appeared conservative in terms of maintaining traditional Chinese life-style. Family was the most important part of their life. It was common to find three or four generations in a family. A married man continued to live together with his parents, grandparents, uncles, cousins, nephews, etc. The family property was vested in the male head of the family. The income from the common property and the earnings of the different members were usually put together for the maintenance of the whole family. In theory, the father was supreme in his authority, but in practice, the mother exercised a great deal of influence and was the center of the domestic life. In most cases, the mother managed all the business in the household and directed the social relations with friends and relatives. It was also the mother who found the future bride or husband for her children and arranged for their betrothals. Sons and daughters paid an equal amount of respect and observed the same degree of mourning for their

mother as for their father. While every member was bound in such a collective net, maintaining the family as a close social unit became the highest value. The interests of the family were absolutely put in the first place, all family members had to do what they could to strive for what was the best for the family. Based on this spirit of collectivism, the life of individuals was only a part of the family life. Any attempt to deviate from this principle would be thought of as rebelling against orthodoxy and ruining the family's welfare. In order to maintain family life in a right direction, parents were given absolute authority to control their children's way of life and supervise their social behaviors through their entire life. As a result of this tradition, in China, people always blamed parents when their child did anything wrong in the society, and the parents had to bear all the moral responsibilities for their child's wrongdoing. As a child, it became natural to obey parents' authority so that his life would always be on the right track. When young children had to leave their family and sought their livelihood in a place far away from their home, parents would contact their clan cousins who lived in the same place as their children, and asked them to supervise the children's behavior. Thus, a patrilineal family with filial piety as the dominant element in the social structure of China provided the context for most activities of an individual, and regulated and controlled much of the individual's behavior. It defined the person's relationship with many of his associates and served as a model for other

organizations. When Chinese immigrants came to Canada, it was also based on this system of family control that they created clan associations to assist in their adaptation to Canadian society and enable them to maintain links with their family in China. More important, the clan organization performed the role of the family in supervising young immigrants' social behaviors and guiding them to fulfill their filial duty to their parents.

The effect of traditional Chinese family life-style could also be found in the immigration movement itself. Like many other immigrants who came to Canada in the nineteenth century, Chinese immigrants came with the dream of making a fortune. However, there was no evidence that the Chinese had planned to settle in Canada permanently before they left their home. For most, immigration to Canada was a part of their responsibility as husbands and sons to provide for the family. The main purpose of this venture was to preserve the family from starvation in the slump of the mid-nineteenth century, and not just to make a personal fortune. The dream of a Chinese immigrant was that, through hard work and thriftiness in Canada, he would return to China rich someday. Thus, he could raise his family without economic hardships on the land where his ancestors were buried, and fulfill his duty to the family in terms of continuing his family line.

Since getting rich quick was more urgent than starting a new life in Canada, the Chinese usually did not bring their families with them when they immigrated to Canada. Even prior

to 1885 when there were no immigration restrictions on the Chinese, few Chinese immigrants set up their home in Canada although many of them got married or started their family just before they left for Canada.⁴⁹ The economic purpose of this immigration pattern was very clear: the cost of maintaining a family in Canada could be turned into more remittances back to China. Meanwhile, since the fare of a trans-Pacific steamship was expensive, it would be cost-effective to spend the money on those family members who could earn the money back immediately after they arrived in Canada.

Most of time, the immigration was a family matter, even though the first Chinese immigrants always came to Canada individually.⁵⁰ This was because few Chinese immigrants could afford the voyage to Canada by themselves before the 1960s. Usually, every adult family member was involved in making the decision of who would be sent to Canada. After the decision was made, the family would try to raise enough money from its clan to finance the trip. However, the money did not go directly to the person who would immigrate to Canada. The family usually controlled it. The family would pay for the immigrant the fare of the steamship and other fees for legal documents. The immigrant would send money back to his family after he found a job and saved up in Canada, then his family

⁴⁹ For example, of 4,744 Chinese in British Columbia in 1880, only 129 were women. See Jin Tan, "Chinese Labour and the Reconstituted Social Order of British Columbia," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 19, 3 (1987): 70-71.

⁵⁰ Kwok Bun Chan, *Smoke and Fire: The Chinese in Montreal* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1996), pp. 25-26.

paid back the loans. Thus, the economic responsibility bound an immigrant and his family together, even though that person might stay alone in Canada. And the relationship of the immigrant to his creditors became the relationship between his family and creditors. The reputation of the family and the filial piety of the immigrant to his family asked him to work very hard in Canada so that his family could pay all the debts as early as the parents promised to the creditors. Many needed eight or ten years to save enough money and pay back the cost of immigration they owed, but some might never have enough money to repay their debts in their whole life.⁵¹ As one Chinese immigrant recalled later: his mother and older sister made the decision to send him to Canada when he was fifteen. The reason for his immigration was that his family became very poor after his father died. His mother, therefore, wanted him to go to Canada and make money for the family because his mother had relatives there. However, his family could not afford the fare to Canada and other costs of the immigration. With the help of the relatives in Canada, the family raised all the money that the young immigrant needed. An expenditure of about three thousand Canadian dollars finally sent the young man to Canada in 1922. Then, he spent most of his life in Chinese restaurants and laundries so that he could keep sending money back to China.⁵²

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 69.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 89-108.

Most early Chinese immigrants were young peasants. They were poorly equipped to deal with the rigors of the life on the Canadian frontier. They did not know English, and were not even able to read and write in Chinese. Their skills were those specific to small-holding rice cultivators. After they immigrated to Canada, they could only take unskilled jobs in mining, railway construction, agriculture and domestic service, although an important minority soon became skilled or semi-skilled workers in the canning industry and railway construction. Based on the data of the Royal Commission Report of 1885, less than two percent of Chinese immigrants were managerial and professional people. After 1885, when provincial and federal legislatures laid down more discriminatory immigration restrictions to Chinese immigrants, the Chinese in Canada were restricted to only marginal participation in the economy. They were tolerated only in the limited number of jobs for which few white workers would compete.

Moreover, despised by the society and denied their fundamental rights as Canadian residents, Chinese immigrants were excluded from certain occupations, even though they had previously gained a foothold in some of those occupations like mining, fishing, and lumbering. Table 1.8 shows that between 1885 and 1931 the occupations of Chinese immigrants were concentrated in a number of labor-intensive industries and other unskilled jobs.

Table 1.8 The Percentage of Chinese Population by Occupations, 1885—1931

Occupation	1885	1901	1921	1931
Professional occupations	0.5	—	0.4	0.3
Store owners & merchants	1.3	9.2	4.6	3.6
Restaurant-keepers ¹	0.1	9.3	6.2	8.9
Laundry owners	—	—	9.62	2.2
Farmers and gardeners	1.3	6.5	3.2	4.2
Miners	15.8	—	0.4	1.0
Cannery laborers	7.6	29.1	0.2	0.8
Lumber & sawmill workers	7.6	1.6	3.2	1.6
Railway workers	31.3	—	0.8	0.3
Store employees	3.3	—	2.2	1.9
Servants, cooks, and waiters	3.0	17.4	23.3	26.2
Laundry workers	1.7	6.5	9.0	13.6
Farm laborers	17.4	—	6.5	7.5
Other laborers	3.3	26.7	24.4	21.4
Other occupations	5.9	2.8	6.0	6.5
Total	100.1	100.1	100.1	100.1
Total number of Chinese in labor force	9,272	3,042	34,042	40,253

Source: Peter Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, p. 47

1. The figure for 1921 includes hotel and restaurant keepers.

Statistical data also show that the Chinese who worked in the lumber industry decreased from 7.6 percent of the total Chinese working force in 1885 to 3.2 percent in 1921 and 1.6 percent in 1931. The number of cannery workers among the Chinese dropped from 29.1 percent in 1901 to 0.8 percent in 1931. Meanwhile, since the Chinese tried to cope with their inferior social status by avoiding the white society, they chose to enter occupations that did not expose them to competition with white workers. As a result, some specific ethnic businesses such as restaurants and laundries emerged in the Chinese community. To a great degree, Chinese immigrants took these two businesses as a survival adaptation, a way of developing alternative economic opportunities within a hostile society. Therefore, restaurant and laundry businesses were

called the Chinese immigrants' "two legs" by which they gained a place in society. Also from Table 1.8, one can find that in 1885 the number of the Chinese who engaged in laundry and restaurant work, such as servants, cooks, waiter, and laundry workers, was less than 5 percent. By 1921, the number increased to 32 percent, and by 1931, to 40 percent. The corresponding figures for laundry and restaurant owners were 0.1 percent for 1885, 9.3 percent for 1901, 15.8 percent for 1921, and 11.1 percent for 1931. This situation continued until the 1950s.

Even in the 1950s when Canadian immigration policy began to open its door to Chinese immigration, most Chinese immigrants still came to Canada as laborers. Figures from table 1.9 indicate that the biggest single group of Chinese workers admitted to Canada between 1950 and 1959 was that of laborers or of the people engaged in the service industries. During the period of 1955-1959, more than half of the Chinese immigration workers admitted to Canada intended to engage in the occupations related to the service industries. Meanwhile, less than 1 percent of the Chinese immigrants entered Canada as professionals during the period from 1950 to 1959, except the year 1955. And few claimed the skilled occupations related to the manufacture, finance, and business categories.

Table 1.9 Chinese Immigrants Admitted to Canada by Intended Occupation, 1950—1959¹

Intended Occupation	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
Managerial	—	—	—	—	4	15	3	2	3	6
Professional	3	9	15	6	14	70	27	31	29	159
Clerical	—	2	8	8	1	8	4	14	7	18
Transportation	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1
Communication	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Commercial	2	6	13	20	12	37	76	27	36	26
Financial	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	1	1
Service	—	—	12	18	94	408	623	229	245	239
Agricultural	3	6	17	6	5	59	86	16	23	11
Manufacturing	—	—	—	—	9	19	17	12	12	13
Laborers	12	91	581	690	691	9	24	15	39	21
Other	57	201	561	318	—	—	—	—	—	—
Not stated	12	8	—	—	12	1	1	8	6	5
Total workers	89	323	1,207	1,066	842	627	862	356	402	501
Total Immigrants ²	1,036	2,182	2,757	1,965	2,037	2,602	2,093	1,662	2,615	2,561

Sources: Annual Reports, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Canada, 1950—1956; Immigration Statistics, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Canada, 1956—1959.

1. The fiscal year for 1950—1954, calendar year for 1955—1959.

2. Refers to the Chinese who came from China and Hong Kong.

It was not until the 1960s when independent immigration became possible for Chinese that Chinese immigrants began to enter the professional job market directly. For example, in 1967, almost eighty-two percent of Chinese workers who entered Canada claimed that they intended to engage in managerial, professional, and other skilled occupations (Table 1.10). The figures from Table 11 also show that the percent of the Chinese immigrants who claimed unskilled occupations tremendously declined during the same period. In particular, the Chinese immigrants who intended to enter the service industry decreased from nearly 50 percent of the total Chinese

immigrants in 1959 to less than 1 percent of the total in 1967.

Table 1.10 Chinese Immigrants Admitted to Canada by Intended Occupation, 1960—1967¹

Intended Occupation	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967
Managerial	2	1	8	11	15	30	55	172
Professional	109	125	146	202	272	498	805	1,376
Clerical	17	6	8	27	33	160	234	366
Transportation	2	—	3	1	2	7	8	14
Communication	1	—	—	2	—	3	5	6
Commercial	8	4	3	9	20	25	22	29
Financial	—	—	—	3	—	2	2	5
Service	56	27	40	64	97	133	108	128
Agricultural	14	2	6	6	9	12	13	13
Manufacturing	10	6	51	33	48	146	163	263
Laborers	15	5	14	7	7	23	17	14
Other	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Not stated	2	2	—	1	2	1	3	20
Total workers	236	178	279	366	508	1,040	1,435	2,406
Total Immigrants ²	1,370	861	670	1,187	2,674	4,352	4,094	6,409

Sources: Immigration Statistics, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Canada, 1956-1959.

1. Calendar year.

2. Refers to the Chinese who came from China and Hong Kong.

The marginal position in the Canadian economy, together with racial prejudice of the society, placed the Chinese at a disadvantage in Canadian society and jeopardized their ability to earn a living. For most Chinese immigrants, especially those early immigrants, life was miserable. As early as the time of the gold rush, Chinese miners were treated as interlopers, and thereby discouraged from staking claims. They were usually found in little clusters, at work upon the

diggings abandoned by white miners.⁵³ The rudimentary technology they employed was labor-intensive, and did not require a great amount of capital. Their life was simple too. In their mining camps, the Chinese usually built log cabins, or rough A-frame shelters, cultivated gardens, and raised chickens. All their worldly belongings could be packed on sticks across their shoulders when they went searching for a fresh gold field.⁵⁴ They would be content if they could make a dollar or two dollars a day after ten or twelve-hour digging on the riverbank. For those who were hired by gold mining companies, the wages were always 25 percent less than white miners earned.⁵⁵ On the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Chinese were also paid lower wages for the same tasks white workers performed. The Chinese daily wage was usually \$1.00, compared to \$1.25-\$1.50 paid to whites.⁵⁶ In addition to lower wages, the Chinese had to buy provisions from the company store, unless they accepted a daily wage of 80 cents. They themselves took care of making and breaking camp, and cooked after a long day's work, tasks the whites were not required to perform.⁵⁷ The wages of Chinese coal miners, lumber and cannery workers were about half those of

⁵³ R Byron Johnson, *Very Far West Indeed: A Few Rough Experiences on the North-West Pacific Coast* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1872), p. 79.

⁵⁴ George M. Grant, *Ocean to Ocean*. Toronto: James Campbell & Son, 1873, pp. 304-305.

⁵⁵ Richard T. Wright, *In a Strange Land: A Pictorial Record of the Chinese in Canada 1788-1923* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1988), p.26.

⁵⁶ Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 44.

⁵⁷ Gunter Baureiss, "Chinese Immigration, Chinese Stereotypes, and Chinese Labour," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 19, 3 (1987): 26.

white workers, or less.⁵⁸ And what was worse, the Chinese were never considered as a desirable group, but just as useful laborers to develop western Canada. When the job market changed, the Chinese would be hurt before all others. For example, when the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed in 1885, thousands of Chinese workers were thrown out of employment. They headed for nearby towns and Victoria from their working camps. Many of them were put in a peculiar predicament—homeless and starving. As the Executive Council of British Columbia reported on 21 November 1885:

Thousands of these people, having been summarily discharged by the railway contractors, and their earnings having been absorbed by their rapacious masters or owners, are now left in a starving condition, and unless substantial relief be extended to them there is every prospect of their perishing during the winter.⁵⁹

After the 1880s, when most Chinese immigrants were forced out of those skilled occupations like milling, mining, canning, and lumbering, they were concentrated in restaurant and laundry industries. Long working-hours and a meager income characterized the life of those who worked in these two businesses. They usually had to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning and worked 15 to 18 hours a day and 7 days a week so that they could earn enough money to feed themselves and save some extra money to send back to China.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 44.

⁵⁹ "A Report of the Executive Council of British Columbia to the Secretary of State in Ottawa," Public Archives of Canada, 1886, cited in Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 18.

⁶⁰ Richard T. Wright, *In a Strange Land: A Pictorial Record of the Chinese in Canada 1788-1923* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1988), pp. 72-74.

Most Chinese immigrants retained their traditional life style in Canada. They ate the same food as they used to eat in China. They spoke their own dialects, and read their community papers, though they barely used English as their communication tool. Their clothes were made by their wives in China or bought from China. Even their kitchenware, such as chopsticks, bowls, and woks, was all Chinese style and brought from China. Their living conditions were poor compared to that of white Canadians. The house occupied by the Chinese was crudely built. A typical dwelling was described in the following tune: "The wall and floor, which was composed of rough lumber, are absolutely bare, and the starry heavens are observable at intervals through the roof."⁶¹ The stairway into which the occupant had to crawl upon his hands and knees was narrow and rickety. The room appeared crowded because space was usually divided off into several small rooms, sometimes even making into two stories out of one. And there was no light and ventilation in the whole house.⁶²

The Chinese immigrants still celebrated Chinese holidays, and maintained their ethnic customs. For example, almost everyone hoped to be buried in his home village in China after he died. If this was not possible at the time, he would ask to have a Chinese style funeral before he was buried

⁶¹ Royal Commission Report, 1902, cited in Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 81.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

in Canada; but his bones would finally be sent back to China and be buried beside his ancestors permanently.

Having lived in a bachelor community, many Chinese immigrants were tainted with some bad habits, such as opium smoking, gambling, and prostituting. Opium was brought to Canada as early as the time of the gold rush in British Columbia. According to Tong-hai Lee, more than half of early Chinese immigrants smoked opium. There were 11 opium factories in Victoria in the 1880s. Their business sale reached as high as three million dollars per year. The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association even provided free opium for its staff to smoke when the Association held a meeting. And opium dens were built in every Chinese community. It is only after 1907 when the government banned opium that opium began to disappear in the Chinese community.⁶³

Gambling was more common in the Chinese community. It even became the most popular activity to fill Chinese immigrants' leisure time. Like opium dens, there were gambling houses in every Chinese community. A contemporary witness in 1903 commented that the gambling business was the most prosperous business in Vancouver, even though there were fifty to sixty percent of Chinese who did not have a job at that time. The author also mentioned that there was hardly a single Chinese shop in the city that did not have a gambling business

⁶³ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), pp. 103-104.

at the same time.⁶⁴ Usually, a big gambling house could have more than a hundred visitors to play at one time, some had food stands inside. Sometimes the owners of gambling houses invited music bands to perform inside so that more visitors would be attracted. To a great degree, gambling was a major form of leisure for early Chinese immigrants. It was estimated that in Vancouver the Chinese spent more than \$150,000 U.S. per year. In the entire province of British Columbia, the Chinese spent more than \$500,000 U.S. per year.⁶⁵ Gambling brought serious social problems to the Chinese community. A gold miner lost more than ten thousand dollars in gambling, which was all he earned from gold diggings.⁶⁶ Some even lost all their savings, and never had money to send back home or to go back to China. Various crimes related to gambling became one of the biggest problems in the Chinese community in the late nineteenth century. Meanwhile, prostitutes caused more trouble to the Chinese community. According to the Report of the Royal Commission in 1885, there were 72 Chinese prostitutes in British Columbia.⁶⁷ These prostitutes entered Canada by forged identification as Chinese immigrants' wives or daughters. The coming of these prostitutes brought depraved life, with murdering, kidnapping, and gang-related fighting,

⁶⁴ Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, *A Travel Journal*, in L. Eve Armentrout Ma, "A Chinese Statesman in Canada, 1903: Translated from the Travel Journal of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao," *B. C. Studies*, 59 (Autumn 1983): 34-36.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁶⁶ Richard T. Wright, *In a Strange Land: A Pictorial Record of the Chinese in Canada 1788-1923* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1988), p. 25.

⁶⁷ The Report of Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, 1885, pp. 363-365.

to the Chinese community.⁶⁸ In a letter to the Chinese Consul General in San Francisco in March of 1884, some leading Chinese merchants in Victoria described the increase of crime, and the degeneration of morals in the Chinese community:

Some wicked Chinese banded together to ride roughshod over their fellow-countrymen in the community. And the old, the poor, and the unemployed suffered from hunger and cold, and poverty and sickness. Nobody showed pity on and gave charity to them; thereby, these unfortunates often died in the streets without anybody's care. Meanwhile, prostitution, gambling, brawling and gang related intimidating, extorting, and fighting brought more and more calamities to the community.⁶⁹

This chaotic situation in the Chinese community later became a main cause in the formation of a community-wide organization, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Victoria.⁷⁰

The first known Chinese organization was the Chinese Freemasons (Hong Men) founded in 1862 in Barkerville, a branch of the same secret society already active in California.⁷¹ The society undertook both political and welfare functions for the Chinese community as a whole. Moreover, facing a hostile society, the members of the organization were discouraged from taking cases to Canadian courts, and most disputes, whether of a civil or criminal nature, were settled by the secret society. Even the behavior in brothels and gambling houses was regulated by the society. The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent

⁶⁸ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), pp. 106-108.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷⁰ In the same letter, the Chinese stated that the most effective solution to the troubles in the Chinese community would be to establish a Chinese association in Victoria.

⁷¹ Edgar Wickberg, *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p. 30.

Association was the first to be organized as a formal community-wide Chinese association. Over 5,000 Chinese in British Columbia joined the association, representing about a third of the Chinese population in Canada at the time.⁷² The association was established in 1884 in Victoria to unite the Chinese in British Columbia in their protest against discriminatory laws and taxes, and to act as a law-enforcement body within the Chinese community against crime, prostitution, and gambling. As stated in its constitution, the organization also saw it as its purpose to undertake social welfare, to settle disputes, to aid the poor and the sick.⁷³ By 1920 the Chinese Benevolent Association had chapters in most major cities in Canada.

Another traditional way the Chinese organized themselves internally was through clan associations, which were directly transplanted from the kinship system in their home villages. As mentioned above, the first Chinese immigrants were from a limited rural region. Their relatives or clan members usually assisted their immigration in Canada. Therefore, people from the same village in China always immigrated to a specific place in Canada where a certain lineage group might have been maintained. In most cases, after an immigrant found his foothold in a certain place where he settled, the person would send a message back to his home village and tell people of his

⁷² Ibid., p. 38.

⁷³ Chuen-Yan Lai, "The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Victoria: Its Origins and Functions," B.C. Studies, 15 (Autumn 1972): 58-61.

life in the settlement. Then, his family members, relatives, or persons from a same clan would follow the pioneer and join him when they decided to try their luck in Canada. After a short time, the people from the same village or clan were concentrated in a certain area. They spoke the same dialects, followed the same cultural traditions, and shared similar standards of living. They might even engage in the same occupations or dominate certain trades.

The clan organization initially emerged in Vancouver at the end of the nineteenth century. The members of a clan organization could trace their descent to one or several ancestors through the paternal line. They adhered to a clan genealogy and used legends, myths, and historical stories to determine the identity of their ancestors. For example, the Huang Clan Association saw Huang Xiang-gong, a famous scholar and official in late Han dynasty (AD 25-221), as its ancestor.

The clan organization fulfilled a variety of functions in the Chinese community. Among others, it conducted ancestral worship and related services, provided lodging facilities, found employment, gave relief when needed, and aided financially towards the burials and shipment of bones of the deceased to China.⁷⁴ However, the most important function was the social control it exercised by defining the interpersonal, political, and economic behavior within the guidelines of traditional kin relations. The original framework of the clan

⁷⁴ Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 80-81.

was based on age hierarchy and proximity of kinship. In other words, a kinship member's form of behavior and allocation of material benefits were partly determined by age and generation factors. In the same generation, for example, older members took precedence over younger members and members of a junior generation. This framework constituted the foundation both for the formal organization of authority in the clan and for the performance of its many functions. Learning the system was an important part of a person's training to fit him for social life in the local community, for that made him know his place within the scheme of things.

While Chinese immigrants transplanted the clan organization to Canada, they extended the functions of the organization, and made it a home to those single males. They utilized the collective force of the organization to protect themselves in face of cultural deprivation and political and economic exclusion in the host society. All clansmen and fellow-villagers found that their disputes would be settled in the organization and their lawsuit would be handled by it too. When a job in a Chinese shop became vacant, preference was given to relatives, clansmen, and fellow-villagers. New arrivals in Canada had to join clan associations; otherwise, they would find it difficult to get a job in the Chinese community or even in the white society. Indeed, the clan organization played a crucial role in solidifying the clan member's hold on certain jobs and industries. As David Lai has shown with the working of chain migration, there was strong

correlation among particularistic lineage ties, jobs and residence in the Chinese community. For example, during the 1880s, most of the Ma's from Tai-shan County in Nanaimo were cooks and servants; in Kamloops, the Huang's from Zeng-cheng County were miners and farmers while the Li's, Lin's, and Huang's of He-shan County were railroad workers.⁷⁵ Moreover, as it happened in China, a certain clan always tended to exclude outsiders or cast out their neighbors of other surnames and to develop into massive single-lineage settlements. For example, most of about 400 Chinese in Winnipeg in the late 1880s were said to have the surname Li. For many years, they had lookouts posted at the roads and railroads entering Winnipeg and tried to prevent by all means other Chinese from coming to compete with their laundry business in the city. This practice ceased only after the Li Clan Association in Vancouver persuaded their clansmen in Winnipeg to change their attitude.⁷⁶

The growth of Chinese organizations took place in the 1910s, and by 1923 all types of organizations had been founded across Canada where larger numbers of Chinese lived. In Vancouver, there were 26 clan associations and 12 district associations in 1923, 10 clan associations and 2 district associations in Toronto in the same year; in 1937 the number of clan associations in Vancouver increased to 46, and 16 in

⁷⁵ Chuen-yan D. Lai, "Home County and Clan Origins of Overseas Chinese in Canada in the Early 1880s," *B. C. Studies* 27 (Autumn 1975): 14.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Toronto; there were 17 for the district association in Vancouver, and 4 in Toronto. Meanwhile, other organizations also emerged, such as trade associations, Chinese schools, and churches.⁷⁷ Almost everyone in the Chinese community affiliated to a certain organization. Indeed, while anti-Chinese feelings were so widespread, non-compliance meant little recourse to economic, moral, and social assistance.

After World War II, the changes of immigration laws unified families separated for decades and permitted entry of Chinese from different regions, speaking different dialects, and with different occupations. These new immigrants were very different from those who came in the early part of the century or the past century. Many were urban dwellers from Hong Kong and Taiwan, in contrast to the earlier immigrants from mainly rural backgrounds. Therefore, they did not have the same bonds with the old Chinese communities or organizations as the early immigrants had.⁷⁸

Since the 1950s, as the demographic composition of the Chinese population changed, and as they gained more economic, political, and social equality, the Chinatowns in major cities have come to lose many of the functions they once performed for the Chinese. The traditional organizations have also become less active and adopted a lower profile in their community. In particular, clan and district associations have

⁷⁷ Edgar Wickberg, "Chinese Associations in Canada, 1923—47," in K. Victor Ujimoto and Gordon Hirabayash ed., *Visible Minorities and Multiculturalism: Asians in Canada* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1980), p. 27.

⁷⁸ Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 94-98.

declined in importance, as they could no longer use the same surname or district to appeal to the new Chinese immigrants who came from diverse social and geographical origins. Memberships in these associations began to decline, and the nature of their operation also changed to performing mainly social functions for charity purpose. In Calgary, for example, the fraternal-political associations changed their objectives and even began to accept non-Chinese members. Others, like the family associations in Winnipeg, lost their functions entirely and have disappeared. Meanwhile, with the decline of discriminatory practices, the Chinese could get social assistance through the government system, and the social workers replaced the social assistance programs of traditional organizations. With the loss of these once-important functions many organizations have also lost community control and been reduced to "social clubs." As a result, the proportion of Chinese Canadians who belonged to ethnic organizations has been continuously declining since the 1950s.

While being denied participation in other than an ethnic sub-economy, Chinese immigrants retreated from the host society, and developed close social bonds among themselves. They transferred the loyalties and institutions of their native villages to Canada, and built their considerably isolated community-Chinatown. Within the Chinatown enclave, the Chinese formed a powerful organizational structure based on the native social institutions of lineage and district of origin. This highly solidary structure effectively unified all

the Chinese in a particular locality. It enabled Chinese immigrants to have minimum contact with the usually hostile dominant group, and to maintain their indigenous cultural traditions. More important, it served as an effective structural barrier to outside attacks. This inward direction of the Chinese was frequently interpreted as their unwillingness to assimilate into the host society, when in fact it was an adaptive solution to the existing conditions.

Indeed, in the face of widespread institutional discrimination, the response of the majority of Chinese was simply to avoid situations where discrimination was expected. An outcome of this response was the formation of various mutual protection and benevolent associations. The Chinese utilized these organizations to cope with a Canadian society that resented their presence and took steps to disrupt their entry and adaptation to the society. These organizations in turn acted as centripetal forces in developing a positive group sentiment and enhancing the feeling of group life among Chinese immigrants.

Chapter 2

The Religion of Early Chinese Immigrants in Canada

Religion has often been highlighted by sociologists as strengthening ethnic identity;¹ it is frequently used to reinforce ethnic consciousness and language maintenance, to affirm the dignity of ethnic group members who might be considered by non-members as having low status, and to encourage conscious social isolation from outsiders.² This was also true for the early Chinese immigrants to Canada. By affiliating to their ethnic religions, the Chinese immigrants found many things that were similar to their experiences in their homeland. Their sense of ethnic identity was aroused and reinforced by the distinct sermons, rites, and worship. In

¹ In his book *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religions and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), Milton M. Gordon has explored the relationship between ethnic religious identity and ethnic contacts for retention of ethnic-related behaviors (pp.173-224). Meanwhile, in their books *Ethnic Diversity in Catholic America* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973) and *The Denominational Society: A Sociological Approach To Religion in America* (Glenview: Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1970), Harold Abramson and Andrew M. Greeley have demonstrated the importance of ethnic-religious factors in the behavior of immigrants and their descendants in the United States. In their article "Differential Effects of Ethno-Religious Structure on Linguistic Trends and Economic Achievements of Ukrainian Canadians," in W. Roman Petryshyn ed., *Changing Realities: Social Trends Among Ukrainian Canadians* (Edmonton: The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1980), Warren E. Kalbach and Madeline A. Richard demonstrated the significance of the religious heterogeneity of ethnic origin groups for language assimilation and social and economic status attainment.

² Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religions and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.27; John M. Yinger, *Sociology Looks at Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 95, 104; also see E. Nottingham, *Religion and Society* (New York: Random House, 1954), and Robert F. Harney, "Religion and Ethnocultural Communities," *Polyphony* 1, 2 (1978): 3-10.

particular, while living in a hostile social environment, the Chinese saw the maintaining of their traditional religious faith as a powerful weapon to defend their ethnic solidarity. Indeed, ethnic religions contributed to the survival of the Chinese community under the pressure of racial hostility during the period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

However, the extreme degree of ethnic solidarity and interaction among the Chinese brought more challenges to Protestant missionaries when they attempted to convert those "pagans". Meanwhile, the Chinese immigrants' religious consensus, set up by their traditional religious beliefs, framed their thinking of Christianity. And it significantly affected the Chinese response to the mission work. Therefore, this chapter will briefly introduce the traditional Chinese religions brought by the Chinese immigrants, and explore the role that those religions played in Chinese immigrants' life in Canada. Based on this description and examination, an analysis of the characteristics of some important Chinese religious beliefs will be done. This will provide a richer cultural context to the mission history.

2.1 Traditional Chinese Religions

During the course of their long history, the Chinese developed their own distinctive ideas concerning human origin,

nature and destiny, and their relation to the universe in which they lived. One of their greatest concerns was to find a satisfactory relationship with a transcendental spiritual world. This concern found expression in a variety of beliefs and religious practices. These beliefs and practices played a significant role in the life and culture of the Chinese.

Before the twentieth century, the religious life of the Chinese immigrants was heavily colored by three major traditional Chinese religions: Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism.³ Among these religions, Daoism is an indigenous Chinese religion. It arose during the second century AD. However, its main ideas could be traced to ancient Chinese concepts of ghosts and gods, and the magical practices based on the theories of *Yin* and *Yang*, and of the five elements before the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC).⁴ According to Daoism, Tao is the source and order of the universe; life is a product of *Yin* and *Yang* as the creative processes of Tao. It consists of the five elements. If those elements could be held together in perfect harmony, life would be prolonged indefinitely.

However, in the real world, that interior harmony is

³ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), pp. 382-383.

⁴ In ancient China, people believed that the basic constituents of the universe are five elements: wood, fire, earth, metal and water, and these succeed one another in exercising a dominating influence over both human and natural events. Meanwhile, the Chinese were convinced that, in the universe, all phenomena proceeded from two primal and complementary forces, *Yin* and *Yang*. The *Yin* is the female principle, negative, receptive, passive and quiescent; the *Yang* is the male principle, active, positive and aggressive. All life is in constant flux, and derives from the blending and harmony of these two forces.

limited by the human body, because the materiality of the human body is the crucial cause of death and the five elements in the human body would disperse at death.⁵ In order to eliminate such physical limitation of the human body, Daoism developed the idea that one must practice "outer elixir" and "inner elixir" to cultivate the "vital breath" of the body.⁶ The "out elixir" involved the combination of a drug of immortality; and the "inner elixir" was the refining of the spiritual essence within the human body by various mental and physical means so that the spirit could be liberated from the physical body. If a person followed Tao and cultivated the "vital breath" of his body perfectly, he would be able to respond to the "vital breath" of the universe. When a person was able to communicate with the universe by the "vital breath", he would be able to break the limitation of the human body and unite with the universe. Thus, the person would wander at will in perfect freedom through the universe, or make his way to the realm of the blessed immortals. By the time of the Song dynasty (960-1280), in face of the logic of inevitable death, Daoism emphasized the practice of the "inner

⁵ Yijie Tang, *Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism in Chinese Culture* (Beijing: Zhongguo Heping Publishing House, 1988), pp. 124-125.

⁶ According to Daoism, both the human body and the universe are produced by the "vital breath" (*Qi* in Chinese). The "vital breath" is also the essential factor in the appearance of the phenomenal world in which Dao manifests itself.

elixir" and separation from secular life in order to seek the true spiritual immortality.⁷

Nevertheless, Daoist teachings and practices of exorcism had more impact on the life of common people. In China, the Daoists who advocated exorcism were usually referred to as the *Fulu* sect of Daoism. This sect of Daoism was characterized in its worship of various ghosts and gods and emphasis on the magic functions of the talisman (called *fulu* in Chinese). The *fulu* is a kind of talisman drawn in esoteric writing by the Daoist. Since the Daoist was believed to be able to communicate with gods, the talisman was believed to carry the commands and orders from the gods in heaven. It could summon and dismiss the deities, keep away demons, invoke the beneficence of deities, and even heal illness. For the Daoist, the ritual of talisman was a procedure whereby he reached mystical harmony with Tao; the supreme powers of the universe thereby were called down into the Daoist's body and made him powerful to fight back against the attacks of demons.⁸ Attracted by the magical functions of the talisman, the Chinese always invited the Daoist to perform the ritual of the talisman when they thought that something might be wrong in their life. They asked the Daoist to bless the dead, free the soul from hell, turn away calamities, and ensure tranquility.

⁷ Yude Wang, *Mysticism in Chinese Culture* (Changsha, China: Hunan Publishing House, 1993), pp. 240-243.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 245-

People also asked the talisman from the Daoist to protect their property, family, businesses, and to bring fortune, wealth, health, and longevity to their family members. All these heavily colored the Chinese religious life through the centuries. People more readily worshiped Daoist gods than they did those of other Chinese religions. Almost every family had at least one talisman or a drawing related to Daoist stories in their house. Daoist gods played various roles and performed different functions in every aspect of Chinese social life. For example, city residents prayed to the God of City for the peace of their city; villagers provided their sacrifices to the God of Earth for good harvests; and family members worshipped Most Exalted Lord Lao for a long life.

However, most important is that Daoism makes a distinct contribution to the Chinese view of life. Daoism adopted the Buddhist doctrines of karma and rebirth and developed its own concept of retribution. According to the Daoist doctrine, a person's good deeds will be rewarded with good, and evil with evil. The retribution may come in this world or the other; and it will not be limited to the person himself, but will be expanded into his family members and descendants.⁹ Thus, a person's success is not merely his own fortune, but also his family's glory; and it will bring honor to his ancestors. If a

⁹ Yijie Tang, *Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism in Chinese Culture* (Beijing: Zhongguo Heping Publishing House, 1988), p. 175.

person does evil things, the punishment will go to his family members, relatives, and even descendants. No one knows when the retribution will come, but one thing is for sure, that is, everyone will get his due reward. The doctrine of Daoist retribution significantly influences Chinese attitudes to the individual life in this world. To a great degree, it reinforces the social control force of morals. People view their life as a part of the whole family life; and an individual's life will exert positive or negative effects on his family members, relatives, or descendants, and these effects will continue to the distant future. Until today, Chinese still live in the shadow of this Daoist doctrine.

Buddhism was first brought into China from India in the first century. The main teachings of Buddhism are the life is suffering, and that the cause of suffering is human desires or passions. Therefore, one must walk on Buddha's way, and extinguish all human temptations, so that one can fully know the transcendental character of ultimate Reality. When one has attained this kind of enlightenment, one is "dead" to the desires of this world, and attains the wisdom to reach the ultimate transformation.¹⁰

The common people in China did not accept the ideas and practices of Buddhism until the seventh century, when several

¹⁰ Laurence G Thompson, *Chinese Religion: An Introduction*, 5th edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1996), p. 103.

truly Chinese Buddhist sects arose. These sects introduced much of Confucian and Daoist thought into their doctrines, and thereby made them more readily available to the common people. Among others, the Pure Land sect and the Chan sect reflected the most Chinese characteristics. The Pure Land sect believed that people had little power to save themselves because the world was filled with material temptations. As long as they lived in the world, people were bound in a vicious circle of sin and error through the three poisons of greed, anger and stupidity. Therefore, they needed Buddhas to help them to set their minds free from all the entanglements of the phenomenal world. Amitabha, the Buddha of compassion, was one of these Buddhas. He lived in the Western Paradise, called Pure Land, and offered to the believer the assistance which only infinite power, grace and merit could give. Those who made a sincere vow of faith in Amitabha's saving power would go to his Western Paradise at death. And, in the paradise, they were certain to attain enlightenment. This belief appealed to many Chinese because it promised people paradise directly at their death, thus avoiding purgatory or rebirth on earth. On the other hand, the way to the paradise was also simple: just calling Amitabha's name, filling the mind constantly with thoughts of him, and accepting his mercy and merit. There was no need for practicing meditation, studying doctrines, or following disciplines. Moreover, faith and devotion could also

bring Amitabha's help to the person who still lived in the world. According to the teachings of the Pure Land sect, in his saving activity, Amitabha was assisted by the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Guan Yin in Chinese). Guan Yin was believed to be able to send Amitabha's unlimited mercy and boundless compassion to the world. Whenever a person was confronted with a crisis in his life, he just needed to call the bodhisattva's name for help. Wherever he was at the time Guan Yin would respond to the request immediately and save the person from the crisis. He also appeared in the world by his various embodiments to help people, and when he did this, the beneficent often knew nothing about it.¹¹

With its emphasis on salvation by faith alone and its teaching of devotion to Amitabha and the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the Pure Land sect later exerted a pervasive and dominating influence over the lives of the common people. While being guaranteed to go to the paradise after death, more Chinese who followed the sect were inclined to look forward to gaining secular help from the Buddha, especially from the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. They worshiped the Buddha whenever they had the opportunity; they provided for the Buddha and bodhisattva with ritual offerings as long as they lived in this world; and they erected the statue of the Buddha in their houses, shops, and public meeting halls. However, all these

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 112-113.

were just for one purpose: to be able to ask the Buddha for help when they were in trouble. The ultimate transformation was less important. They believed that, as long as they were devoted to the Buddha by faith, they would gain his help whenever they needed it in their life. Thus, for the Chinese, while the belief in the Buddha was indeed a matter of their personal salvation, it was more a means to protect them from the suffering in the world. As a result, the teachings and practices of the Pure Land sect were more attractive to the common people in China. In later years, the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara was often represented in a female form, usually known as Goddess of Mercy.¹² The goddess gained a supreme place among the Chinese. As the protector of women and children, the giver of children, the guardian of sailors and the great compassionate savior, the Goddess of Mercy became one of the most prominent deities worshiped by the Chinese. Temples in her honor were founded all over China. To a great degree, it may even be said that the Goddess of Mercy overshadowed Buddha himself and the other great Bodhisattvas.

On the other hand, the practices of the Pure Land sect came to contribute to the distinctive character of Chinese religion, namely, its emphasis on the secular functions of deities and devotion to deities who could get people out of trouble in this life.

¹² Ibid., 112.

While the Pure Land sect of Buddhism offered people an easy way to the paradise in which they would enjoy the eternal life with the Buddha Amitabha, the Chan sect taught people how to reach enlightenment in this world. According to the teachings of the Chan sect, in the Pure Land, people still could not experience the ultimate peace and clarity of mind. The enlightenment was inside every person. One could not find the true nature of Reality by scripture reading. Good deeds also did not guarantee a person to go to the paradise. The practice of ritual and magic would not contribute anything to salvation. And no one else could help the sufferer escape his predicament. Therefore, one should spend his life in meditation and find the pure Buddha in his own mind. The method was to eliminate all false and erroneous thinking, and reach a point of absolute quietude. The Chan sect also emphasized that the awareness of Reality could not be taught or transmitted by books or teachers. All a teacher or a scripture could do was to arouse a kind of spiritual illumination that came only when thought and sense perception ceased.

As the Chan sect developed, it provided many of the basic elements of Chinese life and culture. It exerted a great influence upon the Chinese practice of religion. In their religious practice, the Chinese concentrated more on the direct identification of the limited human consciousness with

the supernatural being. They did not put doctrines, rituals, and forms of organizations in a very important position when they practiced their religions.¹³

Confucianism reflected another distinctive aspect of the diversity of Chinese religion. It began to dominate the Chinese mind-set about two thousand years ago. In the Song dynasty (960-1279), it became the religion of state. Throughout its history, Confucianism manifested a deep sense of human's dependence upon a supreme deity-Heaven. It fostered a sense of an intimate relationship between a transcendental spiritual world and the human world. The central theme of Confucianism was how a person lives to be harmony with Heaven. Its main concern was with humankind in social relations, and with the fundamental principles that lay at the root of those relationships on which the stability of society and the family rested. Confucianism was convinced that human nature had lost its inherent perfection, and the task of the person who wanted to attain his true potential humanity was to restore it by perfecting his moral qualities. Thus, self-cultivation was thought of as the most important part of human life. In cultivating oneself to moral perfection, people were taught to have to nurse some virtues, such as benevolence (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), propriety (*li*), wisdom (*zhi*), and sincerity (*xin*). Among these moral virtues, benevolence and

¹³ *Ibid.*, 113-114.

propriety were thought of as the fundamental factors that characterized a 'perfect man'. Benevolence was the inner quality of the heart and the source of right conduct, and propriety, which governed the individual, family, and social relationships, was the outward expression of benevolence.¹⁴

Confucianism also believed that the supreme deity, Heaven, ruled over the cosmos and all other spiritual beings. Heaven revealed its will by means of its mandate. People had to obey and conform to the Mandate of Heaven so that they could attain moral perfection and ultimately unite with Heaven. In other words, in seeking to perfect one's moral qualities, a person had not merely to conform to human standards and laws, but to regulate his life in accordance with principles that were ordained by Heaven, which formed the regulative principles of a cosmic order. This idea of the unity of Heaven and humankind formed a central pillar of Confucianism. And it also significantly influenced the Chinese world-view and their thinking on religion.¹⁵

Confucianism held its dominant position in the Chinese society throughout all the dynasties until the first years of this century. The teachings of Confucianism have been the most potent single factor in shaping the life and character of the Chinese people.

¹⁴ Yijie Tang, *Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism in Chinese Culture* (Beijing: Zhongguo Heping Publishing House, 1988), pp. 59-67.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-70.

2.2 Early Chinese Immigrants' Religious Life

While early Chinese immigrants were economically segregated from the dominant group, they were also culturally isolated from Canadian mainstream society. This social precondition enabled the Chinese to transplant almost wholesale a form of Chinese culture to Canada. As a result, traditional ethnic religion became dominant in Chinese immigrants' religious life. In fact, from the very beginning, Chinese immigrants brought their indigenous deities with them when they came to Canada. In 1862, Chinese gold-miners erected their first altar and a statue of Guan Gong at the "Loyal and Righteous Hall" of the Chinese Freemasons in Barkerville.¹⁶ Guan Gong is believed to be the God of War, who has the power to dispel evil and restore goodness. He was a famous army general depicted in the popular folk novel, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, and known for his loyalty, righteousness and courage. A Bodhisattva temple was built at Rossland in 1865. However, we do not know what and how many deities were worshiped in the temple because the temple was destroyed in 1920.¹⁷ The early Chinese immigrants also brought a statue of Tan Gong to Victoria in the 1860s. Tan Gong is believed to be a kind and benevolent deity who has the power to help people

¹⁶ Tung-hai Lee, *A History of the Chinese in Canada* (Taipei: Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1967), p. 224.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

who travel on the sea. Legend had it that Tan Gong was a cowherd who transformed himself into a deity. The idol was first put on the beach near the Chinatown in Victoria for protecting the Chinese immigrants arriving from the sea. Later, in about 1875, a Chinese settler built a small temple for Tang Gong in Chinatown. In 1886, the Chinese in Victoria rebuilt the temple, and formally named the new temple Tan Gong Temple. Since then, Chinese have always visited the temple.¹⁸ People visited the temple to seek help from him with regard to personal crises, family matters, safety during travel, business forecasts, career advancement, a possible marriage, auspicious location of a house, sickness, and even applications for immigration papers to Canada. There was also a temple in which the Goddess of Mercy was worshipped in the early Chinatown. Some radical anti-religious activists later destroyed the temple, but the statue of the Goddess of Mercy was saved by an anonymous believer who secretly moved the statue to his home and continued to worship the deity in his home.¹⁹

In 1885, when the Chinese Benevolent Association was established in Victoria, a shrine, called "Lie Sheng Gong," was built on the third floor inside the building of the Association. It paid tribute to five deities: Guan Gong,

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 226.

Heavenly Empress, a woman who was patron of all sea travelers; the God of Wealth, the patron of businessmen; Hua Tuo, a noted healer, and Confucius, who represented ethical conduct, the family, and society.²⁰ The shrine was an attraction for many Chinese immigrants in Victoria, and it became the official place of worship in the Chinese community. It was also told that the Chinese built three "Joss Houses" in Victoria by 1902.²¹ And, according to a contemporary witness, one could always find offerings on the altars of the temples. The offerings included chicken, tea, and pork; and the oil lamp on the altar would be kept burning all the day. People came to the temple and worshiped their deities and requested the help of their favorite deities. The worshipper usually went down on his knees and touched his head upon the floor as he held two prayer sticks in his hands. After saying his prayer, he would drop the sticks on the floor, and if the sticks fell in a certain way he had the assurance that his prayer would be answered as desired. Then, he would take a slip of paper upon which were printed certain requests, and set fire to it. When the paper disappeared, he would beat a drum or sound upon a bell which the temple provided, so that the deities in heaven would know he was sending requests to them.²²

²⁰ Ibid., p. 226.

²¹ J.C. Speer, "Our Chinese Work in British Columbia," *The Missionary Outlook* 21, 2 (February 1902): 30.

²² Ibid., p. 30.

Among others, ancestor worship was very popular among the early Chinese immigrants. Indeed, ancestor worship was already a fully developed cult in China at least three thousand years ago. At that time, Chinese believed that there was an unseen but completely real dimension to the world in which the souls of their ancestors dwelt. These souls were able to bless and protect the surviving family members in this world. However, if the deceased was not placated by suitable burial and sacrifices, his soul would turn into a demon, called *gui* in Chinese, who was capable of bringing calamities on the living. Thus, a relationship of mutual dependence was built between the living and the dead, in which the former provided sacrifices for the latter in exchange for blessings, such as health, happiness, wealth, long life, and family harmony. When Confucianism became dominant in the Chinese ideology, the moral and social significance of ancestor worship received growing emphasis. In particular, Confucius made ancestor worship a vital part of filiality. According to his teachings, the filial son not only rendered service to his parents while they were living, but also performed elaborate funeral and sacrificial rites upon their death in order to express the genuine and lasting quality of filial sentiments. Thus, ancestor worship came to be a means of cultivating family values like filial piety, honesty and loyalty, and the continuity of the family lineage. By the rites of mourning and

the sacrifices to the ancestors, the survivor's grief was expressed; the spirit of the dead obtained its peaceful life in the other world; the family was blessed by the soul of the dead; and the lineage received a continuing sense of wholeness.

Since early Chinese immigrants lived in a bachelor community, the Chinese community or clan organization took the responsibility to supervise the Chinese immigrants' performance of ancestor worship. Usually, every clan organization would build an ancestor altar in the main hall of the clan house. The altar consisted of a portrait of the clan's ancestor with a couplet on the each side of the portrait, and a table bearing an incense burner, joss-stick holder, flower vases, and plates for sacrificial food. On the ancestor's birthday, all the members of the clan would gather together in front of the altar and perform the rite of ancestor worship. A principal worshipper would lead the members to salute their ancestor by bowing three times to the portrait of the ancestor. Then, he would offer incense and wine to the ancestor; and other worshippers would present sacrificial food on the altar table. The ritual would be concluded by reading a eulogy that detailed the history, moral conduct, glories, and achievements of the ancestor.

Moreover, since the welfare of the soul was a large factor in ancestor worship, the Chinese immigrants always gave

their deceased fellows a lavish funeral. At the funeral, tables would be set out on the street, loaded with the food and confectionery of which the dead was fond. After the Buddhist or Daoist priest chanted his prayers, the hired mourners were brought forth with all the signs of being grief stricken. On the way to the grave, slips of paper, perforated with thousands of pin holes, were scattered with the thought that the demons which were after the soul, having to pass through every hole in every paper, would not catch up till the body was in the grave. And roasted pork would be provided in front of the grave, so that the demons could not go to reach the dead.²³

After the funeral ceremony, every year during the Pure Brightness Festival,²⁴ the Chinese community would also organize a trip to the Chinese cemetery and a ceremony would take place to pay respects to those who died in Canada. Although it was usually a family activity in China, the ceremony held in Canada was always a community affair. People went to pay respects to their fellow members. They would tidy up the graves, light joss sticks and candles, and burn paper money and ingots of silver and golden foil; and they would

²³ The funeral ceremony may be somewhat different among the different groups of the Chinese immigrants. This description of the Chinese funeral ceremony is according to a contemporary witness in Victoria, British Columbia. See J.C. Speer, "Our Chinese Work in British Columbia," *The Missionary Outlook* 21, 2 (February 1902): 30.

²⁴ The Pure Brightness Festival is, according to the Chinese calendar, the day marking the beginning of the 5th solar term. It is usually on April 4, 5, or 6. This is a traditional day for the Chinese to worship their ancestors.

also offer fruit, wine, roast pigs, steamed chickens, and other sacrifices to the dead.²⁵ For many years, the ceremony which took place for the Pure Brightness Festival was one of the most important community activities for the Chinese in Canada.

Even so, the Chinese still thought that the soul of the dead was homeless, for the dead was buried in a foreign country. The soul of the dead, for the Chinese, would hover over his tomb and be not able to rest until his bones were buried in his home village. According to this belief, the Chinese always tried to send their fellow's bones back to China. The Chinese community usually took this responsibility. The common practice was to bury the body in a Chinese cemetery for seven years, and then dig it up. After the bones of the body were completely cleaned up and dried, they would be packed into a wooden crate. When the Chinese community collected a sufficiently large number of the crates, a shipment of the crates to China would be arranged. In 1907, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association of Victoria built a special house in Ross Bay Chinese Cemetery to store the crates collected from the Chinese communities across Canada. The shipment of the crates to China continued until the 1940s.²⁶

²⁵ David Chuenyan Lai, "The Chinese Cemetery in Victoria," *BC Studies*, 75 (Autumn, 1987): 28.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-36.

Before the 1940s, indigenous Chinese religions overwhelmingly dominated the religious life of the Chinese in Canada. According to the Census of Canada in 1941, there were almost two thirds of the Chinese population who claimed to be Confucians and Buddhists (Table 2.1 and 2.2). Since there were no official statistics for Chinese religious affiliation before 1931, the Census of Canada in 1921 just shows that there were 38,395 who affiliated to Confucianism and Buddhism among the total population of Canada. At that time, the total population of Chinese and Japanese in Canada was 55,455, which was supposed to be the only two ethnic groups to affiliate to those two religions. The percentage of Buddhists and Confucians among the population of Chinese and Japanese in Canada was 69.2%; the same percentage was 66.8% in 1911, and 70% in 1901 (Table 2.1 and 2.2). Considering the fact that Daoism was as popular as those two religions among the Chinese, there would be many Chinese who believed in Daoism. Therefore, it can be said that almost all the Chinese immigrants in Canada were affiliated to their ethnic religions before 1921.²⁷

²⁷ According to the annual reports of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, in 1923 there were about one thousand Chinese who were the members of these two Protestant denominations. For the detailed analysis of the Chinese Christian population before 1923, see Chapter 5.

Table 2.1 Chinese Population by Religious Denomination, 1901-1961²

Denomination	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961
Christians	-	-	-	9,817	9,841	18,111	35,737
Confucians & Buddhists	15,522 ¹	24,574 ¹	38,395 ¹	24,693	22,744	-	-
No Religion	-	-	-	3,238	1,843	-	-
Other Sects	-	-	-	648	-	-	-
Not Stated	-	-	-	8,123	199	-	-
Other ³	-	-	-	-	-	14,417	22,460
Total	17,312	27,774	39,587	46,519	34,627	32,528	58,197

Sources: Statistics Canada, 1901-1961 Censuses of Canada.

1. The number is for the total population of Canada. 2. The Chinese population is defined by racial origin. 3. Includes all other non-Christian religions and no-religion.

Table 2.2 Percentage Distribution of Chinese Population by Religious Denomination, 1901-1961³

Denomination	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961
Christians	-	-	-	21	28.4	55.7	61.4
Confucians & Buddhists	70 ¹	66.8 ¹	69.2 ¹	53.1	65.7	-	-
No Religion	-	-	-	7	5.3	-	-
Other Sects	-	-	-	1.4	-	-	-
Not Stated	-	-	-	17.5	0.6	-	-
Other ²	-	-	-	-	-	44	38.6
Total	-	-	-	100	100	99.3	100

Sources: Statistics Canada, 1901-1961 Censuses of Canada.

1. The figures are for the total population of the Chinese and Japanese.

2. Includes all other non-Christian religions and no-religion. 3. The Chinese population is defined by racial origin.

The influence of traditional Chinese religion on the life of Chinese immigrants in Canada was everywhere visible. There was almost no corner in the Chinese community where one did not find shrines, altars, and other places of worship. In a community center, the shrine in which various deities were worshipped would be erected in a conspicuous place in the building. In the main hall of a clan organization house, there would have been an altar that held the tablets of the deities favored by the clan. Each trade guild would have its patron

god with his appropriate festival. Religious ceremonies provided by Buddhist or Daoist priests would be held at the great events of the community, and particularly during the rites of death and mourning. The Chinese would say prayers to gods or spirits in a time of personal crisis or for special events such as birth, marriage, or death, at which the protection and goodwill of gods and ancestor spirits were invoked. The almost universal belief in and practice of geomancy or "Feng Shui", the keen interest in fortune telling, colored many early Chinese immigrants' day-to-day life. They read geomantic omens for their house location, business investment, personal career, and almost everything that would happen in their life. In fact, the pattern of their life was heavily shadowed by a world of gods, spirits, and specters.

However, Chinese immigrants' religious life showed some characteristics that were very different from those of their contemporaries. One of the most distinctive characteristics was that, for the Chinese, gods were needed only for specific and practical purposes. Therefore, they were constantly proliferating and being renewed; over the years the names, attributes, functions and even personalities would change, and many former historical figures were to be deified as the patron gods of different groups of people. Since the god-worshipper relationship was temporary rather than permanent, and practical rather than emotional, the Chinese only looked

for a Buddha or some other divinity or spirit that could render immediate and specific assistance to those who were in trouble. For example, the earliest Chinese immigrants in the nineteenth century gave priority to the worship of Guan Gong who represents loyalty, righteousness and courage. This reflected those Chinese immigrants' immediate needs to be tightly bounded together so that they could defend their interests by their collective force, and effectively fight back the racial hostilities against them. When the Chinese community was built in the 1880s, Confucianism and ancestor worship were more emphasized so that the moral order would be properly maintained among the Chinese. Later, when various clan organizations and ethnic businesses became popular in the Chinese community, the chosen deity related to the legend of the clan's origin, and the God of Wealth got more favor from the Chinese. After the beginning of the century, the priority of Chinese life in the society changed from fighting for the survival of the ethnic group to the search for family and individual well-being.

Meanwhile, when Chinese did pray, their utterances were little more than an express request for godly favors. They sought the favors of the gods but did not link themselves personally with the gods or regard themselves as permanently committed to the gods; intensive personalized prayers were as incongruous as they were unnecessary. Therefore, the Chinese

never tended to seek a deity whose teachings were intended to save all human beings in all ways and for all time. So long as the chosen god or gods were willing to help, they were not reluctant to put themselves at the god's mercy. Thus, a Chinese person might worship many deities of different faiths without having an organizational affiliation with any one of them. He might pray to the Goddess of Mercy for fertility, the God of Medicine for health, or the God of Wealth for family well-being and prosperity, depending on the magical power desired for the occasion. He might go to a shrine or altar, light candles and incense, mumble a prayer for the benefit or benediction desired, and even donate some money, but leave the place without further obligation or even visit. When Buddhist or Daoist priests performed a religious rite at some special event, the obligation also ended at the conclusion of service. Such a relationship between the worshiper and the deity was an "over-the-counter" deal, and the worshiper was free to shop in the religious market according to his taste and needs. Therefore, as it happened in their homeland, the Chinese in Canada always dedicated their temples or shrines to the worship of various gods, and few of the temples were the sanctuaries for only a single deity. Most commonly, Chinese temples were built expressly to house a mixed company of gods, including those from Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and the popular deity favored by the local community. As a result, for

a long time, there was in the Chinese community no solid organization of church as happened in the white community. And unlike other contemporary Canadians, who usually belonged to a certain Christian denomination, few Chinese affiliated with any institutionalized sect. While each Christian denomination was distinguished from others by its insistence upon doctrinal propositions, the religious life of the Chinese had nothing to do with signing articles of faith. For the Chinese, there was no question of which gods were true and which false. They usually evaluated their gods according to their effects. And they would always turn to the more effective ones and get rid of those from whom people obtained less than what they desired.

2.3 An Analysis of Early Chinese Immigrants' Religious Beliefs

Although Chinese immigrants' religious orientation appeared polytheistic in their outlook, there were still some fundamental beliefs that directed their religious practice. These beliefs mainly came from the core teachings of Confucianism. They represented the Chinese world-view, and supplied key operational values for the performance of religion in China. While Chinese immigrants attempted to reach their ultimate transformation in a completely different social and cultural environment, these beliefs still guided them to

the goal. Among others, the beliefs in Heaven and the Mandate of Heaven played the most important role in making Chinese immigrants' religious identity.

For the Chinese, Heaven was more than the visible sky. It was the principle of universal order. And it was believed as a supreme deity with the character of divine transcendence. It was the central source of being, and the most powerful of all the gods and supreme over all other deities.²⁸

As a supernatural force in the universe, Heaven was believed to exercise its power on humankind by sending its order down to them. This order was often referred to as the Mandate of Heaven in Chinese religion. People believed in the Mandate of Heaven, and thought of it as the demonstration of the supreme power of Heaven and the appearance of the will of Heaven to humankind. And the Mandate of Heaven could predetermine the course of all events in human society and it is the final order to regulate human life and their relationships.²⁹ Therefore, it was the ultimate explanation for momentous events in history as well as occurrences in the individual's life. However, the prediction of the Mandate of Heaven was believed totally beyond human competence. Prayers could sometimes affect these events, but they were considered impossible to avoid or alter after they were commanded. In

²⁸ Youlan Feng, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, third edition, vol. 1 (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1995), p. 89.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

other words, human beings would be totally controlled and regulated in those commands from Heaven, which directly affected their happiness and well-being.

What is more important is that the beliefs in Heaven and the Mandate of Heaven contained strong ethical implications. At this point, Heaven was not only believed as the supreme ruler of the universe, but also the author of the moral order in the human world who was concerned to protect and sustain the normative human order.³⁰ Therefore, the Chinese believed that Heaven demanded righteousness and good works. It sent blessings to those who had excellent moral behavior, and punished those who rebelled against it by licentiousness. As it is written in the *Book of Historical Documents*:

In its inspection of men below, Heaven's first consideration is of their righteousness; and it bestows on them accordingly length of years or the contrary. Heaven does not cut short men's lives; —they bring them to an end.³¹

Here, the moral implication of the belief in Heaven gave an ethico-theological meaning to the anthropomorphic attributes of Heaven and its relationship to human conduct. In other words, Heaven was thought of as being able to determine the course of one's life or the rise and fall of the moral order through its power of ethical judgment. Instead of being a "mute and silent" force, Heaven, according to this outlook,

³⁰ Ibid., p. 68.

³¹ James Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, second edition, vol. 3 (Taipei, Taiwan: Literature, History, and Philosophy Publications, 1971), p. 264.

expressed its approval of good and disapproval of evil by causing a variety of extraordinary phenomena to appear in the skies and on earth. It was based on this belief that Chinese articulated the relation between Heaven and humankind in terms of the central focus upon the individual's virtuous behavior. They believed that it was a person's responsibility to maintain the proper relation with Heaven, and that would be done through acting virtuously throughout all of one's life. As long as a person continued to act in virtuous ways, so long as he fulfilled his role with proper ritual observance and the obeying of virtuous sanctions, Heaven would continue to provide the protection for him to have a peaceful life in the world. However, Heaven would remove its protection and send some calamity on him as the signs of its wrath and punishment, if he strayed from virtuous ways. Moreover, even though a person had received the Mandate of Heaven and was supposed to have a good life in this world, his fortune might pass on to those who deserved it more because of their virtues, if the person failed to behave himself well. Such was the reason used by the Chinese to explain to themselves why personal misfortune had happened.

It was also from this fundamental belief that the Chinese believed that human destiny—both mortal and immortal—depended, not upon the existence of a soul before birth or after death nor upon the whim of a spiritual force, but upon an

individual's good works. In other words, it was a person's task to engage in learning and self-cultivation such that his nature would become fully manifest. A person would come to understand his nature when he fully developed his self-cultivation. And it was in understanding the true human nature that the person could understand the Mandate of Heaven. When the person, in the exercise of his heaven-bestowed nature, became morally perfectible to the point at which he could understand the great transforming and nourishing processes of Heaven for the universe, he then stood in a relation of unity with Heaven. In other words, when his inner integration and harmony of personality conformed to Heaven, the person came to have a transcendent power to connect the human world to the supernatural world in a framework of the interplay between the Mandate of Heaven and human destiny.

Here, Heaven was conceived of as immanent in human nature. And human nature was as much an embodiment of Heaven as the movements of the heavenly bodies. It was this belief in the high position of humankind in the cosmic order that inspired the Chinese to identify his moral cause with a sense of super-humanity. It also gave rise to the belief that the universal goal of humankind in life was to fulfill the destiny that Heaven had conferred upon him, namely, fully to cultivate every potentiality of human nature from the seeds of goodness inherent in him. Here, the fundamental idea was that Heaven

was within human bodies and humankind was perfectible, therefore, self-cultivation must be the aim of every life. As it was said in *Mencius*:

He who has exhausted all his mental constitution knows his nature. Knowing his nature, he knows Heaven. To preserve one's mental constitution, and nourish one's nature, is the way to serve Heaven. When neither a premature death nor long life causes a man any double-mindedness, but he waits in the cultivation of his personal character for whatever issue; —this is the way in which he establishes his Heaven-ordained being.³²

Thus, while moral virtues constituted the governing and guiding principle of human conduct, the belief in Heaven directed Chinese to follow a supernatural way which Heaven ordained for them. Here, a profound reverence for and belief in Heaven and the Mandate of Heaven pervaded the seeking of personal perfection. On the other hand, the establishment of the moral order based on religious piety provided a theological basis for proper individual behavior in Chinese society.

However, on the individual level, how could a person reach the ultimate goal of making himself fully and perfectly in harmony with Heaven? According to Chinese concepts, a person had to practice the virtue of benevolence, or *ren* in his whole life.³³ Key to *ren* is the five relationships: between subject and ruler; father and son; husband and wife; elder

³² Xi Zhu, *Collected Commentaries on the "Four Books"* (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1983), p. 349.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

brother and younger brother; and friend and friend. These five relationships regulated Chinese social behaviors with certain attitudes towards one another: love in the parents, filial piety in the children, respect in the husbands, friendliness in the elder brothers, loyalty among friends, respect for authority among subjects, and benevolence in the rulers. By practicing *ren*, a person would find his right position in the society and be of "propriety" in everything. And this moral perfection would transform a person into a "superior" man who knew Heaven's appointment and thereby conformed himself to Heaven. Thus, the quest for ultimate transformation was summed up in the individual moral cultivation, namely, the practice of *ren*. Putting this in another way, while the belief in Heaven tended to lead the Chinese to the other world, the personified characteristic with which they endowed Heaven brought the belief close to the life in this world. Moreover, when Chinese emphasized on the belief, they defined human nature as the Heaven-ordained and thereby perfectible.³⁴ Heaven as the source of absolute religious authority thus broadened its sphere from spiritual realm to individual daily life. While a person attempted to develop his own character into perfection by walking on the path of virtue, there would be a need in his inner mind for the development of religious practice. And by doing so, the person could be constantly

³⁴ Ibid., p. 335.

reminded of the supernatural power of Heaven in his life and made it fully manifest that he was walking on the path of Heaven. As a result, self-cultivation was believed not only to be able to bring people a perfect life in this world, but also to lead their way to oneness with Heaven.

It is worth noting that the emphasis of the belief in Heaven and the Mandate of Heaven was primarily on the ethical aspect. Its fundamental idea was that human beings could achieve the ideal of superior humanity by fully developing every potentiality of human nature from the seeds of goodness inherent in each of them. However, this moral emphasis also included a strong supernatural implication, namely, the conviction that the original motive power for the transformation and the progress of human life lay in the directive principle of Heaven's ordinance. In other words, a person could not be truly perfect unless he reached the stage at which he was sensitive to the Mandate of Heaven for the direction of his own life. Here, religious values were embedded in the moral order, and inseparable from the individual's existence. It was through such a combination of secular morals and religious beliefs that the seeds of the religious dimension of the Chinese world-view, which stressed the absoluteness of Heaven and the total dependence of humankind upon the Mandate of Heaven, manifested themselves. It became the fundamental principle of the Chinese way of life

to seek the inner integration and harmony of personality with supernatural Heaven, the so-called oneness of humankind with Heaven.

The differences between the Chinese and the Christian faiths are radical ones, not only because Christianity holds a transcendent God of pure spirit to be the creator of heaven and earth, but also because the Chinese is unfamiliar with the opposition between this world and the next. Chinese and Christians consequently adopt totally opposed ways of proceeding. Christian faith relates to an interventionist God who created the world on his own initiative and gave each human being a soul and manifested himself in the course of individual existences. Thus, in the Christian view, the world is provisional and limited in both space and time. It is created by God to prepare a new order that will fully reveal the ultimate meaning of history. And the ultimate aim of life in this world is only preparing the individual for the life in the other world. The eternal salvation of the soul depends on the gift from God through grace. Christianity, therefore, calls for repentance from conformity to the present age and for commitment to participation in God's intended transformation of life. In contrast, the Chinese belief in Heaven does not refer to a creator God, or any radical distinction between a transcendent eternity and a temporary earthly life. Instead, the Chinese faith evokes the ideas of

submission to destiny and serious and sincere conduct in this world. The term of Heaven expresses an order that is both divine and natural, both social and cosmic. It is a crossroads where the religious and the secular, and concepts of humankind and the world all meet. In other words, while the Chinese believed Heaven to be divine in the very functioning of the universe, they defined its divine quality as immanent in the world. There was no being or truth which transcended it. Therefore, the Chinese had no such aspiration towards a God external to this world. They saw that their life in this world was fully to develop the innate sense of good dispositions, which was there as a reflection of the Mandate of Heaven. The process of each person's endeavor to perfect his social being was the basis for everything and there was something religious about the effort. As the Chinese believed, it was the very process that constituted the human work of "serving Heaven." Behaving correctly thus became the way to integrate oneself into the order of the world and contribute through one's own actions to the work of Heaven. At this point, the Chinese religion defined a human being as a social being, situated within a complex of relationships which was considered to be an extension and expression of an immanent and universal order—the Mandate of Heaven. Thus, unlike the Christians, who pay more attention to the divine relationship of humankind to God, the Chinese take more into consideration the modes of

individual behavior, or the secular relations between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger, friend and friend.

This religious framework significantly affected Chinese immigrants' life on both the community and individual levels. In particular, it helped the Chinese effectively to resist the attack of alien ideology. While Protestant missionaries attempted to fill the Chinese mind with the truths of revelation, the Chinese saw the Christian God as no more than a deity who might protect them from secular hardships, just as they had seen the other deities. They did not think seriously about such terms as "the salvation of the soul", "sin", and "grace". The missionaries thus encountered the Chinese with many chasms of misunderstanding in the late nineteenth century.

CHAPTER 3

The Response to the Chinese Immigrants in Canada

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with few exceptions, English-speaking Canadians were unanimous in their response to the Chinese immigrant in Canada: they tried everything to exclude the Chinese from participation in the social and economic life of Canadian society. Various discriminatory legislative attempts were made to deprive or restrict Chinese immigrants' social and economic rights. Agitated by popular literature, public speeches, and religious sermons, the sentiment against the Chinese flourished in every city in which Chinese immigrants resided. Disseminated by politicians, union leaders, and clergymen, the dread of the "Yellow Peril" was broadly shared by various groups of people in the country, even though some of them benefitted directly or indirectly from the presence of the Chinese. A contemporary witness in the late nineteenth century gave a vivid description of the popular reaction to the Chinese among white Canadians, especially those who lived in the province of British Columbia:

The public press of the Pacific Slope is for the most part guilty of Sinophobia, and discuss Chinese questions, apparently, as if conscious of the vigilant eye of anti-

Chinese subscribers and voters upon them; and the comforting reflection that as the Chinese are political ciphers in Canada they are not to be reckoned with. Labor unions and mass meetings pass resolutions against the Mongolii, and refuse to patronize those who employ them; stores, hotels, factories, etc., advertise that they have no Chinese about them in any capacity; others have lying caricatures designed to poison the people against them; even the Provincial Legislature can hardly pass a bill, where one can possibly be inserted, without an anti-Chinese clause.¹

However, the Protestant response to Chinese immigrants was unique in the Canadian experience. While anti-Chinese sentiment was broadly shared among other English-speaking Canadians, particularly in British Columbia, Protestant clergy, mainly those from the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Anglican churches challenged public hostility to the Chinese. They not only gave the Chinese more favorable views than did most of their contemporaries, but also launched mission work among the Chinese immigrants. Indeed, the three main Canadian Protestant Churches opened their missions to the Chinese in Canada in the 1880s and 1890s.² Yet, like many other white Canadians at the time, Protestant clergy were influenced by unflattering Chinese stereotypes. Thus, while they attempted to bring Chinese and whites into direct and continuing contact in an atmosphere relatively free from racial tension, the Protestant clergy were preoccupied by racial prejudices. Their

¹ A.B. Winchester, "Mission to the Chinese in British Columbia," Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Acts and Proceedings* (1897), p. 188.

² S.S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), p. 72, 120-121; Frank A. Peake, *The Anglican Church in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1959), pp. 140-141.

judgment of the Chinese lay in derogatory assumptions about the Chinese. These reactions seemed to be contradictory. However, if we place the Protestant response to the Chinese in the context of Canadian history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the paradox can be explained by examining Canadian nationalism and the Protestant vision of the nation, which dominated the mindset of Protestant clergy of the time. Nationalism, conceived by the Protestant clergy as the determination to maintain Canada as an Anglo-Saxon nation, significantly influenced their response to the Chinese because of implied the necessity of assimilating foreign immigrants into the Canadian white Anglo-Saxon Protestant community.³ So would the Protestant vision of the nation influence the response of Protestant clergy in their enthusiasm to make Canada God's dominion, given its millennial implication.

By revealing the strength of nationalist and evangelical sentiments among the Canadian Protestants, this chapter will describe and analyze English-speaking Canadians' common attitudes to the Chinese immigrant in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Special attention will be paid to the attitudes of Protestant clergy to the Chinese, and the comparison between their attitudes and that of other Canadians. The aim is to place the Protestant mission to the

³ N. K. Clifford, "His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis," *Studies in Religion*, II, 4 (1973): 315.

Chinese in the context of Protestant concerns of the time, and to give a clear picture of the social environment in which the Protestant missionary worked among the Chinese.

3.1 Canadian Nationalism and the Yellow Peril

Under the influence of nineteenth-century racist ideas, beginning during the 1870s some English-speaking nationalists began to promote a Canadian nationality that emphasized Canada's British heritage and the superior position of the Anglo-Saxon race in the nationhood. They assumed that the capacity for self-government, which represented the spirit of liberty, was a unique attribute of the northern races of Europe. It was the racial factor that provided the continuity in the evolution of the political system from the primitive assemblies of the Teutonic tribes in northern Germany, to the parliamentary system of the Saxons in England, and to the federal framework of the Canadians in Canada.⁴ The nationalists saw English-speaking Canadians as the successors to Anglo-Saxon tradition in two ways: Canada's frigid climate and rugged landscape made it a northern nation. These natural environments were the same as those of northern Europe, which were most suitable for humankind to develop those political

⁴ Carl C. Berger, "Race and Liberty: The Historical Ideas of Sir John George Bourinot," in John P. Heisler & Fernand Ouellet, eds., *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, 1965*. Pp. 96-102.

qualities that produced the modern system of self-government.⁵ Secondly, English-speaking Canadians could claim to be the direct descendants of the northern race, because their "Anglo-Saxon blood" came from Teutons or Germans who lived in northern Germany and Denmark.⁶ Because of this racial heritage, the nationalists believed that English-speaking Canadians possessed a special genius for self-government and creating an ordered and progressive society. And English-speaking Canadians were destined to assume the dominant role in building the nation, and to preserve the Anglo-Saxon tradition of liberty.⁷ Meanwhile, just as Anglo-Saxons had made the modern British nation and developed the highest form of civilization that the world had yet seen, their descendants in Canada would form a new northern Britain, and, as the nationalists believed, spread Anglo-Saxon values to the whole world.⁸ Nationalism implied that it was impossible to articulate a Canadian identity in which one could see anything other than the character of the Anglo-Saxon race.

When the new influx of immigration into Canada came in the late nineteenth century, this Anglo-Saxon nationalism

⁵ Carl Berger, "The True North: Strong and Free," in Peter Russell, ed., *Nationalism in Canada* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Company of Canada Limited, 1966), pp. 10-12.

⁶ Carl C. Berger, "Race and Liberty: The Historical Ideas of Sir John George Bourinot" in John P. Heisler & Fernand Ouellet, eds., *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, 1965*, pp. 96-97.

⁷ George M. Grant, *Ocean to Ocean* (Toronto: James Campbell & Son, 1872), p. 367.

⁸ C. S. Eby, "The True Inwardness of the Yellow Peril," in J. Castell Hopkins ed., *Empire Club Speeches, 1907-08* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1910), p. 45; and Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 217.

intensified an extant nativism. At the time, most English-speaking nativists defined Canada as a white Anglo-Saxon country. They believed that the Anglo-Saxon race was biologically better fitted than other peoples for the task of governing and advancing civilization, and that its culture stood above all others.⁹ They saw their moral and social standards as "the only and final standards," and cultural uniformity was thought of as the precondition for nationality.¹⁰ Any culture other than the British-Canadian one was thought of as an alien presence in the country,¹¹ and also considered as inferior.¹² It was also maintained by the nativists that, since some immigrants were innately incapable of participating in the conduct of democratic government, their increase in numbers brought an immediate threat to the Anglo-Saxon heritage of self-government and the spirit of liberty.¹³ They argued that these aliens transported to the country many notions that would damage the national spirit, such as "the continental ideas of the Sabbath, the nihilist's ideas of government, the communist's idea of property and the

⁹ J. R. Miller, "As a Politician He Is a Great Enigma: The Social and Political Ideas of D'Alton McCarthy," *Canadian Historical Review*, 63 (1977): 413.

¹⁰ R. B. Bennett, "Anglo-conformity" in H. Palmer, ed., *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Toronto: Copp Clar, 1975), p. 119.

¹¹ Terrence Murphy, ed., *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 331.

¹² J. S. Woodsworth, "Nation Building," *The University Magazine*, XVI (1917): 90.

¹³ J.A. Macdonald, "Canadian Clubs and Canadian Problems," *Canadian Club of Toronto, Season 1907-1908* (Toronto, 1908), pp. 256-7; Charles A. Magrath, *Canada's Growth and Some Problems Affecting It* (Ottawa: The Mortimer Press, 1910), p. 54.

pagan's ideas of religion."¹⁴ And all these alien elements would retard "the development of a sense of community fellowship, or corporate responsibility, and of devotion to a social ideal" in the country.¹⁵ As a result, the nation's "sound and suitable public institutions," "high political ideals," and "social conscience" would be supplanted by "a lower order of habits, customs and institutions"; in other words, the nation would be destroyed.¹⁶

The nativists, therefore, launched a crusade for ideological purity with arguments for the exclusion of those immigrants whose racial background did not equip them with the biological elements necessary to enable them to conform to the Anglo-Saxon institution of self-government. Their judgment as to who were the desirable immigrants varied almost in direct proportion with their physical and cultural distance from London, and the degree to which their skin pigmentation conformed to Anglo-Saxon white.¹⁷ They drew as favorable a list as possible of the various groups. Americans, apart from the

¹⁴ Carson J. Cameron, *Foreigners or Canadians?* (Toronto: Baptist Home Mission Board of Ontario and Quebec, 1913), p. 17.

¹⁵ J. S. Woodsworth, "Nation Building," *The University Magazine*, XVI (1917): 88.

¹⁶ Carson J. Cameron, *Foreigners or Canadians?* (Toronto: Baptist Home Mission Board of Ontario and Quebec, 1913), p. 14; J. S. Woodsworth, "Nation Building," *The University Magazine*, XVI (1917): 88; and W. S. Smith, *Building the Nation: A Study of Some Problems Concerning the Churches' Relation to the Immigrants* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1922), p. 32.

¹⁷ Howard Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century," in R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith, eds., *Reading Canadian History: Post-Confederation*, 4th edition (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada, 1994), p. 145.

Mormons, were regarded as the most desirable;¹⁸ and the British too because people from this group were "of the very best blood in the world."¹⁹ The Scandinavians and Germans were similarly welcomed, because they were viewed as "most useful and productive people."²⁰ The immigrants from Austria-Hungary, Russia, and southeastern Europe, also qualified.²¹ The Ruthenians received more direct and harsh condemnation than most other European groups. They were described as "animalized," and "quarrelsome and dangerous."²² This group was followed in the ethnic pecking order by some "strange" religious sects, such as the Hutterites, Mennonites, and Doukhobors. Last, were the Asian groups, the Chinese, Japanese, and East Indians who, because their color difference formed "an obvious and permanent racial barrier to assimilation."²³

As might be expected, considerable opposition developed to the entry of those who were biologically less related to the Anglo-Saxon race. Opposition to those groups came from a variety of sources, for a variety of reasons. However, one of

¹⁸ J. S. Woodsworth, *Strangers within Our Gates or Coming Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 64-5. See also Sir Clifford Sifton, "The Immigrants Canada Wants," *Maclean's Magazine* (April 1, 1922), in Howard Palmer, ed., *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1975), p. 34.

¹⁹ Sir Clifford Sifton, "The Immigrants Canada Wants," *Maclean's Magazine* (April 1, 1922), in Howard Palmer, ed., *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1975), 38.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²¹ J. S. Woodsworth, *Strangers within Our Gates or Coming Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 108, 116.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-5.

the most pervasive thoughts was that the Anglo-Saxon tradition of self-government would be washed away in "a sea of illiteracy and inexperience with free institutions."²⁴ For the nativists, Canada's greatness was ensured so long as its Anglo-Saxon character was preserved. Since some immigrants did not have any "hereditary relation to the history of Canada,"²⁵ they could not measure the standard of Anglo-Saxon virtues, and, therefore, were not able to integrate into the life of the nation. For these alien elements, the best solution was to exclude them from the country. As J. S. Woodsworth stated in 1917: for the best interests of the Canadian people, "we must stand guard at our gates. ... We have every right to rigidly exclude those who would lower our standard. It may be necessary to apply this policy in the case of certain groups or nations."²⁶ The editor of *The Christian Guardian*, W. B. Creighton, expressed the same idea slightly differently, with an emphasis on Canadian nationality:

We do not desire to have Canada filled with an unassimilated mass of people of different races and tongues and religions who would possess no common bond of union and whose presence in large numbers would undo all the work that has already been done in trying to build up a Canadian nation.²⁷

²⁴ Howard Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century," in R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith, eds., *Reading Canadian History: Post-Confederation*, 4th edition (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada, 1994), p. 146.

²⁵ Stephen Leacock, "Canada and the Immigration Problem," *National and English Review* (April 1911), in Howard Palmer, ed., *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1975), p. 49-50.

²⁶ J. S. Woodsworth, "Nation Building," *The University Magazine*, XVI (1917): 97.

²⁷ Cited in Mary Vipond, "Canadian National Consciousness and the Formation of the United Church of Canada," in Mark G. McGowan and David B. Marshall, ed., *Prophets, Priests, and Prodigals: Readings in Canadian Religious History, 1608 to Present* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1992), p. 169.

This sense of Anglo-superiority framed the mindset of English-speaking Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When English Canadians discussed the issue of the nationality of Canada at the time, racial prejudices focused their attention primarily on how to keep the homogeneity of Anglo-Saxon culture in Canada. And it was easy for these people to agree on the solution: immigrants who were culturally or racially inferior and incapable of being assimilated either culturally or biologically would have to be excluded.

It is not surprising that Chinese immigrants received more harsh judgments when racial prejudices dominated public thought. Among others, the most popular was the one that the Chinese immigrant was a great menace to the Anglo-Saxon civilization and the nationality of Canada. And their presence in Canada would be accompanied by a multitude of evils. This Chinese menace was often referred to as the Yellow Peril. The dread of the Yellow Peril circulated widely in the English-speaking community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many English-speaking Canadians believed that, with the influx of Chinese immigration to Canada, the Chinese menace would rapidly spread over the whole country.

And if action was not immediately taken, these Chinese "would threaten the nation's future progress and prosperity."²⁸

The assumption of the Yellow Peril was that, because of China's great population and its inferior civilization, the influx of Chinese immigration to Canada would bring a great threat to Canadian society and the Canadian way of life. And, as a politician from British Columbia warned in 1879, the large numbers of Chinese immigrants "would over-run the land like grasshoppers."²⁹ They would take away jobs from white workers and imperil the livelihood of every white wage earner because of their capacity to work for low wages.³⁰ They would lower the moral standard of the white man, because they "never had moral principles such as have been the stimulus of the English-speaking races."³¹ They would bring down the white man's standards of living by their unclean, vicious, deceitful, offensive, degraded, servile, and idolatrous life.³² And they would throw back the progress of the nation "for hundreds of years,"³³ because they were a physically and

²⁸ W. G. McQuarrie's letter to Members of the House of Commons, 4 May 1922, cited in Patricia E. Roy, "Educating the 'East': British Columbia and the Oriental Question in the Interwar Years," *BC Studies*, 18 (Summer 1973): 54.

²⁹ Mr. Thompson's testimony before the Select Committee on Chinese Labor and Immigration, "Report on Chinese Labor and Immigration, 1879," in *Journals of the House of Commons of Canada*, Vol. XIII (1879), Appendix 4 (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1879), p. 14.

³⁰ John MacKay, "Problems of Immigration II: The Real Meaning of Oriental Exclusion or Restriction," *Westminster Hall Magazine and Farthest West Review*, V, 1 (February 1914): 6.

³¹ James A. Emery, "The True Principles of National Life," in J. Castell Hopkins, ed., *Empire Club Speeches, 1907-1908* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1910), p. 31.

³² W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), p. 7-11.

³³ John MacKay, "Problems of Immigration II: The Real Meaning of Oriental Exclusion or Restriction," *Westminster Hall Magazine and Farthest West Review*, V, 2 (March 1914): 5.

mentally inferior race.³⁴ Worst of all, they would degrade and destroy the Anglo-Saxon civilization, "by the substitution or admixture with it of their own inferior civilization."³⁵ And the Anglo-Saxon race, which was the real representative of the nationality of Canada, would be driven out of the country.³⁶ As a result, the inferior Chinese would control the country.³⁷ John MacKay, principal of Westminster Hall, gave his readers a vivid description as to the dreadful consequence of the Yellow Peril in a series of articles on Canadian immigration problems published in 1914: The Chinese (and other Oriental races)

are casting envious eyes to the richer domains of which the white races have taken possession and sooner or later they will force us to share our vastly richer opportunities with them ... Like a yellow tidal wave, the Oriental races rise, big with menace, over the whole world. And this tidal wave will inevitably submerge our white civilizations unless we see its meaning and prepare to turn it into a blessing and uplift to white man and yellow man alike.³⁸

Although most ideas of the Yellow Peril came from highly stereotyped conceptions, many English-speaking Canadians subscribed to its theory without question, forming their image of the Chinese immigrants on this basis. This image saw the Chinese as a barbarian people who would ultimately "cripple

³⁴ Jasper H. Preston, "The Chinese Question," *Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review* (July 1881): 82.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

³⁶ "Report on Chinese Immigration, 1885" (*Sessional Papers of B. C.*, 1885, No. 54a), p. 170.

³⁷ Jasper H. Preston, "The Chinese Question," *Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review* (July 1881): 82.

³⁸ John Mackay, "Problems of Immigration III: Immigration and World Peace," *Westminster Hall Magazine and Farthest West Review*, V, 2 (March 1914): 5.

the white race for centuries, if not forever".³⁹ The chief significance of the Chinese image lay in the strong influence it had upon race relations between the Chinese and the whites, whether in British Columbia or in other provinces in Canada.

Indeed, when English-speaking Canadians discussed the issue of Chinese immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they would usually start the subject with the inferior character of Chinese civilization. The remarks of Jasper H. Preston, on the character of the Chinese and the nature of Chinese civilization, were perhaps representative. Preston described the Chinese, as regards their intelligence, to be "little better than grown-up children." And that

their civilization, such as it has been, is effete and worn out, and their intellect is of a low order, being confined to cunning, which we are told is the wisdom of the weak. They have the talent of imitation, but do not possess the inventive faculty. They never add to the little they will consent to learn.

Worse than that, even while the European taught the Chinese their arts and science, "the Chinese attempted no improvement on what they had acquired, except by mingling European science with their own crude and foolish notions."⁴⁰

It was along this line of racial prejudice that stereotypes about the Chinese were formed and widespread in the white community. People, especially those who lived in

³⁹ C.S. Eby, "The True Inwardness of the Yellow Peril," in J. Castell Hopkins ed., *Empire Club Speeches, 1907-08* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1910), p. 44.

⁴⁰ Jasper H. Preston, "The Chinese Question," *Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review* (July 1881): 83.

British Columbia, circulated the stereotypes among themselves in the press and public meetings, among other forms of communication. For example, in 1884, a prominent white man, Gilbert M. Sproat, brought the stereotypical Chinese image to the public when he made his testimony before the Royal Commission on Chinese immigration. Sproat stated that "all progress in China has long ago stopped", while "the evil attains complete development." A Chinese, nourished by this civilization,

has been forced to regulate his life, in a very direct and exclusive manner, in reference to the primitive human instinct of self-preservation, or at any rate, a low animal existence with a few coarse enjoyments. The long continued, uniform operation of overmastering external conditions, had compelled him, and it also has enabled him, to subsist on the very least which in his case will merely maintain the nerve force that drives his muscular machinery ... The repression of the natural development of the man, which ought to be moral and intellectual as well as physical, together with an inherited inaptness, prevents his advancing much beyond the ways and means which the passion of self-preservation inspires and stimulates.

Sproat also attempted to convince the commission that the character of the Chinese "is of a fixed, persistent type, alien, beyond any control or chance of change, to everything that concerns western civilization." When he made a more specific comment on the Chinese in British Columbia, he stated that the "ignorant and debased aliens" were "absolutely without any capabilities for citizenship," and remained "absolutely outside our community, in a state of low animal

apathy to all that concerns its well-being."⁴¹ Like Sprout, many others held that, because of their low condition, the presence of the Chinese in the country was "one of the greatest evils" with which the white Canadian had to contend.⁴² And the mass immigration of Chinese to Canada would be fatal to the country's destiny. As an author warned in his article on the social problem confronting the province of British Columbia, if a large number of Chinese were allowed to stay in Canada, "no true national life would have been possible. We could never have had a homogeneous population." The author further stated:

Now the character of our civilization and the whole influence of the Occident on the Orient depend on the preservation of our national life in this Western Province, as in the Western States. At the point where the West touches the East our race must be at its purest and best. A white British Columbia is therefore the basis our immigration policy.⁴³

There was another Chinese stereotype that aggravated the dread of the Yellow Peril among English-speaking Canadians. That was the assumption that the Chinese could never be assimilated; therefore, they would contribute little to the wealth of the country, and to a certain extent, they would impoverish it by largely remitting their earnings to China. As

⁴¹ "Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, 1885" in *Sessional Papers*, Vol. 18, No. 11, Ottawa: Government Printer, 1885), (No. 54a) pp. 164-67.

⁴² Bunster's testimony before the Select Committee on Chinese Labor and Immigration, "Report on Chinese Labor and Immigration, 1879," in *Journals of the House of Commons of Canada*, Vol. XIII (1879), Appendix 4 (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger & Co., 1879), p. 2.

⁴³ Geo C. Pidgeon, "The Social Problems of British Columbia," *Westminster Hall Magazine and Farthest West Review*, 7, 3 (April 1915): 18.

a politician of British Columbia commented in 1886: the Chinese "are not of our race and cannot become a part of ourselves. We cannot build up a homogeneous people in Canada with races of that description, a population totally alien to ours."⁴⁴ This conclusion in fact reiterated English-speaking Canadians' consensus of Anglo-Saxon superiority. The common belief was that the color line divided the Chinese from the white man. And it meant that the assimilation of the Chinese could never take place. The ultimate effect of Chinese immigration thus would be to create a permanent alien presence in Canada. Moreover, the character of Chinese culture made the Chinese impossible to integrate into Canadian society. For example, John MacKay argued that since the Chinese (and other Asians) were "controlled by patriarchal or tyrannical forms of government and some non-Christian form of religion," they were incapable of becoming part of "a Christian democracy" based upon "the recognition of significance and the rights of the individual man."⁴⁵ On the contrary, they would be "the tremendous menace" to "democratic institutions and Western standards of living."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Senator Hugh Nelson's speech in the Senate, *Debates of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada* (Ottawa: Government Printer, 21 May 1886), p. 680.

⁴⁵ John MacKay, "Problems of Immigration II: The Real Meaning of Oriental Exclusion or Restriction," *Westminster Hall Magazine and Farthest West Review*, V, 1 (February 1914): 7. For the same opinion in an earlier year's version, see *Royal Commission Report on Chinese Immigration, 1885*, in *Sessional Papers*, Vol. 18, No. 11 (Ottawa: Government Printer, 1885), (No. 54a) p. 165.

⁴⁶ John MacKay, "Problems of Immigration III: Immigration and World Peace," *Westminster Hall Magazine and Farthest West Review*, V, 2 (March 1914): 5.

Moreover, the Chinese immigrants' way of life, especially the mere presence of Chinatown with its curious mixture of the exotic and the repulsive, was taken as proof that the Chinese seemed to be apart from the host community forever. As a result, the Chinese were thought not only to be unable to assimilate into Canadian society, but also unwilling to integrate into the society. As the Report of Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration concluded in 1902: The Chinese came to this country

with customs, habits and modes of life fixed and unalterable, resulting from an ancient and effete civilization, with no desire to conform to western ideas. They form, on their arrival, a community within a community, separate and apart, a foreign substance within, but not of our body politic, with no love for our laws and institutions; a people that will not assimilate or become an integral part of our race and nation. With their habits of overcrowding, and an utter disregard of all sanitary laws, they are a continual menace to health. From a moral and social point of view, living as they do without home life, schools or churches, and so nearly approaching a servile class, their effect upon the rest of the community is bad. They pay no fair proportion of the taxes of the country. They keep out immigrants who would become permanent citizens, and create conditions inimical to labor and dangerous to the industrial peace of the community where they come. They spend little of their earnings in the country and trade chiefly with their own people. They fill the places that ought to be occupied by permanent citizens, many of whom leave the country on their account. They are unfit for full citizenship, and are permitted to take no part in municipal or provincial government. Upon this point there was entire unanimity. They are not and will not become citizens in any sense of the term as we understand it. They are so nearly allied to a servile class that they are obnoxious to a free community and dangerous to the state.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ "Report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, 1902," in *Sessional Papers*, Vol. 36, No. 13 (Ottawa: Government Printer, 1902), (No. 54) p. 278.

The English-speaking Canadians' response to the Chinese immigrants, to a great degree, reflected their consensus of the time. In other words, the deep meaning implied in the response was the conception of English-Canadian nationalism, which represented most contemporary English-speaking Canadians' understanding of the country's destiny. This destiny was to develop Canada as a homogenous Anglo-Saxon nation. Without doubt, on this view, the Chinese immigrants' presence in Canada was a serious menace to the nationhood of the country,⁴⁸ or "a real danger to the welfare of the country."⁴⁹ The only solution to this Yellow Peril was to exclude them from the gates of the country.⁵⁰ Indeed, some suggested the deportation of all Chinese and the confiscation of all their property, and others asked the government not to give the Chinese an equal chance in the life of the country in order to maintain Canada as a white man's country.⁵¹

3.2 Protestant Clergy's Response to the Chinese

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most Protestant clergy accepted the common view that northern

⁴⁸ W. G. McQuarrie's speech in the House of Commons, in *Debates, House of Commons of Canada* (8 May 1922), p. 1509.

⁴⁹ A. H. Fenwick, "For East Is East," *MacLean's Magazine* (15 January 1928): 9.

⁵⁰ J. S. Woodsworth, *Strangers within Our Gates or Coming Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 232.

⁵¹ S. S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), pp. 58-9.

racess and northern civilizations were superior. They faithfully committed themselves to the nationalist vision of Canada, and strongly believed that Canada was and should remain an Anglo-Saxon nation, and as such it could embody the highest principles of civilization. Reflecting such a dominant ethos of Canadian society, the clergy shared the popular fear of the Yellow Peril, and saw the Chinese immigrant as a threat to the nation's destiny. Their attitude to the Chinese immigrant was shaped almost entirely by the negative image of the Chinese character, which usually reflected common racial prejudices. Moreover, from their viewpoint of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, the clergy often asked the condemnation of the heathen character of the Chinese immigrant, and thought that this was the main cause of the Chinese problem for the country.

Viewing the Chinese immigrant through the filter of racial and religious commitments of English-speaking nationalists, some Protestant clergy always made negative observations on the Chinese immigrant. In church publications and speeches, they repeatedly emphasized that spiritual indifference and moral inadequacy were typical of the Chinese character. Rev. George E. Hartwell, a Methodist clergyman in British Columbia, contributed most to the circulating of Chinese stereotypes among Protestant clergy. Hartwell had been a missionary in China before he returned to Canada in the late

1900s. After settling in Victoria, he began to work among Asians as a Methodist missionary. In 1910, Hartwell was appointed to be the acting superintendent of the Methodist Oriental Mission in British Columbia. After Rev. S.S. Osterhout returned to his position for studying language in China in 1912, Hartwell continued to work among the Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia for several years. During the years in which he was the acting superintendent of the Methodist Oriental Mission in British Columbia, Hartwell visited almost every Chinese community in the western provinces. Through his study of the Chinese immigrant, especially his observation of Chinese communities in western Canada, Hartwell believed that the Chinese immigrant in British Columbia would "carry out their part in the great feat of building up in this last great West."⁵² Therefore, he thought that the Protestant church should study the problems caused by Oriental immigrants so that people could understand the importance of the Oriental mission work.⁵³ As a result, Hartwell published a series of articles about Chinese immigrants in *Missionary Bulletin* between 1911 and 1913. Among Protestant clergy, Hartwell was one of the first persons to

⁵² George E. Hartwell, "Chinese Work in B.C.," *Missionary Bulletin*, 8, 1 (December 1911): 932.

⁵³ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, 14/2/4, 78.093C-box 7-file 137, Geo. E. Hartwell, "Annual Report of Oriental Missions in British Columbia, 1911-1912."

conduct this kind of study on Chinese immigrants.⁵⁴ Although his study was rough, Hartwell not only gave a summarized account of Chinese culture, but also introduced the Chinese way of life according to his first-hand impression of the Chinese people. He also briefly analyzed the influence of the clan system and the secret societies on the Chinese immigrant in Canada.⁵⁵ Without doubt, as a white man, Hartwell's opinions drew heavily upon the popular image of the Chinese. His most oft-repeated judgments of the Chinese were that the Chinese people were grasped by "gross idolatries and superstitions"; their life was handicapped from the start by the force of pagan vices;⁵⁶ therefore, their finer human and spiritual feelings had long since been stifled.⁵⁷ In his report to the headquarters of the Methodist Missionary Society, Hartwell made his point more straightforward: the Chinese people

are pagan in religion; they have long since been alienated from spiritual experiences; their conscience is not active and hence social habits are practised that tend toward degradation.⁵⁸

Hartwell continued his description of the Chinese immigrant along this line of racial prejudice. In his eyes,

⁵⁴ Before the 1920s, little research was conducted on the Chinese immigrant. Beside Hartwell's and Woodsworth's, Rev. J.C. Speer, also a Methodist clergyman and former missionary in China, published a small book *The Story of China in Canada* in 1908 (or before) which conducted a quite general survey of the issue of Chinese immigration.

⁵⁵ George E. Hartwell, "Chinese Work in B.C.," *Missionary Bulletin*, 8, 2 (March-June 1912): 1029-1036.

⁵⁶ "A Letter from Rev. Geo E. Hartwell," *Missionary Bulletin*, 8, 2 (March-June 1912): 1033, 1035.

⁵⁷ George E. Hartwell, "Our Work among the Japanese and Chinese in British Columbia," *Missionary Bulletin*, 9, 3 (June-September 1913): 514.

⁵⁸ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, 14/2/4, 78.093C-box 7-file 137, Geo. E. Hartwell, "Annual Report of Oriental Missions in British Columbia, 1911-1912."

Chinese immigrants were a group of "professional gamblers" and "opium eaters"⁵⁹ who had no "definite moral conviction of right or wrong".⁶⁰ And they were "the lowest product of an effete civilization whose manhood had long since been crushed under the weight of poverty, misery and crime."⁶¹

Although it was hardly true that Chinese practices were worse than those of white Canadians, the dissimilarity of their habits made the Chinese immigrant open to much criticism in Hartwell's articles. For example, Chinatown, as described by Hartwell, was built up "without any regard for beauty, regularity, sanitation or comfort."⁶² It was often "the carcass to attract the foul birds of Western vices, the dumping ground of those evils which the white man wishes removed from his own door."⁶³ Thus, like English-speaking nativists, Hartwell also saw the Chinese immigrant in the country as "an eruption upon the body;" they would not only devour much of the moral strength of the white community, but also threatened the whole body of the country.⁶⁴

Hartwell was not the only one to subscribe to the stereotype of the Chinese immigrant. The threat of the Yellow

⁵⁹ George E. Hartwell, "Our Work among the Japanese and Chinese in British Columbia," *Missionary Bulletin*, 9, 3 (June-September 1913): 520.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 518.

⁶¹ George E. Hartwell, "Our Work among the Japanese and Chinese in British Columbia," *Missionary Bulletin*, 9, 3 (June-September 1913): 517.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 518.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 520.

⁶⁴ George E. Hartwell, "Chinese Work in B. C.," *Missionary Bulletin*, 8, 2 (March-June 1912): 1029.

Peril was the consensus amongst Protestant clergy at that time. Indeed, committed to the concept of homogeneous Anglo-Saxon nationalism, many Protestant clergy were alarmed by Chinese immigration to Canada. Their hopes for cultural uniformity in Anglo-Saxon Protestantism seemed to be threatened by these heathen Chinese. As a result, Protestant clergy agreed with the common opinion that some limitation of Chinese immigration must be made for the sake of the preservation of Canadian national ideals and of Canada as the white man's country.⁶⁵ This can be well demonstrated from another contemporary Protestant clergyman's opinions on Chinese immigration. In his book, *Our Task in Canada*, which profoundly influenced the Protestant attitude to the non-English speaking immigrant in the 1910s, R.G. MacBeth, a Presbyterian clergyman, explained the reasons that caused the Chinese immigration problem bluntly in a tone of racial prejudice against the Chinese. He told his readers that the core of the problem lay in Chinese immigrants' "non-assimilable qualities, their lower standards of living and their willingness on account of these lower standards to work for less than white men consider a minimum wage."⁶⁶ Although MacBeth, like most other Protestant clergy, was opposed to excluding Chinese immigrants from the country, he strongly

⁶⁵ "Editorial: The Anti-Asiatic Situation," *The Christian Guardian* (18 September 1907), p. 5.

⁶⁶ R.G. MacBeth, *Our Task in Canada* (Toronto: The Westminster Co. Limited, 1912), p. 77.

supported the policy of restricting Chinese immigration. In his book, MacBeth gave his own explanations why the policy of restriction was necessary for Canada. Among others, the basic point that he made was that the inferior character of the Chinese immigrants made them inassimilable and therefore undesirable to this country. At this point, MacBeth made a completely racist statement that clearly revealed his deep sentiment against the Chinese and inner fear of Chinese immigration:

The law of cosmic evolution in history justifies the superseding of a lower civilization by a higher. It is in the interests of human progress that lands of great natural resources should be possessed by races that have a high civilization. But if the Chinese were allowed to come into the Western Province without restriction they might swamp the white population, and practically dispossess it in a year or two. This would not be in the interests of human advancement; for the Chinese, though a people of some remarkable elements of good, are a people of a lower civilization.⁶⁷

In the early twentieth century, there were also a few Protestant clergymen who advocated the exclusion of Chinese immigrants from Canada. They thought that it might be the "best" or "wisest" way to stop the Chinese menace.⁶⁸ Among these Protestant clergymen who supported the exclusion of Chinese from the country, none other than James S. Woodsworth influenced so many white Canadians in their attitudes to the Chinese immigrant. As a Protestant nationalist, Woodsworth was

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 81.

⁶⁸ J.C. Speer, *The Story of China in Canada* (Toronto: The Department of Missionary Literature of the Methodist Church, Canada, 1908 [or before]), pp. 22-3.

highly uncomfortable with a multi-ethnic conception of Canadian identity. He suggested that "the idea of a homogeneous people seems in accord with our democratic institutions and conducive to the general welfare."⁶⁹ And the conception of Canada as a white man's country had "deeper significance" than people could imagine.⁷⁰ As a result, Woodsworth shared the fear of the Yellow Peril with most of his contemporaries. He believed that the Chinese "would soon swamp the country west of the mountains" if the influx of Chinese immigration continued.⁷¹ In his book *Strangers within Our Gates*, which was published in 1909, Woodsworth illustrated his ideas of the immigration problems confronting Canadians at that time. One of his most influential points introduced in the book was a hierarchy of culture defined by national character.⁷² By structuring such a cultural hierarchy, Woodsworth echoed the nationalist sentiment of his time. He put northern European races on the top of the hierarchy, and the Chinese at the bottom. While the top races, namely, the British, German, Scandinavian, and American were thought to be the most desirable class of immigrants to Canada, Woodsworth argued that the Chinese should be "vigorously excluded" from

⁶⁹ J. S. Woodsworth, *Strangers within Our Gates or Coming Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 231.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁷² The clearest expression of Woodsworth's idea of the cultural hierarchy was his approving quotation from an American author. See *Strangers within Our Gates or Coming Canadians*, p. 164.

Canada because "their own moral standards and religious beliefs" made them unassimilable.⁷³

However, it should be noted that Protestant clergy showed a good deal of contradiction in their attitudes to the Chinese immigrant. This was particularly true when they considered the issue of the Chinese immigrant from the viewpoint of Christianity. For example, J.S. Woodsworth undermined his own contentions of excluding the Chinese immigrant from Canada when he discussed the responsibility of the Protestant church to them. In the same book, J. S. Woodsworth seemed to agree with the point in the annual report of the Methodist Missionary Society: the Chinese are "human beings like ourselves;" and they are able to be a part of Canadian society.⁷⁴ In a later year, J. S. Woodsworth appraised that China represented "a very high type of civilization." Therefore, he asked Canadians to overcome the prejudices against the Chinese immigrant.⁷⁵ In his speech on the Chinese Immigration Bill in 1923, J. S. Woodsworth accused Canadians of being hypocrites. They objected to the Chinese coming to Canada because they would "make poor citizens," but took from

⁷³ J. S. Woodsworth, *Strangers within Our Gates or Coming Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 155, 231-32.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

⁷⁵ J. S. Woodsworth's speech in the debate of the exclusion of the Chinese immigrant, *Debates: House of Commons*, Vol. 3, 1923 (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1923), pp. 2485-6.

them the right to be with their wives and children, which would be "necessary to make them good citizens."⁷⁶

In fact, J.S. Woodsworth was not the only clergyman who showed a contradictory attitude to the Chinese immigrant. The common sense of Christian humanitarianism made many Protestant clergy view the Chinese immigrant in a way that went against their sentiment of Anglo-Saxon superiority. For example, contrary to his point of view in "the law of cosmic evolution history", R. G. MacBeth asked his readers not to underestimate the Chinese immigrant, especially their industrious and ingenious characteristics. He thought that the whites had some things to learn from the Chinese. MacBeth particularly emphasized that the Chinese immigrant should "be treated in a Christian spirit and given a training in religion" so that they could make a contribution to the welfare of Canadian society.⁷⁷

Indeed, most Protestant clergy thought prejudice and discrimination offended their Christian humanitarian commitment and their sense of common justice and fair play.⁷⁸ They argued that if Canadians treated the Chinese as a menace to society and attempted to drive them out of the country, that only proclaimed that they were barbarians themselves. This was because the Chinese were human beings like white

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 2485.

⁷⁷ R.G. MacBeth, *Our Task in Canada* (Toronto: The Westminster Co. Limited, 1912), pp. 82-3.

⁷⁸ "Editorial," *The Missionary Outlook*, 21, 9 (September 1902): 195.

Canadians, and that they were capable of "rising in the scale of civilization and becoming a useful element in Canadian cosmopolitan population."⁷⁹ They criticized the nativist attempt to exclude the Chinese from the country as a shortsighted policy.⁸⁰ They pointed out that those nativists put themselves in "a position of hostility, not only to our national, but also to our Christian sentiments and traditions."⁸¹ And they firmly believed that it would be "inhuman" to deny the Chinese immigrant "the right to earn an honest living" in Canada.⁸² Therefore, Protestant clergy generally opposed the prejudice and discrimination against the Chinese immigrant already in Canada, and called for humane and generous treatment of them. For example, although J.C. Speer, a Methodist clergyman, agreed with prohibiting the Chinese from coming to Canada, he stated in his book, *The Story of China in Canada*:

for those [the Chinese immigrant] who have already come to us, and for those who are born among us of Asiatic parents, let there be shown the spirit of British fair play, and above all the Christian charity and mercy which brought our Master to this cold world. These men are human, and they have been redeemed by that blood in the merits of which alone we expect to find favor.⁸³

Some clergy went still one step further to criticize that

⁷⁹ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1907-08*, pp. 36-7.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁸¹ "Treatment of the Chinese," *Christian Guardian* (February 24, 1886), p. 118.

⁸² "Editorial," *The Missionary Outlook*, 26, 9 (September 1907): 195.

⁸³ J.C. Speer, *The Story of China in Canada* (Toronto: The Department of Missionary Literature of the Methodist Church, Canada, 1908 [or before]), pp. 22-3.

Chinese stereotypes were based on "unreason and ignorance of facts", and sustained by "misrepresentation" and "selfishness".⁸⁴ Among those clergymen who challenged the anti-Chinese sentiment, Alexander Sutherland, the secretary of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church of Canada, always displayed a strong Christian conscience when he observed the Chinese immigrant. Sutherland was one of the first Protestant church leaders who studied the Chinese issue by directly contacting the Chinese immigrant. In 1885, he made a trip to Victoria, B.C. and visited the local Chinese community there. After his return from the trip, Sutherland submitted a special report on the Chinese mission work in British Columbia to the general board of the Society. Facing the strong reaction against the Chinese immigrant in the white community, in his report, Sutherland shot back refutations of anti-Chinese arguments. He pointed out that the Chinese problem was "greatly complicated by those political demagogues" who attempted to "pander to the hoodlum class" and "take up an unreasoning cry" against the Chinese. As to the accusation that the Chinese were not going to make a home in Canada, and that they lowered the living standards of the whites, he argued that the Chinese would settle in Canada if they did not receive hostile treatment from the white community. And he

⁸⁴ George M. Grant, "The Chinese Question," *Rose-Belford's Monthly and National Review* (August 1881), p. 209.

also thought that the Chinese did not "willingly take smaller wages or sell at cheaper rates than others;" instead, they just got what they could obtain.⁸⁵ In his later correspondence with a local missionary, Sutherland especially emphasized that, although the public opinion displayed a strong anti-Chinese sentiment, the Methodist Church should

clearly define and fearlessly stand by the true Christian attitude respecting these Asiatic strangers and firmly refuse to be diverted from approved lines of Christian work by the insinuations of prejudiced newspapers or by the declamations of demagogues either labor or political.⁸⁶

As one of the important leaders of the Methodist missionary organization, Southerland's attitude greatly influenced the policy of the Methodist church toward the Chinese immigrant in Canada. For example, the Methodist Missionary Society set forth its position on the issue of Chinese immigration in the annual report of the society for 1907-8, which opposed the exclusion of Chinese immigrants and believed that the Chinese could become a useful element in the country. This official statement of the Missionary Society, to a great degree, reflected Southerland's opinion on the Chinese issue. Later, in an address delivered at the Canadian National

⁸⁵ "Mission to the Chinese," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1885-86*, p. xiv.

⁸⁶ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, fonds 14/2/4, 78.092C-box 4-file 73, A. Sutherland to T.E. Holling, August 19, 1909.

Missionary Congress, Sutherland reiterated the same opinion.⁸⁷ During the period when he headed the Missionary Society, Sutherland tried hard to keep the organization distant from the anti-Chinese alliance. He advocated on various occasions that Canada should give the Chinese the equal right "to seek a home in this country" as other immigrants had.⁸⁸ He also emphasized that it was the church's duty to help the Chinese to get fair treatment in this country.⁸⁹ From his attitude to the Chinese immigrant, it will be not difficult to see the role that Sutherland played in the policy-making circles of the Methodist Church. Indeed, among Canadian Protestant denominations, the Methodist Church first launched the mission to the Chinese in Canada. It also put more financial and human resources into the mission work than any other denomination.

However, most clergy considered the issue of Chinese immigration in a practical way. They believed that the prejudice and discrimination against the Chinese would hamper the Protestant church's mission work among the Chinese in Canada, and even damage the church's endeavor to evangelize China. Commenting on the Vancouver riot of 1907 against the Chinese, the editor of *the Missionary Outlook* pointed out that the prejudice against the Chinese would only give the Chinese

⁸⁷ A. Sutherland, "Our Duty to the Asiatics in Canada," in Canadian National Missionary Congress, ed., *Canada's Missionary Congress: Addresses Delivered at the Canadian National Missionary Congress, Held in Toronto* (Toronto: Canadian Council, Laymen's Missionary Movement, 1909), p. 114.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

"an indisputable evidence" that Christianity was not practiced in this country, and that it would "inevitably retard the extension of Christ's kingdom in foreign lands."⁹⁰ Hartwell claimed that prejudice would prevent "the sap of Christian love and sympathy" from flowing into the work of mission.⁹¹

Moreover, most Protestant clergy's criticism of the prejudice against the Chinese immigrant was mainly aimed at the form, not the substance, of federal restrictive policies. Since they clung to the popular, negative Chinese image, they believed the restriction on Chinese immigration to be necessary, and some even demanded that existing regulations be further tightened. In fact, the most desirable policy, they suggested, was one that regulated Chinese immigration by admitting only a certain number, and then closing the doors absolutely. As to the number, it should be determined by the number that the country could Canadianize. As a leader of the United Church of Canada declared in 1929, what was required were laws "more in keeping with the high ideals and traditions of the British Empire and the dominion of Canada."⁹²

It also should be noted that, in the Protestant church at large, the issue of discriminating against the Chinese did not arouse a general concern among clergy. Only a few ministers,

⁹⁰ "Editorial," *The Missionary Outlook*, 26, 10 (October 1907): 220.

⁹¹ George E. Hartwell, "Chinese Work in B. C.," *Missionary Bulletin*, 8, 1 (December 1911): 932.

⁹² S. S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), p. 4.

educators, editors, and administrators paid attention to the problem. And even their attention was mostly limited to the discussion of the issue in church newspapers and magazines. Few actions were taken to fight against the discrimination and dispel the racial tensions between the Chinese and the whites. As Sutherland pointed out in 1909:

While so much is said, and often falsely, against these Oriental strangers, no one so far as I am aware had had the courage to face the hoodlums and the demagogues and demand for these Orientals the same fair treatment which is demanded for White men.⁹³

In a word, racial assumptions informed the clergy's view of the Chinese within the framework of English-speaking Canadian nationalism. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Protestant clergy had a profound desire to maintain Canada as a pure Anglo-Saxon Protestant country. In order to reach this national destiny, most Protestant clergy believed that all non-Anglo-Saxon elements in the country must be assimilated into the political, social, and religious tenets of white Protestant Canadians. The Anglo-Saxon nationalism thus directed Protestant clergy to see the Chinese as a threat to Canadian cultural homogeneity, because they were an inferior people who had an unassimilable heathen nature. Some of the clergy even thought that the Chinese

⁹³ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, fonds 14/2/4, 78.092C-box 4-file 73, A. Sutherland to T.E. Holling, May 3, 1909.

should be excluded from Canada, while most of them advocated limiting Chinese immigration.

However, the commitment to Christian humanitarianism made Protestant clergy's attitude to the Chinese display apparent contradictions. On the one hand, most Protestant clergy showed their sympathy for the Chinese immigrant in Canada. They also opposed discriminatory treatment of the Chinese. In many cases, the clergy expressed their concern for the Chinese immigrant's spiritual health, their moral welfare, and their social well-being. On the other hand, although Protestant clergy differentiated themselves from Anglo-Saxon nationalists in the Chinese issue because of their common sense of humanitarianism, it was impossible for the clergy to detach themselves from the reality of Canadian society. Their concern for the Chinese, to a great degree, came from the missionary enthusiasm of evangelizing all heathen races in the world. In fact, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the maintaining of Canada's Anglo-Saxon heritage, for the Protestant church, was an ideology that affected all its activities in the mission to the Chinese immigrants in Canada. As a result, Protestant clergy always faced the dilemma of reconciling their Christian humanitarian ideals of love and equality with their sense of Anglo-Saxon superiority and their contempt for the Chinese immigrant.

3.3 Missionaries' Attitudes to the Chinese

The enthusiasm of evangelism prompted some Protestant missionaries to work among Chinese immigrants soon after their arrival in Canada in 1858. This work of mission gave the missionaries an opportunity to come to know the Chinese in a way most Canadians could not. In turn, this allowed the missionaries to view the Chinese from a unique vantage point to which most of their contemporaries could not reach. Without doubt, Protestant missionaries also felt anxious for the Chinese impact upon Canadian society. Deep within the missionary mind lurked the negative stereotypes of the Chinese. Their views on the Chinese could not completely break free of the limitation of popular opinions about the Chinese. In their mission reports and correspondence, the missionaries also criticized Chinese idolatry, superstition, and moral inadequacy, and condemned their bad social conduct such as gambling, opium smoking, and unsanitary living conditions. However, most missionaries tried to overcome the white prejudice when they observed the Chinese. In the face of public prejudice, Protestant missionaries expressed their genuine sympathy for the Chinese immigrant; they were concerned for the welfare of the Chinese and offered them friendship, the fruit of western culture, and a new social life. The statement of an Anglican missionary seemed to reveal most missionaries' feeling regarding the Chinese: as a

Christian, there was no option but to do his best to serve the Chinese, even though, as a white man, he might need to struggle with his prejudice against the Chinese.⁹⁴

Unlike most white Canadians, missionaries believed that it was not only necessary but also possible to Christianize the Chinese immigrant. In their eyes, it was the duty of Christians to help the Chinese into Canadian society. Furthermore, missionaries were more confident that the Chinese were capable of conforming to Canadian ideals and to Canadian standards of life, education, and citizenship.⁹⁵ This confidence came from their understanding of the Chinese immigrant after they made physical contact with them. As a Methodist missionary observed: "The Chinese are worthy of our thought and our effort. Whatever faults they may have, they have some virtues quite equal to any we possess."⁹⁶ Consequently, missionaries often saw considerable virtue in the Chinese character. They praised the Chinese for their "highly intelligent," "industrious," and "honorable" character.⁹⁷ A Methodist missionary told his readers in the *Toronto Mail and Empire* that, according to his forty-year

⁹⁴ Church of England, *Journal of the Twenty-Second Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia*, 1922, quoted in W. Peter Ward, "The Oriental Immigrant and Canada's Protestant Clergy, 1885—1925," *BC Studies*, 22 (1974): 53.

⁹⁵ S. S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), p. 6, 110.

⁹⁶ D. V. Lucas, "Our Chinese Mission," *The Christian Guardian* (January 22, 1896), p. 50.

⁹⁷ S. S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), p. 57.

experience of work among the Chinese, the latter were "the most industrious people on our earth." He therefore concluded: "Encourage the Chinaman to bring his wife, to take the oath of allegiance, to become in every sense a fellow citizen, and you would soon find them as good as the best for the development of our resources and the building up of a great nation."⁹⁸

Thus, while most white Canadians blamed the Chinese immigrant for their indifference to Christianity and thereby thought that they were unacceptable for Canadian society, missionaries gave a different thought. They believed that the Chinese would accept Christianity if white Canadians opened their whole heart to accept the Chinese. In a letter to his church, a Presbyterian missionary in Victoria, British Columbia told his church leader:

The Chinese are accessible ... Many of them are anxious to learn English and seek to become attached to those who take an interest in them. They have been subjected to a great many annoyances, but they have learned to distinguish the Christian people who treat them well from the worldlings who injure them.⁹⁹

As a result, missionaries often challenged the popular hostility to the Chinese immigrant. They criticized that the stereotypes of the Chinese gave people "a very erroneous impression" of the character of the Chinese, and that the Chinese vice was generally magnified and their virtues were

⁹⁸ "Editorial," *The Missionary Outlook*, 21, 9 (September 1902): 196.

⁹⁹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Mission fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, Correspondence Re: British Columbia Chinese Mission, 1888-1925, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-reel 1-file 1, P.M. McLeod to D. Fraser, January 11, 1888.

underrated. They believed that the Chinese had been persistently misrepresented and deliberately maligned by some politicians who curried favor with certain interest groups to win votes. They pointed out that the truth was that "no class of foreigners coming to our shores is more peaceable, industrious, honest and frugal than the Chinese;" and that the Chinese set "an example for politeness and gentlemanly deportment" to all other Canadians.¹⁰⁰ Many missionaries therefore repeatedly urged an end to existing discriminatory restrictions on Chinese immigration.¹⁰¹ They stated that the Chinese had the same rights as other Canadians to live in this country. The racial prejudice against the Chinese immigrant was an offense to the Christian faith in justice and fair play. And discrimination also hindered missionaries' evangelical efforts, and forced them to fight against "almost insurmountable obstacles in their endeavors to win the Chinese for the Christ."¹⁰² As a missionary commented in 1902, the popular anti-Chinese sentiment brought an embarrassing situation to those who strove to convert the Chinese immigrant:

The feeling against the Chinaman is not a little hindrance to the work among these people, for it is hard for John Chinaman to reconcile the teachings of the

¹⁰⁰ "Chinese Character," *The Christian Guardian*, March 3, 1886, p. 134.

¹⁰¹ Edgar Wickberg ed., *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1982), p. 143. W. Peter Ward, "The Oriental Immigrant and Canada's Protestant Clergy, 1858-1925," *BC Studies*, 22 (1974): 50.

¹⁰² S. S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), p. 24.

missionary, that the Christians are taught to love the whole world, with the attitude of those who are doing their best to drive him back to his heathen land.¹⁰³

Another missionary showed a similar worry when he talked about the discriminatory policy of a local school board, which attempted to segregate all the Chinese students in an exclusively Chinese school. After the failure of negotiations with the school board, the missionary suggested that the "unchristian policy" would "affect very seriously our mission work."¹⁰⁴

On the other hand, the atmosphere of the mission nourished a warm relationship between missionaries and Chinese immigrants. Within this environment grew a genuine sense of inter-racial trust. Missionaries often held the Chinese in genuine esteem. They usually described them in glowing terms. As for Chinese converts, missionaries particularly praised their "clear testimony and evident knowledge concerning the truth of the Christian religion," and declared them loyal, faithful, devoted, and honest. And the conversion was seen as ample evidence of the possibility to win the Chinese.¹⁰⁵ Such favorable attitudes are not surprising. Close contact reduced the social and cultural distance between the missionaries and

¹⁰³ J.C. Speer, "Our Chinese Work in British Columbia," *The Missionary Outlook*, 21, 2 (February 1902): 29.

¹⁰⁴ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Mission fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, Correspondence Re: British Columbia Chinese Mission, 1888-1925, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-reel 5-file 145, W. L. Macrae to Mackay, January 5, 1923.

¹⁰⁵ S. S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), p. 75.

the Chinese. Thus, the missionaries could view individual Chinese with fewer stereotyped conceptions. For instance, when a missionary, who was in charge of Victoria's Chinese Day School, reported the school's work among the Chinese immigrants, he made many favorable comments about the Chinese, and he felt "a great privilege" to be engaged in this work. He reported: "While there is much to be deplored, there is much to be liked about the Chinese people. There are many lessons we can learn from them." While he talked about his experience in working among the Chinese; he admitted:

I could not have been better treated by them. Although my mind had been pretty well imbued with the 'heathen Chinese' sentiment so prevalent amongst us, it did not take me very long to discover that the Chinese people were men and women pretty much like ourselves, and I have always endeavored to act accordingly. From no people in Victoria have I received more kindness than from the Chinese people, heathen as well as Christian.¹⁰⁶

Gratified by the Chinese progress towards assimilation, missionaries particularly felt the urgency of their work. They asked the church to put more energy and money into the Chinese mission. In their mission reports and newspaper articles, missionaries often complained about the indifference of the general public to the work of the Chinese mission. They could not understand why many Christians ignored the large number of Chinese who were right at their doors when they expressed a

¹⁰⁶ E. A. Churchill, "Report of the Chinese Methodist Day School at Victoria, B. C.," *Missionary Outlook*, 17, 5 (May 1898): 77.

deep and abiding interest in the cause of missions in China.¹⁰⁷

As an early missionary who worked among the Chinese in Victoria pointed out:

While the Christian churches are at great cost in sending missionaries to China, we have thousands of Chinese in Victoria, and on the Pacific coast, who might be brought under the influence of the Gospel at comparatively little expense, had we a suitable agent.¹⁰⁸

Moreover, missionaries often asked on various occasions to take the Chinese in "a friendly, brotherly spirit," and treat them equally as other Canadians.¹⁰⁹ Without doubt, in order to do this, sympathy for the Chinese was indispensable. Missionaries knew this more clearly than other Canadians, so they made successful contact with the Chinese, and they touched the hearts of the Chinese. However, the white Canadians' consensus of the time limited the missionary ability to develop their own way to convert the Chinese to Christianity and to lead them into Canadian society. The general environment of the nation and the atmosphere within the Protestant community framed the missionary view of the Chinese immigrant. The fusion of nationalism with religion equally found its expression in the missionary response to the Chinese immigrant.

In summary, few ethnic groups drew so much public

¹⁰⁷ S. S. Osterhout, "The Chinese Stranger," *Christian Guardian*, April 11, 1923, p. 14.

¹⁰⁸ W. Pollard, "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1879-80*, p. xii.

¹⁰⁹ S. S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), p. 209-210.

attention as did the Chinese during the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. People discussed the issue of Chinese immigration in the legislature, on the street, in the press, and in the meeting hall. Without doubt, a few central ideas always dominated the discussion, such as the heathen and uncivilized characteristics of Chinese culture and the Chinese immigrants' incapability of assimilating into a white society. Again and again, white English-speaking Canadians were equated with the Anglo-Saxon virtues of initiative, industry, freedom, and democracy, whereas the Chinese were assumed of superstition, ignorance, and autocracy. As a result, the racial prejudice against the Chinese was clearly stamped upon the thought of most white English-speaking Canadians, and legislative and public discrimination became a main part of Chinese immigrants' experience in Canada during the period of the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. Meanwhile, the Protestant missionaries were put in an awkward predicament when they strove to convert the Chinese to the Protestant religion. In other words, the missionaries had to work in a social environment imbued with racial prejudice when they tried to convince the Chinese immigrants that the greatness of the Christian religion lay in its power of love and righteousness.

CHAPTER 4

The Individual Missionary Efforts to Reach the Chinese Immigrants in Canada since 1859

As mentioned in the beginning of Chapter 3, the white English-speaking Canadians responded to the Chinese immigrants with racial prejudice and Anglo-Saxon nativism. However, some Protestant missionaries in British Columbia viewed the issue of the Chinese immigrants in Canada in a totally different way. First of all, they felt personal sympathy for the Chinese, especially because they remained untouched spiritually and physically by the Protestant churches. In 1885, a Methodist missionary in Victoria wrote:

I was considerably impressed with the fact that it did not seem to me to be in harmony with the essential spirit of Christianity to allow 4,000 heathen to live and die, surrounded by those who profess and call themselves Christians, and no one doing anything to help them.¹

Secondly, the missionaries soon realized that the presence of the Chinese immigrants in the country provided an opportunity for the Protestant churches to fulfill their obligation to convert the world by sending the Christian gospel to the Chinese immigrants. As a missionary pointed out, the increase of the Chinese population in British Columbia "calls loudly

¹ Editorial, "Work among the Chinese in British Columbia," *The Missionary Outlook*, 5, 4 (April 1885): 52.

upon the churches of Canada . . . to enter this field with redoubled energy, to Christianize this race."² Finally, the enthusiasm for evangelizing Canada gave these missionaries great courage to break the racial barrier and to carry on a most difficult task—converting these so-called unassimilable Chinese.

The Protestant missionaries made their first efforts to reach the Chinese immigrants soon after these people appeared in British Columbia in 1858. Historical records show that a Methodist missionary began his evangelizing work among the Chinese immigrants in New Westminster, British Columbia as early as 1859. After his pioneer work, several other Methodist missionaries and lay workers entered the field of the Chinese mission in British Columbia. However, the Protestant churches did not undertake organized work among the Chinese immigrants until the middle of the 1880s. Before that time, the mission work among the Chinese immigrants was mainly that of individual missionaries. Local church members or philanthropists usually supported these missionary activities, and all the missionaries did their work on a voluntary basis. In 1885, the Methodist Church first launched its organized mission to the Chinese immigrants in Victoria, British Columbia. Following this initial consolidation of the Chinese mission work, before long, the Presbyterian, Anglican, and

² The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1877-78*, p. xiv.

Baptist churches also organized their missions to the Chinese in several cities across the country, such as Winnipeg, Montreal, and Toronto.

This chapter will give a narrative history of the Protestant pioneering missions to the Chinese immigrants in Canada prior the 1890s when the major Protestant churches such as the Methodist and Presbyterian churches launched their organized missions to the Chinese immigrants in Canada. The missions in this period were the first stage of Protestant missions to the Chinese. They experienced both failure and success, and also developed from individual activities to organized programs. The narrative in this chapter is in chronological order and will proceed denomination by denomination. Some important events of the actual work will be described in detail. The emphasis of the chapter is on analyzing the characteristics of the early missionary work, its difficulties and gains.

4.1 Methodist Missions to the Chinese

Methodist missions to the Chinese in Canada can be traced back to the year 1859 when Edward White made his first effort to reach the Chinese in New Westminster, British Columbia. In 1858, Edward White and three other clergymen were selected by the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Canada as missionaries to establish the first Methodist missions in the newly formed

colony of British Columbia.³ Soon after his arrival in Victoria, British Columbia in February 1859, Edward White was assigned to New Westminster.⁴ Since few historical records about Edward White survive, little is known about White's initial missionary activities in New Westminster, especially the details about his work among the Chinese immigrants. However, his published diaries, letters, and missionary reports show that he did make personal contact with the Chinese and his church was also involved in the Chinese work. White's diary for Sunday, December 11, 1859 recorded: "Had two Chinese at the Sunday School today." In the entry for 18 December the same record could be found. The diaries also show that Edward White, an Anglican missionary and several others went to a "very interesting" Chinese party and had a dinner with the Chinese on December 21, 1859.⁵ Certainly, merely from White's diaries, we cannot be certain that Edward White himself was actually involved in the missionary work among the Chinese immigrants in New Westminster. However, one of his letters published in the *Christian Guardian* gives a few more details about his missionary activities directly related to

³ Alexander Sutherland, *The Methodist Church and Missions in Canada and Newfoundland: A Brief Account of the Methodist Church in Canada. What It Is and What It Has Done* (Toronto: The Department of Missionary Literature of the Methodist Church, Canada, 1909), p. 211.

⁴ Madge Wolfenden, "Edward White," in Marc La Terre, ed., *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), vol. 1, p. 701; Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), p. 286.

⁵ The United Church of Canada, B.C. Conference Archives, *Edward White Diaries*, December 11, 18, and 21, 1859.

the Chinese immigrants. In the letter, Edward White reports that he visited the local Chinese community "several times a week," and that he also conducted worked to teach the Chinese the English language.⁶ Moreover, from White's letter, it becomes evident that the Chinese were not merely attracted to the church to learn English, but "were frequently present at preaching."⁷ And in his annual report on the mission work in New Westminster for the year 1860, White further mentioned that these Chinese showed "hopeful signs of a disposition to learn and embrace Christianity."⁸

As one of few white Canadians who made direct contact with Chinese immigrants in the late 1850s and early 1860s, Edward White showed a strong sense of opposing white Canadians' discriminatory opinions of the Chinese. Contrary to the popular cry of stopping Chinese immigration to Canada, Edward White stated that Canadians should let the Chinese come and treat them kindly, because Canada was trying to get China open to its commerce and Christianity.⁹ Edward White also saw much virtue in Chinese immigrants. In 1860, he reported:

While others are grumbling and hesitating, or in too many instances drinking and gambling, the Chinese go at once to the mines, work hard, and spend as little as possible. I have not seen one of them either drinking or gambling since I came to this coast.¹⁰

⁶ Edward White, "A Letter from New Westminster, B.C." *Christian Guardian*, 31, 7 (15 February 1860).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1860-61*, p. xxix.

⁹ Edward White, "A Letter from New Westminster, B.C." *Christian Guardian*, 31, 7 (15 February 1860).

¹⁰ Ibid.

Meanwhile, as a missionary, Edward White further expressed his desire to convert these Chinese and showed the confidence that the church would "soon begin to reap the harvest."¹¹

In the early 1860s, Edward White was not the only one who was involved in Chinese mission work. According to Edward White, another Methodist missionary in Victoria tried to obtain a supply New Testaments in the Chinese language for the Chinese immigrants.¹² Emily Woodman, Edward White's sister-in-law, also made close contact with the Chinese. In 1860, she opened a night school for the Chinese. The school was thought of as the first institution of that kind in the province. It offered the Chinese the learning of the English language and the knowledge of Christianity.¹³

Although Edward White established a close relationship with the Chinese immigrants in New Westminster, his early missionary effort had little effect on the Chinese. For example, only three Chinese attended the Sunday school in his church.¹⁴ White also did not make any progress in converting the Chinese immigrants. Meanwhile, White's suggestion of opening the Chinese mission did not receive any response in the Methodist policy-making circle. The initial mission therefore did not continue after White left New Westminster.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ S.S. Osterhout, *Orientalists in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), p. 71.

¹⁴ Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1860-61*, p. xxix.

The first Chinese convert was reported in 1875 when William Pollard came to New Westminster. The name of the Chinese convert was Sam Sing, who later was involved in the Chinese mission work.¹⁵ In 1883, Ebenezer Robson, assisted by his wife and daughter, gave the Chinese work in New Westminster a more permanent nature. From then on, the Methodist mission to the Chinese in the city was carried on without interruption until the Methodist church entered the United Church of Canada in 1925.

At this early stage of the mission, the city of Victoria played an important role, although the Chinese work did not start until Ephraim Evans organized a Chinese class in the Sunday school of his church in 1866.¹⁶ Since Victoria had then the largest Chinese population in Canada, more individual clergymen and lay members of the local church were involved in the work. In 1868, the Rev. Emos E. Russ, a local church pastor, used a disused barroom near Chinatown to open a night school for the Chinese. The school attracted many Chinese who lived nearby. Russ's wife undertook most of the teaching, but there were also several volunteers who were involved in the schoolwork.¹⁷ And it was reported that by 1870 there had been

¹⁵ S.S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), p. 72.

¹⁶ Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1865-66*, n.p.

¹⁷ S.S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), pp. 72-3.

several Chinese classes that were operated by individual missionaries and lay members of the local church in the city.¹⁸

In 1873, William Eli Sanford, a Hamilton businessman, afterwards Senator Sanford, made a business trip to Victoria. After his return to Ontario, Sanford wrote a letter to a Methodist church leader and expressed his concern that such a large number of Chinese were completely untouched by the Protestant church. He suggested that some permanent mission work should be undertaken among the Chinese immigrants in Victoria. Meanwhile, Sanford made a contribution of five hundred dollars for the establishment of a Chinese mission. He also promised that the same amount of money would go to the mission to sustain its work in the following years. As a result, a mission school, usually called the Sanford Mission School, was opened in Victoria in 1874.

The school was located at the same place of Russ' night school. William Pollard, the local church minister, reported that there were a total of thirty Chinese who attended the day school in the first few months after the opening of the school, and the same number for the Sunday school. It was also reported there were seven Chinese who came to a Bible study class on Sundays.¹⁹ In its first year, the mission school was a great success. Pollard wrote in 1875: "The Sanford Mission

¹⁸ Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1869-70*, p. xx.

¹⁹ Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1873-74*, p. xviii.

School is progressing successfully, we have two conversions."²⁰ This was the first time that Chinese converts were mentioned in a church document. Pollard also reported that there were 107 Chinese who attended the mission school during the year; and the highest number of the Chinese who came to the school at any one time was 45.²¹ In order to meet the demands of the growing number of students, the mission school had to move to a bigger building in 1875. At that time, the Chinese mission appeared promising and fast growing. Pollard therefore asked the Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada to appoint a missionary to the Chinese immigrants.²²

In the next year, the mission school still seemed to be going well. It was reported that there were as many as ninety Chinese who attended the school during the year.²³ The school kept two classes every day, one in the daytime and the other at night, under the management of Ms. C.E. William. Every Wednesday evening, Amos Russ held a preaching service in the school. The Sunday school continued and several lay church members were "zealous in this important work."²⁴ The school made further progress in converting Chinese immigrants. There

²⁰ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1874-75*, p. xii.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

²² *Ibid.*, p. xii.

²³ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1876-77*, p. xxxviii; and also S.S. Osterhout, *Orientalists in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), pp. 73-4.

²⁴ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1876-77*, p. xxxviii.

was another Chinese who received baptism in 1877.²⁵ In the same year, some local missionaries, who were interested in the Chinese mission, held a meeting to discuss the nature and object of the Chinese mission in Victoria. It was said that the meeting was the first of the kind in Canada. In the meeting, the missionaries reached the same view on the importance of the Chinese mission. Contrary to the popular opinions in Canada on the Chinese immigrants, the missionaries believed that the Chinese would be in this country permanently. It followed that the Chinese mission should be organized as a regular work of the church. This judgment was contrary to the current thinking of the Chinese immigrants themselves, but it was later proved correct. Unfortunately, at that time, few people agreed. Even so, based on this understanding of the Chinese mission, the missionaries who participated in the meeting asked the Missionary Society to send a missionary to the Chinese immigrants as soon as possible.²⁶ In the following years, missionaries who made contact with the Chinese immigrants constantly attempted to convince their church leaders of the necessity and urgency of the organized Chinese mission. In their correspondence to the church leaders in the Missionary Society, speeches at the annual meetings of denominational organizations, and articles

²⁵ Ibid., p. xxxviii.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. xxxviii-xxxix.

for church periodicals, again and again, the missionaries called for the opening of the Chinese mission. However, the policy makers of the Protestant churches were hesitant about putting their energy and money into this field at a time when most English-speaking Canadians believed that the Chinese would disappear from this country long.

In the following years, the development of the first attempt to convert the Chinese seemed to confirm the church leaders' worries. The Chinese mission began to appear in all its complexity and difficulty. In his third annual report of the Sanford Mission School, Amos Russ implied that the main motivation that brought the Chinese to the mission school was "the want of secular employment." Meanwhile, he also noted that there was strong feeling against those Chinese who were going to convert to Christianity in the Chinese community.²⁷ As a result, the mission school began to suffer a painful decline in attendance. It was reported that there were only eight students who were regularly attending the school in the year 1878. This decline of attendance resulted in the cessation of Bible study in the school in 1878 and then the closure of the school itself in 1878 or 1879.²⁸

There were various reasons why the Sanford Mission School failed to play its role in the Chinese mission. However, one

²⁷ Ibid., p. xxxviii.

²⁸ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1877-78*, pp. xiii-xiv; *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1878-79*, p. xi.

of the most important reasons was that the school still rested on individual activity although both the Mission Society and the local church were involved in running it. There was no strong leadership in the schoolwork. The organization of the school was loose—everyone who worked in the school was a volunteer. Meanwhile, it was also clear that at that time the local church had not been ready to enter the field of the Chinese mission. The minister even complained to the Missionary Society: "it is impossible for the minister to handle the mission."²⁹

Nevertheless, the Sanford Mission School was a very promising beginning for the Chinese mission. The high attendance at the school in the first two years showed that the Chinese welcomed the school. Although most of them went to the school to learn the English language, some showed on interest in studying the Bible. It was reported that there had been twenty students in the Bible class when the school was closed. Therefore, the missionary who was in charge of the school at the time regretted this short mission venture: "Had the school been continued it is more than probable that before this time there would have been a flourishing Chinese Church in the city."³⁰

Unlike the missions in New Westminster and Victoria, a

²⁹ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1874-75*, p. xii.

³⁰ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1880-81*, p. xii.

lay member of the local church initiated the Chinese work in Vancouver. In the early 1860s, Mrs. M. Monk, a local church pastor's daughter, opened a school for the Chinese to learn the English language. In the school, she also tried to teach the Chinese about Christianity. At the same time, Mrs. Monk offered various kinds of social assistance to help the Chinese adapt to Canadian society. Before an appointed missionary came to Vancouver in 1888, Mrs. Monk carried on all the work to evangelize the Chinese in Vancouver.

As an individual Methodist lay person, Mrs. Monk's mission to the Chinese was very successful. One of her students, Fong Dickman, later became one of the first Chinese Methodist missionaries. He first worked among the Chinese immigrants in Nanaimo, a mining city of British Columbia. At that time, gambling and other reprehensible behaviour controlled Chinese mining workers' leisure life. But in his patient way, Dickman continued to influence the lives of the Chinese in Nanaimo. And from time to time he brought Chinese people into the Methodist church of the city. After many years of labor in Nanaimo, Dickman returned to Vancouver in 1906 and was appointed the minister of the local Chinese church. During the period of his ministering in the Chinese church in Vancouver, Dickman continued to serve the wider Chinese community. With the assistance of others, he organized and published the first Chinese newspaper in Canada, which was

designed to combat gambling, opium smoking, and other immoral life among the Chinese immigrants.³¹

There were other mission activities among the Chinese immigrants that were conducted in the areas beyond the major cities of British Columbia. However, these missionary activities were only sporadic and there were neither any Chinese mission schools nor Chinese baptisms reported during that period.³²

It might be ironic that once again a business trip brought a favorable turn to the Methodist Chinese mission and eventually changed the whole history of Protestant missions to the Chinese immigrants in Canada. In 1884, John Dillon, a businessman from Montreal, visited Victoria for a business purpose. The life of the Chinese in that city made an impression in him. In particular, he was concerned about the spiritual condition of the Chinese—they were outside the “civilizing” influence of Christianity, as he called it. On his return, John Dillon wrote to James Ferrier, a member of the General Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, and asked the Methodist church to take in some measures for the religious instruction of the Chinese in British Columbia, and especially those in the city of Victoria. In his letter, Dillon also promised a donation of one hundred dollars to the

³¹ S.S. Osterhout, *Orientalists in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), pp. 87-8.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6.

Missionary Society of the Methodist Church if a mission was started in Victoria.³³ Later, Dillon's letter was read in the meeting of the General Board of Missions held in October 1884. After much discussion, a resolution was passed. The resolution gave the local church leaders the authority to reopen a Chinese school and start a mission among the Chinese in Victoria "as soon as opportunity afforded." The General Board also asked the local church to collect necessary information about the Chinese in Victoria for the General Board so that further decisions regarding the mission could be made.³⁴

The local church immediately took action. Inquiries were conducted in regard to the possible number of people who would attend the school and the amount of support that would be given by the members of the local church and the Chinese community. However, it was most important to find a suitable location for the school and a missionary who could communicate with the Chinese in their native language. In February 1885, a missionary was appointed by the Missionary Society to work specifically among the Chinese in Victoria, and, at the same time, a Chinese school was opened in the city. The opening of the new Chinese school marked the beginning of the organized Methodist mission to the Chinese in British Columbia, and in Canada as well.

³³ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society 1884-1885*, p. xiv.

³⁴ Ibid, p. xv; and also "Work among the Chinese in British Columbia," *The Missionary Outlook*, 5, 4 (April 1885): 51-2.

Methodist individual missionary work among the Chinese prior to 1885 was basically a failure. Mission schools were usually not able to survive; the Chinese appeared indifferent to the message of Christianity even though they were interested in studying English. Certainly, the shortage of human resources and financial support explained the indifference of the Methodist churches in British Columbia to the Chinese mission, although several Methodist clergymen and lay workers were involved in the work. However, the strong prejudice against the Chinese was also a leading reason for this failure. As a missionary in Victoria noted, some people opposed the Chinese mission on no other ground than that the people to be evangelized were Chinese.³⁵ The same missionary reported that sometimes he found it difficult to rent a room as the classroom for his Chinese school.³⁶ There was also another negative factor that made the mission work ineffective. That was the language problem. At that time, no missionary worker knew the Chinese language; also few Chinese immigrants understood English. It became extremely difficult for the missionary and the Chinese to communicate. Missionaries had to rely on the newly converted Chinese to translate their sermons to the Chinese audience. No one knew

³⁵ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society 1885-1886*, p. xiii.

³⁶ "Work among the Chinese in British Columbia," *The Missionary Outlook*, 5, 4 (April 1885): 52.

to what degree the newly converted Chinese understood Christianity. The abilities of the Chinese interpreters in the English language were also in doubt. All this made the Methodist mission to the Chinese largely unfruitful in a period of more than twenty years.

4.2 Presbyterian Missions to the Chinese

The individual Presbyterian missionary activities began as early as the early 1880s. David McLaren, a Presbyterian layman, started a Chinese class in the Toronto Young Men's Christian Association in 1881.³⁷ This earliest record of a Presbyterian mission to the Chinese was found in the weekly bulletin of the Toronto Young Men's Christian Association, the *Shaftesbury Hall Weekly Bulletin*. In its issue of 6 May 1882, the bulletin introduced McLaren's Chinese class to the Association's members as follows:

A Chinese class is held in our rooms every Sabbath afternoon, at three o'clock. Mr. D. McLaren has been led by the Lord to take a deep interest in this work and has met with much encouragement in his labours.³⁸

The class seemed to have a strong appeal for the Chinese in Toronto. According to the same bulletin published a few months later, among the sixteen Chinese in Toronto at that time, nine attended the class.³⁹ The class usually started with religious

³⁷ "Chinese Class," *Shaftesbury Hall Weekly Bulletin*, Anniversary Number (October 17, 1882): n.p.

³⁸ "Chinese," *Shaftesbury Hall Weekly Bulletin*, 3, 3 (May 6, 1882): 1.

³⁹ "Chinese Class," *Shaftesbury Hall Weekly Bulletin*, 3, 22 (September 16, 1882): n.p.

exercises, which were mainly the preaching of the gospel and the answering of questions about Christianity asked by the students. However, much of the work was devoted to teaching the Chinese to read and write English. Although people from different denominations joined the work of the Chinese class, David McLaren was in charge. Financial assistance for maintaining the class was also through David McLaren's generosity, for the Presbyterian Church had not yet developed an interest in the Chinese at that time. Nor was the Young Men's Christian Association involved in McLaren's Chinese work; it took no financial responsibility for this Chinese class.⁴⁰ The class continued until the Presbyterian Church started its organized missions among the Chinese immigrants in 1891.

In 1886, a local Presbyterian minister's sister, under the auspices of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of Winnipeg, began a Sunday school for the Chinese laundrymen in Winnipeg. It began with five students, when some local church members devoted themselves to the teaching of the English language to the Chinese. The attendance continued to increase to more than thirty in the early 1890s. Although most Chinese came to the school for the purpose of learning English, seven of the students converted to Christianity and joined Knox Church of Winnipeg. When Miss Watt, the founder of the Chinese

⁴⁰ "Chinese Class," *Shaftesbury Hall Weekly Bulletin*, Anniversary Number (October 17, 1882): n.p.

school, left her position in 1892, James Thomson, a local clergyman, and his wife took charge of the school work. Later, he was appointed the missionary to the Chinese in Winnipeg.⁴¹

In the 1880s, the Chinese mission work was also conducted in cities such as Montreal, Victoria, and New Westminster.⁴² However, there are no detailed contemporary records left about these Presbyterian missions to the Chinese immigrants in these cities prior to 1891. What can be learned from fragmentary historical records is that individual Presbyterian clergymen continued their Chinese mission in major Canadian cities throughout the 1880s, but the work was on a voluntary basis.

From the middle of the 1880s, the state of the Chinese immigrants began to draw more and more attention from the Presbyterian clergy in British Columbia. In 1885, some Presbyterian clergy sent a letter to the Foreign Mission Committee of the Eleventh General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to introduce the Chinese conditions in British Columbia. They attempted to call the attention of the Presbyterian Church to the Chinese immigrants. Although the committee decided to "suggest to the assembly to instruct their successors to give earnest attention to this matter," it

⁴¹ "Chinese Mission in Winnipeg," *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1894*, p. lxxv.

⁴² Janet T. Macgillivray, *The Story of Our Missions* (Toronto: The Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1915), p. 251. And also see United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-reel 1-file 2, the Correspondence of Thomas Scouler to J.B. Fraser, January 9, 1889.

still thought that it was not the right time to open the Chinese mission in British Columbia.⁴³ Three years later, the clergy from the Presbyterian Church in British Columbia sent a petition to the General Assembly and asked to open the Chinese mission in British Columbia as soon as possible. They also suggested that the churches of the province provide accommodation and all necessary expenses if the General Assembly would support a missionary. After careful consideration, the Assembly decided to give the Foreign Mission Committee the authority to manage the whole matter.

The decision of the General Assembly was:

In regard to entering upon Missionary work among the Chinese in British Columbia, urged upon the Church by the Presbytery of Columbia, the Assembly remits the whole matter to the Committee of the Western Division to take such action in the premises as they may deem warranted by the state of the funds.⁴⁴

In British Columbia, the Presbytery of British Columbia, considering the greater number of the Chinese immigrants in Victoria, decided that a Chinese mission would be located in Victoria.⁴⁵ After the decision was made, the Foreign Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church in British Columbia began to look for suitable candidates so that a missionary could be chosen to work among the Chinese immigrants in that city. On

⁴³ The Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Acts and Proceedings*, 1885, p. 32.

⁴⁴ The Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Acts and Proceedings*, 1888, p. 21.

⁴⁵ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-reel 1-file 2, the Correspondence of Thomas Scouler to J.B. Fraser, January 9, 1889.

the recommendation of the Presbytery of British Columbia, three missionaries who knew the Chinese language and had worked in China were contacted. However, none of them was willing to accept the position. Among them, J.E. Gardiner refused the position because the Methodist Church had hired him; J.B. Fraser felt that the funds provided by the Foreign Mission Committee were not enough to support his work in British Columbia; J.S. Happer preferred to accept the appointment to work in Japan and China.⁴⁶ After it failed to find an English-speaking missionary, the Presbytery of British Columbia considered hiring a native agent to work among the Chinese immigrants.⁴⁷ It also wanted the Foreign Mission Committee to provide the full expense of a mission in Victoria for the first year.⁴⁸ It seemed that the Presbytery of British Columbia did not gain support for its ideas from the Foreign Mission Committee in Toronto. A missionary was not appointed until 1892. However, the church leaders in British Columbia did not give up their efforts to convince the Foreign Mission Committee of the feasibility and urgency of the Chinese mission. In his letter to Thomas Wardrope, the Convener of the Foreign Mission Committee (Western Division), a local Presbyterian church leader in Victoria, expressed his

⁴⁶ Ibid., the correspondence of P.M. McLeod to Thos. Wardrope, 19 October 1888; the correspondence of J.B. Fraser, 9 January 1889; file 4, the correspondence of J.S. Happer to P.M. McLeod, 8 February 1891.

⁴⁷ Ibid., file 3, the correspondence of P.M. McLeod to the Foreign Mission Committee, 24 April 1890.

⁴⁸ Ibid., file 3, the correspondence of D.J. Macdonald to Thomas Wardrope, 11 February 1890.

confidence in the Chinese mission: "a wide door is open for us." He also tried to convince Wardrope that this work in fact was already begun and that his church was ready to take an active part in it. Therefore, he hoped the Foreign Mission Committee would make an effort to support this valuable work.⁴⁹

The local church leaders in British Columbia brought the issue of the Chinese mission to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church again in 1890. An overture from the Synod of Manitoba and the North-West Territories⁵⁰ was read in the Assembly. After introducing the current conditions of the Methodist missions to the Chinese immigrants in British Columbia, the local church leaders asked the General Assembly to consider "the duty and urgency of establishing a Mission to these spiritual strangers."⁵¹ Although this overture was sent to the Foreign Mission Committee for further consideration, there was still no action adopted in the following year. The Foreign Mission Committee was still hesitating as to whether or not it was justified in bearing the full expense of a mission in Victoria where the Methodist missionary had carried on a mission for years. Moreover, the Committee was also not clear as to whether there was a sufficiently large number of Chinese immigrants who would be permanently settled in British

⁴⁹ Ibid., file 4, the correspondence of Patrick M. McLeod to Thomas Wardrope, 17 February 1891.

⁵⁰ At that time, the Presbyterian Church in British Columbia belonged to this Synod.

⁵¹ The Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Acts and Proceedings, 1890* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1890), p. 61.

Columbia. The Committee also considered the questions, such as the accessibility of the Chinese to missionary efforts, public attitudes to the Chinese, and a "suitable place for preaching". In order to make the matter clearer, the Committee sent its representative to British Columbia to ask local church leaders about these issues.⁵² As a result, when the General Assembly met in 1891, the Foreign Mission Committee passed a resolution that indicated that the Committee was still inclined to keep the Chinese mission work at the level of voluntary activities. The resolution read:

The Committee is rejoiced to hear of the mission initiated among the Chinese by St. Andrew's Church, Victoria, and of the marked success of like efforts in Donald, and expresses the conviction that such volunteer work ought to be prosecuted by every congregation in the North West and British Columbia where Chinese reside, as has been done for many years in Toronto, Montreal and elsewhere.⁵³

The Committee policy on the Chinese mission did not affect local churches' attitudes to the issue. Moreover, by then it was not only in British Columbia, but also in other provinces that more and more Presbyterian clergy realized the importance of the Chinese mission work. The local churches, especially those in western Canada, appeared to be more willing to undertake the mission. The Presbytery of Calgary

⁵² United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-reel 1-file 3, the Correspondence of D.J. Macdonald to Thomas Wardrope, 11 February 1890

⁵³ The Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Acts and Proceedings, 1891* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1891), p. 34.

even appointed Thomas Paton as its own missionary to work among the Chinese before the Committee did the same. Paton thus became the first appointed missionary who worked among the Chinese immigrants in the history of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Encouraged by the action of the church in Calgary, the Presbyterian Church leaders in British Columbia presented a memorial to the meeting of the General Assembly in 1891. The memorial asked the General Assembly to endorse the action of the Presbytery of Calgary and "to carry out the purpose already resolved upon to begin mission work among the Chinese on the Pacific Coast."⁵⁴ The memorial was received and forwarded to the favorable consideration of the Foreign Mission Committee. In December 1891, A.B. Winchester accepted the appointment of the Foreign Mission Committee to begin to work among the Chinese in Victoria.⁵⁵ This appointment finally finished the debate on the subject of the Chinese mission between the local churches and the Foreign Mission Committee. It also brought the Presbyterian Church in Canada to enter the field of the Chinese mission on an organized basis.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 62.

⁵⁵ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-reel 1-file 4, the Correspondence of A.B. Winchester to Hamilton Cassels, 28 December 1891.

4.3 Anglican and Baptist Missions to the Chinese

Since the Anglican Church always tried to avoid overlapping its mission work with other Protestant denominations, it entered the Chinese mission field only in the 1910s. However, some Anglican clergy were not slow to realize the importance of the missionary work amongst the Chinese immigrants. In his annual report for the year 1860, bishop George Hills stated: "Missionaries from the Church of England should be sitting in the midst of Chinese . . . seeking an entrance within their hearts for the saving faith of Jesus."⁵⁶ In fact, in 1860, not long after his consecration as the Bishop of British Columbia, George Hills made contact with the Chinese in British Columbia.⁵⁷ In Victoria, he noted the possibility to start work amongst the Chinese immigrants from the fact that a Chinese man had given ten pounds to the new St. John's Church in the city. He thought that this fact showed that the Chinese mission work would have a promising future.⁵⁸ Indeed, the report of the Columbia Mission for the year 1860 mentioned that the Bishop of British Columbia "made an important beginning amongst the Chinese."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Columbia Mission, *The Second Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1860* (London: Rivington, 1861), p. 73.

⁵⁷ In 1860, George Hills visited many settlements in British Columbia. In his journal, he recorded his impression to the Chinese immigrants who were working in different mining towns. See *the Second Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1860*, pp. 38-57.

⁵⁸ George Hills, *The "Occasional Paper": Two Letters from the Bishop of Columbia to the Rev. E. Cridge and Bishop Demers* (Victoria, B.C.: British Colonist, 1860), p. 14.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Historical records show more Anglican clergymen in British Columbia were involved in the Chinese mission in the 1860s. In the annual report of Columbia Mission for the year 1862, it was mentioned that John Sheepshanks, an Anglican missionary in New Westminster, kept regular contact with several Chinese there, and he also gave them religious instruction. In Yale, a lay missionary, who had formerly worked in China, made efforts to reach the Chinese. He had success in attracting the Chinese to the church. When the Anglicans built their own church in Yale, ten Chinese made their contributions to the building. The missionary even stated that he looked to the Chinese with more encouragement than to the white settlers there.⁶⁰ The report of the Columbia Mission also recorded a missionary's visit to a Chinese farm at Quesnel in 1866. Although the Chinese on the farm did not show any particular interest in Christianity, the visit left a deep impression on the missionary. He stated: "Perhaps at no distant day, a really hopeful field of missionary enterprise may be afforded among these truly interesting people."⁶¹ In Lytton, some Chinese called the missionary of the town and hoped to receive some secular training and instruction from him. While the missionary turned down the request of the

⁶⁰ Columbia Mission, *The Forth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1862* (London: Rivington, 1863), p. 48.

⁶¹ Columbia Mission, *The Eighth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1866* (London: Rivington, 1867), p. 46.

Chinese, he was also impressed by the fact that the Chinese immigrants wholly keep aloof from the church, and had not "apparently even the curiosity or interest to enquire concerning our holy faith and practice."⁶² In the report of 1869, a missionary reported his efforts to preach to the Chinese immigrants at William Creek, B.C. He also opened a school for the Chinese there. Every afternoon, about ten Chinese people came to his school to learn the English language and Christianity. Chinese curiosity about Christianity made a deep impression in the missionary. He therefore asked his church to send a missionary for the Chinese in the whole area of Quesnel.⁶³

This kind of individual and scattered missionary activity continued to the late 1880s. Things began to change in the early 1890s. From that time on, some local Anglican churches began to get involved in the Chinese mission in British Columbia. In 1890, H.B. Hobson, the first rector of Christ Church, Vancouver, opened a school in his church for the Chinese immigrants in Vancouver. He also conducted other missionary activities in the Chinese community of Vancouver. In his church, a few other clergymen and a number of devoted women became involved in the work. Hobson's mission later

⁶² Columbia Mission, *The Tenth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1868* (London, Rivington, 1869), p. 37.

⁶³ Columbia Mission, *The Eleventh Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1869* (London, Rivington, 1870), p. 57.

became the Church of the Good Shepherd. He also had several Chinese immigrants convert to the Anglican Church.⁶⁴ In 1892, an Anglican missionary who had served the Chinese in Honolulu started a night school for the Chinese in New Westminster.⁶⁵ The school gained the support of the Canadian Church Missionary Society, and quickly attracted considerable numbers of Chinese immigrants in the city. In 1893, a similar school was opened at Christ Church, Vancouver, and a Chinese Mission Aid Association was formed to support the Chinese work in the diocese of British Columbia. This school was supported by the clergy of Christ Church and St. Paul's and many other church members.⁶⁶

Like other denominations' work among the Chinese immigrants, the Anglican mission to the Chinese in British Columbia had little success in a thirty-year period. The first baptisms were reported in 1893 when the Rev. H.H. Gowen baptized six Chinese in Christ Church, Vancouver.⁶⁷

In 1894, L.N. Tucker became the rector of Christ Church of Vancouver. Tucker seemed to be the first Anglican clergyman to realize that the Chinese work could not be carried on without special funds and human resources. In 1900, he presented a report urging the appointment of a Chinese

⁶⁴ Lyndon Grove, *Pacific Pilgrims* (Fforbez Publications Ltd., 1979), pp. 50-1.

⁶⁵ *Churchman's Gazette*, Vol. 12, No. 3, July 1892.

⁶⁶ *Churchman's Gazette*, Vol. 13, No. 3, July 1893.

⁶⁷ *Churchman's Gazette*, Vol. 13, No. 6, October 1893.

speaking priest to work in those places where a large number of Chinese people could be found. He also emphasized that this work had to obtain the help of an adequate number of Chinese catechists. As to the mission funds, he estimated that the maintaining of such work would need at least two thousand dollars per year.⁶⁸

In 1901, a donation was made by the Women's Auxiliary of the ecclesiastical province of Eastern Canada to the Chinese mission in British Columbia.⁶⁹ As a result of the donation and other support from Ontario and England, a Chinese mission station was erected in Vancouver in January 1903. It consisted of a chapel, a schoolroom, and a lodging house for the catechists and converts. Since it proved impossible to find a Chinese clergyman, James Hall, a Chinese catechist, took charge of the work in the Chinese church, but under the supervision of the Reverend Cecil C. Owen and a Chinese Mission Committee. In the first couple of years, the work of the Chinese mission went well enough. The school was open five evenings a week with the support of four volunteer teachers. There were about thirty-five students who attended the school everyday. James Hall also conducted a Bible class on Wednesday evenings, with an average attendance of twenty. On Sunday mornings, the Chinese attended the service held in Christ

⁶⁸ Minutes of the Executive Committee, Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster, May 16, 1900.

⁶⁹ *Journal of 20th Session of the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster*, 1901, p. 41.

Church; then, in the afternoon and evening, they would take part in special services at the mission, conducted by Hall. It was reported that four Chinese were baptized in 1903.⁷⁰ In addition, the Chinese catechist routinely visited the Chinese homes in the city. He also traveled to the canneries where many Chinese were employed during the summer.

The mission work became discouraging in the following years. The attendance at the evening school and Sunday school decreased tremendously so that sometimes there was no one to come to the schools. A special committee was appointed to investigate the situation. Some measures were taken with the hope that better work would result. While the committee realized that the new changes failed to improve the mission work, it accepted Hall's resignation in 1907, and his place was taken by George Lim Yuen who had been doing part of the work on a voluntary basis.⁷¹ The work made considerable progress under Lim Yuen's leadership, especially on recovering lost membership. The annual report of 1909 showed that the attendance at the evening school increased to thirty, and the religious meetings were also well attended. A few people were newly baptized.⁷² By 1914, the mission had become "flourishing." An average of fifty-five Chinese attended the evening school, and the attendance of the religious meeting

⁷⁰ *Journal of 22nd Session of the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster*, 1903, pp. 41-2.

⁷¹ *Journal of 25th Session of the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster*, 1907, p. 39.

⁷² *Journal of 27th Session of the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster*, 1909, p. 32.

increased to forty-five.⁷³ Yuen was therefore ordained, becoming the first Chinese to receive ordination in the Anglican Church in Canada.

As the mission work grew, the need for consolidation became apparent. In 1915, a composite Oriental Missions Committee was set up with representatives from the Synod of B.C. and from the Diocesan Board of the Women's Auxiliary. Meanwhile, it was felt that the scattered nature of the work required a special agency to take over the whole work throughout the province. A memorial was therefore addressed to General Synod suggesting "that the M.S.C.C should take over, become responsible for, and carry on this as one of its departments of work."⁷⁴ The memorial was also presented to the newly formed Provincial Synod of British Columbia in 1917; and it resulted in the adoption of a canon setting up the Provincial Board of Missions to Orientals.⁷⁵ This signaled the end of individual Anglican mission to the Chinese immigrants in British Columbia.

Baptist missionaries were more interested in European immigrants, especially those from northern and eastern European countries. They made little effort to reach the Chinese immigrants in Canada. According to J.R. McDonald, a historian of Canadian Baptist churches, the Baptist Church in

⁷³ *Journal of 32nd Session of the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster*, 1914, p. 61.

⁷⁴ *Proceedings, Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster*, June 1915, p. 22.

⁷⁵ *Proceedings, Provincial Synod of British Columbia*, May 1917, pp. 31-2, 50-2.

western Canada focused its work mainly on the immigrants from countries like Germany, Sweden, Ukraine, Norway, and Hungary. There was no Chinese church to be found in the statistics of the Baptist Church for the period from 1873 to 1948.⁷⁶ However, some individual missionaries engaged in Chinese mission work on their own behalf. For example, one of the first Baptist missionaries in British Columbia reported in 1878: "We have started a Chinese mission in Victoria, with Mrs. Celia McNaughton as superintendent. We hope to be able to interest many of our brethren and sisters in this mission."⁷⁷ Little is told about this mission, and no one knows how long the mission existed in the city. However, one thing seemed to be certain, that is, the mission had little success. In fact, the Baptist Church kept a low profile in its Chinese mission work for many decades. Usually the Baptists just joined other Protestant denominations in a union mission to work among the Chinese immigrants. For example, a Baptist minister joined the Calgary Chinese Christian Association, an interdenominational missionary organization in Calgary, and took charge of the Chinese church.⁷⁸ However, the Baptists did maintain some independent missions to the Chinese immigrants in the country.

⁷⁶ J.R. McDonald, *Baptist Missions in Western Canada, 1873-1948* (Edmonton: Baptist Union of Western Canada, 1948), p 59.

⁷⁷ Cited in J.C. Baker, *Baptist History of the North Pacific Coast* (New York: Arno Press, 1980 [first version, 1912]), p. 261.

⁷⁸ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 2-file 53, the Correspondence of C.A. Colman to A.E. Armstrong, June 13, 1912.

A list of Chinese classes for the year of 1921 entered two Chinese classes conducted by the Baptist Church of St. John, New Brunswick, and four in Toronto.⁷⁹ The Chinese converts to the Baptist Church have been far fewer than to other Protestant denominations. According to the Census of Canada, there were only 228 Chinese Baptists to be reported in the whole country in 1931.⁸⁰

The Protestant mission to the Chinese immigrants prior to the 1890s was basically individual activities. Few Protestant clergy entered the mission field. It seemed that far more urgent issues than the Chinese mission attracted most Protestant clergy's immediate interests. Such a position of the Protestant church in dealing with the Chinese mission was particularly reflected in a letter of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in response to a local congregation leader's request to hasten the progress of setting up the work of mission to the Chinese. In the letter, although the committee expressed "the very deepest interest in the question of taking up work among the Chinese," it insisted that "the committee's view" of the issue needed to be "world-wide." And this "world-wide" view, as it was claimed, enabled the committee to see reasons for hesitating

⁷⁹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 4-file 138, "List of Classes of the Eastern Canada Chinese Mission, 1921."

⁸⁰ *Religious Denominations by Racial Origins, 1931* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1933), pp. 1-12.

to take up work among the Chinese. The committee then criticized that the local congregation leader could not see these reasons were of "so much importance", because his view was narrowed by his living with the Chinese."⁸¹

Meanwhile, the Protestant churches were heavily affected by the popular racial prejudice against the Chinese. They hesitated to open the Chinese mission even though they realized that the mission was necessary for the interests of their churches and the future of the country. In most cases, the Protestant churches were not willing to put their financial and human resources into this field. The missionaries who worked in the field obtained little support from either their denominations or church members. The mission itself was also not fruitful. Over more than three decades, less than ten Chinese converted into Christianity. This result gave more negative corroboration to the Protestant church leaders in their evaluation of the Chinese mission. This situation, plus other external factors, had great impact on the Protestant mission to the Chinese in the following years, although this time the churches consolidated their work and put more resources into their missionary enterprise.

⁸¹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-reel 1-file 4, the Correspondence of Hamilton Cassels to P. McF. McLeod, February 25, 1891.

CHAPTER 5

The Establishment of the Missions: the Organized Work among the Chinese from 1885 to 1923

After many years of hesitation and debates, the Protestant churches came to realize that Chinese immigrants' presence in Canada would be permanent, and that the disposing of the Chinese problem depended on the degree to which the churches could Christianize them. As Alexander Sutherland, General Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, declared in 1885:

The Chinese cannot be got rid of by repressive measures; they cannot be boycotted out of the country, much less driven out by mob violence. They have come to stay, and the only wise policy is to transform them into useful citizens . . . Let the Chinaman learn English . . . and let him accept the Christian religion . . . and he will make a safer and better citizen than some whose support is now eagerly courted by the politicians.¹

Meanwhile, the missionaries who made first contact with the Chinese immigrants sent a vast amount of positive information about their work among the Chinese back to their headquarters. In particular, while a new wave of Chinese immigration came to Canada with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the early 1880s, the Chinese mission appeared to be more

¹ Alexander Sutherland, "Mission Work in British Columbia," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society*, 1885-86, p. xiv.

urgent for the Protestant churches to reach their goal of evangelizing the country. Moreover, the first response of the Chinese immigrants to the mission was overwhelmingly encouraging. It showed that the mission might be a promising enterprise in the future. Under these circumstances, the Protestant churches finally made their decisions to start their Chinese missions on an organized basis. Thus, among the major Protestant denominations in Canada, the Methodist Church first began its Chinese mission in 1885, followed by the Presbyterian Church in 1891, and then the Anglican Church in 1917.

5.1 The Methodist Missions

In February 1885, the Methodist Church started its organized mission to the Chinese immigrants in Canada. It happened just a few months after the General Board of Missions made its decision to open a Chinese mission in Victoria in October 1884. A Presbyterian missionary's son, John E. Gardiner, played an important role in consolidating the efforts of all previous Methodist missionaries and organizing on a permanent basis Methodist mission efforts among the Chinese in Victoria. Gardiner was thought of as a most successful missionary in Victoria.² He was born in China and

² George E. Hartwell, "Work among Orientals in British Columbia," *Missionary Bulletin*, 10, 3 (June 1914): 608.

could speak Cantonese fluently. In early 1885, Gardiner came from San Francisco to Victoria as an interpreter in a Chinese trial. When he arrived in Victoria, Gardiner was impressed by the "spiritually destitute" condition of the Chinese immigrants in the city. He strove to enlist the co-operation of the local churches on behalf of a union mission to the Chinese, but without success. Gardiner then turned to the local Methodist church, from which he received some encouragement. After inquiring into the conditions of the Chinese community, a report favoring the opening of a Chinese mission school was sent to the General Board of Missions. At the same time, the General Board learnt that Gardiner was willing to help start a Chinese mission school for the Methodist church. The Board soon sent a telegram to the local church and told it the Board's decision: "organize the school immediately."³

In February 1885, a Chinese mission school was opened in Victoria, B.C. John Gardiner was in charge of the school as a volunteer worker until 1888 when he was appointed as the first Methodist missionary to work among the Chinese. At the school opening day, twenty-eight Chinese attended the English class. After the class, W.W. Percival, Superintendent Minister of Victoria, the Methodist Church, preached to the Chinese, and John Gardiner interpreted the preaching into Chinese. In the

³ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1884-85*, p. xv.

following two months, the number of the Chinese who attended the school continued to increase, and, at its peak, the number in attendance reached more than one hundred.⁴ A Bible study class was also opened on Sunday afternoons, and about 50 Chinese were present. After the Bible study class, on Sunday evenings, a religious service was held. Gardiner conducted the service in the Chinese language. It was the first religious service exclusively in the Chinese language ever held in Victoria. According to a local daily newspaper reporter, over 200 Chinese attended the first religious service.⁵ In the following months, more Chinese came to the service. When A. Sutherland, General Secretary of the Missionary Society, visited the Chinese mission in July of 1885, he found the schoolroom crowded to overflowing when a preaching service was conducted by John Gardiner on a Sunday evening. Later, he estimated that there were six to seven hundred people present at the service on that evening.⁶

The missionaries and their leaders were encouraged by the first success of their mission school. It was just two months after the school was opened that W.W. Percival was considering a bigger mission station to meet the development of the Chinese work. Meanwhile, the issue of finding a suitable

⁴ "Work among the Chinese in British Columbia," *The Missionary Outlook*, 5, 4 (April 1885): 52.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-3.

⁶ Alexander Sutherland, "Notes of a Tour among the Missions of British Columbia," *The Missionary Outlook*, 5, 10 (October 1885): 149.

Chinese missionary was also raised.⁷ The success of the Chinese mission in Victoria was also indicated in part by the fact that eleven Chinese were baptized within five months of the school's opening.⁸ When Sutherland gave his first annual report of the Chinese mission, he was confident in the future of the mission. He even optimistically predicted that in the future the mission would "require a church to accommodate five or six hundred people,"⁹ even though there were only thirteen Chinese who were members of the Methodist Church at that time.

In 1888, John E. Gardiner resigned from his position in the government and accepted the appointment of the Methodist Church as one of the first full-time missionaries to work among the Chinese immigrants in Canada.¹⁰ Under Gardiner's leadership, the Chinese mission in Victoria continued growing in the following years. In just one year, Gardiner made the membership of the mission in Victoria double, from twenty four in 1888 to fifty in 1889.¹¹ The evening school was well attended; the religious service attracted more Chinese—sometimes over one hundred people showed up for the service. In his first annual report to the General Board of Missions, Gardiner stated:

The work is in every respect encouraging. The prospects are bright. Were a much larger building available we feel

⁷ "Work among the Chinese in British Columbia," *The Missionary Outlook*, 5, 4 (April 1885): 53.

⁸ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1885-86*, p. xiii.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xvi; and the statistics in *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1885-86*.

¹⁰ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1888-89*, p. xxxviii.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. xxxviii.

quite confident that it would be filled, inasmuch as a great many have had to retrace their steps after reaching our present hall, on account of the crowded state of the congregation.¹²

Gardiner also devoted many of his energies to eradicate the vices that then were strongly entrenched in the Chinese community. He fearlessly combatted the smuggling of Chinese women and girls for immoral purposes. It was reported that Gardiner rescued ten Chinese girls from a life of slavery in 1886, and he also provided a temporary home for some of those girls.¹³ These girls later were transferred to the Chinese Rescue Home, an institution jointly operated by the Missionary Society and the Woman's Missionary Society. Gardiner also struggled to root out reprehensible habits of the Chinese immigrants like gambling and opium smoking, which caused havoc among them. Gardiner carried on his struggle against these vices until he returned to San Francisco. He became a terror to the "high binders" and the gambling syndicates of Victoria and Vancouver. However, Gardiner's efforts obtained little support from either the Chinese community or the larger society. He was even persecuted by the Chinese who were involved in the immoral businesses. His life was threatened—a price was placed upon his head by Chinese secret societies.¹⁴

¹² Ibid., p. xxxix.

¹³ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1886-87*, p. xiii.

¹⁴ S.S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), pp. 76-8.

In 1891, a church building was erected in the Chinatown of Victoria. At the same time, the members of the Chinese church increased to one hundred and five. The number in attendance at the religious service reached two hundred, or one tenth of the Chinese population of Victoria as possible.¹⁵ In order to reach as many of the Chinese who lived in Victoria, Gardiner often conducted street preaching service in Chinatown. In 1893, Gardiner reported that he made all the Chinese "with but few exceptions" hear his preaching "some less and some more frequently."¹⁶ The success of his mission work gave Gardiner more confidence to win the Chinese immigrants to Christianity. Indeed, in the following three years, the mission continued to make encouraging progress. By the time that Gardiner left for Vancouver in 1895, one hundred and forty two Chinese who had the Chinese church in Victoria.¹⁷

The Chinese mission in Victoria experienced severe decline in the following years. By 1906, the church had just fifty-seven members.¹⁸ In a special report written in 1910 by James Turner, Superintendent of Japanese and Chinese Work in British Columbia, it was reported that the preaching service was not largely attended in Victoria. There were usually forty or fifty people who came to the church for the preaching

¹⁵ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1890-91*, p. xxvi.

¹⁶ "The Chinese Work on the Pacific Coast," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1892-93*, p. xxxviii.

¹⁷ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1895-96*, p. xxxviii.

¹⁸ "The Chinese and Japanese Work on the Pacific Coast," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1905-06*, p. xlv.

service, although the capacity of the church was five hundred people.¹⁹

The mission seemed to begin recovering from a nearly two-decade decline in the early 1910s. The night school and religious service held on Sunday evenings became well attended again. It was reported in 1913 that there was an average attendance of one hundred students at the night school. And, usually about one hundred and fifty Chinese came for the Sunday service. George E. Hartwell, the superintendent of the mission, therefore, optimistically predicted: "the future presents a brighter outlook."²⁰ The *Annual Report* of 1914 showed that the membership of the Chinese church in Victoria had increased to seventy-five.²¹

While the General Board of Missions decided to organize a mission school in Victoria in 1885, it sent another missionary to open a mission in Vancouver. This missionary was Chan Sing Kai. Chan was born in a Christian family. His father, as a Chinese scholar, made a large contribution to Chinese literature in the translation of the Bible. Therefore, Chan acquired from infancy an accurate knowledge of the Bible. He then received his education in the school of the Wesleyan

¹⁹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Incoming Correspondence of the General Secretary, Alexander Sutherland, fonds 14/2/4, 78.092C-box 4-file 67, James Turner, "Special Report on Work among Asiatics in Canada," 1910.

²⁰ George E. Hartwell, "Work among Orientals in British Columbia," *Missionary Bulletin*, 10, 1 (April 1914): 39, 42, 44.

²¹ "Chinese and Japanese in Canada," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1913-14*, p. xlii.

Methodist Mission in Hong Kong. In his first three-year service in the mission of Vancouver, Chan succeeded in influencing the lives of many Chinese in Vancouver, especially young Chinese men. He brought thirty-two Chinese into the mission. And when one of his converts later moved to Kamloops, he devoted himself to spreading Christianity among his fellow countrymen. With his assistance, the local missionary soon converted several other Chinese.²² Besides his services in Vancouver, Chan also traveled to the cities of New Westminster and Victoria and preached to the Chinese there. In 1891, Chan was ordained a Methodist minister, and he became the first Chinese clergyman of the Methodist Church of Canada.²³

In 1900, a three-story church building was erected in the Chinatown of Vancouver. The church building contained a chapel with a seating-capacity of two hundred people, a schoolroom for one hundred students, the minister's residence, and dormitory accommodation for thirty young people.²⁴ It was a new idea to provide a dormitory facility in a church building. It was thought that the young Chinese men who lived in the church building could separate from the unwholesome surroundings of the Chinatown, and that they would be more amenable to the influence of the Christian religion. This afterwards proved to

²² "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1889-90*, p. xix.

²³ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1890-91*, p. xxviii.

²⁴ "The Chinese Work on the Pacific Coast," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1899-1900*, p. xxxv; and "Chinese Mission, Vancouver," *Christian Guardian*, May 30, 1900, p. 349.

be the case and from the dormitories came a large percentage of the additions to the church membership from that time on. The membership of the Vancouver church reached its highest in 1896, forty two faithful.²⁵

The Chinese in Vancouver responded the mission more enthusiastically. It was reported that, in a series of religious services organized by a local Methodist church, at one time, there were over one thousand Chinese who attended the service.²⁶ A contemporary writer commented on this event in a satisfied tone: "These meetings are index to the new spirit that is being manifested in all Oriental communities. The doors, after years of Christian endeavor, are beginning to open."²⁷

From 1920, the Methodist Church began its efforts to cooperate with other Protestant denominations in the Chinese mission. Since it was believed that a social center would reclaim the Chinese from gambling and other vices, the Methodist Church tried to build a social center which contained entertainment facilities for the Chinese so that the church could attract more Chinese in their leisure time. For this purpose, the Methodist mission contacted the Anglican and Presbyterian missions to discuss the possibility of erecting a large social center containing Y.M.C.A equipment, and to

²⁵ "The Chinese Work on the Pacific Coast," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1895-96*, p. xxxviii.

²⁶ "Chinese and Japanese in Canada," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1913-14*, p. xlii.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xlii.

organize a united mission to the Chinese.²⁸ Certainly, the interdenominational union of the Chinese mission was not realized until the birth of the United Church of Canada in 1925. However, from this time on, the activities of the Chinese mission became more interdenominational.

From the early 1890s, the organized Methodist mission to the Chinese was expanded to the areas of British Columbia beyond the cities of Victoria and Vancouver. One of the major missionary fields was in New Westminster. In the first few years after the organized mission began, the city was regularly visited by the missionary who was stationed in Vancouver. Some lay members of the local church maintained a mission school in the city on a voluntary basis. Sunday evening services conducted by the visiting missionary usually attracted about one hundred Chinese people.²⁹ Since many Chinese moved to New Westminster to look for employment in the canning industries after the completion of the Pacific Railway, a mission station was opened in New Westminster in 1891. The membership of the mission increased from nine in 1890 to forty eight in 1893 when the membership peaked.³⁰ In a correspondence with a church publication, the missionary in the field reported that he visited most fisheries on the Fraser River, "not once or twice, but many times" during a

²⁸ Ibid., p. 259.

²⁹ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1889-90*, p. xx.

³⁰ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1892-93*, p. xxxviii.

fishing season. Usually he went from place to place, singing, praying, and preaching to the Chinese workers. Sometimes, he preached five or six times a day.³¹ However, the success of the mission in the city did not last because of the fickle nature of the Chinese population. The membership of the mission was usually less than twenty although the Chinese population in the city reached as high as four thousand.³²

While most Methodist missions enjoyed success, the mission in Nanaimo experienced failure from its beginning. After a mission station was built by the support of the Chinese of the province in 1895,³³ it never attracted much attention among the Chinese. According to the annual statistics of the Missionary Society between 1896 and 1914, the attendance at the night school was always less than fifteen and the members of the mission were never more than ten, although once there was a Chinese population of one thousand in Nanaimo.³⁴ As it was reported in 1903: "The work of this mission is not progressing as much as we could wish. The attendance at the Sunday services had not been large."³⁵ One of the main reasons the work was difficult was that the Chinese secret societies had a strong hold among the Chinese in

³¹ "The Chinese Work," *The Missionary Outlook*, 17, 11 (November 1898): 165.

³² "Chinese and Japanese in Canada," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1913-14*, p. xl; and "The Chinese Work," *The Missionary Outlook*, 17, 11 (November 1898): 165.

³³ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1895-96*, p. xxxix.

³⁴ *Annual Reports of the Missionary Society, 1896-1914*.

³⁵ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1902-03*, p. xli.

Nanaimo and the surrounding districts. The other was that the clan organization exercised great influence on the life of the local Chinese, because two-thirds of the Chinese in Nanaimo belonged to a single clan.³⁶ Since the gambling and opium business were usually controlled by the leaders of the secret society and clan organizations, the Methodist mission was thought of as a threat to their business. As a result, the Chinese might be persecuted if they were too close to the church.

By 1923, the Methodist Church had reached almost all the Chinese communities in British Columbia. It had thirteen mission stations at Victoria, Nanaimo, Vancouver, New Westminster, Steveston, Kamloops, and Nelson. Six missionaries and thirteen school teachers worked among about twenty five thousand Chinese immigrants in the province.³⁷

However, during this almost forty-year period, the Methodist Chinese mission in British Columbia did not develop into as promising an enterprise as it appeared to be at the beginning of the mission. In fact, the mission just experienced a short prosperous period in the first half of the 1890s. After reaching its highest peak in 1896, the mission always stood at a low level, especially in the sense of the church membership. According to the *Annual Report of the*

³⁶ J.E. Gardiner, "The Chinese Work," *The Missionary Outlook*, 12, 5 (May 1892): 68.

³⁷ "Oriental Missions in Canada," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society*, 1923, p. 98.

Missionary Society, the Methodist Church had a membership of two hundred and thirty nine Chinese in British Columbia in 1896.³⁸ After that, the church membership continued to decline until 1899 when there were only seventy-six Chinese who stayed in the Methodist Church.³⁹ It took a long time to recover from this decline. In 1923, the church membership reached two hundred and forty three, which just passed the level of twenty-seven years before.⁴⁰

From the 1910s, the Missionary Society began to send its missionaries to the other provinces beyond British Columbia. In 1910, a Chinese mission in cooperation with the Presbyterian Church was opened in Winnipeg,⁴¹ in Moose Jaw in 1911, in Calgary in 1917,⁴² and in Toronto in 1919.⁴³

The Methodist Woman's Missionary Society also joined the mission to the Chinese immigrants in Canada, first in Victoria and then in the major cities across the country where Chinese immigrants resided. The Woman's Missionary Society began its mission to the Chinese immigrants in 1887, when conditions became serious in regard to the importation of Chinese girls for immoral and inhuman purposes by the Chinese in British

³⁸ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1895-96*, p. xiii.

³⁹ "The Chinese Work on the Pacific Coast," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1898-99*, p. xxxvi.

⁴⁰ The statistics of the Chinese Mission in British Columbia in *Annual Reports of the Missionary Society, 1885-1923*; and also see Table 1 at the end of the chapter.

⁴¹ *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1909-10*, p. 26.

⁴² S.S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), p. 100, 103.

⁴³ "Toronto Methodist Chinese Mission," *The Missionary Outlook*, 42, 5 (May 1922): 354.

Columbia. As mentioned before, John Gardiner, the first Methodist missionary to the Chinese immigrants in Victoria, had made tremendous efforts for the emancipation of these people. Since he received little help from the local church, Gardiner appealed to the Missionary Board of the Methodist Church for assistance. The Board gave the appeal sympathetic consideration and in turn laid the matter before the Woman's Missionary Society. Before long, an agreement was reached between the Board and the Woman's Missionary Society: they would cooperate in building the Chinese Rescue Home in Victoria. The Board promised it would provide a home and other financial support, while the Woman's Missionary Society would send a worker to the home. In December 1887, Annie Leake was appointed to take charge of the Chinese Rescue Home in Victoria, and at that time there were nine Chinese women, aged from eight to twenty, who were in the Home.⁴⁴ According to the first annual report of the Chinese Girl's Rescue Home, religious instruction was regularly conducted in the Home on Sundays by John Gardiner; prayer-meetings were also organized. Other activities like learning the English language and sewing training were included in the daily program of the Home.⁴⁵ In the 1900s, the Home expanded to Vancouver, and it became an important part of the Methodist mission to the Chinese

⁴⁴ "A Letter from Miss Leake," *The Missionary Outlook*, 8, 4 (April 1888): 58.

⁴⁵ Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report, 1887-88*, p. 54.

immigrants. The work among the Chinese women and children continued without interruption until the establishment of the United Church of Canada in 1925.

Since 1885, when the Chinese mission began, in a period of thirty-eight years, the Methodist Church had sent its missionaries to almost all the Chinese communities across the country. Its mission schools, street preaching, and Sunday schools reached about twenty percent of the Chinese population in Canada.⁴⁶ However, the mission did not produce a significant effect on the religious life of the Chinese immigrants in Canada. The Chinese missions across the country had had at most a membership of five hundred by 1923.⁴⁷ The Chinese churches were still at the stage of their early development—short of financial resources, strong leadership, and loyal membership. And the Chinese churches did not play important roles in the life of the Chinese community. The profile of the Chinese mission remained low, although the expenditure of the Chinese mission increased about seven times from 1890 to 1923.⁴⁸ It seemed that the Missionary Society had not developed a successful strategy to win the Chinese immigrants. It did

⁴⁶ An estimated figure according to the *Annual Reports of the Missionary Society* during this period.

⁴⁷ According to the *Annual Report of the Missionary Society*, the Chinese membership of the Methodist Church in British Columbia was two hundred and forty three. At the same time, it was reported that there were about one hundred Chinese Christians in Alberta, sixty in Saskatchewan, fifty in Winnipeg. But these Chinese Christians usually belonged to interdenominational Chinese mission organizations. In Ontario and Quebec, almost all the Chinese Christians affiliated to the Presbyterian Church.

⁴⁸ The expenditure of the Chinese mission was about twenty four hundred dollars in 1890, and thirty thousand in 1923. See *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1889-90*, and *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1923*.

not provide any Canadian missionaries working in the field except for a short period at the beginning of the mission. The mission work heavily depended on the native workers, who had little formal theological training. Meanwhile, the attempt to find a person who knew the Chinese language as the superintendent of the mission remained unsuccessful for more than twenty years. Confronting this frustrating situation, the leaders of the Missionary Society appeared to be at a loss for what to do. Sometimes, they felt that they had to give up the mission, but their sense of responsibility to evangelize the country told them that they could not. T.E. Egerton Shore, General Secretary of the Missionary Society, revealed his mixed feeling when he discussed the issue of looking for a competent person to take charge of the Chinese mission with T.F. Harrison, President of British Columbia Conference of the Methodist Church:

. . . unless we could get an efficient superintendent who would also have working knowledge of the [Chinese] language, we had better close up that work entirely. There are, however, 25,000 Asiatics in British Columbia who must be assimilated into our Christian civilization. We cannot abandon the work and it must be done in an effective way.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Correspondence of T.E. Egerton Shore, fonds 14/2/4, 78.093C-box 7-file138, T.E. Egerton Shore to T.F. Harrison, May 11, 1911.

Without doubt, the weak leadership of the Chinese mission contributed to the lack of success in converting the Chinese immigrants to the church.⁵⁰

5.2 The Presbyterian Missions

Like the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church also chose Victoria, B.C. to build its first Chinese mission station. The first appointed Presbyterian missionary to the Chinese in British Columbia was Alexander B. Winchester, who had worked in China for a number of years and knew the Chinese language. Winchester arrived in Victoria in April 1892, just four months after he accepted the appointment of the Foreign Mission Committee. After he arrived in Victoria, Winchester first studied the Chinese mission work in the city, which had already been done for several years by the Methodist Church. He then went to San Francisco and Portland to look into the work of the Presbyterian mission to the Chinese immigrants in these cities and to try to find a native assistant who could speak Cantonese for the mission in Victoria.⁵¹

After he returned to Victoria from the United States, Winchester met a lay Presbyterian missionary, C.A. Colman, who

⁵⁰ For example, one of the reasons that the Chinese Presbyterians in B.C. were not willing to unite with the Methodist Church was that they thought that the Methodist leadership among the Chinese was weak. See United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 6-file 182, the Correspondence of W.D. Noyes to R.P. Mackay, April 17, 1925.

⁵¹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 1-file 5, the Correspondence of A.B. Winchester to H. Cassells, May 13, 1892.

had recently returned from Canton, China. Since Colman could speak Cantonese fluently, after consulting the Foreign Mission Committee, Winchester decided to invite him to join the Chinese mission in Victoria. In June 1892, Winchester, assisted by Colman, opened an evening school for the Chinese immigrants near the Chinatown of Victoria, and a boy school in October of the same year. The evening school was kept open five evenings each week. However, the school was not as successful as Winchester expected. The attendance at the school was around twenty to thirty. Winchester commented on the first year school work with a little disappointment in his annual report:

In our strong desire to reach speedily the perishing souls to whom we have been sent, we have perhaps at times been inclined to discouraged impatience, because the work developed so slowly.⁵²

And the school had few regular students. The great majority of the Chinese attended the school occasionally. It was reported that only five or six students kept their attendance from the beginning of the school, although there were over fifty names on the school rolls.⁵³ The boy school was maintained by three lay members of the local church, and had nine boys attending.⁵⁴ In the following years, the mission expanded its Chinese

⁵² "Mission to the Chinese in Victoria, British Columbia," *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1893* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1894), p. lxxxix.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. lxxxix.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xc.

schools to Vancouver, New Westminster, Union, Wellington, and Nelson.⁵⁵

In October 1893, C.A. Colman was appointed the missionary to assist Winchester in the work of the Chinese mission in Victoria by the Foreign Mission Committee.⁵⁶ At the same time, Winchester and Colman began to conduct religious services in the Chinese school on Sunday evenings. Although there were once five hundred Chinese who attended the service, usually the missionaries never succeeded in getting more than thirteen people to the religious service.⁵⁷ The evening school was still most welcomed, and the attendance increased much in the following years, while the boy school was closed because of a shortage of teachers. In the cities outside Victoria, the local congregations maintained all the Chinese schools. Winchester and Colman made frequent visits to these schools. During their visits, the missionaries would preach to the local Chinese immigrants.

Since Winchester did not know Cantonese, his mission work appeared unattractive to the Chinese immigrants. He confessed himself that his every attempt at preaching to the Chinese

⁵⁵ "Chinese Mission in British Columbia," *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1894* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1894), p. lxxiii.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. lxxi.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. lxxi; and United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 1-file 7, the Correspondence of C.A. Colman to R.P. Mackay, April 16, 1894.

proved a failure because he could not speak their dialect.⁵⁸ In order to improve this situation, Winchester went to China and learned Cantonese in 1894. When he returned to Victoria six months later, he brought Ng Mon Hing, a Chinese assistant, with him. Ng was a graduate of the American Presbyterian Theological School in Canton. He had had fourteen years of experience in working among the local Chinese people before he came to Canada.⁵⁹ Later, during his twenty-five years working among the Chinese in Victoria, Vancouver, and Toronto, Ng Mon Hing played an important role in attracting the Chinese immigrants to the Presbyterian Church, especially in the development of a strong leadership in the Chinese Presbyterian churches. In fact, from the very beginning, Ng showed his competence as a Chinese missionary to win his countrymen to Christianity. Soon after his arrival in Victoria, Ng involved himself in the work of the evening school. His success in attracting more and more Chinese to come to the school gave a tremendous boost to the Presbyterian mission work in Victoria. It was reported that in Victoria the evening school had five hundred and twenty eight names on the roll in 1895, double the number of two years previously.

⁵⁸ "Mission to the Chinese in Victoria, British Columbia," *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1893*, p. lxxxix.

⁵⁹ A.B. Winchester, "Mission to the Chinese in British Columbia," *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1895* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1895), p. lxxii.

In 1895, the mission bore its first fruit when a Chinese convert was baptized in September of that year.⁶⁰ After this first achievement, in 1899, a Chinese congregation, named the First Presbyterian Chinese Church, was organized in Victoria, with a membership of fourteen.⁶¹ It was also the first Chinese Presbyterian congregation in Canada.

After Ng Man Hing arrived in Victoria in 1895, Colman was transferred to the mainland and took charge of the mission work in Vancouver and New Westminster. Thus, the Presbyterian mission to the Chinese immigrants expanded to the other two major centers in which thousands of Chinese immigrants lived at that time.

Despite all the efforts to reach the Chinese immigrants, the mission work in British Columbia was growing little in the 1900s. The attendance at the evening school, Sunday school, and religious service were never particularly encouraging. Usually, there were only about ten to thirty Chinese who attended various mission activities. The church membership also did not see much increase. It was reported in 1908 that the First Presbyterian Chinese Church in Victoria had a membership of seventeen, while the number was fourteen almost ten years earlier.⁶²

⁶⁰ A.B. Winchester, "Mission to the Chinese in British Columbia," *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1896* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1896), pp. lxxx-lxxxi.

⁶¹ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1899* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1899), p. 173.

⁶² *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1908*, p. 179.

In the following years, the Chinese mission appeared to flourish in British Columbia. The attendance at mission activities increased remarkably; and the attitudes of the Chinese immigrants to Christianity also improved noticeably. It was reported in 1915 that the average attendance at the evening school in Victoria increased to ninety, and the greatest number at one class reached one hundred and seven. The attendance at the evening service was on average one hundred and twenty, with about three hundred and fifty to four hundred on some special occasion. The membership of the Chinese congregation of Victoria also increased to fifty-seven in 1914.⁶³ Another event indicating the development of the Chinese mission happened in 1917, when twenty-five Chinese were baptized on the same day in Victoria. This was the largest number baptized at any one time by any Chinese mission in Canada. As a result of this large number of baptism, the Chinese congregation in Victoria added fifty-six new members in just one year.⁶⁴

In Vancouver, Robert Duncanson, the superintendent of the Chinese mission, mentioned in his annual report for the year 1915 that the attitude of the Chinese to Christianity was changing. He reported that he was even invited to preach to the Chinese of Kamloops in the local "Josh House". He reported

⁶³ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1915*, p. 141.

⁶⁴ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1918*, p. 131.

that some preaching meetings held in the Chinatown of Vancouver attracted more than one thousand Chinese people.⁶⁵ And the membership of the Chinese mission in Vancouver also increased from seventeen in 1909 to seventy two in 1915.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, a Session was appointed to supervise the Chinese mission in Vancouver in 1914. Seven representative elders were chosen from leading congregations in Vancouver.⁶⁷ This step was designed not only to add new vigor and direction to the mission, but also to establish close ties between the mission and the local congregations. However, difficulties arose concerning the relationship between the Session and the Mission Superintendent, which reduced the effectiveness of the work, and probably hastened the resignation of Duncanson.⁶⁸

The Presbyterian mission to the Chinese immigrants was not confined to the province of British Columbia. The mission was seeking to extend its influence among the Chinese residing in other large cities across the country. The first step was made in Calgary in 1891. As a result of the memorial presented to the General Assembly, which requested the endorsement of the work among the Chinese already started by Thomas Paton, the Foreign Mission Committee made a small grant to him. Later, the Chinese mission in Calgary came under J.C.

⁶⁵ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1917*, p. 118.

⁶⁶ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1916*, p. 142.

⁶⁷ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1915*, p. 142.

⁶⁸ Duncanson particularly emphasized the importance of a superintendent who had the power to control the whole mission work. See *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1919*, p. 135.

Herdmen's leadership. It was reported in 1902 that there were twelve Chinese Christians in Calgary under the supervision of Herdmen.⁶⁹ When Herdmen resigned in 1903, W. Porterfield, Secretary of the Calgary Y.M.C.A., took charge of the work.⁷⁰ At the same time, an interdenominational mission organization was established, under the name of the Calgary Chinese Mission, to carry on the mission work among the Chinese immigrants in the city. It was reported in 1922 that the mission work was still carried on by voluntary workers. The Association maintained two English classes, with ten teachers and forty-eight students in the year.⁷¹

In Winnipeg, James Thomson was appointed the superintendent of the Chinese mission in 1894. However, the mission work did not make any progress in converting the two hundred Chinese in the city until C.A. Colman baptized eight Chinese in 1909.⁷² In 1918, an interdenominational missionary organization was formed, with a membership of sixty Chinese immigrants. The Association, uniting missionaries from the Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Y.M.C.A., conducted the mission work among the Chinese immigrants in Winnipeg.⁷³

⁶⁹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 1-file 15, "The Report of Chinese Work in British Columbia under the Canadian Presbyterian Church," Nov. 1, 1902.

⁷⁰ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1903*, p. 113.

⁷¹ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1922*, p. 125.

⁷² *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1910*, p. 140.

⁷³ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 3-file 100, the Correspondence of S.F. Ricketts to R.P. Mackay, August 30, 1918.

The largest Presbyterian missionary establishment outside British Columbia was in Montreal. As the result of an overture from the Presbytery of Montreal regarding the opening of a Chinese mission in Quebec, the 1894 General Assembly instructed the Foreign Mission Committee (Western Division) to secure the services of an evangelist to work among the Chinese in Montreal and other cities of Quebec and Ontario.⁷⁴ In November 1894, Joseph Thomson was appointed the missionary to the Chinese in Quebec and Ontario, with Montreal as headquarters.⁷⁵ In the first year of the mission, Thomson opened fifteen Sunday and evening schools in various Presbyterian churches, and started a Chinese Sunday evening church service in Knox Church. The schools were well attended; it was reported that the average attendance was three hundred and fifty-five.⁷⁶ The mission continued to make steady gains among the Chinese in Montreal. It was reported that by 1915 the church membership had increased to two hundred and thirty five from seven in 1897.⁷⁷

As mentioned before, the Chinese mission in Toronto was carried on mainly as a branch of the Y.M.C.A. work, although the majority of the workers were Presbyterians. However, in

⁷⁴ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1894* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1894), p. 55.

⁷⁵ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1895* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1895), p. lxxxii.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. lxxxiii.

⁷⁷ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1897 and 1915* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1897, 1915), p. 192 and p. 143.

1894, under the auspices of the Christian Endeavour Society, Cooke's Presbyterian Church in Toronto opened its own Chinese class.⁷⁸ According to the superintendent of the class, there were about fifteen to seventeen Chinese who attended the class every Sunday evening. Since the other Chinese class in the Metropolitan Church had about the same number of students, over half of fifty Chinese in Toronto then were under the influence of the Presbyterian Church.⁷⁹ After J. Thomson was appointed the missionary to the Chinese in Quebec and Ontario, the mission in Toronto was under his supervision. Through Thomson's efforts, three Chinese in Toronto were reported to have converted to Christianity in 1896.⁸⁰ In 1902, Thomas Humphreys became part-time missionary to work among the Chinese in the city.⁸¹ In 1905, there were in Toronto nine Chinese schools conducted by different Presbyterian churches, and thirty-five Chinese were received into membership of the church.⁸² In 1908, Ng Mon Hing was transferred from Vancouver to Toronto, and he became the first full time Presbyterian missionary to the Chinese in Toronto.⁸³ After the Chinese Christian Association was established in 1909, the mission

⁷⁸ Thomas Humphries, "Chinese Class Report," *Annual Report of Cooke's Presbyterian Church, 1899*, p. 23.

⁷⁹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 1-file 32, the Correspondence of J. Henderson to R.P. Mackay, May 5 and 8, 1894.

⁸⁰ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1897*, p. 192.

⁸¹ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1902*, p. 194.

⁸² *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1905*, p. 104.

⁸³ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1909*, p. 111.

work in Toronto carried interdenominational character.⁸⁴ In 1913, a Chinese church building was erected under the support of the Presbyterian Church. By 1915, there were twenty-five Chinese schools conducted in the city, seventeen of which were Presbyterian.

The Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada had also conducted the Chinese mission in the major cities of Canada since the 1900s. The first worker employed by the Women's Missionary Society was Carrie Gunn. She began the missionary activities among the Chinese women in Victoria in 1900.⁸⁵ Through the help of a Chinese missionary's wife, Gunn learned Cantonese. Thus, she began to visit the Chinese families in the city, and tried to preach to the Chinese women. However, Gunn's first efforts to reach the Chinese women met with very little success. She reported in 1902 that the Chinese women often refused to open their doors to her.⁸⁶ By 1922, there had been two classes for women, with average attendance of seventeen, and a primary class of boys and girls, with average attendance of twenty-four.⁸⁷

By 1923, the Presbyterian Church had expanded its Chinese missions throughout the country. From St. John to Victoria,⁸⁸

⁸⁴ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1910*, p. 140.

⁸⁵ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1901*, p. 165.

⁸⁶ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1902*, p. 192.

⁸⁷ *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1922*, p. 126.

⁸⁸ It was reported in 1922 that Halifax and St. John each had two Chinese Sunday schools, with about forty students. See *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1922*, p. 126.

missionary efforts had been initiated among the Chinese immigrants by appointed missionaries and dedicated volunteers. In many cases, the Chinese Christians themselves actively participated in these endeavors, either as lay workers or as ordained ministers. The evening schools, Sunday schools, and other mission facilities attracted thousands of the Chinese immigrants. In particular, the influence of the mission reached its highest in some Quebec and Ontario cities like Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Hamilton; and in some places nearly half of the Chinese population were connected with some kind of missionary activities. However, the success on converting the Chinese immigrants was modest. Like their Methodist fellows, during this period, the Presbyterian missionaries made very slow progress in converting the Chinese immigrants. By 1923, the Presbyterian Church had just won about one percent of the Chinese population in Canada to the church. In other words, among more than thirty five thousand Chinese immigrants, there were only about three hundred and fifty affiliated to the Presbyterian Church in 1923.⁸⁹

5.3 The Anglican Missions

In 1917, the Provincial Board of Missions to Orientals in British Columbia was formed to control Anglican mission work

⁸⁹ For the detailed statistic figures, see Table 5.1 on page 205.

among the Chinese and Japanese immigrants. The Board was presided over by the Metropolitan of the province and assisted by an administration committee. The Board would regulate the appointment of missionaries, the administration of finances, and the opening of new mission fields. The funds with which the work was carried on came from different Anglican missionary institutions. The Missionary Society of the Canadian Church supported all the male missionaries, and the Canadian Woman's Auxiliary supported all the women workers. In addition, grants were made to the Board by the S.P.G. and the British Columbia and Yukon Church Aid Society in England. A small amount was contributed locally from the various dioceses in British Columbia.

The Board soon organized its Chinese mission in British Columbia. Neville Lascelles Ward was appointed Superintendent of Chinese Missions, with Lim Yuen as assistant.⁹⁰ By 1924, the mission had established four stations in British Columbia.⁹¹ In Victoria, the Good Hope Mission conducted the mission work among the Chinese immigrants. A Chinese missionary took charge of the station. In Vancouver, there were two mission stations. The Good Shepherd Mission was dedicated to women and children. The missionary in charge was Hilda Hellaby, who had a good

⁹⁰ H. Walsh, *Stewards of a Goodly Heritage: A Survey of the Church's Mission Fields in Canada* (n/p: The Joint Committee on Summer Schools and Institutes of the Church of England in Canada, 1934), p. 60.

⁹¹ N. Lascelles Ward, *Oriental Missions in British Columbia* (Westminster, England: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1925), pp. 92-8.

knowledge of Cantonese, and her assistant used to be a missionary in China. The Good Samaritan Mission was the other station in Vancouver, and it was also the largest mission station that the Anglican mission had in British Columbia. In Vernon, another mission station was built to serve the six hundred Chinese immigrants in the city and about two thousand in the surrounding districts.

There were no records to show how many Chinese were converted during this period. However, it is clear that the Anglican mission to the Chinese immigrants made little progress over a considerable length of time. It was reported that there were three hundred and thirty nine Chinese and Japanese who were baptized in the first decade after the Provincial Board of Oriental Missions was formed.⁹² And the Anglican mission to the Chinese was mainly conducted in British Columbia. In other provinces, the Anglican missionaries usually joined the local union mission to the Chinese immigrants, as happened in Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto.⁹³ Meanwhile, the local Anglican churches in St. John and Toronto also maintained their Chinese classes.⁹⁴

⁹² Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, *Missions to Orientals in Canada as Carried on by the Provincial Board of Missions to Orientals in B.C.* (Toronto: Church House, 1927), p. 5.

⁹³ For example, the Anglican Church in Winnipeg joined other Protestant denominations to organize the interdenominational Chinese Christian Association in 1918, which conducted the mission work among the Chinese immigrants in Winnipeg. See United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 3-file 100, "Chinese Christian Association: Report, Proposal, and Application"

⁹⁴ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 4-file 138, "List of Classes of the Eastern Canada Chinese Mission," 1921.

The Anglican mission to the Chinese emphasized work among the younger generations. The mission put more energy into conducting kindergartens, day schools for children and evening schools for young people. The church hoped, that, by helping these young Chinese people know the standards of conduct and social life of Canadian society, they could influence their future life when they grew up and enable them to cast off the shadow of Chinese culture.

During a period of almost forty years, major Protestant denominations in Canada consolidated their scattered and individual Chinese mission activities into centralized institutions.⁹⁵ They built Chinese mission stations in the major centers across the country, where a large number of the Chinese immigrants resided. With the help of these stations, the missionaries reached almost all the Chinese communities in the country. In some major Canadian cities like Victoria, Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal, the Chinese churches were organized under the supervision of the missionaries. With the development of the Chinese missions, some Chinese converts became local Chinese church leaders, and some became lay missionaries to their countrymen.

However, the Protestant missions did not gain significant success in the mission field during this period; in

⁹⁵ The Chinese missions were under the control of the Foreign Mission Committee in both the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church; the Anglican Church gave authority on the Chinese mission to the Provincial Board of Missions to Orientals in British Columbia.

particular, the missionaries failed to convert as many of the Chinese immigrants as they initially thought they could. The influence of Canadian Protestantism reached only about two percent of the total Chinese population in Canada.⁹⁶ The total number of Chinese converts may have been about one thousand in 1923 [Table 5.1].

Table 5.1 The Chinese Membership in Major Protestant Churches⁹⁷

Year	Methodist	Presbyterian	Anglican	Baptist
1885	13	-	-	-
1890	112	-	-	-
1895	239	1	6 ²	-
1900	81	52	-	-
1905	124	84	-	-
1910	136	131	-	-
1915	173	364	45 ³	-
1920	209	394	-	-
1923	243	350 ¹	339 ⁴	-

Sources: *Annual Reports of Methodist Missionary Society*, *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church*, and *Synod Journals of the Diocese of New Westminster of the Anglican Church*.

1. Estimated figure. 2. The figure is for the year 1893. 3. Estimated figure for the year 1914. 4. Estimated figure of the Chinese and Japanese who were baptized during 1917-1927.

Meanwhile, the missions had to struggle with the shortage of financial and human resources all the time. The prejudice against the Chinese always casts a shadow over the missions.

⁹⁶ This percentage was estimated according to the number of the church membership and the attendance in the Chinese mission school, Sunday school, and religious service. And according to the Census of Canada, in 1921 the number of the Chinese population in Canada was 39,587. In a letter of 1925, S.S. Osterhout also mentioned that only about one or two percent of the Chinese population in Canada attended either church services or Sunday schools. See United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 6-file 180, the "Extract of Letter from Rev. S.S. Osterhout, D.D., Dated Sept. 1st, 1925."

⁹⁷ There were other about 210 Chinese Christians in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, who belonged to interdenominational mission organizations.

Chinese skepticism or even resistance to Christianity also made the mission work more difficult.

When the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1923, the Chinese mission was confronted with more challenges. At one time, it was almost in vain for the Protestant churches to convince the Chinese that the principles of Christianity represented the highest form of the values of Canadian society—equality and love. The churches had to put more energy into dispelling the hostility of the Chinese immigrants to the white community, while they strove hard to fight against the various laws of discrimination against the Chinese immigrants in Canada. Without doubt, the mission work was seriously hurt in this social environment, although it was still carried on without interruption in the following years.

CHAPTER 6

Crisis and Development: The Missions during the Period of 1923 to 1967

1923 was a critical year for both the Protestant churches and the Chinese immigrants. On 4 May 1923, the House of Commons passed a new Chinese immigration bill, best known as the Chinese Exclusion Act. Under the new Chinese immigration act, Chinese were entirely forbidden to enter Canada unless they were diplomats, children born in Canada, merchants, or university students. This discriminatory immigration act had a major impact on the Protestant missions to the Chinese immigrants. In fact, it virtually terminated the development of the mission for a long time, although the missionaries had recently been rejoicing at the revival of the Chinese immigrants' interest in Christianity.

In spite of the serious conditions adverse to the mission work among the Chinese immigrants, the Protestant churches strove to maintain the missions that they had established in the Chinese communities throughout the country, and tried everything to push the work forward. Meanwhile, the leaders of the Protestant missionary organizations repeatedly urged the federal government to end the existing discriminatory

immigration laws against the Chinese. Indeed, the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act in 1947 resulted partly from such an effort. The missionary efforts of the Protestant churches proved worthwhile. After a few years of discouraging decline, the Protestant mission work among the Chinese immigrants began growing again in the late 1920s. And the development of the mission began in the 1930s and continued until the 1960s, especially after the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1947.

In this chapter, the history of the Protestant mission to the Chinese immigrants during the period of 1923 to 1967 will be described. This was a period that began in a time imbued with political crisis, but ended at the time when the Protestant mission to the Chinese immigrants had made the greatest progress in its more than one-hundred-year history. Discouragement and victory characterized this period. The struggle for survival in a time of political bitterness made the history of the mission more colorful during this period. The changing of the times also brought new faces to the mission.

6.1 The Response of the Protestant Churches to the Chinese Immigration Act

When the House of Commons began to discuss the new Chinese immigration bill, the leaders of the Protestant

churches did not expect that the federal government would adopt an exclusionist policy toward Chinese immigration. As they usually did, some of the leaders expressed their support to restrict the Chinese immigration to Canada in a joint petition to Prime Minister Mackenzie King which was signed by the superintendents of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Anglican missions to Orientals of British Columbia on 3 April 1923. In the petition, the leaders of the major Protestant missionary organizations that worked among the Chinese immigrants suggested that the admission of the Chinese immigrants to Canada should be placed not only on "a class basis," but also on "a numerical or percentage basis." And the number or percentage should be determined by "the number of Chinese which we could hope to assimilate and Canadianize."¹ However, it did not take long for the leaders of the Protestant missions to realize that the new Chinese immigration regulations would have a devastating effect on their work among the Chinese immigrants. As soon as he saw a copy of the bill, R.P. MacKay, the secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, sent a telegram to the Prime Minister and urged the government to change the exclusionist features of the bill. He stated that the bill, as it would exclude all Chinese including Christian workers, "would defeat

¹ Public Archives of Canada, Immigration Branch, RG 76, vol. 589, file 827821, part 9, "A Joint Petition of S.S. Osterhout, N. Lascelles Ward, and David, A. Smith to Mackenzie King," April 3, 1923.

the encouraging work being done amongst the forty thousand Chinese in Canada."² On April 16, 1923, W.D. Noyes, the executive secretary of the Eastern Canada Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, sent a letter to the acting Minister of Immigration and Colonization and asked for the elimination of the part excluding all Chinese from entering Canada. He pointed out that the suggested Chinese immigration bill would make it impossible for the churches to bring in Chinese Christian workers to carry on the mission work among the Chinese immigrants in Canada. He particularly emphasized that it was "inconceivable" that the government placed "obstacles in the way of Christian work."³ Soon after, the Board of Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada adopted a resolution against the new Chinese immigration bill. The resolution stated that the Board opposed the government's policy on Chinese immigration because the exclusion of the Chinese from entering Canada made "no provision for the admission of Chinese preachers, Bible women or other religious workers."⁴ Both the Anglicans and Methodists joined the protest. The leaders of the Protestant churches also expressed

² United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 5-file 146, the Correspondence of R.P. MacKay to D.A. Smith, April 24, 1923.

³ Public Archives of Canada, Immigration Branch, RG 76, vol. 588, file 827821, part 7, the Correspondence of W.D. Noyes to Charles Stewart, April 16, 1923.

⁴ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 5-file 146, the Correspondence of R.P. Mackay to D.A. Smith, April 24, 1923.

the strong hope that the bill should be amended so that the Chinese Christian workers and their wives and children would be allowed to enter Canada.

Among the leaders of the Protestant churches, R.P. MacKay appeared more uncompromising in opposing the government's new policy on Chinese immigration. He even thought that the action of the government was "criminal."⁵ After the House of Commons passed the bill, R.P. MacKay wrote a letter to Charles Stewart and stated that "from every point of view" the act was "objectionable" and "unjust," and therefore should be condemned. He further pointed out that the Christianizing of the Chinese was the most important work in building the nation, and that the efforts being made in that direction by the churches should be encouraged rather than discouraged by the exclusionist immigration act.⁶

In the following years, the Protestant churches never gave up their endeavor to force the government to eliminate the immigration act. When a movement was initiated to press the government to repeal the Chinese Immigration Act in 1946, many Protestant church leaders became the leading organizers in the Committee for the Repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Public Archives of Canada, Immigration Branch, RG 76, vol. 588, file 827821, part 7, "the Correspondence of R.P. MacKay to Charles Stewart, May 23, 1923.

However, usually the protest of the Protestant church leaders to the Chinese Immigration Act was not based on their opposition to the discriminatory nature of the Act. Instead, the churches were in sympathy with "the general principle" of the act.⁷ The major concern of the church leaders was that the Act made it difficult for Chinese Christian workers to enter Canada. Although the church leaders thought that it was immoral to prevent the Chinese immigrants from having their wives and children with them, they confined their protest of the Act mainly to the exclusion of Chinese Christian workers. In the resolutions of the Protestant churches regarding the issue and the related petitions and letters to the governmental officials, the leaders of the Protestant churches repeatedly made just one requirement—amending the bill so that the Chinese Christian workers would be allowed to enter Canada. At this point, the superintendent of the Oriental Mission of British Columbia of the United Church of Canada made clear the Protestant churches' position in seeking the amendment of the Act: "Our contention is that missionaries, their wives and children should have been included as a fourth exemption to the new regulation."⁸ It was not hard to

⁷ Public Archives of Canada, Immigration Branch, RG 76, vol. 588, file 827821, part 7, "the Correspondence of S. Gould to Charles Stewart, April 19, 1923.

⁸ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, United Church of Canada, Board of Home Missions fonds, Board Secretary's Correspondence, 1927-1972, fonds 509/S2/1, 83.050C-box 11-file 13, S.S. Osterhout to C.E. Manning, May 25, 1926.

understand why the leaders of the Protestant churches responded to the Chinese Immigration Act in such a way. Historically, the Protestant churches were never against the government's policy of restricting Chinese immigration, because the church leaders thought that it was already too demanding for the churches to Christianize the Chinese immigrants already in the country. However, from the very beginning of the Protestant mission to the Chinese immigrants in Canada, the work among the Chinese was heavily dependent on native workers. As the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Canada declared in his letter to the Minister of Immigration and Colonization, without those Chinese workers "the good Christian work being done will be defeated."⁹ Indeed, in the matter of the Chinese immigration, the attitude of the Protestant church leaders was unequivocal: the Christianizing of the Chinese immigrants was a priority on the Protestant churches' agenda. And it was so manifest an obligation that legislation or anything else that thwarted it must prove hurtful to the churches' missionary enterprise. Therefore, the response of the Protestant churches to the Chinese Immigration Act was mainly out of their concern for the interests of their missionary enterprises.

⁹ Public Archives of Canada, Immigration Branch, RG 76, vol. 589, file 827821, part 9, the Correspondence of R.P. MacKay to Charles Stewart, April 21, 1923.

However, the missionaries who worked among the Chinese immigrants had a much different response to the Act. The missionaries generally considered the prejudice against the Chinese, which underlay restrictive legislation, to be as reprehensible as the legislation itself. They usually used much stronger words in criticizing the government's policy on Chinese immigration. As to the new Chinese Immigration Act, from the first time that it was proposed, the missionaries focused their criticism on its nature of discrimination against the Chinese. In a letter of the Montreal Chinese Mission of the Presbyterian Church to the Minister of Immigration and Colonization, the missionaries condemned the new Chinese immigration bill to be "hardly fair to the Chinese and hardly worthy of Canada." They asked the government to amend the bill so that it "would ensure liberty and justice to the Chinese residents of Canada."¹⁰ At a convention of Chinese mission workers held in Kingston in November 1923, the delegates, who came from different Protestant denominations and represented all the Chinese missions in eastern Canada, passed a resolution against the Chinese Immigration Act. This resolution was not like the earlier one adopted by the Presbyterian Board of Mission. It condemned the violation of

¹⁰Public Archives of Canada, Immigration Branch, RG 76, vol. 588, file 827821, part 7, the petition of Montreal Chinese Mission of Presbyterian Church to Charles Stewart, April 16, 1923.

the human rights of the Chinese immigrants in its first article:

That it is a breach of faith with Chinese who have resided in Canada for years in obedience to Canadian laws, and who have established themselves in lawful business, to be now deprived of the privilege of bringing their wives and families to Canada. The civilized world has deprecated the characterization of contract as "a scrap of paper," and the Conference interprets this Bill 45 as in spirit a similar violation of contract.¹¹

The resolution also stated that the convention would "exercise all influence within its power" to impel the modification of the Act and "protect the Chinese from injustice and Canadians for the reproach of dishonourable and anti-Christian treatment of a sister nation."¹²

Working among the Chinese immigrants, the missionaries knew more about the devastating effect of the Act on their evangelical efforts. Discrimination and prejudice always hampered the work of the mission among the Chinese immigrants. Therefore, when the missionaries criticized the Act, they directed their disapproval of the Act more at its harmful consequences for their mission work among the Chinese immigrants in Canada. They blamed the existing discriminatory immigration laws that had damaged family life in the Chinese community and caused various social problems among the Chinese

¹¹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 5-file 161, "Resolution re Bill 45."

¹² Ibid.

immigrants. The new Act would expose the Chinese permanently to immoral and evil "temptation." They also noted that the unfair treatment of the Chinese immigrants would raise a hostile feeling to Christianity among the Chinese immigrants, and this hostile feeling would be a great stumbling block to further Christian work among them. The missionaries believed that, in order to evangelize the Chinese immigrants, they needed not only to preach the message of Christianity but also to show the Chinese deeds of friendship and brotherly kindness. And only the fair treatment of the Chinese immigrants would "make them see and feel the beneficence of practical Christianity in the laws and actions of Canadians."¹³ Therefore, the Christian principles of justice and fair play should equally apply to the Chinese immigrants. And all discriminatory immigration laws against the Chinese should be eliminated.¹⁴

Indeed, the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 produced a strong repercussion among the Canadian Protestant communities. And both the church leaders and missionaries were critical of the federal government's policy on Chinese immigration. They all believed that the Act would bring more difficulties for their work among the Chinese immigrants. They sent petitions

¹³ Public Archives of Canada, Immigration Branch, RG 76, vol. 588, file 827821, part 7, a petition of the Northern Saskatchewan Chinese Mission to Mackenzie King, May 10, 1923.

¹⁴ Public Archives of Canada, Immigration Branch, RG 76, vol. 588, file 827821, part 7, a petition of President of Chinese Mission and Christian Association, Ottawa to Charles Stewart, April 30, 1923.

and letters to politicians and expressed their opposition to the Act. However, it was also clear that the leaders of the Protestant churches and the missionaries who worked among the Chinese immigrants had different views in the issue. For the church leaders, the Act would result in technical damage to the missionary enterprise among the Chinese immigrants, such as preventing the importing of native missionaries to Canada. And they thought that the impossibility of bringing Chinese Christian workers to Canada was most harmful to the mission work. For the missionaries, the issue was considered from a totally different angle. In fact, the missionaries judged the Act mainly from their common sense of justice and Christian humanitarianism. They thought the Act offended their Christian faith. Therefore, the missionaries were more concerned with the devastating consequences of the Act for the life of the Chinese immigrants in Canada. Moreover, they saw the effects of the Act on the mission work among the Chinese mainly from the point of view that the Act would severely damage the relationship between the church and the Chinese community. For them, discrimination against the Chinese would hamper the mission work more than the lack of native workers.

It was also noteworthy that the church leaders and the missionaries seldom made their opposition to the Chinese Immigration Act public, although they took a clear-cut position on this issue. In particular, strong words against

the Act could only be found in the personal correspondence. It was evident that the Protestant churches and their missionaries obtained little support from the larger Canadian society on the issue of Chinese immigration. The anti-Chinese consensus was widespread at that time so that the Protestant churches had to keep quiet at least in public.

6.2 The Missions from 1923 to 1947

Although they did not make marked progress in the effort to evangelize the Chinese immigrants before 1923, the Protestant churches were still confident and optimistic in their ability to win the Chinese. This optimism was especially echoed during the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1922, when it reported that the Chinese mission work was making "progress all along the line." In the same annual report, the Foreign Mission Committee also proudly announced that, despite "the anti-Oriental propaganda in British Columbia, and the spirit of independence among the Chinese," "the fact that the Church is their best friend is recognized on every hand."¹⁵ However, just one year later, when the Chinese Immigration Act was passed, the confidence in the future of the Chinese mission was replaced by uncertainty and anxiety, although the missionaries still believed that the

¹⁵ "Chinese in Canada," *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1922* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1922), p. 125.

Chinese were "more ready to respond to the Gospel than any other foreigners."¹⁶ Indeed, the superintendent of the Methodist Chinese Mission of British Columbia reported in 1923 that the unjust treatment of the Chinese immigrants seriously affected the mission work. And because of the discriminatory Chinese Immigration Act, the number of new baptisms were half that of the previous year.¹⁷

Since it became impossible for the Chinese immigrants to bring their families to Canada after the Act took effect, many Chinese immigrants, including some Chinese Christians, returned to China. Among those who returned, some began to organize anti-Christianity campaigns in their home villages. This anti-Christian propaganda attributed the government's discrimination against the Chinese immigrants to the inhumanity of Christianity. It, in turn, significantly affected the Chinese immigrants' attitudes to Christianity because most of the immigrants' family members were exposed in the anti-Christian propaganda. In an annual report of the Presbyterian mission to the Chinese immigrants, this painful fact was reported. W.D. Noyes, the superintendent of the Chinese Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Eastern Canada, reported in 1923 that anti-Chinese agitation and restrictive legislation had led many Chinese to become introverted and to

¹⁶ "Chinese in Canada," *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1923*, p. 135.

¹⁷ "Oriental Missions in Canada," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1923*, p. 63.

shun the Christian missions. Moreover, the anti-Christian propaganda from China caused some nationalistic Chinese immigrants to turn against Christianity.¹⁸

The Protestant churches made a quick response to the critical situation caused by the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923. In addition to sending petitions to the politicians and asking for the emendation of the Act, they added more social programs to the mission work among the Chinese immigrants so that the missions might still be attractive to the Chinese. It was important for the Protestant missions to provide as much social assistance to the Chinese immigrants as possible, so that the Protestant missions would build a closer relationship with the Chinese community and reduce the anti-Christian feeling caused by the Act. Based on this new missionary strategy, major Protestant missions organized more schools for Chinese immigrants. In particular, the missions began to open schools for the Chinese children to learn the Chinese language and literature. Meanwhile, they also started classes to teach Chinese women domestic skills, and kindergarten for the very young. The Chinese churches were often sponsoring social activities in the Chinese community, such as Sunday School socials, picnics, banquets, sewing societies, Boy Scout troops, Mission Bands for the girls, and other clubs of

¹⁸ "Chinese in Canada," *Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1923*, pp. 107-8.

various sorts designed to provide an uplifting influence on the life of the Chinese immigrants. Moreover, the missionaries made more visits to the Chinese immigrants in their homes and working places, especially to the sick and old. They also offered medical and legal assistance when it was required. All these activities were directed towards one goal—touching the Chinese people in every way by word and act. By doing so, the Protestant missions became the friends and benefactors of the Chinese immigrants when they needed help, when the rest of the Canadian society treated them only with hostility and discrimination.

Indeed, the Protestant missions brought the Chinese immigrants many social benefits. For example, the first Canadian-trained Chinese doctor and nurse were sponsored by the missions when they studied at university. Regardless of the motives that lay behind their endeavors, the Protestant missions became a force to be reckoned with in the Chinese communities, and did much to demonstrate for the Chinese some of fine qualities of Western civilization. Meanwhile, more and more Chinese immigrants began to hold positions of responsibility and trust in local Protestant missionary organizations, and contribute financially to the maintenance of the missionary endeavors.

Moreover, after Church Union was realized in 1925, the Protestant missionary efforts were stimulated again. And the

union also created a new sense of confidence in the future triumph of the mission work among the Chinese immigrants.¹⁹ When the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches amalgamated in 1925, the great majority of Chinese missions, schools, and churches in these two denominations passed under the authority of the United Church of Canada. S.S. Osterhout was appointed superintendent in charge of the Chinese work west of the Great Lakes, and W.D. Noyes took charge of the work of eastern Canada. At the same time, the Chinese mission work was transferred from the Foreign Mission Committee to the Board of Home Missions, so that the work could reflect more correctly its nature.

However, the Chinese Presbyterian churches in Vancouver, Victoria, Toronto, and Montreal did not enter the Union. They stayed in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the name by which the non-union Presbyterians called themselves. David Smith, the former superintendent of the Presbyterian Chinese mission in British Columbia, now took charge of the Chinese work across the country in the new Presbyterian Church. He stayed in the position for almost forty years.²⁰ In 1925, the new Presbyterian Church kept fourteen missionaries nationwide, but it had no missionary facilities because all old Presbyterian Church's properties were transferred to the United Church of

¹⁹ "Oriental Missions," *The United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1928, p. 301.

²⁰ "Report of General Board of Missions," *The Presbyterian Record*, L, 10 (October 1925): 294.

Canada.²¹ The new Presbyterian missions maintained an organized congregation in Victoria and one in Vancouver with ministers. The Young Men's Chinese Institute of Toronto was the center for the Presbyterian Chinese work in Ontario. Regular work was carried on also in Montreal, Ottawa, Brockville, Sudbury, Windsor, Hamilton, Regina, Calgary, and Cranbrook.²²

One of the most important changes in the Chinese mission work was that in 1926 the United Church undertook a new experiment by establishing a Chinese Medical Mission in Vancouver. This medical mission was under the direction of Dr. P.Y. Chu, a graduate of Toronto Medical School. The basic idea of introducing the medical missionary work was to "attack the Oriental problem from somewhat different angles." More specifically, the church hoped that the work of the medical mission would help to convince the Chinese that "the real Spirit of Christianity is to uplift and to encourage."²³ According to S.S. Osterhout, the heart of the Chinese immigrants still remained as "callous and indifferent" to Christianity as it was thirty years ago. He believed that, through the mediation of the medical mission, the "spirit of Jesus" would be more forceful in breaking down the "coldly indifferent and somewhat antagonistic spirit of the Canadian

²¹ "Chinese in Canada," *The Presbyterian Record*, LII, 5 (May 1927): 141.

²² *The Presbyterian Record*, LIII, 6 (June 1928): 170.

²³ "Orientals in Canada," *The United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1927, p. 116.

Chinese."²⁴ The Board of Home Missions first opened a missionary hospital in Vancouver, and then another small one in Victoria, which cooperated with the Chinese Benevolent Society.²⁵ The medical mission received a warm response from the local Chinese communities. The hospitals attracted more Chinese immigrants to the missions, and, to a great degree, they helped to improve the relationship between the church and the Chinese community, which had been badly damaged by the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923. Under the supervision of Dr. Chu, the mission work in Vancouver also made great progress. It was reported that the Sunday school in Vancouver increased more than one hundred percent in membership and attendance in 1931.²⁶

The Chinese Immigration Act also brought another change in the Protestant mission to the Chinese immigrants in Canada. This was that the church began to shift its work to the younger generations from the 1930s. Kindergarten and Sunday schools became the main focus of the missionary work. Due to the Act of 1923, Chinese immigration to Canada was entirely stopped. Until then, the missionary work was mainly conducted through the night schools by teaching the Chinese the English language. When the Chinese immigration was cut off sharply

²⁴ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, United Church of Canada, Board of Home Missions fonds, Board Secretary's Correspondence, 1927-1972, fonds 509/S2/1, 83.050C-box 11-file 13, S.S. Osterhout to C.E. Manning, June 8, 1926.

²⁵ "Oriental Missions, Western Canada," *The United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1930, p. 202.

²⁶ "Oriental Missions—Western Canada," *The United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1931, p. 129.

after 1923, night schools became empty. In this circumstance, the Protestant missions soon shifted their educational work to the young Chinese, some of whom were born in Canada. Night schools were replaced by kindergartens, day schools, and Sunday schools. In the United Church missions, the educational work started from the kindergartens that were usually organized by the Woman's Missionary Society. After the Chinese children graduated from the kindergartens, they were transferred to the Sunday schools and other youth groups, where their training in religious matters was continued until they became eligible for membership in the church. This missionary strategy, according to S.S. Osterhout, was aimed at "the future strength and development of the work," while the political situation in Canada gave too many negative effects in the Chinese mission work.²⁷ It was also as an Anglican missionary report declared: by the continuous training of the younger generation of the Chinese immigrants, "the influence of the Church is steadily brought to bear upon the boys and girls through their formative years."²⁸

Through their persistent endeavors to work among the Chinese immigrants, and especially by providing various supports to the Chinese communities, the Protestant missions survived from the crisis caused by the Chinese Immigration Act

²⁷ "Oriental Missions, Western Canada," *The United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1930, p. 201.

²⁸ *Journal of Proceedings of the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada*, 1937, p. 429.

of 1923. The missions across the county successfully maintained the strength of the mission work and prevented the membership of the Chinese churches dropping sharply. It was reported that the United Church maintained all its nine missions in British Columbia during the years. It also cooperated with other Protestant denominations and continued the mission work among the Chinese in Calgary and Winnipeg without interruption.²⁹ In eastern Canada, the United Church mission was still active in the life of the Chinese immigrants. The missionary activities of the United Church in eastern Canada were mainly conducted in Hamilton, Montreal, and Toronto. In these centers, the missionary work was organized by either the local Chinese United Church, as was the case in Montreal, or by the missionaries sent by the Board of Home Missions. There were also Chinese Christian Associations more closely connected with the local Canadian churches in London and Ottawa. A cooperative Sunday school was conducted for the Chinese in Halifax.³⁰ In Toronto, the United Church mission often cooperated in its activities with a multi-denominational Chinese Christian organization—the Chinese Christian Institute. The membership of this organization was composed of Baptists, Presbyterians and United Churchmen. A Chinese Presbyterian missionary took

²⁹ "Oriental Missions, Western Canada," *The United Church of Canada Year Book, 1930*, pp. 201-2.

³⁰ "Oriental Missions, Eastern Canada," *The United Church of Canada Year Book, 1930*, p. 198.

charge of the organization. In Montreal, with the increasing influence of the Roman Catholic Church among the Chinese immigrants, the Protestant mission work faced more challenges. Many members of the Protestant missions were drawn to the Roman Catholic Church. Moreover, sometimes the local Roman Catholic churches restricted the activities of Protestant missionaries. It was reported that, after the Roman Catholic Church took over the Chinese hospital in Montreal, which was established by the former Presbyterian mission, Protestant missionaries were refused entrance to the hospital to visit the members of their churches.³¹

For many years, the Anglicans, the Presbyterians, and the Methodists had been the only three Protestant denominations that conducted missions among the Chinese immigrants. More Protestant denominations entered the field of the Chinese mission in the 1920s, including the Baptists, the Salvation Army, the Free Methodists, and the Seventh Day Adventists.

In spite of the competition among these denominations, the United, the Presbyterian, and the Anglican churches continued to dominate the mission to the Chinese immigrants in Canada. The statistics show that about eighty-five percent of the Chinese who claimed to be Christian in the 1931 Census of Canada belonged to these three denominations. It is also

³¹ Ibid., 144.

noteworthy that the United Church was the most important player in the field of the Chinese mission. And among those Chinese Christians, more than half claimed to be affiliated with the United Church.³² Another important fact is that the mission had more success in Ontario. The table below shows that in 1931 about one third of the Chinese members of the United Church, over half of the Chinese Presbyterians and Baptists, and more than one third of Chinese Anglicans were found in Ontario [Table 6.1].

Table 6.1 Chinese Population in Canada by Religious Denominations for Provinces, 1931¹

Denomination	Canada	P.E.I	NS	NB	QB	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC	Territories ²
United Church	4,638	6	61	43	285	1,356	321	840	748	978	-
Presbyterians	2,289	-	70	31	134	1,343	77	184	135	315	-
Anglicans	1,329	20	71	18	64	466	75	162	96	357	-
Baptists	228	-	5	20	3	134	8	15	23	20	-
Roman Catholics	803	1	25	15	380	145	47	51	46	93	-
Other Christians ³	530	-	2	2	60	137	18	71	34	206	-
Confucians and Buddhists	24,693	3	46	64	1,188	1,639	777	1,282	1,834	17,860	-
Other Sects	648	-	4	-	54	112	32	63	134	249	-
No Religion	3,238	-	9	5	155	168	101	185	111	2,503	1
Not Stated	8,123	1	47	33	427	1,419	276	648	714	4,558	-
Total	46,519	31	340	231	2,750	6,919	1,732	3,501	3,875	27,139	1

Source: *Religious Denominations by Racial Origins, 1931* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1933), pp. 1-12.

1. The Chinese population is defined by racial origin.
2. Include Yukon and Northwest Territories.
3. Include Adventists, Brethren and United Brethren, Christians, Church of Christ, Christian Science, Evangelical Association, Greek Orthodox, International Bible Students, Lutherans, Pentecostal, Protestants, and Salvation Army.

³² According to the 1931 Census of Canada, 9,817 Chinese claimed to be Christian, 4,638 of whom belonged to the United Church of Canada. See table 6.1.

The increase of the Christian influence among the Chinese immigrants also showed in the figure of Confucians and Buddhists in the statistics. Compared with the previous decade, many fewer Chinese immigrants claimed to be Confucian and Buddhist. According to the Census of 1931, the number of Confucians and Buddhists in the Chinese population in Canada dropped to about fifty percent of the total Chinese population in Canada, whereas this percentage was over 90 in 1921.

However, as to the active members of the Chinese churches, the Protestant missions to the Chinese immigrants did not make marked progress during the decade after the Chinese Immigration Act took effect in 1923. The membership of the individual Chinese mission and the attendance at the Sunday school were usually less than one hundred. For example, it was reported that the Chinese mission of the United Church in Vancouver, which was the biggest Chinese mission in western Canada, had a membership of ninety in 1929.³³ And the membership of the Chinese missions in eastern Canada seemed to be smaller than in Vancouver. According to the annual report of the superintendent of the United Church Chinese mission in eastern Canada, the mission of the United Church in Toronto

³³ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, United Church of Canada, Board of Home Missions fonds, Board Secretary's Correspondence, 1927-1972, fonds 509/S2/1, 83.050C-box 14-file 93, "Chinese Work in Vancouver Presbytery," October 1929.

had a membership of only thirty-seven in 1931 and fifty for the Montreal mission in the same year.³⁴ The mission work, according to S.S. Osterhout, the superintendent of the Chinese Mission of the United Church in western Canada, was "still almost at a standstill" until the end of the 1920s.³⁵

In addition to the United and Presbyterian missions, the two major players in the Chinese missionary field, the Anglican Church conducted a considerably smaller missionary enterprise in the Chinese community. It was reported that the Provincial Board of Missions to Orientals in British Columbia maintained four mission stations in the Chinese communities in Victoria, Vancouver, and Vernon throughout the 1920s and 1930s.³⁶ The Anglican missionary force was smaller than that of the other two Protestant denominations. The mission had six missionaries and their activities were limited to the province of British Columbia. In other provinces, the Anglican Church usually joined the cooperative missionary activities among the Chinese immigrants, such as was the case in Winnipeg, Toronto, and Hamilton. The Chinese Anglican churches were small too. The attendance at church services was usually under thirty people. Adult baptisms were not often reported, usually three

³⁴ *The United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1932, p. 155.

³⁵ "Oriental Missions," *The United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1929, p. 144.

³⁶ H. Walsh, ed., *Stewards of a Goodly Heritage: A Survey of the Church's Mission Fields in Canada* (n/p: The Joint Committee on Summer Schools and Institutes of the Church of England in Canada, 1934), pp. 60-1.

to five per year, but more Chinese children than adults accepted baptism in this period.³⁷

In the 1930s, the Protestant missions to the Chinese immigrants faced more challenges. First of all, the great depression of the 1930s hit the mission work very hard. Many Chinese immigrants were put out of their businesses and work, and, for most Chinese immigrants in Canada, life became more difficult. The uncertainty of life brought more fluidity of the Chinese population in Canada, which mainly consisted of single men. Many Chinese immigrants returned to China, others were always on the move to find employment. Facing this tough economic situation, the Protestant missions across the country had a hard time raising money to support their activities. It was reported that in 1932 the United Church mission in Toronto raised just one fifth as much money as it had ten years before.³⁸ And the attendance at religious services and other missionary programs also dropped dramatically. In Toronto, the highest attendance at religious services in the United Church mission was twenty-six and the lowest just four during the year 1933, and just one Chinese received baptism in the same year.³⁹ However, the Protestant missions strove to maintain their work among the Chinese immigrants through this difficult

³⁷ *Journal of Proceedings of the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada, 1927*, p. 205, and 1934, pp. 385-6.

³⁸ "Oriental Work in Eastern Canada," *The United Church of Canada Year Book, 1933*, p. 156.

³⁹ "Oriental Work in Eastern Canada," *The United Church of Canada Year Book, 1934*, p. 159.

time. In particular, by providing social assistance to the Chinese immigrants, the Protestant missions continued to exercise their influence in the life of the Chinese immigrants. Through frequent visiting of Chinese homes, most missionaries kept a close relation with local Chinese immigrants. Moreover, the Protestant missions were active in the life of the local Chinese community. Sometimes, the missions were the only organizers of social activities in the Chinese community. It was reported that, during the time of the Great Depression, the Anglican mission in the city of Vancouver conducted relief work to the Chinese as the official agent of the government. According its annual report of 1934, the Anglican mission administered \$8,000 from the Government Relief Fund in the year and helped forty-seven Chinese families to receive government relief funds. A total of more than twelve hundred Chinese were under the care of the mission.⁴⁰

As a result, the Protestant mission work continued to make progress in the 1930s, although the economic and political situations had negative effects on the work. According to the annual reports of various mission organizations, most Protestant missions kept their membership from declining in the 1930s, although they faced great

⁴⁰ *Journal of Proceedings of the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada, 1934, 386.*

financial difficulties during the same period. The statistics from the Census of Canada in 1941 also prove the point: major Protestant denominations quite successfully kept their influence in the Chinese community. In fact, except for the Anglican Church they did not lose Chinese members. The United and Presbyterian Churches even made some increase of their Chinese membership [Table 6.2].

These increases are more noteworthy given that, as the table shows, the total Chinese population in Canada dropped tremendously during the decade.⁴¹ In other words, among the Chinese population in Canada, the percentage of the Chinese immigrants who affiliated to the major Protestant denominations increased considerably during the 1930s, namely, from eighteen percent in 1931 to twenty five percent in 1941.

Table 6. 2 Chinese Population in Canada by Religious Denominations for Provinces, 1941¹

Denomination	Canada	P.E.I	NS	NB	QB	ON	MB	SK	AB	BC	Territories ²
United Church	4,721	12	98	9	136	1,443	270	521	641	1,591	-
Presbyterians	2,420	8	78	32	161	1,109	53	116	130	733	-
Anglicans	1,091	5	46	8	82	264	56	123	67	440	-
Baptists	233	1	13	9	13	126	4	9	16	42	-
Roman Catholics	1,007	13	17	38	368	177	39	42	39	274	-
Other Christians ³	358	-	8	-	27	47	27	90	104	55	-
Confucians and Buddhists	22,744	6	100	41	1,382	2,603	740	1,433	1,798	14,638	3
Mormon	11	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	8	-	-
Other ⁴	1,843	-	9	4	185	305	47	183	296	814	-
Not Stated	199	-	3	11	23	69	12	26	23	32	-
Total	34,627	45	372	152	2,378	6,143	1,248	2,545	3,122	18,619	3

⁴¹ According to the Census of 1931, the Chinese population in Canada declined about twenty six percent.

Source: Census of Canada, 1941.

1. The Chinese population is defined by racial origin.
2. Includes Yukon and Northwest Territories.
3. Includes Adventists, Brethren and United Brethren, Christians, Church of Christ, Christian Science, Evangelical Association, Greek Orthodox, International Bible Students, Lutherans, Pentecostal, Protestants, and Salvation Army.
4. Includes "No Religion".

6.3 The Development of the Missions until 1967

With the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act in 1947, many new Chinese immigrants came to Canada in the 1950s. The Chinese population in many Canadian cities doubled during the decade of the 1950s [Table 6.3]. Since this new wave of Chinese immigration was characterized by family reunion, many single Chinese immigrants who had joined the Protestant missions brought their family members to Canada. This provided an opportunity for the Protestant missions to develop their work among the new Chinese immigrants, while the missionaries could reach the family of the new immigrants in an easier way with the help of the Christian member in the family.

Table 6.3 Geographical Distribution of Chinese Population by Major Cities, 1881—1961¹

City	1881	1891 ²	1901 ²	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961
Victoria	690	2089	2,915	3,458	3,441	3,702	3,037	1,904	2,137
Vancouver	290	1,103	2,558	3,559	6,484	13,011	7,174	8,729	15,223
Calgary	—	—	64	485	688	1,054	799	973	2,232
Edmonton	—	—	11	130	518	467	384	782	1,805
Regina	—	—	—	89	250	308	247	211	584
Saskatoon	—	—	—	—	228	261	206	225	499
Winnipeg	2	16	119	585	838	1,033	719	738	1,194
Toronto	10	33	221	1,099	2,249	2,635	2,326	2,879	6,715
Montreal	7	33	714	1,197	1,842	1,982	1,703	1,272	3,324

Source: Censuses of Canada, 1881-1961

1. The Chinese population is defined by racial origin.
2. The Chinese population is by birthplace.

Indeed, the influx of the new Chinese immigrants, especially of a large number of young people, was considered an opportunity that the Protestant churches had "never hitherto faced."⁴² In Winnipeg, a new Chinese church was soon erected with the financial support of the Board of Home Missions of the United Church just one year after the Chinese Immigration Act was repealed.⁴³ This was the first Chinese church built in the city by the United Church mission. Four years later, the first resident minister was also sent to the church.⁴⁴ In Toronto, the attendance at church services in the Chinese United Church reached two to three hundred in 1958,⁴⁵ whereas the number had been just about sixty to seventy-five in the early 1950s.⁴⁶ The Presbyterian mission in Toronto built a new Chinese church in 1961, which cost \$400,000. This multi-function church building was designed as a church, school and community center. It consisted of the 350-seat nave, gymnasium, classrooms, and other meeting rooms.⁴⁷ The Protestant missions were also active in community life. In Toronto, the social activities organized by the United Church

⁴² *The United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1952, p. 155.

⁴³ *The United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1949, p. 138.

⁴⁴ *The United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1953, p. 144.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, "Report of Toronto Chinese United Church," 1959.

⁴⁶ *The United Church of Canada Year Book*, 1952, p. 141.

⁴⁷ *The Presbyterian Record*, LXXXIV, 7-8 (July-August 1959): 20; and LXXXVI, 2 (February 1961): 18.

mission sometimes attracted as many as seven hundred Chinese immigrants.⁴⁸

During the 1950s, attendance at the missionary activities increased considerably. As a result, the Chinese missions in some cities began to be self-supporting.⁴⁹ By the end of the 1950s, the United Chinese mission had established eleven Chinese congregations across the country, with nine ordained ministers and five W.M.S workers serving about eight thousand five hundred Chinese immigrants.⁵⁰ The membership of the Chinese congregation of the United Church mission was usually from twenty-five to about one hundred and thirty in the 1950s.⁵¹ In the 1960s, the membership of the Chinese missions did not change very much except at the United Church mission in Vancouver. According to the annual missionary report of the United Church, the Chinese United Church of Vancouver increased its membership by about one hundred from 1950 to 1967. In other words, its members increased to about two hundred and thirty in 1967.⁵² In other cities, the United

⁴⁸ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, United Church of Canada, Board of Home Missions fonds, 509/S2/1, 83.050C-box 43-file 888.

⁴⁹ *The United Church of Canada Year Book, 1956*, p. 152.

⁵⁰ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, United Church of Canada, Board of Home Missions fonds, 509/S2/1, 83.050C-box 33-file 623, "A Record of the Board of Home Missions Annual Meeting, April 10-14, 1961.

⁵¹ According to the reports of the Chinese Mission Conference of the United Church in 1959, the congregation in Vancouver had a membership of 135, Victoria 25, Nanaimo 40, Edmonton 50, Calgary 70, Moose Jaw 50, Winnipeg 70, Toronto 75, Hamilton 25, Ottawa 45. See United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, United Church of Canada, Board of Home Missions fonds, 509/S2/1, 83.050C-box 43-file 888, May 1-3, 1959.

⁵² United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, United Church of Canada, Board of Home Missions fonds, 509/S2/1, 83.050C-box 132-file 6, "The Annual Report of the Chinese United Church of Vancouver," 1967.

Church mission also made progress; for example, the mission in Ottawa had sixty-two members in 1965,⁵³ and in Winnipeg it had eighty.⁵⁴

The Protestant churches did not add to the missionary force in the field of the Chinese mission during the 1950s and the early 1960s.⁵⁵ In 1961, the Presbyterian Church was maintaining five Chinese congregations across the country.⁵⁶ Among them, the one in Toronto was the biggest, having about two hundred members and an active Chinese community center. However, after David A. Smith retired from his position as superintendent of the Chinese mission in 1962, the Presbyterian mission to the Chinese immigrants in Canada seemed to stop as an organized activity, because no new superintendent was appointed after Smith.

The Anglican Church reduced its missions to just one in Vancouver throughout the 1950s and 1960s, while other missions came integrate with local Anglican churches. The Chinese mission, as it was reported, showed considerable progress in baptisms and financial contributions by the Chinese members, while the attendance at religious services increased just "a

⁵³ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, United Church of Canada, Board of Home Missions fonds, 509/S2/1, 83.050C-box 73-file 170, January 1966.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, box 96, file 27.

⁵⁵ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, United Church of Canada, Board of Home Missions fonds, 509/S2/1, 83.050C-box 10-file 8, "Highlights from Annual Meeting of the Board of Home Missions, 1967.

⁵⁶ *The Presbyterian Record*, LXXXVI, 3 (March 1961): 2.

little" in these years.⁵⁷ From the middle of the 1960s, the Anglican Church began to put its efforts into the integration of the Chinese into the parishes in which they resided. Finally in 1967, the Provincial Board of Missions to Orientals in B.C. was disbanded. The missionaries who worked among the Chinese immigrants were transferred to the local parish churches "in the hope that the members of the Chinese and Japanese congregations may be more readily assimilated into the parochial life of the area."⁵⁸ It was at this time that the organized Anglican mission to the Chinese immigrants ended.

With the increase of young Chinese immigrants who obtained their education in Canada, many Chinese joined local English churches. And since many new Chinese immigrants set up their homes outside of the Chinatowns, some of them went to the English churches near their homes. Thus, although the Chinese missions had fewer members in each individual mission, the 1961 Census of Canada showed that the Chinese Christian population in Canada grew dramatically during the decade of the 1950s. Table 6.4 shows that the four major Protestant denominations that worked among the Chinese immigrants increased their membership increase dramatically during the decade of the 1950s.

⁵⁷ *Journal of Proceedings of the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada*, 1965, p. 182.

⁵⁸ *Journal of Proceedings of the General Synod of the Church of England in Canada*, 1967, p. 150.

Table 6.4 Numerical of Chinese Population by Religious Denomination, 1931-1961¹

Denomination	1931	1941	1951	1961
United Church	4,638	4,721	10,612	22,492
Presbyterian	2,289	2,420	3,564	5,121
Anglican	1,329	1,091	1,667	2,636
Baptist	228	233	399	973
Roman Catholic	803	1,007	1,764	3,801
Other Christian	530	369	105	714
Confucians & Buddhists	24,693	22,744	-	-
No Religion	3,238	1,843	-	-
Other Sects	648	-	-	-
Not Stated	8,123	199	-	-
Other ²	-	-	14,417	22,460
Total	46,519	34,627	32,528	58,197

Sources: Statistics Canada, *Censuses of Canada, 1931-1961*.

1. The Chinese population is defined by racial origin.

2. Includes all other non-Christian religions and no-religion.

Moreover, the percentage increase in the number of the Chinese Protestants was higher than the increase in the Chinese population during the same period. During the decade of the 1950s, the Chinese population in Canada increased about seventy-nine percent, but the number of Chinese Christians in the four major Protestant increased by more than ninety percent. This means that about 53.7 percent of the Chinese population in Canada affiliated with the four denominations in 1961, whereas this percentage was 49.6 in 1951 and 24.5 in 1941.

After continuous endeavor during more than one hundred years, the Protestant churches made great progress in the Chinese missionary work. More than half of the Chinese population in Canada joined the Protestant churches. In the following years, after Canada opened its door to independent

Chinese immigrants, more well-educated Chinese came to Canada. These Chinese immigrants were more inclined to integrate into the mainstream society directly, while the language barrier appeared to be no problem hindrance to them doing so. Facing this new situation, the Protestant churches changed their missionary strategy, relying instead on the local churches to develop the missionary work among the Chinese immigrants. The organized mission to the Chinese immigrants became less important after the 1960s.

Chapter 7

An Analysis of the Motives and Methods of the Protestant Missions

Although Chinese immigrants experienced racial prejudice from most white English-speaking Canadians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Canadian Protestant churches adopted a clear policy in their response to the Chinese: saving them from heathenism. It was just as Alexander Sutherland, General Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society of Canada, stated in 1885:

Whatever may be the political or social aspects of this question, our duty as Christians toward the Chinese now among us is plain, —we must do all in our power for their spiritual enlightenment.¹

However, what did the "spiritual enlightenment" really mean for Canadian Protestant clergy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? How did the clergy see their "duty as Christians" to the Chinese? How did Protestant churches save the Chinese from heathenism? And did they achieve their goals? In this chapter, all of these questions will be answered from an analysis of the complex amalgam of Protestant

¹ Alexander Sutherland, "Notes of a Tour among the Missions of British Columbia," *The Missionary Outlook*, 5, 10 (October 1885): 149.

vision of Canada, their social ideals, and missionary enthusiasm.

Moreover, the motives that lay behind Protestant missionary endeavors will be analyzed by exploring what the Protestant clergy themselves said on the subject. It is also the purpose of this chapter to analyze the methods used by the missionary. The gains and losses of the missionary work will be given special attention.

7.1 Protestant Vision of Canada and the Removing of the Yellow Peril

Like all other English-speaking nationalists in the late nineteenth century, Canadian Protestant clergy strove hard to make Anglo-Saxon institutions and values a part of Canadian nationhood. However, the clergy were more enthusiastic about building the institutions and values of Canadian society on a Protestant Christian foundation. They profoundly believed that Protestant faith and tradition was the only true religion—the only divinely revealed message of salvation, and that God demanded the adoption of this true religion throughout the world.² They were also convinced that the Protestant church was entrusted to advance God's work in the world. Fired with such a conviction, Canadian Protestant clergy were determined

² S. S. Osterhout, "Canada's Oriental Problem and the Solution of It," *The Missionary Bulletin*, 17, 2 (April-June 1921): 227.

to make Canada "His Dominion."³ They saw their destiny as creating a Protestant nation and thereby making the nation a basis for God's kingdom on earth. As W. T. Gunn declared in his book *His Dominion*:

For a land prepared and reserved through the ages, so wide, so rich, so wonderfully placed, the Purpose of God must be a Nation that shall be His steward and make such immense wealth the means to magnificent spiritual achievements.⁴

Thus, by assuming that the nation could become a sacred community, most Canadian Protestant clergy entwined their commission to establish a holy dominion intimately with the English-speaking Canadian nationalism. One of the Protestant church's functions was to supply the spiritual component of national life, and the nation, in turn, would become God's vehicle for the spread of Protestant Christianity around the world. Moreover, many clergy believed that Canada could not fulfill its true mission in the world until it had become a Protestant country. As a Presbyterian clergyman stated:

This dominion, if we are faithful, seems destined to become in the hands of God a chosen instrument for turning the rest of the world unto Him, and if we fail in our duty we shall lose the peerless opportunity of the world's history and the nations of mankind beyond will suffer.⁵

However, the Protestant vision of Canada as "His Dominion" was rooted in the assumption of the homogeneity and

³ William T. Gunn, *His Dominion* (Toronto: Canadian Council of the Missionary Education Movement, 1917), p.88.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵ R.G. MacBeth, *Our Task in Canada* (Toronto: The Westminster Co. Limited, 1912), p. 22.

morality of Canadian society. It showed the strong influence of English-speaking Canadian nationalist sentiments and reflected the common English-speaking Canadian racial assumptions of the time. In fact, like English-speaking Canadian nationalism, this vision was also motivated by the sense of Anglo-Saxon racial and cultural superiority and a predisposition to denigrate all non-British groups. It defined the basic character of Canada needed to underpin God's earthly kingdom as a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant country. From this starting point, the Protestant church attempted to mold the character of the Canadian people. And this character, according to Protestant understanding, was the British way of life and Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. A Congregationalist clergyman therefore stated that the task of the church was "to make Canada, right through to the heart, a nation baptized with strength and beauty and the spirit of Jesus Christ."⁶

To develop such a white Protestant nation, the Protestant clergy felt obligated to Canadianize all non-Protestant immigrants into conformity with Anglo-Saxon Protestant social and cultural ideals and standards. However, when they launched the campaign to assimilate non-British immigrants, the clergy put their greatest emphasis on assimilation to the

⁶ Hugh Pedley, "Report of Annual Gathering of the Congregational Union of Canada," *Canadian Congregationalist*, LXX (June 20, 1923): 8, quoted in Mark G. McGowan and David B. Marshall, ed., *Prophets, Priests, and Prodigals: Readings in Canadian Religious History, 1608 to Present* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1992), p. 168.

standards of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. They therefore sought to carry the gospel of God to everyone in the country, especially "to the votaries of false or perverted religions," "those whose Christianity is but a lifeless form," and "the polyglot millions from beyond the seas who come to seek homes." And the purpose of this mission was to solve "the difficult problems presented by the diversities of race, language, religion, and national life," and ultimately to bring the heterogeneous peoples into line with the vision of Canada as "His Dominion."⁷ As an editorial entitled "The Church as Melting Pot" in *The New Outlook* stated:

Large sections of our Dominion are being filled with a polyglot people... And the problem which confronts our statesmen and all who have at heart the true welfare of our nation in the future is how to fuse these diverse elements in our population so as to form one great and homogeneous community committed to the highest ideals of what is best in our modern Christian civilization.⁸

Within the framework of the vision of "His Dominion," Canadian Protestant clergy insisted that the work of converting those who belonged to religions different from Protestantism could significantly affect the development of the nation. They believed that the work would create not only a national spirit, but also a healthy morality and a regard for Christian institutions. And those who were evangelized were thereby taught right moral attitudes and responsibilities

⁷ "Editorial," Methodist Church of Canada, *The Missionary Outlook*, 25, 8 (August 1906): 172.

⁸ The United Church of Canada, *The New Outlook* (2 December 1925), p. 4.

and thus made fit to become Canadian citizens; conversely, while they were Canadianized, their assimilation would lead them to the true Christian life. The social impulse and concern for social conditions thus reinforced the evangelistic tone of the Protestant church. In consequence, the work of Protestant missions to non-Protestant immigrants also placed Canadianization as the highest ideal of their mission. As W.S. Smith in his popular book, *Building the Nation*, pointed out: "the nation is built as Christianity grows and Christianity grows as the nation is built."⁹

In a word, for Canadian Protestant clergy, the work of missions would build the foundation of the national spirit. And only this common national spirit would provide Canada the sense of community it needed to withstand the challenge of immigration influx. It was also in this sense that the Protestant church was thought of as the country's real "melting pot".¹⁰

The Protestant vision of Canada as "His Dominion" significantly influenced the Protestant response to the Chinese immigrant. On the one hand, most Protestant clergy could not escape from the limitation of the consciousness of Anglo-Saxon superiority. They shared the widespread dread of the Yellow Peril with other white Canadians. And, the illusory

⁹ W. S. Smith, *Building the Nation: A Study of Some Problems Concerning the Churches' Relation to the Immigrants* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1922), p. 160.

¹⁰ Editorial "The Church as Melting Pot," *The New Outlook* (December 2, 1925): 4.

threat of the Chinese aroused their real concern for Canada's Anglo-Saxon heritage. On the other hand, the evangelical desire to win heathen souls for Christ led the Protestant church to challenge public anti-Chinese sentiments and launch the mission to the Chinese. Thus, the Protestant reaction to the Chinese immigrant mingled the acceptance of the Chinese with the rejection of them.

Without doubt, Canadian Protestant clergy saw the presence of large numbers of Chinese immigrants in the country as "a serious problem."¹¹ In the words of a Methodist clergyman from Vancouver, the Protestant church was

face to face with a most powerful heathenism, strong, subtle, deep, a heathenism that cannot be moved by any ordinary effort. The problem is a more serious one than that confronting the missionaries in the Orient as all of our mission workers here can testify.¹²

The problem was so serious that the Protestant clergy feared that Chinese heathenism would undermine their ideal to build a culturally homogenous Anglo-Saxon Protestant country. The clergy therefore spared no effort in removing the Chinese menace from the country. However, the Protestant clergy's tactics to fight the Yellow Peril are different from those of extreme nativists. While some nativists advocated the complete exclusion of the Chinese immigrant and a few even suggested

¹¹ The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society*, 1907-08, p. 36.

¹² United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Incoming Correspondence of the General Secretary, Alexander Sutherland, fonds 14/2/4, 78.092C-box 4-file 81, A. M. Sanford to A. Sutherland, January 27, 1910.

massive deportations, most Protestant clergy thought that exclusion was just one of the solutions to solve the problem of Chinese immigration, but not the only one.¹³ They were confident that the final solution of the issue was in the church's hands. In other words, the church would protect the country from the Yellow Peril by evangelizing the Chinese. It was just like what a Presbyterian clergyman said: "We should give the Chinese in Canada the gospel, not only because they need it so very much, but also to save our western shores from the polluting influence of heathenism."¹⁴ A local Methodist church leader from Victoria also gave a similar statement:

The presence of so many of these people [Chinese and other Orientals] in our coast cities, with their heathen practices and their heathen ideals of morality, is a distinct menace to the young people of our own race and color. The only restraining influence seems to be that which is exercised by the Christian church.¹⁵

It was the deep concern for the nation's cultural identity that gave Canadian Protestant clergy the initial motive to evangelize the Chinese immigrants in Canada. The clergy believed that the realization of Canada's nationhood was contingent upon the Chinese immigrant's acceptance of

¹³ James S. Woodsworth's speech in the debate of the exclusion of the Chinese immigrant, *Debates: House of Commons*, Vol. V, 1924 (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1924), p. 4357.

¹⁴ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-reel 1-file 4, the Correspondence of Austin G. McKittrick to W. McLaren, August 3, 1891.

¹⁵ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Incoming Correspondence of the General Secretary, Alexander Sutherland, fonds 14/2/4, 78.092C-box 4-file 81, A. E. Roberts to A. Sutherland, February 1, 1910.

Protestant Christianity. Mission therefore was fundamental to the manner in which they conceived of nationality. Consequently, the Protestant clergy, on the one hand, advocated the strict restriction of Chinese immigration; on the other hand, they repeatedly warned the public of the urgency of evangelizing the Chinese immigrant in this country and its importance in maintaining the nation's Anglo-Saxon heritage. The following warning came from the Superintendent of the Chinese Mission in British Columbia, Methodist Church of Canada:

If we fail to Christianize them [Orientals] they will in a measure Orientalize us. If we fail to impart a touch of new life to them they in turn will touch us with a withering blight.¹⁶

The commitment to the vision of "His Dominion" also gave Canadian Protestant clergy an inner religious impulse to evangelize the Chinese immigrants in Canada. Unlike other white Canadians, the Protestant clergy believed that it was a fundamental mistake to suppose that the Chinese problem could be solved just by acts of Parliament but without taking account of God's plan for the world. They thought that the Chinese immigrants in Canada were included in God's plan for the redemption of man. As George M. Grant, Principal of Queen's University, stated:

Christ came not to the west, but to the east. He came, not for the sake of the whole, but for the sake of the

¹⁶ S. S. Osterhout, "Our Chinese Missions in British Columbia," *Missionary Bulletin* XIII, 3 (July-September 1917): 499-500.

sick. He loved the world; black, brown, red, yellow men, as well as white.¹⁷

Meanwhile, most Protestant clergy believed that God had put the burden to evangelize the world on the shoulders of English speaking peoples. And many of them were confident of being able to evangelize the world in their generation.¹⁸ Thus, the presence of the Chinese immigrant was seen as God's call to the church. As Alexander Sutherland stated: "The providence of God has opened a way to this hitherto neglected people [the Chinese immigrant], and the voice of the Master is heard, saying, 'They need not depart; give ye them to eat.'"¹⁹ Many Protestant clergy, therefore, showed their enthusiasm for the divine plan by throwing themselves into the enterprise of evangelizing the heathen Chinese. As a Methodist clergyman described his feelings when he first visited the Chinese community in Victoria in 1887:

When it is remembered there are four thousand of such persons with their opium dens and haunts of vice in the Christian city of Victoria, I asked myself, and I ask the Methodist Church, if there is not a cause of reproach. Thus so little is done for these heathen whom God had providentially led to our shores as if he would challenge our allegiance to himself, our trust in Jesus, and our confidence in his religion.²⁰

¹⁷ George M. Grant, "The Chinese Question," *Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly and National Review*, August 1881, p. 209.

¹⁸ The Methodist Church in Canada, *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1911-2*, p. vii.

¹⁹ A. Sutherland, "Mission Work in British Columbia," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, the Methodist Church of Canada, 1885-6*, p. xiv.

²⁰ John A. Williams, "Notes of Travel—British Columbia," *The Christian Guardian*, August 10, 1887, p. 499.

At this point, the clergy's motive to get involved with the Chinese mission more directly came from their faithfulness to the Christian religion and their feeling of duty to their church.

Closely linked with this evangelical impulse was a Christian conscience that aroused Protestants' serious concern for the very presence of Chinese heathenism. Many Protestant clergy felt that they could not sit by idly and remain indifferent to the existence of Chinese heathens in the country. As the Anglican bishop of Columbia observed in 1892:

It would indeed be a reproach to churchmen here, if with these thousands of heathen flocking to our Christian shores, we neglect to do for them what missionaries of old have done for ourselves, and withhold from them the Gospel of our Divine Master's love and the means of His grace and salvation.²¹

The Protestant clergy therefore thought that it was their church's duty and obligation in Christ to give the "full light of the Gospel" to the Chinese, and finally lead them to salvation.²² As T. E. Egerton Shore, Assistant Secretary of the Methodist Church of Canada, stated: "It is very important that these men be won to Christ and led to give themselves unreservedly to the Christian life."²³ And this importance, according to the same clergyman, lay in that the work had "a

²¹ Church of England in Canada, Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia, *Reports* (1892): 11-12.

²² The Methodist Church of Canada, *Annual Report Missionary Society, 1906-07*, lxxv.

²³ Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Correspondence of T.E. Egerton Shore, fonds 14/2/5, 78.093C-box 7-file 130, T.E. Egerton Shore to Thom Chue Thom, April 25, 1907.

tremendous bearing upon the future of our country and civilization."²⁴

Many Protestant clergy were also convinced that the Christian truth would remove Chinese vice and heathenism, give the Chinese the blessings of a higher civilization, and consequently "make such contribution of good as they can to the welfare of the country into which they have come."²⁵ For example, when Alexander Sutherland responded to a missionary's report on Chinese superstitious customs, he pointed out that "the only way" to deal effectively with the Chinese immigrant's superstitious customs was to show them "a more excellent way," namely, send God's gospel to the Chinese immigrant. "When Christ is faithfully preached some, at least, received Him, and when He is received the old superstitions quickly fall away."²⁶

Moreover, it was often suggested as well that the mission work among the Chinese immigrants in Canada would bear fruit when the Chinese returned to China. Since the Chinese were thought not to intend to settle in Canada permanently, the Protestant clergy believed that the Christianizing of the Chinese immigrants in Canada would not only benefit the work of home mission, but also strengthen the hands of the

²⁴ Ibid., file 133, T.E. Egerton Shore to E.W. Morgan, April 2, 1910.

²⁵ R.G. MacBeth, *Our Task in Canada* (Toronto: The Westminster Co. Limited, 1912), p. 83.

²⁶ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, the Correspondence of the General Secretary, Alexander Sutherland, fonds 14/2/4, 78.092C-box 4-file 73, A. Sutherland to T.E. Holling, May 3, 1909.

Protestant missionaries in China. And the evangelization of China, in turn, would provide a solution to the problem of Chinese immigration to Canada.²⁷ Therefore, the Chinese immigrants in Canada were often seen as potential tools that might be used in the future evangelizing of China. As S.S. Osterhout pointed out:

One of the very best ways to help our work and the work of other societies in foreign lands, is to so interpret the Christian faith and the Christian life to these lonely strangers that they themselves will embrace Christianity and finally return to witness for Christ in their own land.²⁸

In short, Protestant missionary endeavors to evangelize the Chinese immigrants in Canada were essentially motivated by the fundamental Christian belief that God cares for all the people in this world and has a claim on the allegiance of all. Moreover, it was also widely believed that the millennial reign of Christ would come only when the gospel had been diffused throughout the world. Thus, there was none that would take second place when an opportunity occurred to affect the eternal destiny of the Chinese immigrant. As Sutherland claimed: "It is God's purpose and plan to establish His

²⁷ MacBeth believed that if China was converted to Christianity, the Chinese would remain at home to develop their country, instead of coming to Canada. See R.G. MacBeth, *Our Task in Canada* (Toronto: The Westminster Co. Limited, 1912), p. 82.

²⁸ S. S. Osterhout, "The Chinese Stranger," *Christian Guardian*, April 11, 1923, p. 14.

kingdom on earth. The business of the Church is to evangelize the world."²⁹

However, since Anglo-Saxon nationalism directed the Protestant clergy to view the Chinese immigrant as a threat to Canadian cultural homogeneity, the mission was initially from the strong sense of self-defense. The Protestant vision of Canada and the Protestant church's self-defined responsibility in building the nation gave the mission contain more secular implications. Unfortunately, these secular elements were often colored by the prejudice against the Chinese and therefore overshadowed the core evangelical nature of the mission. In other words, while Protestant missionaries strove to save Chinese souls from heathenism, they were defending the nation's identity and building the nation's future along the line of their vision of Canada. The missionaries who worked among the Chinese immigrants therefore had two motives, a religious one, to save the Chinese heathens and fulfil the church's responsibility of evangelizing China, and the other was a nationalist one, to protect their own country from the threat of the Yellow Peril. It was just this that the Presbyterian Church of Canada stated about its motives for

²⁹ Alexander Sutherland, *The Methodist Church and Missions in Canada and Newfoundland: A Brief Account of the Methodist Church in Canada* (Toronto: The Department of Missionary Literature of the Methodist Church, Canada, 1906), p. 253.

evangelizing the Chinese: "Our responsibility for these people, our own safety, and the effect on the work in China."³⁰

Moreover, for the Protestant church, removing the Yellow Peril and protecting Canada from its threat sometimes were more important than evangelizing the Chinese themselves. This might be why the Canadian Protestant churches did not begin the organized missions to Chinese immigrants until more than three decades after the first Chinese immigrant landed in this country, given the fact that the anti-Chinese sentiments reached their peak at that time.

7.2 The Change of the Mission's Priority

As mentioned above, the dread of the Yellow Peril motivated the initial reaction of the Canadian Protestant churches to Chinese immigrants. And the vision of Canada as His Dominion gave the churches an inner impulse to remove the Yellow Peril from the country. Thus, for a considerable time after it was launched in the 1880s, the Protestant mission to Chinese immigrants had been largely considered as part of the Protestant church's strategy to build a homogeneous Anglo-Saxon Protestant country. In addition, since the Chinese were generally believed not to intend to remain in Canada, the laboring for the Chinese in Canada was often seen as a step to

³⁰ *The Acts and Proceedings of the Forty Fourth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1918), p. 133.

strengthen the Protestant church's missionary enterprise in China.

However, things began to change after the First World War. A growing commitment to Canadianize Chinese immigrants spurred the Canadian Protestant churches to rethink the purpose of evangelizing the Chinese. While few Protestant clergy considered the mission to Chinese immigrants as a step to transform the Chinese into Canadians prior to the 1920s, many of them now believed that they could bring Chinese immigrants into Canadian society by converting them to the Protestant religion.

The new conception of the missionary motive derived mainly from a new spirit of "Christian internationalism" which emerged in the Canadian Protestant community after the First World War.³¹ According to Robert Wright, with the awakening of Canadian Protestant clergy to the outside world after the First World War, the clergy approached a new vision of a Christian international order in the 1920s and 1930s. At the heart of the vision was the belief that Christ embodied the ideals of brotherhood, peace, and justice, and that the church had a crucial role to play in the implementation of these ideals, especially in the improvement of relations between

³¹ For a detailed discussion of the growing spirit of "Christian internationalism" among Canadian Protestant churches after the First World War, see Robert Wright, *A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for a New International Order, 1918-1939*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.

individuals and nations.³² In terms of race relations, this new Christian internationalism meant the abandonment of all forms of ethnocentrism, the invocation of a new spirit of humility, and the willingness to embrace the principles of cooperation and mutual respect.³³

Inspired by such a new spirit of racial tolerance, Canadian Protestant clergy became increasingly broad-minded about the issue of Chinese immigration from the 1920s. In the first place, the continuous flow of missionaries to and from China had brought the country into more intimate touch with Chinese culture than would otherwise have been possible. Returning missionaries lectured indefatigably from one end of Canada to the other not only on the religious problems of China but on its history and art as well. For example, James L. Stewart's *Chinese Culture and Christianity*, which was published in 1926, was written originally as a series of lectures at the Canadian School of Missions. As a former missionary to China, Stewart attempted to give a "constructive criticism" of Chinese culture in his book. And by so doing, he hoped to articulate the argument that "we of the West must readjust our values, broaden our vision, deepen our

³² Robert Wright, *A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for a New International Order, 1918-1939* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), p. 4, 33, 36.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 142, 176.

sympathies, correct our contacts, or reap the whirlwind of wrong-doing and misunderstanding."³⁴

In fact, the new international spirit influenced not only Protestant clergy's view of Chinese people, but also their way of looking at Chinese culture and religion. Some Protestant clergy began to view the Chinese religion and culture in a "higher valuation."³⁵ Many of the assumptions lying behind the belief in the superiority of Western culture in the past were being questioned. The strategy of Christian mission was also reevaluated. As a result, the Protestant clergy believed that the church must be "world minded," and "appreciative of those who differ," so that it could accord with the international and interracial realities of the modern world.³⁶ As an author in *the Canadian Student* suggested:

We are all searching and hungering for righteousness. Let us go on the quest together, American, East Indian, Chinese and African. Let us share our experiences. We would give the best we have experienced; we would know the best other peoples have experienced. Perhaps together, some of them coming to us and some of us going to them, we may develop a better religion than any of us have yet known.³⁷

There was also another factor that contributed to the rising of the new international spirit among the Canadian Protestant clergy. This factor was the influence of the

³⁴ James Livingstone Stewart, *Chinese Culture and Christianity: A Review of China's Religions and Related Systems from the Christian Standpoint* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1926), pp. 9-10.

³⁵ "Editorial," *The Canadian Student*, 7, 4 (January 1925): 99.

³⁶ Sophia Lyon Fahs, "Has the Missionary Movement Promoted World Mindedness at Home?" *The Canadian Student*, 8, 6 (March 1926): 183.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

brutality and devastation of the First World War. The war made a deep impression upon many of the non-Christian people of the world that the Western civilization had "many defects,"³⁸ and that the sense of supremacy and superiority of the West was fallacious.³⁹ Many colored people therefore changed their view of world order. They demanded an end to the white man's domination in world affairs, and asked "to grasp and keep the control of their own destinies."⁴⁰

Back home, on the issue of the relationship between the dominant Anglo-Saxon group and new minority immigrant groups, Protestant clergy began to develop a new spirit of mutual respect. Facing the fact of social and cultural diversity of Canada in the first years of the twentieth century, the clergy realized that non-British immigrants would never conform to Anglo-Saxon institutions and values. Instead, "a common and genuine brotherhood" including "black, red, yellow, brown and white" should be developed in Canada.⁴¹ As an author in the *New Outlook* pointed out:

We may, and do, feel that our modern civilization has much to offer these strangers, but to cheapen and depreciate their own ideals would utterly defeat our best endeavors. Much better to select all that is finest and noblest in their distinctive national character, and use it as a stable foundation on which to build a higher conception of citizenship.

³⁸ "Editorial," *The New Outlook*, 1, 27 (December 9, 1925): 3.

³⁹ Robert Wright, *A World Mission: Canadian Protestantism and the Quest for a New International Order, 1918-1939* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), p. 151.

⁴⁰ Basil Mathews, *The Clash of Color: A Study in the Problem of Race* (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1924), p. 22.

⁴¹ Editorial, "The Color Line," *The New Outlook*, 4, 24 (13 June 1928): 13.

All peoples may contribute largely to the welfare of our beloved Dominion, and this fact, if properly impressed upon the individuals, tends to inspire them with a new feeling of self-respect and national importance.⁴²

Thus, a new Protestant vision of nation building emerged in the 1920s: to make a new Canadian people who were united in the spirit of Protestant Christianity. Although this vision of Canadianization itself implied homogeneity, and it demanded cultural assimilation, linguistic conformity, and above all, Christianization, the notion of Canadianization was expressed in more humanitarian language. As W.G. Smith observed in his book *Building the Nation* published in 1922, Canada could not be built out of "pure stock," nor was "purity of stock" required. He then stated:

A nation is, after all, a community of people, associated and organized as a free state, under one civil government for common purposes and ordinarily dwelling together in a distinct territory. It may thus include persons of different racial origins, who also are united in these common purposes and loyal thereto.⁴³

In fact, as early as 1917, W.T. Gunn suggested in his book *His Dominion* that the new non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants might make some useful contribution to nation building and enrich the life of the nation.⁴⁴ He also stated that the

⁴² Barbara Gibson Wyld, "Strangers Yet Brethren," *The New Outlook*, 4, 13 (28 March 1928): 11.

⁴³ W.G. Smith, *Building the Nation: A Study of Some Problems Concerning the Church's Relation to the Immigrants* (Toronto: Canadian Council of the Missionary Education Movement of the United State and Canada, 1922), p. 154.

⁴⁴ William T. Gunn, *His Dominion* (Toronto: The Canadian Council of the Missionary Education Movement, 1917), p. 213, 215.

Protestant church had no national limits and knew no divisions of race or color, but stood with "its message of unbounded love and sympathy."⁴⁵ Although the Canadian Protestant churches had to take a long step in reaching the goal of racial equality, many clergy would continue the tradition established by Gunn in the next two decades. In particular, several publications sponsored by the Canadian Protestant churches in the 1920s made a great contribution to encouraging Canadian people to rethink the country's destiny. Smith's book *Building the Nation* was one of these publications. Among the Protestant clergy at his time, Smith first brought to the public the idea that people of different race, nationality, and religion might live together in harmony with each other and make a contribution to "the building of a united national spirit."⁴⁶ In her book *Our Canadian Mosaic* published by the Y.W.C.A. in 1926, Kate A. Foster applied the concept of mosaic to Canada's national structure. She suggested: "in nation-building all manner of materials are required and there surely is an interesting analogy between the extraordinarily diversified uses of Mosaic...and the services rendered by each of the peoples in the task of setting up the frame work of our national structure."⁴⁷ She also encouraged the spirit of good

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 223.

⁴⁶ W.G. Smith, *Building the Nation: A Study of Some Problems Concerning the Church's Relation to the Immigrants* (Toronto: Canadian Council of the Missionary Education Movement of the United State and Canada, 1922), pp. 76-7.

⁴⁷ Kate A. Foster, *Our Canadian Mosaic* (Toronto: The Dominion Council Y.W.C.A., 1926), p. 141.

will, friendliness, and mutual respect among all peoples in the country, and saw the spirit as the cement without which Canada could not hope to succeed in the task of building a Canadian mosaic.⁴⁸ Ten years later, J.I. MacKay developed Foster's idea of Canada as a mosaic into a vision of an ethnic mosaic, which provided the core of a new multicultural Canadian identity. In his book, *The World in Canada*, published in 1938, MacKay attempted to call Canadians' attention to the fact that Canada had been established as "a land of infinite variety."⁴⁹ He suggested that the Canadian Protestant churches should do all they could to resolve "the people of Europe and Asia, and of any other continental origin" into a multi-ethnic mosaic. And he believed that this mosaic would save the "world in Canada" from "greed and unneighbourliness" and "point the way to the saving of the larger world."⁵⁰

Although a large number of Canadian Protestant clergy still remained wedded to traditional notions of Anglo-Saxon conformity, some clergy moved a significant distance in the 1920s toward the view that Canada's national identity could only be maintained by applying the principles of Christian fellowship and cooperation to non-Anglo-Saxon groups. And they began to believe that every ethnic group could make its contribution to the nation building. This new conception of

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁴⁹ J.I. MacKay, *The World in Canada* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, 1938), p. viii, 5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 33-4, 203.

racial relations brought many Protestant clergy to believe that it was possible and necessary to include the Chinese immigrant in the church's agenda of Canadianization so that these people could become "a real and vital part of our country's life."⁵¹

Directed by the new understanding of the church's responsibility to the Chinese immigrant, from the 1920s some Protestant clergy began to criticize the popular stereotype about the Chinese immigrant. For example, in his book, *Building the Nation*, W.G. Smith criticized the widespread assumption that the Chinese was inassimilable. After surveying the Chinese immigrant's contributions to the development of the country and exploring the Chinese virtues of industry, thrift and honesty, Smith pointed out that it was in fact racial discrimination that made the assimilation of the Chinese immigrant impossible.⁵² From the viewpoint of Christian humanitarianism, Smith further argued; the Chinese and the white man

are both members of the one human family, in which they stand on terms of equality, heirs of all the promises,

⁵¹ S. S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), 6-7; W. S. Smith, *Building the Nation: A Study of Some Problems Concerning the Churches' Relation to the Immigrants* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1922), p. 156.

⁵² Kate A. Foster, *Our Canadian Mosaic* (Toronto: The Dominion Council Y.W.C.A., 1926), pp. 34-6; and W.G. Smith, *Building the Nation: A Study of Some Problems Concerning the Church's Relation to the Immigrants* (Toronto: Canadian Council of the Missionary Education Movement of the United State and Canada, 1922), p. 132, 143.

through Christ, in whom there is neither white man nor yellow man...but new creatures in Christ Jesus.⁵³

He therefore suggested that one of the tasks of the Protestant church in Canada was "to arouse a sentiment favoring race equality before the law." He asked that the church put "a precise programme" into operation for introducing the Chinese immigrant to "the glories and possibilities of Canadian citizenship."⁵⁴ At this point, S.S. Osterhout, Superintendent of Oriental Missions West of the Great Lakes, the United Church of Canada, made a much clearer statement: Chinese immigrants had their "rights to live in this land," "rights to education," and "rights to enjoy themselves." Therefore, the Protestant churches in Canada should strive to bring the Chinese into "harmony with the entire population" and to build them into Canada's national structure.⁵⁵

The desire to Canadianize Chinese immigrants provided the Protestant churches a new impetus to evangelize the Chinese. This was because most Protestant clergy saw the Christianizing of the Chinese as the only way to Canadianize the Chinese immigrant in the country. They believed that the Canadianizing of the Chinese immigrant was not simply a matter of learning English and throwing away old customs, but a deeply moral and

⁵³ W.G. Smith, *Building the Nation: A Study of Some Problems Concerning the Church's Relation to the Immigrants* (Toronto: Canadian Council of the Missionary Education Movement of the United State and Canada, 1922), pp. 158-9.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁵⁵ S.S. Osterhout, *Oriental in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1929), p. 6, 209-210.

spiritual process. The process was of building a Canadian character according to the principles of the Protestant religion,⁵⁶ because the gospel of God was "the only power that [could] harmonize, assimilate and unify the heterogeneous elements that enter into our Canadian life."⁵⁷ Therefore, Protestant clergy saw the bringing of the gospel of God to the Chinese as their "greatest treasure," and so had the Chinese for "mighty friends and fellow workers for the Kingdom of God."⁵⁸ With the gospel of God, Protestant clergy believed, the Chinese immigrant would acquire the nation's most sacred ideals and values and could be integrated into Canadian life. It was also from this belief that Protestant clergy saw their church as the only agency through which the Chinese immigrant could be introduced to what it finally meant to be a true Canadian.

There was also another factor that helped to change the Canadian Protestant churches' view of their mission to the Chinese immigrant. In 1923, the Chinese Exclusion Act was put into effect, and Chinese immigration to Canada was completely stopped. As a result, the immediate threat of the Yellow Peril to Canadian nationality seemed to be reduced. The racial

⁵⁶ A. W. Home, "The Epworth League and the Immigrant," *The Christian Guardian*, XCI (1 December 1920): 16.

⁵⁷ *Baptist Yearbook*, 1905, quoted in Richard Allen ed., *The Social Gospel in Canada* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975), p. 203.

⁵⁸ William T. Gunn, *His Dominion* (Toronto: Canadian Council of the Missionary Education Movement, 1917), p. 25.

tension between the Chinese immigrant and the white group to a great extent was also relieved. Meanwhile, with the emergence of native-born generations in the Chinese community, the presence of the Chinese immigrant in the country became a permanent phenomenon. As an Anglican clergyman stated in 1934, the Protestant church must accept those Canadian-born Chinese as "part of our Western life," and train them to become good citizens.⁵⁹ Realizing the change in Chinese immigration, Canadian Protestant churches began to consider the necessity of assimilating Chinese immigrants, especially those who were born in Canada. Clearly, the evangelizing of the Chinese immigrant was thought of as the chief means to reach the goal.

In a word, the change of Protestant clergy's thinking about Canada's national identity after the First World War provided the Canadian Protestant clergy a new motive for their mission to the Chinese immigrant. While the Canadianizing of the Chinese was thought of as a necessity in building the nation's future, the evangelizing of the Chinese immigrant was seen as the only way by which the Protestant churches could achieve their goal of Canadianizing the Chinese.

Thus, from the 1920s, the Protestant mission work among the Chinese was to a great extent motivated by the desire to assimilate the Chinese immigrant into Canadian society. The

⁵⁹ H. Walsh, *Stewards of a Goodly Heritage: A Survey of the Church's Mission Fields in Canada* (n/p: The Joint Committee on Summer Schools and Institutes of the Church of England in Canada), p. 52.

Protestant clergy saw their work among the Chinese immigrants as a means of helping the Chinese achieve a basic level of political, social, and economic integration into Canadian society. However, for most of these clergy, the

notions of Christianization and Canadianization were mutually related. The new thinking of the Chinese mission by no means altered the initial goal of the mission. The purpose of the mission was still the removing of the alien presence of the Chinese immigrant in the country and the maintaining of Canada's Protestant national identity, although the focus of the mission was different from the one prior to the 1920s.

7.3 The Missionary Methods of Reaching the Chinese

The evangelizing of the Chinese meant that Protestant missionaries were to teach the Chinese the Protestant religion and to convert them. It also meant that the Chinese were to be taught the Canadian way of life and to be assimilated into Canadian society. However, the first step of evangelization had to be to make contact with the Chinese. In other words, the missionaries had to get into the isolated Chinese community before they could preach the gospel of God to the Chinese. It was not easy work for the missionaries to make this first step, given the fact that there existed many hatreds and suspicions between the two groups. Even leaving aside the question of racial tension, it would have been very difficult for the missionaries to reach the Chinese. Among other obstacles, the biggest was language. As noted in Chapter 1, most early Chinese immigrants did not know English, and they could not even read and write in their own language. On

the other hand, it was also known that few Protestant missionaries, or English-speaking Canadians, were willing to learn other languages, including the Chinese language. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they thought it degrading. For the Protestant missionaries, the learning of the English language by the Chinese was indispensable to understanding the gospel of God. Thus, the mission to the Chinese was started by teaching Chinese immigrants the English language, not from preaching the gospel. In the early years of the mission, the language teaching was thought to be "the only way" by which the missionaries could reach the Chinese.⁶⁰

In fact, the mission was usually started with the opening of a mission school. The Protestant missions organized various schools in Chinese communities, such as evening schools, day schools, and Sunday schools. Day schools were organized primarily to reach Chinese children; Sunday schools were especially for those who expressed further interest in learning the Bible; evening schools were most attractive to Chinese immigrants. Both the educational and evangelistic functions operated in the evening school. The teaching of the English language was one of the most popular programs conducted in the evening school. To some degree, it was also the main reason that the Chinese were willing to come to the mission stations. However, the language teaching was always

⁶⁰ "Chinese Mission," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, 1880-81*, p. xii.

offered for the purpose of evangelization. It was never thought of as the offering of secular education. A Presbyterian missionary pointed out that the evening school was simply for "the communication of Gospel truths, and nothing more."⁶¹ Thus, the program of teaching the English language became a tool for enlightening the Chinese about the Protestant religion. Indeed, as soon as students were found to be able to read a little, the Bible lessons began. Moreover, in the evening school, the students were always asked to remain and listen to the missionary preach after the language class.⁶²

While the missionaries considered their educational work to be of prime importance in reaching the Chinese immigrant, they did not feel that this work was an unqualified success. One of the persistent complaints was that, while many Chinese came to the mission school to learn the English language, few of them were willing to show up in the same place to hear a gospel address. Once the Chinese learned a little English, they left to seek employment or better opportunities. A Presbyterian missionary even declared that "no enduring results are traceable to school work." And a Methodist missionary gave an even more negative judgment about the

⁶¹ A.B. Winchester, "Chinese in Canada," in W.S. MacTavish, ed., *Reapers in Many Fields: A Survey of Canadian Presbyterian Missions* (Toronto: The Westminster Company, Ltd., 1904), p. 231.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 235.

mission school. He said that he was not aware of "a single member having been won to the church through the school." They insisted that preaching the Word should be the first thing and all-important in the mission work.⁶³

Indeed, the school work often overshadowed the other mission activities in the Chinese mission. The missionaries put much more energy into organizing the school than any other work. In their mission reports, the missionaries took delight in talking about the school work, and gave various figures to show the gains in the work. However, they were always ignoring the fact that the church membership never grew with the increase in school attendance.⁶⁴ When the mission was heavily dependent on the mission school to attract the Chinese, a crisis was also planted in its future work. In the 1950s and 1960s, with the development of the public education system, the mission began to lose its important position in the Chinese community because the mission school was no longer the only institution to provide educational programs to the Chinese immigrant.

Realizing the deficiency of the mission school, the missionaries tried to find other opportunities to contact the

⁶³ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 1-file 5, the Correspondence of A.B. Winchester to R.P. Mackay, December 3, 1892.

⁶⁴ According to mission reports, while the number of the students in the mission school usually remained around one hundred or more, the membership of the church was hardly over twenty. See chapter 5 for detailed statistical figures.

Chinese. Visitation thus became another favorite means of reaching the Chinese. Throughout the years, the missionaries tried to visit as many Chinese as they could. This included both visiting the Chinese homes in cities and traveling to the remote area in which the Chinese could be found. Visitation became necessary for the early missionaries because most Chinese immigrants worked long hours each day and seven days a week at that time. Therefore, it was difficult for the missionaries to have regular meetings with them in the mission station. Moreover, although Chinese communities in Canada were highly segregated in the late nineteenth century, the individual Chinese could be found everywhere, for they were always on the move to find jobs. In order to reach these Chinese immigrants, the missionaries traveled to mining camps, farms, ranches, railroad works, and remote towns, where Chinese immigrants could be found. Sometimes, they spent months away from home, traveling long distances, and sleeping wherever shelter could be found. Once arrived in a place, the missionaries met people, preached in the street, held religious meetings, and distributed religious tracts.

Among these missionary activities, street preaching was thought as the best way to attract the Chinese. Since it was not convenient to meet the Chinese in their workplaces, and few Chinese were reached by house visiting, the missionaries preached in the street whenever the weather conditions

allowed. Through this preaching, the missionaries reached more Chinese than they did in the mission station. It was reported that on some occasions there were as many as two or three hundred Chinese immigrants who stood and listened "with close attention for over an hour to a Gospel address or addresses."⁶⁵ It was for this reason that street preaching was preferred by the missionaries, even after local Chinese churches were created. Sometimes, the missionaries also trained Chinese Christians to preach in the street. And usually Chinese preachers did a better job than white missionaries did, for it was easier for a Chinese preacher to communicate with their countrymen, and to find a topic that was of interest to the Chinese audience. However, some hot topics were more likely to offend audiences. The debate on a certain topic often interrupted the preaching. Sometimes, the debate could bring a boycott of the preaching.

Through the methods of itinerating and street preaching, Protestant missionaries reached a maximum number of Chinese immigrants, including those who lived in remote areas. However, the itinerating and street preaching, even when they were regular, made it difficult to provide the Chinese immigrant with uninterrupted religious services, which was extremely important at the initial stage of the mission. From

⁶⁵ *The Acts and Proceedings of the Twenty Fourth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1898), p. 201.

missionary reports, it becomes evident that, although the missionaries spent lots of time and energy visiting the Chinese who lived in remote areas, they hardly established the mission work in those places, or kept the Chinese connected with the mission for a long period of time. Moreover, even after some Chinese Christians were found to help make the local missionary work active, the lack of financial and local church supports and the lack of professional training of these agents made the mission work in the community beyond the missionary's supervision difficult to maintain. The same was true for the street preaching. Although the preaching attracted many Chinese, few of them took the further step of joining the church.

All these drawbacks, to a great degree, resulted from the lack of support from the local church. In most cases, the Chinese mission work depended solely on the missionaries; few local church members showed any interest in the work. A long-time Presbyterian missionary noted that the Chinese work was in fact done by a few church members, and not by the church as a whole.⁶⁶ Some missionaries also complained that local churches rather than isolated missions would do the mission

⁶⁶ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 3-file 83, the Correspondence of C.A. Colman to R.P. Mackay, December 31, 1895; and also A.L. Burch to R.P. Mackay, April 16, 1912.

work more effectively.⁶⁷ Indeed, the missionaries were often asked by local white people if there was "any use to talk to these yellow fellows."⁶⁸ There were also some people who frankly told the missionaries that there was no need to send missionaries to the Chinese community, for they did not believe that the Chinese would be able to understand a white people's religion.⁶⁹

Protestant missions also provided a variety of social services for the Chinese immigrant, although the possibilities for evangelism in the provision of these services were never lost on the missionary mind. For a long time during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, the mission had often been the only institution to provide social services and help to Chinese immigrants. Inspired by the social gospellers' ideal of creating in this world a human society based on the Christian principles of love, charity, humanity, and brotherhood, from the 1920s, the Protestant churches invested more money in building medical, recreational, and educational facilities for the Chinese immigrants in Canada. Sometimes they were even convinced that "the greatest need" of the

⁶⁷ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Correspondence of T.E. Egerton Shore, fonds 14/2/4, 78.093C-box 7-file 135, George E. Hartwell to T.E. Egerton Shore, November 2, 1911.

⁶⁸ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 1-file 38, C.A. Colman, "Report of Work Don in Connection with the Canadian Presbyterian Chinese Mission, 1903."

⁶⁹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 3-file 83, the Correspondence of R. Duncanson to R.P. Mackay, October 15, 1914.

mission was "not more missions, but outstanding social centres," which would draw more Chinese immigrants from gambling dens and other haunts of vice.⁷⁰ Indeed, the social programs attracted many Chinese to the missions on the one hand; and they also improved the social conditions of the Chinese community and lifted up the life of Chinese immigrants on the other hand.

The social concerns of the Protestant missions also included fighting against the social sins of the Chinese community. From the very beginning of their working among the Chinese, the missionaries strove to eliminate all disgraceful social phenomena caused by secret societies, opium dens, gambling, prostitution, and the slave traffic. They often cooperated with the police and local authorities in cracking down on illegal activities in Chinese communities. For example, one of the first missionary activities conducted by the Methodist Church was to rescue slave Chinese girls from their owners. The missionaries firmly held to the view that they had to lift the Chinese up in the social, civil, and moral scale and let them acquire all the cultural and spiritual trappings of white society, before they could convince the Chinese Christianity would bring a new life to them.

⁷⁰S.S. Osterhout, "Canada's Oriental Problem and the Solution of It," *Missionary Bulletin*, 17, 2 (April-June 1921): 232.

7.4 The Gains and Losses

Although Protestant missionaries devoted all their energy to converting the Chinese immigrant to Christianity and set various strategies to expand the fruits of their working among the Chinese, the progress of the mission was always slow, and at times discouraging. In fact, the mission work among the Chinese immigrant had minuscule results; particularly, in terms of church membership, the actual number of Chinese converts was very small. Many Protestant church leaders felt that the Chinese work had succeeded neither in the Canadianizing of the Chinese, nor in the development of a self-supporting religious life in the Chinese community. In church correspondence dated from the early 1910s, T.E. Egerton Shore, General Secretary of the Missionary Society, the Methodist Church of Canada, made a totally negative comment on the Chinese mission in British Columbia:

This matter of working among the Asiatics in British Columbia has been a serious problem for some years. Our experience and results of the work have been anything but satisfactory.⁷¹

The reasons causing this unsatisfactory situation varied according to different times and circumstances; however, some negative factors affected the mission work all the time. Among others, the most disadvantageous was the sojourn nature of the

⁷¹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Correspondence of T.E. Egerton Shore, fonds 14/2/4, 78.093C-box 7-file138, T.E. Egerton Shore to T.F. Harrison, May 11, 1911.

early Chinese immigrants' life style. In particular, without a family, the Chinese rarely settled in a certain place for a longer time. They often looked for better employment in different places at different seasons of the year, either voluntarily or under the direction of their agent, who, if hostile to mission work, would take this means of breaking up a group interested in Christianity. This highly transient nature of the Chinese population made the mission difficult. Furthermore, the language barrier, the lack of organization and of the necessary equipment for mission work limited the missionary work largely to that of searching out and organizing, distributing literature and establishing schools at different points.

Another problem of the mission, which had bothered the leaders of the Protestant churches for years, was the leadership of the Chinese mission. Considering the huge cultural, religious, and language barriers between the missionary and the Chinese immigrant, the leaders of Protestant missionary organizations believed that unless they could build a strong leadership in the Chinese mission, the work among the Chinese would never be as successful as they desired. Without doubt, in order to build such a leadership, the mission first needed the right person to take the position of superintendent. The missionary organizations of various Protestant denominations all set up standards for the

superintendent. For example, a Methodist church leader emphasized that the superintendent should be a person who

can study the people and their whole relationship to our Western life; one who can learn the language and can follow the working of the Oriental mind; one who can develop efficiency in our working staff and lead them on to successful achievement.⁷²

However, due to the hostile social environment against the Chinese, it was extremely hard for the churches to find enough missionaries to work among Chinese immigrants, especially to obtain a suitable person to supervise their missions. In missionary reports and correspondence, there were often complaints about the difficulty in securing "a strong man" at the helm of the Chinese mission, especially a person who would make the job "a life long work."⁷³ This situation appeared worse for the Methodist Church. It never stopped looking for a qualified superintendent for its Chinese mission until 1910 when S.S. Osterhout was appointed as the superintendent of the Oriental mission in British Columbia.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, in order to build a close relationship between

⁷² United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Incoming Correspondence of the General Secretary, Alexander Sutherland, fonds 14/2/4, 78.092C-box 4-file 81, A. M. Sanford to A. Sutherland, January 27, 1910.

⁷³ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Incoming Correspondence of the General Secretary, Alexander Sutherland, fonds 14/2/4, 78.092C-box 4-file 81, A. M. Sanford to A. Sutherland, January 27, 1910.

⁷⁴ Osterhout was appointed to the position in 1910, but he took charge of the mission only in 1912 when he finished two-year language training in China and came back to Canada. See *Annual Reports of the Missionary Society, 1910-11*, pp. 10-11; and *Annual Reports of the Missionary Society, 1912-13*, p. xiv.

the missions and the Chinese community, all Protestant missionary organizations tried to train a strong native missionary team to work among the Chinese. The leaders of the missionary organizations believed that a native leadership was essential to any successful or permanent work among Chinese immigrants. Therefore, hiring native workers in the mission was thought of as "the best policy" of the mission.⁷⁵ Indeed, from the very beginning of the mission, the Canadian Protestant churches recruited native missionaries from China to work in Canada. Moreover, several newly converted Chinese Christians were appointed to positions in the missions. This way of providing native missionary workers for the missions had been practiced for many years. Yet the result was disappointing. The leaders of the missions realized that the native missionaries were still not competent to do the work as it ought to be done, even after they had been engaged in the work for several years.⁷⁶ While some Chinese missionaries were not able to preach Christian doctrines along the denominational line because they usually had no regular theological training,⁷⁷ some Chinese workers who were hired

⁷⁵ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 6-file 180, Extract of Letter from Rev. S.S. Osterhout, D.D. Dated September 1, 1925.

⁷⁶ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Correspondence of T.E. Egerton Shore, fonds 14/2/4, 78.093C-box 7-file 138, T.E. Egerton Shore to T.F. Harrison, May 11, 1911.

⁷⁷ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, fonds 14/2/4, 78.093C-box 7-file 130, T.E. Egerton Shore, "Special Report on Work among Asiatics in Canada," 1910.

from China could not adjust to the new conditions in Canada, and therefore failed in their work among the Chinese immigrants.⁷⁸ The difficulty in finding native workers who were pious, and had "knowledge of the Scriptures" and "good education" was thought of as "the chief hindrance" to the mission.⁷⁹ Sometimes the leaders of the missionary organizations even doubted the utility of the existence of the missions that were maintained by native workers. Some had suggested closing these inefficient mission stations for a few years until the time when "a high grade of trained leadership" was built.⁸⁰

In summary, while they were sent to work among the Chinese immigrants in Canada, Protestant missionaries usually carried a mindset that combined elements of Christianity and the Protestant vision of Canada. The presuppositions that shaped the mindset had an adverse influence on missionaries' motives for evangelizing the Chinese. And the motives heavily colored by secular purposes determined in large measure the objectives that the missionaries sought, and the methods they adopted in pursuit of them. Without doubt, in a period of almost a century, Protestant missionaries struggled at

⁷⁸ S.S. Osterhout, "Our Chinese Missions in British Columbia," *Missionary Bulletin*, 13, 3 (July-September 1917): 502.

⁷⁹ "Asiatics in Canada," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, the Methodist Church of Canada, 1907-08*, p. 38.

⁸⁰ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, Correspondence of the General Secretaries, Correspondence of T.E. Egerton Shore, fonds 14/2/4, 78.093C-box74-file 138, T.E. Egerton Shore to S.S. Osterhout, July 10, 1912.

considerable cost to win the Chinese immigrants to Christianity. They were deeply concerned about the Chinese immigrants' spiritual health and moral welfare, and did everything they could to help the Chinese to build a new life in Canada, including the elimination of various social vices. However, at the same time, the missionaries tried in every way to destroy the Chinese cultural tradition in order to fulfil their own need for self-expression by imposing a narrow set of religious beliefs and cultural standards. The encounter of Canadian Protestant missionaries with Chinese immigrants thus also brought insensitivity, arrogance, and misunderstanding.

Protestant efforts among the Chinese immigrants in Canada can by no means be dismissed as a record of failure. The missions performed many services that no one else was able or willing to perform. Despite their own prejudices, they helped many Chinese immigrants find acceptance in Canadian society. For example, it was with the church's financial support that the first Chinese doctor gained her medical training at a Canadian university.⁸¹ Meanwhile, the missions did attract an appreciable number of Chinese immigrants into their churches. The Christian church became a permanent part of the religious and social structure of the Chinese community in Canada. Chinese Christians and their churches also became part of the

⁸¹ Helen G. Day & Kenneth J. Beaton, *They Came Through: Stories of Chinese Canadians* (Toronto: The United Church of Canada, n.d.), p. 7.

Canadian religious scene.

CHAPTER 8

The Chinese Response to the Protestant Missions

From the very beginning of their mission, Protestant missionaries were welcomed among the Chinese immigrants in Canada. The spirit of fraternal love and Christian humanitarianism embodied by the missionaries left a deep impression on the Chinese. They discovered that these white people truly and sincerely practiced what they believed, and that they were different from other white Canadians. Most Chinese immigrants agreed that the missionaries were "good men" who were willing to offer help to anyone who needed them. The Chinese therefore showed their sincere appreciation to missionaries' kindness and friendliness with respect and friendship.

However, no matter how appreciative the Chinese were of missionaries' personalities and their religious piety, the religion that the missionaries carried seemed less appealing to the Chinese immigrants. The situation was described by a Presbyterian missionary:

Sometimes the Chinese show their appreciation for what we do for them by giving us presents, but their appreciation of our efforts does not goes [sic] so far

as to bring them to the missions to hear the gospel.¹

Indeed, the missionaries often complained that the Chinese displayed an indifferent and sometimes resistant attitude toward the Protestant missions. Some even blamed the Chinese for refusing the gospel of God and completely indulging in their ancient superstitions. However, if the issue is considered from the historical perspective of Chinese life in Canada, it will be found that the Chinese response to the Protestant missions was not simply an issue of religious orientation. The Chinese experience in Canada, to a great degree, affected their attitude toward the Canadian Protestant churches and their missions. In other words, the Chinese response to the missions largely resulted from their relationship to the dominant white group in Canada. Changes in the ethnic relationship between the whites and the Chinese immigrants were the prime reasons for the change in the Chinese attitude towards the Protestant missions.

This chapter will examine the Protestant mission from another angle, namely, the Chinese experience. More specifically, it will discuss how Chinese immigrants responded to the missionary's message and what role the Chinese way of life played in the encounter between the

¹ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 4-file 120, the Correspondence of C.A. Colman to the Foreign Mission Committee, 1920.

Chinese immigrants and the missionaries. Meanwhile, through examining changes in Chinese religious affiliation, the effects of the mission on Chinese life in Canada will also be analyzed. The chapter will give more attention to the impact of ethnic conflict on the Chinese response to the missions.

8.1 The Pragmatic Attitude to the Missions

In Canadian history, most immigrants came to the country to make a new and better life for themselves. However, once they entered the country, most immigrants of ethnic minority groups found that it was necessary for them to change in whatever ways necessary to become more integrated into the larger society, even though this change sometimes brought them bitter experience. In other words, traditional dress, foreign tongues, different religions, and unfamiliar customs might be seen as obstacles preventing equal access to the larger society's opportunity structures and as inhibiting economic status mobility. Furthermore, any unwillingness or inability to minimize these visible ethnic traits would result in some degree of social or economic costs to the individual who chose to maintain a distinctive minority group identity and behavior.² In fact, most early immigrants who

² In their study of Ukrainians in Canada, using data from the 1971 Census Public Use Sample, Kalbach and Richard conclude that the Ukrainian who became less ethnic was more likely to reach higher income levels than his same generation counterpart who remained totally ethnic. See Warren E. Kalbach and Madeline A. Richard, "Differential Effects of Ethno-Religious Structure on Linguistic Trends and Economic Achievements of Ukrainian Canadians," in W. Roman Petryshyn ed., *Changing Realities: Social Trends Among Ukrainian Canadians* (Edmonton: The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1980, pp. 78-96).

came from minority groups always made whatever changes that were required to achieve the social and economic mobility necessary to move from their initial ethnic reception areas into the larger society and fuller participation in its social and economic institutions. The Chinese immigrants to Canada were no exception.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, for most Chinese immigrants, immigration to Canada was an economic venture. The purpose of the Chinese immigrant was to make money in Canada. This purpose gave the Chinese a strong impulse to integrate into Canadian society. They were anxious for the opportunity to integrate, because they knew that it was the only way for them to realize their dream of becoming a wealthy person when they returned to their home in China.

However, due to the discrimination against the Chinese immigrants in Canada, the Chinese community was completely segregated from the larger society in the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries. As a result of the segregation, the Chinese lost their opportunity to contact other groups of people, especially the white groups in Canadian society. It was in such a time when racial tensions dominated the relationship between the Chinese and the whites, that Protestant missionaries, most of whom were white and English speaking, came to the Chinese community.

Without doubt, the missionaries came for the purpose of evangelization. However, what they first created in the Chinese community was not the church, but the mission school.

It was also known that the mission school offered various English language classes. For the Chinese who were mostly illiterate but eager to enter the larger society, the mission school provided a unique opportunity for contact with the people who were from the dominant white group in Canadian society. Moreover, judged even by today's standards, the scholastic environment in the school was also excellent: one teacher usually had as few as ten students in class. The Chinese soon took advantage of this mission facility, although they did not know much about the purpose of the school and the contents of the textbook—the Gospels.

In missionary reports, it was always told that evening English classes in the mission school were well attended. This was particularly true in the first years of the mission. At that time, the missionaries from the Methodist and Presbyterian churches often reported that the attendance in their mission schools was over one hundred. In an annual report on the Methodist mission work in Victoria, it was mentioned that the average attendance in the mission school was about two hundred people in the year 1890, or one-tenth of the Chinese population in the city.³

However, most Chinese came to the mission school not for acquiring religious knowledge, but for gaining a certain proficiency in the understanding and speaking of the English language so that they could find a higher-wage job.

³ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, the Methodist Church of Canada, 1890-91*, p. xxvi.

Since the Chinese came to the missions mainly for learning the English language, few of them intended to develop a relationship with the mission itself. Once they thought that they had learnt enough English skills to find a better job, they left the school and went to make money. In most of cases, when these Chinese left the school, they cut off their relationship to the missions; and certainly, they would never make any contact with their English teachers and the missionaries again. Therefore, at the early stage of the mission, the Chinese response to the mission was to welcome the missionaries and the English classes, but to keep away from the religion taught by the missionaries.

There was other evidence that made the Chinese attitude to the missions manifest. The evidence was also from the reports on the mission school. Various missionary reports showed that, although the Chinese appeared keen on attending the mission school, few of them stayed long with the school--most left in a few months. Moreover, the attendance continued to decline just a few years after the mission school was opened. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, it was often reported that the annual attendance at the mission school varied between one thousand and nearly two thousands. However, after the middle of the 1890s, the attendance declined to several hundreds. And the persons who attended the school year-around were only 10 to 20. For example, in a Presbyterian missionary's report, it was noted that although the names on the school roll reached 760 in 1896, the average

attendance at the school was only about 30.⁴

Indeed, many Chinese immigrants treated the Protestant missionary more as a language teacher than as a preacher of the gospel of God. It even happened that when some Chinese immigrants learnt that an Anglican missionary came to their community, they visited the missionary and asked him to teach them the English language, but not to give them any religious instruction.⁵ A Presbyterian missionary also reported to the leader of his mission organization that the Chinese just wanted to learn from him the English language, but did not show "any direct interest" in what they told them of the gospel.⁶ However, although some missionaries warned that it was a waste of money to try to win the Chinese by teaching them the English language,⁷ most Protestant church leaders and missionaries were not willing to heed the warning. They grossly miscalculated potential growth in the Chinese mission by the attendance in the schools. For example, in 1891, a Methodist missionary report gave a self-confident comment on the mission work in Victoria:

It has awakened new interest in Chinatown in respect of the work which is being done among them, and furnishes them with a practical and conspicuous illustration of

⁴ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 1-file 10, John Campbell, "Missions to the Chinese in British Columbia," May 5, 1897.

⁵ Columbia Mission, *The Tenth Annual Report of the Columbia Mission for the Year 1868* (London: Rivington, 1869), p. 37.

⁶ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 1-file 1, the Correspondence of C.A. Colman to R.P. Mackay, April 16, 1894.

⁷ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 1-file 39, the Proceeding of the Presbyterian Mission Commission of British Columbia, August 31, 1905.

the solicitude which the Methodist Church feels for the salvation of their race.⁸

Another example was that both the Methodist and Presbyterian churches built their first Chinese church buildings with a large capacity to hold several hundred people. However, in the later years, the membership of few Chinese churches in Canada passed one hundred.

In fact, the pragmatic character of the Chinese attitude to the Protestant mission reflected the traditional Chinese way of thinking about religion. As noted in Chapter 2, the Chinese never accepted the idea of monotheism. For them, the Christian God was only one of those deities who would protect them from a bad life in this world. Therefore, while they considered if they should worship a deity, they usually made their decision from more secular considerations: what kind of protection could the deity provide for them, and to which degree could the protection reach. For example, when a Chinese immigrant explained to a missionary the reason that made him not accept the Christian belief, he said that God did not help his illness when he prayed to him for help. He also complained that he had done everything to express his belief in God, but his health got worse and worse. He then gave his conclusion to the missionary: "Your Jesus doesn't hear or doesn't care or isn't able to help me when I pray to Him; therefore I don't want to hear any more about Him."⁹ A

⁸ "The Chinese Work," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, the Methodist Church of Canada, 1890-91*, p. xxvi.

⁹ *The Acts and Proceedings of the Twenty Sixth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1900), p. 152.

Chinese farmer told another missionary a similar story about his reason for abandoning the Chinese gods whom he had worshiped for many years. He said that he had been working on his farm many years, worshiped his gods every day, but the gods did not help him to make money, instead, he lost money on his farm. Therefore, he decided not to believe in Chinese gods anymore.¹⁰

However, the pragmatic attitude to the missions did not mean that the Chinese were tolerant of their countrymen's converting to Christianity. This was particularly true in the early years of the mission. At that time, whenever a Chinese showed interest in the mission, he would experience threats or persecution from the people in his community.¹¹ Therefore, the formal profession of Christianity was a difficult task for the Chinese. It usually meant to cut off the relationship with family members, relatives, and friends, the very persons that the convert was dependent on in order to come to Canada in the first place. A Methodist missionary reported in 1886 that a Chinese young man was beaten by his uncle because the young man was going to convert to Christianity. The uncle even swore to kill the young man if he got baptized.¹² Another Methodist missionary reported in a later year that a new Chinese convert was kicked out of the house by his brother

¹⁰ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 1-file 38, C.A. Colman, "Report of Work Done in Connection with the Canadian Presbyterian Chinese Mission, B.C.," 1903.

¹¹ *The Acts and Proceedings of the Twenty Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1897), p. 188.

¹² W.W. Percival, "The Chinese Mission in B.C.," *The Missionary Outlook*, 6, 5 (May 1886): 77.

after he refused to obey his brother's order to stop coming to the mission.¹³ Moreover, sometimes the whole Chinese community might sanction the converts for their deviating from the traditional way of life, particularly when some anti-Christian people controlled the local community.

Indeed, in the early years of the mission, the missionaries faced strong opposition to the mission from the highbinder, opium dealers, gambling organizers, and brothel managers. Even for those already converted, the missionaries had to make strong efforts to persuade them to cut off their relationships to secret societies and other evil forces in the Chinese community.¹⁴ As a Presbyterian missionary, who worked among the Chinese immigrants in Cumberland, British Columbia, reported, "nearly every Chinese man" in the local community was either a member of a Chinese secret society or in some way had to submit to its power.¹⁵ It also happened that when the first mission school opened in Victoria, notices were posted in various parts of Chinatown, containing threats against the lives of the Chinese who attended the mission school or were baptized.¹⁶ A similar case happened in a mining community. The mission school there was boycotted, because one of Chinese students in the school refused to subscribe money for the practice of the rites at a Chinese

¹³ Tong Chue Thom, "Work among the Chinese in British Columbia," *The Missionary Bulletin*, 2, 2 (September-December, 1904): 309.

¹⁴ "Asiatics in Canada," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, the Methodist Church of Canada*, 1908-09, p. 43.

¹⁵ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 4-file 120, the Correspondence of C.A. Colman to the Foreign Mission Committee, 1920.

¹⁶ W.W. Percival, "The Chinese Mission in B.C.," *The Missionary Outlook*, 6, 5 (May 1886): 78.

funeral.¹⁷

The most serious case of the kind was an incident that happened in Vancouver, in which some interest groups in the Chinese community successfully lobbied the city authorities to issue an order banning street preaching in Vancouver's Chinatown. The incident occurred when a rumor was circulated accusing the members of the Nationalist Party of agitating among the Chinese immigrants in Vancouver for revolution against the Chinese government in the name of preaching the gospel in the Chinatown's streets. Some Chinese businessmen, who felt that the Protestant mission hurt their gambling business,¹⁸ immediately used the rumor as a weapon against the mission. They first sent a petition to the Chinese Consul and made the Consul believe what was circulating on the street was a true situation. Then, they successfully persuaded the Consul to ask for an official meeting with the mayor of the city. The result of the diplomatic meeting was the banning of street preaching. Although the ban was soon lifted after a Canadian missionary explained to the mayor what he and his Chinese assistants had really done on the street, just one Chinese missionary was allowed to preach in the streets of Chinatown.¹⁹

An underlying source of the hostility that the Chinese expressed towards the Protestant mission was the conflict

¹⁷ *The Acts and Proceedings of the Twenty Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Presbyterian, 1897), p. 186.

¹⁸ S.S. Osterhout, "Work among the Orientals in British Columbia," *Missionary Bulletin*, 11, 4 (September-December 1915): 679.

¹⁹ The incident was continually reported in *The Chinese Times*, a local Chinese newspaper published in Victoria, British Columbia. See *The Chinese Times*, July 7-16, 1915.

between the monotheism of Christianity and the polytheism of the traditional Chinese religion. As described in Chapter 2, Christianity was not an essential part of the ethno-religious identity of the Chinese immigrants to Canada. Traditional religious beliefs dominated Chinese immigrants' spiritual life in Canada. While Protestant missionaries attempted to convince the Chinese that there was only one God who was ultimately in control of the universe, few Chinese immigrants understood what this really meant.

From their own religious experience, most Chinese at that time believed that there were many deities in the world, and that the Christian God was only one of these deities. Therefore, they were more inclined to put Jesus on their list of deities, but not to replace those already on the list. They were worshiping as many deities as they could as long as they believed the deity was properly functioning to protect them from any untold calamities. In their mind, every deity had its special functions, and any other deities could not replace the functions.

Taking this model of the religious orientation of the Chinese immigrants to Canada, one could say that the Chinese immigrants were Confucian in terms of observing filial piety; they were Taoist when they worshiped supernatural beings; and they were also Buddhist because they believed in samsara. Since Chinese immigrants were asked to forsake all the deities they had worshiped for generations before they could accept the Christian God, many of them felt confused. Some of

them just refused to accept the religion that the missionary sent to them. As a Chinese immigrant told a Presbyterian missionary: it was unacceptable that he had to abandon his old beliefs if he wanted to be a Christian. The Chinese further told the missionary: although the teaching of Jesus is great, "you cannot make us believe that there are no ghosts, we know there are, we have seen them, and though you should kill us we would still believe in them." The missionary later expressed surprise at such strong traditional beliefs in the Chinese mind. He admitted that the Canadian Protestant churches had to confront the reality of "the appalling ignorance and superstitious attitudes" to Christianity before they could win those heathen Chinese.²⁰

Moreover, from the pragmatic perspective on the Protestant religion, Chinese immigrants simply did not see any sign that the Christian savior would offer them a more secure life in Canada than did their old deities. This was particularly true when the Chinese saw that no white Canadians applied Jesus' teaching of love and brotherhood to them; instead, they implanted hatred among peoples by discriminating against those different from them. Indeed, when the Chinese generally believed that all white Canadians were Christian, and were living in a contradiction of their beliefs, they felt doubt about the white people's religion. This feeling of skepticism further reinforced the attitudes

²⁰ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 1-file 7, the Correspondence of C.A. Colman to R.P. Mackay, August 9, 1894.

of indifference and even hostility to the Protestant religion among Chinese immigrants.

While those uneducated Chinese immigrants saw the conflict between Christianity and traditional Chinese religion mainly from their daily experience of religious practice, the elite of the Chinese community took the issue to the level of ethno-cultural identity. These people, who were mainly businessmen, community leaders, educators, and newspaper editors, believed that the conflict was not just an issue of religious affiliation, but related more to the ethnic identity of the Chinese community. It was from this point of view that the Chinese elite usually resisted the Protestant mission, although few of them were hostile to the mission. What they tried to convince their compatriots of was that Confucianism was much better than Christianity. As a supporter of the Association of Confucians in Montreal said in a gathering of the association:

Confucianism contains such extensive knowledge and profound scholarship that it brings all the doctrines of all the religions in the world under its rules... It will be not possible for a person to know any other religions, before he learns the teachings of Confucianism.²¹

The elite in the Chinese community tried everything to influence their people to maintain traditional beliefs and resist the invasion of Christianity. Among others, one of the most important methods used by the elite to resist the spread

²¹ *The Chinese Times*, Victoria, B.C., November 1, 1917, p. 3.

of Christianity was to open Chinese language schools. In the school, the Chinese language was taught and Chinese cultural traditions were introduced. The teaching of Confucianism was especially emphasized in the school's curriculum.

Chinese community newspapers were also used to offset the influence of Christianity. Articles that advocated Confucianism were often published in the newspaper. The celebration of Confucius' birthday was also reported on time. Sometimes, some articles criticizing Christianity could be read in the newspaper too.

While the missionaries preached to the Chinese people in the streets, individual Chinese persons might raise a debate with the missionary. *The Chinese Times*, the official Chinese community newspaper, which had been published daily in Victoria, British Columbia until the 1970s, reported in 1926 an incident in which a Chinese businessman debated with a missionary who was preaching in the street of the Chinatown in Victoria. Although the report did not mention the topic of the debate, it must have been a very heated one because their debate attracted many spectators. Moreover, during the debate, the man was so emotional that a policeman decided to bring him to a police station because the police believed that the man would attack the missionary physically if the debate continued.²²

As for the public criticism of the mission, the editors of *The Chinese Times* played an important role. Although few

²² *The Chinese Times*, Victoria, B.C., February 10, 1926, p. 3.

strong anti-Christian words were found in the editorials of the newspaper, the editors often indirectly criticized Christianity by comparing Confucianism and Christianity. The following paragraph was typical in this kind of editorial published in *The Chinese Times*:

The teachings of Confucius are far more brilliant than that of Jesus. It is not adhere rigidly to the theory of a certain school, but to absorb the quintessence of various schools. And Confucianism is more tolerant than any other religions. Since it emphasizes rituals to model people's behaviors, the society keeps peace; and different ethnic groups can peacefully live together in the same country.²³

The message that of the editor tried to his people was that they did not need to forsake their beliefs and convert to Christianity. And it was also worthless to convert to Christianity, because Confucianism was better than any other religion. For the editors and authors of the newspaper, conversion was nothing but the abandoning of Chinese cultural tradition and its result was the loss of the connection with the motherland.

However, not everyone in the Chinese community considered the Chinese tradition as important as the editor of *The Chinese Times* did. Influenced by Protestant missionaries, some Chinese were going to change themselves, so that they could adapt to a new life as soon as possible, which usually meant to convert to Christianity. For most Chinese immigrants, it was not so easy to make the decision

²³ *The Chinese Times*, Victoria, B.C., March 23, 1918, p. 3.

to convert to the new faith, even though they had already decided to give up the old beliefs. Many of them were suffering from cutting off their relationship with the old tradition but not finding their position in the new faith. The following story demonstrates how hard it was for the Chinese to accept a new faith. The story goes back to the first years of this century. In Victoria, British Columbia, there was a Chinese vegetable gardener who was friends with a Chinese Christian. Through the Chinese Christian, the gardener knew the missionary who worked in the city. After hearing the missionary preach and taking part in the activities organized by the missionary, the gardener began to believe that the Chinese ancestral worship was "utterly worthless and entirely foolish."²⁴ He therefore refused to attend the rites of ancestral worship, and stopped visiting the graveyard to burn incense and paper money for the dead. He also refused to pay the annual amount collected by his clan for sending his countrymen's bones back to China. He then spent several years to persuade his wife to do the same. However, after years of hesitation, he still could not make a decision if he would accept the Christian God. He remained in such a dilemma, even after his wife and children became Christians.²⁵

However, more Chinese immigrants, especially Chinese Christians came to make compromises between the Christian

²⁴ Tong Chue Thom, "Work among the Chinese in British Columbia," *Missionary Bulletin*, 2, 2 (September-December 1904): 310.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 310-311.

faith and their traditional beliefs. They tried to maintain their old tradition after they converted to Christianity. They went to a Christian church and prayed to God; but, at the same time, they continued to observe traditional Chinese customs, such as the Chinese calendar, the celebrating of the Chinese holidays, and the worshiping of their ancestors. Even some Chinese missionaries also kept their Chinese life-style and observed Confucian rites, while they were preaching to their people the new religion. For example, a Chinese Presbyterian missionary gave his newborn son a Chinese style celebration before he gave his son Christian baptism. What he prayed for his son was that he be buried in China so that Confucius could take care of his soul.²⁶

In the process of making compromises between Christianity and Confucianism, more Chinese Christians tried to demonstrate what the two religions had in common; and they convinced their people that the combining of the two religions was possible. And this combination would give Chinese people maximum benefits. For example, while speaking at a gathering celebrating the fourth anniversary of the Independent Chinese Presbyterian Church in Vancouver, the Chinese Consul, who was Christian, told his audience that if they studied the teachings of Christianity, they would find that the common elements between Confucianism and Christianity were countless.²⁷ When another Chinese Christian

²⁶ Chan Kwok Bun, *Smoke and Fire: The Chinese in Montreal* (Beijing: The Beijing University Press, 1996), p. 201.

²⁷ *The Chinese Times*, Victoria, B.C., March 20, 1918, p. 3.

gave a speech at a gathering celebrating Confucius' birthday, he made the point clearer: "we Christians believe in Jesus, and we also know that Confucius was like Jesus to teach people to be a good man. If a person believes in Christianity, and, at the same time, he also studies Confucius' teachings, he will be absolutely a virtuous man."²⁸

8.2 Racial Tensions and the Missions

Since the levels of prejudice and discrimination were unusually harsh, barring Chinese immigrants from entering into Canadian mainstream institutions, the characteristic features of Chinese life in Canada were social and cultural isolation and a low level of absorption into the larger society. However, this imposed segregation did not make the Chinese immigrants isolated from themselves. As depicted in Chapter 1, within their community, the Chinese established a powerful social structure based on the extended family pattern of lineage. Much of Chinese social life in Canada was organized around various kin, clan, and secret societies. As a result, the Chinese developed a strong sense of identification with their native country. The traditional Chinese way of life, thus, for the Chinese immigrants in Canada, was not only the cultural heritage that brought them the pride of their motherland, but also a self-protective weapon in a hostile society.

²⁸ *The Chinese Times*, Victoria, B.C., November 5, 1918, p. 3.

While the Canadian Protestant churches launched the campaign to evangelize Chinese immigrants, the leaders of the Chinese community immediately realized that the mission was a threat to the maintaining of the ethnic identity of the Chinese community. In other words, they knew that the conversion to Christianity would change their community members to deviate from the traditional Chinese way of life. And deviation from the tradition meant to the community leaders that the community would lose its manpower to fight against the social and economic injustice that was imposed on Chinese immigrants by white Canadians. Moreover, community leaders, who occupied positions of power and influence in the Chinese community, had an interest in maintaining the separation between the Chinese community and the larger society. This was because the dissolution of the barriers would entail for them a significant loss of power, and certainly of economic benefits. Thus, the racial tensions between Chinese immigrants and white Canadians caused a cultural conflict between Christianity and traditional Chinese religion. The trigger of the conflict was the Protestant mission. It is not surprising that, under this circumstance, the Chinese community exhibited resistance to the Protestant missions.

Although Protestant missionaries did not meet strong opposition from the Chinese community as a whole, the leaders of the Chinese community exercised all their influence to discourage Chinese immigrants from accepting the Protestant

religion. They also tried everything to stop the expansion of the mission in the Chinese community. One of the most typical collective actions that they took to resist the influence of the mission was to organize the Association of Confucians across the country. The first Association of Confucians was established in Victoria in 1914. Following this first step, the Chinese in cities such as Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal soon established the same organizations. Chinese businessmen, newspaper editors, and schoolteachers were key members of these organizations. The goals of the Association were to promote Confucianism among the Chinese immigrants, extend the influence of Confucianism to every aspect of life in the Chinese community, and teach the new generation of Chinese immigrants the Chinese cultural tradition. And the general purpose of the association was to resist the development of the Protestant mission. As a reporter of *The Chinese Times* commented on the establishment of the Association of Confucians in Victoria:

Recently the intellectuals who were worried about the strong influence of Christianity on our people advocated organizing the Association of Confucians. Their purpose was to resist the expansion of Christianity by institutionalizing Confucianism in the Chinese community."²⁹

Every year the associations in the cities across the country organized various celebrations on the birthday of Confucius.³⁰ Gatherings would be held in the cities where most

²⁹ *The Chinese Times*, Victoria, B.C., October 10, 1914, p. 3.

³⁰ August 27 in Chinese lunar calendar.

Chinese lived. Community leaders would give speeches to ask Chinese immigrants to maintain the Confucian tradition in their life. Chinese schools would also have special worship rites to Confucius. Newspapers would publish editorials and articles to pay respect to Confucius. An editorial of *The Chinese Times* gave a frank explanation of the campaign advocating Confucianism:

We have to let our people learn Confucianism, for only by so doing, will the people here keep their motherland in their heart forever, and they will be more concerned about China. Our community, in turn, will become more consolidated.³¹

The associations of Confucians remained active in the Chinese communities across Canada until the 1930s. Their campaign to promote Confucianism and their endeavors to inculcate Chinese cultural tradition in younger generations of Chinese immigrants, to a great degree, blocked the development of the Protestant mission in the Chinese community.

Thus, while most common Chinese immigrants weakened the effect of the Protestant mission by their pragmatic attitude to the mission, the elite in the Chinese community strengthened the ethnic identity of the Chinese community by advocating Confucianism.

Faced with this double resistance from the Chinese community, the Protestant attempt to evangelize the Chinese immigrants in Canada was often overshadowed by the

³¹ *The Chinese Times*, Victoria, B.C., December 2, 1922, p. 3.

disappointments of ineffectiveness and hopeless feelings about the future. At this point, both the elite in the Chinese community and the common Chinese people played important roles. On the one hand, the elite consolidated the Chinese community by nurturing community members' sense of cultural nationalism. Confucianism, due to its character of being China's national ideology, was used to strengthen the ethnic identity of the Chinese community. And the strong sense of community identity gave the Chinese community the power to resist the spread of the Protestant mission. On the other hand, the common Chinese people diminished the effect of the Protestant mission by their pragmatic way of adopting Christianity, which brought the Protestant missionaries much discouragement in their work among the Chinese.

Indeed, the cultural conflict was only one of the aspects that had a negative influence on the Protestant missions. Throughout the history of the mission, racial conflict often colored the relationship between the Chinese immigrant and the missionary. This situation is as John Rex has pointed: the minority group's desire for maintaining its identity and the insistence upon the elimination of "alien cultural practices" by the dominant group often cause an ethnic conflict.³² The Chinese resistance to the Protestant mission, at this point, can be seen in Chinese immigrants' fight for ethnic survival in Canadian society. Throughout the

³² John Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory*, second edition, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1983), p. 100.

years, the Protestant missionaries found that they had to overcome Chinese nationalist feelings before they could teach the Chinese the gospel of God.

While discriminated against by white Canadians, many Chinese immigrants felt that to espouse Christianity was to adopt the religion of the race that condemned them.³³ There was also a popular saying that circulated among the Chinese: the purpose of the Christian mission was to help Western countries "take possession of Chinese territory."³⁴ Since the Chinese immigrants in Canada had a close relationship with China, they were usually very sensitive to the future development of China. Therefore, the suspicious attitude to the mission often turned to a real anti-Christian campaign in the Chinese community. This was particularly true in the 1920s when a nationalist movement swept all over China. Encouraged by the nationalist feeling, more anti-Christian articles and editorials were published in *The Chinese Times* in the 1920s. And the authors of the newspaper turned their topic from promoting Confucianism and advising people not to convert to Christianity to criticizing Christianity and its mission to the Chinese people. They accused Christian missionaries of deceiving the Chinese into thinking that all the missionaries had done was for the Chinese people's best interests, whereas their real purpose was so that the Chinese

³³ "The Chinese Work on the Pacific Coast," *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, the Methodist Church of Canada, 1893-94*, p. xlii.

³⁴ Tong Chue Thom, "The Chinese Work," *The Missionary Outlook*, 17, 11 (November 1898): 166.

would not oppose Western countries' invasion of China.³⁵ A placard that was issued by the Anti-Christianity Society in Vancouver's Chinese community in 1922 gave a clear illustration of the Chinese anti-Christian sentiments of the day, especially these of young Chinese intellectuals. The placard claimed that Christianity obstructed the progress of science, and hindered the development of human thought; and it deceived the Chinese by so-called Christian love and liberty, so that the Chinese people could not perceive the real face of the mission--"a forerunner of a Capitalist in China."³⁶

The anti-Christian sentiment among Chinese immigrants was intensified by the adoption of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1923. Although the Canadian Protestant churches opposed the new Chinese immigration law, and many church leaders and missionaries joined the Chinese in criticizing the law, a new wave of anti-Christian sentiment spread in the Chinese community through the articles of the Chinese newspapers and the speeches of the Chinese community's leaders. An editorial of *The Chinese Times* uttered its strongest words against Christianity:

Canadians were not real Christian, and they did not practice the teachings of Jesus, although they called themselves Christian. They discriminated against our countrymen, and issued various laws excluding our people from Canada... All they did for us was against the teachings of Jesus. And how can we understand the

³⁵ *The Chinese Times*, Victoria, B.C., April 15, 1922, p. 3.

³⁶ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Foreign Missions fonds, Mission to the Chinese in Canada, fonds 122/2, 79.189C-box 5-file 141, a placard posted in Vancouver's Chinatown, 1922.

Christian principles of equity, liberty, and love from their discriminatory action against our people? ... Our Chinese should wake up from Canadians' treatment to our people. We should not be deceived by their so-called religion of love. We should unite as one to save our nation and fight back the bullying and humiliation imposed by foreigners.³⁷

While strong words were used to criticize Christianity and Protestant missionaries, the newspaper published more articles to argue that Confucianism was the only way to save China and protect Chinese immigrants from white Canadians' discrimination. The titles of the editorials used similar words to express the editors' nationalist feelings, such as "Spread Confucianism for the Sake for Saving China," and "Confucianism Is the Best Theory of Saving China."³⁸ In these editorials, the editors especially emphasized the role of Confucianism in consolidating the Chinese community and strengthening the relationship of the Chinese immigrants to their motherland.

The racial weapon was played by the leaders of the Chinese community in the following years, especially during the period of the anti-Japanese war (1937-1945). During these years, the attention of Chinese immigrants was totally drawn to the political situation in China and the progress of the anti-Japanese war. The nationalist consensus dominated every aspect of life in the Chinese community. Everything that

³⁷ *The Chinese Times*, Victoria, B.C., July 8, 1924, p. 3.

³⁸ *The Chinese Times*, Victoria, B.C., 8 November 1922 and 12 June 1929, p. 3.

happened in China was interest to the Chinese immigrants in Canada. The community newspaper gave detailed reports on the war every day. The community activities were all for the purpose of helping China to fight against Japan, such as fund raising, public gatherings, and recruiting young Chinese to go back to China to fight the invasion of Japan. During these years, the Chinese immigrants showed less interest in the Protestant mission, while the Canadian Protestant churches exhibited an indifferent attitude to China's war against the Japanese. In particular, the Chinese felt that they could not stand to sit in the same church with Japanese listening to the missionary preach about world peace.³⁹ No matter what the purpose of union church services was, the racial tensions between the Chinese and the white Canadian were extremely apparent during the 1920s and 1930s. As mentioned in Chapter 6, after 1923 the Protestant mission to the Chinese in Canada obtained few results. Things changed during the first years of the 1940s when China became an ally of Canada in the Second World War.

The figures from the Census of Canada in 1941 further demonstrate the effects of discrimination on the Chinese mission.

³⁹ The mission of The Methodist Church in Victoria, B.C. organized an International Communion Service every year during the years of the Second World War. In the service, the Chinese and Japanese sit side by side in the same church. See the *Annual Report of the Missionary Society, the United Church of Canada, 1939*, p. 106.

Table 8.1 Chinese Population in B.C. and Ontario by Religious Denominations in 1941¹

Province	Protestants ²	Catholics	Confucians ³	Others ⁴	Total
B.C.	2,806	274	14,638	901	18,619
Ontario	2,942	177	740	2,284	6,143
Canada	8,465	1,007	22,744	2,411	34,627

Source: Census of Canada, 1941, Table 5, p. 56.

1. The Chinese population is defined by racial origin.
2. Includes those who affiliate to the United, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Baptist.
3. Includes Buddhists.
4. Includes all other religions, "no religion," and "not stated".

Table 8.1 shows the distribution of Chinese population by religious denomination in British Columbia and Ontario in 1941. The geographical distribution of Chinese Christians in these two provinces reflected a significant factor in the Chinese response to the Protestant mission. Table 8.1 shows that only 15 per cent of the total Chinese population of B.C. were affiliated with the Canadian Protestant churches in 1941; however, almost half of the Chinese in Ontario were Protestants. And the Ontario Protestant population of 2,942 accounted for about 35 per cent of the total Protestant Chinese population of Canada, while the Chinese population in Ontario was only about 18 per cent of the total Chinese population of Canada. What is more significant is the geographical distribution of Confucians. Among those Chinese who claimed to be Confucians, about 65 per cent of them lived in B.C., while only about 3 per cent of them were in Ontario. In other words, about 79 per cent of the Chinese in B.C. claimed themselves Confucians, but only about 12 per cent of

them in Ontario claimed the same religious affiliation.

These statistics suggest that the Chinese in B.C. were more likely to maintain their traditional way of life, and to affiliate with their traditional religion, while the racial tension was more apparent in that province. The Chinese in Ontario, unlike their countrymen in B.C., felt less racial discrimination in their daily life. They could vote and could practice as lawyers, pharmacists, and accountants. Since this was the case, the Chinese in Ontario had greater opportunity for upward mobility. Since it was often believed that there was a common association of church membership with social mobility, the Chinese in Ontario showed a greater interest in the Protestant mission.

Due to the racial tension, the Chinese response to the Protestant mission was always affected by the relationship between the Chinese community and the larger society. The discrimination against the Chinese immigrants was always an important factor affecting the Chinese immigrants' response to the Protestant mission. For Chinese immigrants, in order to survive in a hostile society, the maintaining of their ethnic identity became extremely important. The leaders of the Chinese community advocated a patriotic spirit among the Chinese immigrants, and emphasized the cultivation of the sense of community identity. Therefore, the Chinese immigrants' response to the Protestant mission was generally

negative. As a missionary commented: The harsh treatment that the Chinese immigrants received in Canada would "not tend to wean them of their own, nor wed them to our country and customs."⁴⁰

Moreover, since the maintaining of ethnic identity was very important for Chinese immigrants' survival in Canada, the Chinese immigrants in Canada always emphasized the close relationship to their motherland. At this point, the Chinese response to the mission was often an echo of the political events that happened in China. And to a great degree, the response reflected the change of the relationship between Canada and China during the first half of this century.

8.3 The Effects of the Mission

Generally speaking, the Protestant missions did not influence the life of the Chinese community very much. Most Chinese immigrants did not even notice the missions except for the English school, the street preaching, and the Christmas celebration. Chinese churches only made a small appearance in the life of the Chinese community. Located in the heart of Chinatowns, the churches had almost no contact

⁴⁰ James C. Speer, *The Story of China in Canada* (Toronto: The Department of Missionary Literature of the Methodist Church of Canada, 1909?), p. 21.

with the mainstream Protestant community. The members of the Chinese church came mostly from the laboring class. They could hardly support their church by themselves. For example, *The Chinese Times* published a contribution list for the Chinese Methodist church in New Westminster, British Columbia in 1919. The list showed that the 126 contributors contributed a total of 215 dollars to their church's missionary fund; most contributed less than one dollar.⁴¹ Native pastors usually administer the Chinese churches. In most cases, the Chinese language was the only language of communication in the church service. Their activities were rarely reported in community newspapers.⁴² And Chinese Christians, like their countrymen, were isolated from the large society. Their lives were still shadowed by old cultural traditions. Their behavior conformed to old Chinese customs. They were Christians but not Canadian Christians.

Indeed, the missions produced some effects on individual Chinese lives. Among others, some young Chinese immigrants, especially second and third generation Chinese immigrants, felt the impact of the Protestant missions on their lives more. After they accepted the new faith, these young Chinese abandoned the old Chinese way of life. They endeavored to adapt into the new Christian way of life. However, the

⁴¹ *The Chinese Times*, Victoria, British Columbia, May 30, 1919, p. 3.

⁴² For example, there were only a few reports on the activities of the Chinese churches found in *The Chinese Times* in its more than four-decade circulating history.

conversion to Christianity, for most Chinese immigrants, did not guarantee that they were accepted by the larger society. Conversion often brought the break-up of the old Chinese way of life, but not the establishment of a new way of life. Many young Chinese Christians felt that they did not belong to either the Chinese community or the larger society. They found themselves "separated socially from the Chinese by their training and beliefs and from the white youth by their race."⁴³

Discrimination was always a factor affecting the Chinese immigrants' life in Canada. This was also true for Chinese Christians. Unlike their countrymen whose roots were still in China, some Chinese Christians thought that they were Canadian "in thoughts, ideals, feelings, attitudes,"⁴⁴ because they embraced a Canadian religion and lived a Canadian way of life. However, when they stepped outside the door of the church, they soon realized that they were not real Canadian, no matter how Christian they were. This was because they were not accepted by Canadian society, even though they embraced a Canadian religion. A United Church survey of Chinese Christians life in Canada showed that the Chinese Christians, like their non-Christian countrymen, were not welcomed in the

⁴³ United Church of Canada/Victoria University Archives, Methodist Church (Canada) Missionary Society fonds, 14/2/4, 78.095C-box 1-file 16, the Proceeding of an Unofficial Meeting of the Ministers of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches of Victoria, B.C., April 12, 1914.

⁴⁴ Helen G. Day & Kenneth J. Beaton, *They Came Through: Stories of Chinese Canadians* (Toronto: Literature Department of Woman's Missionary Society, the United Church of Canada, 1944?), p. 2.

white community. The survey told of a Chinese couple's experience in looking for a house in a white community. After converting to Christianity, the couple wanted to leave Chinatown. When they bought a house in a white community, a neighbor on the street began to circulate a petition asking the city council to forbid the owner of the house to sell them the house. His argument was that wherever there were Chinese, there would be opium dens and fan tan joints. And many people agreed with him and signed the petition.⁴⁵ The story shows that even in the 1940s, life was still very hard for the Chinese in a discriminatory society. Living in such a social environment, Chinese Christians found that although they escaped from the trammels of the old Chinese ideas, the new faith did not provide them a new spiritual shelter in the larger society. Worse than that, they felt that they were eliminated from both parties: the traditional Chinese way of life and the new Canadian culture.

However, the Protestant missions also had a positive impact on Chinese life. Education was the biggest benefit that the Chinese immigrants obtained from the mission. The English language school helped many Chinese immigrants to learn about Canadian society at an early stage of their settlement in Canada. The language skills that they learnt from the school helped them to find jobs in the larger

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

society and do business with white men. It is important that the language training helped the Chinese to learn the Canadian way of life. As a result, it helped to transfer the Chinese into the larger society.

Conclusion

By 1967, when the Canadian government's new immigration regulations brought the end of the discriminatory immigration policy against the Chinese people, Canadian Protestant missionaries had successfully extended the influence of Protestantism to almost every Chinese community across the country. More than half of the Chinese immigrants in Canada claimed their religious faith to be Protestantism.¹ The Canadian Protestant churches were making good progress in evangelizing the Chinese immigrants.

However, it was from that time on that major Canadian Protestant denominations one after another ceased their organized missionary activities among the Chinese immigrants in Canada. Although it might be a coincidence that the churches ended the mission when the Canadian government no longer saw Chinese immigrants as a threat to the country, a close relationship between the mission and the dread of the Yellow Peril could still be seen from the pre-1960s history of the mission.

The mission to the Chinese immigrants was part of the

¹ According to the figures of Census of Canada, in 1961, among 58,197 Chinese immigrants in Canada, 31,222 claimed that they belonged to one of four major Canadian Protestant denominations--the United, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Baptist.

Canadian Protestant churches' national campaign to integrate the Chinese into a Protestant Christian community defined according to a vision of Canada as His Dominion. Since this Canadian Protestant version of the Kingdom of God was grounded in a homogeneous ethnic and political heritage--Anglo-Saxon institutions and Protestant Christianity, the Canadian Protestant churches saw all immigrants who did not share this heritage as a threat to the realization of their vision. Thus, for the churches, the evangelization of Canada meant the accomplishment of uniformity in Protestant religion and Anglo-Saxon culture. As N.K. Clifford has pointed:

The vision of Canada as 'His Dominion' helped not only to define the threat of immigration but also to direct their [Protestant] response into a crusade to Canadianize the immigrants by Christianizing them into conformity with the ideals and standards of Canadian white Anglo-Saxon Protestants.²

As long as the sense of Anglo-conformity framed the Canadian Protestant clergy's mindset in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the evangelizing of Canada conducted by the Canadian Protestant churches was heavily colored by racial prejudice. In other words, the Protestant campaigns to Christianize Canadians showed a strong influence of English-speaking Canadian nationalist sentiments and reflected the common English-speaking Canadian racial assumptions of the time. With the conviction that a white

² N.K. Clifford, "His Dominion: A Vision in Crisis," *Studies in Religion*, 2, 4 (1973): 315.

Anglo-Saxon Protestant nation represented the highest form of Christianity and civilization, Protestant clergy firmly believed that it was their responsibility to ensure that Canada maintained a religious and cultural identity with such a nation. In order to achieve this goal, the clergy strove to Canadianize non-Protestant immigrants by Christianizing them into conformity with Canadian Protestant cultural and religious ideals and standards. At this point, like all other English-speaking Canadian nationalists, Protestant clergy put their greatest emphasis on assimilation to the standards of the English-speaking majority, with the purpose of bringing the immigrants into line with their vision of Anglo-Saxon Protestant civilization.

It is clear that the Protestant mission to immigrants was primarily motivated by their concern for the nation's destiny. For Protestant clergy, the work of evangelizing those who brought various religions different from Protestantism could significantly affect the development of the nation. Therefore, the Protestant church was duty-bound to play a vital role in safeguarding nation's values and leading these "strangers" into God's Dominion. The clergy also thought that neglect of these "strangers," for the church, meant a national peril because "a lower order of habits, customs and institutions" would supplant Canada's "sound and suitable public institutions," "high political ideals," and "social

conscience."³ By evangelizing them, however, there would be created a national spirit that gave Canada the sense of community which it needed to withstand the challenge of alien cultures. Moreover, the clergy believed that those who were evangelized were thereby taught the right moral attitudes and responsibilities and thus made fit to become Canadian citizens; conversely, as they were Canadianized, their assimilation would lead them to the true Christian life. The social impulse and concern for social conditions thus reinforced the evangelistic tone of the churches. Meanwhile, the work of the Protestant missions to immigrants also placed Canadianization as the highest ideal of the missions.

In sum, since the vision of Canada as His Dominion implied a strong ethnocentric meaning, racial prejudice strongly affected the churches' missionary work among immigrants. In fact, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, racial prejudice, for Protestant clergy, was a frame of mind, a cluster of beliefs and emotions that directed their perceptions of the world around them. In this sense, racial prejudice was an ideology and it found expression in the Protestant strategy to Canadianize and Christianize immigrants. While evangelism was still the key to

³ Carson J. Cameron, *Foreigners or Canadians?* (Toronto: Baptist Home Mission Board of Ontario and Quebec, 1913), p. 14; J.S. Woodsworth, "Nation Building," *The University Magazine*, XVI (1917): 88; and W.S. Smith, *Building the Nation: A Study of Some Problems Concerning the Churches' Relation to the Immigrants* (Toronto: the Ryerson Press, 1922), p. 32.

the Canadian Protestant churches' missionary activities, it was mainly a practical evangelism with a number of significant social and nationalistic ramifications. And the churches' missionary impulse was often replaced by an eagerness to realize their vision of building a religiously and culturally homogeneous nation.

It was in this viewpoint that the Protestant missions to the Chinese immigrants in Canada were also part of white Canadians' battle for removing the Yellow Peril.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many white Canadians saw the Chinese immigrants in Canada as the Yellow Peril that would destroy the nation's Anglo-Saxon Protestant civilization. In order to protect the nation from such a threat, politicians, church leaders, university professors, newspaper editors, and union leaders soon formed an anti-Chinese coalition to eliminate the Chinese immigrants from this country. As a result of this anti-Chinese campaign, the Chinese immigrants were deprived of the normal rights of citizenship and other social and economic privileges for many years. Indeed, they had been refused participating in the social and economic life of Canadian society until the late 1940s. Meanwhile, from the 1880s, discriminatory immigration laws severely restricted Chinese immigration to Canada, and finally excluded them from entering the country in 1923.

As leading players in Canadian society, the Protestant churches joined the white anti-Chinese coalition to campaign for removing the Yellow Peril. Most Protestant clergy shared the anti-Chinese sentiment with their contemporaries, and they also saw the presence of the Chinese in Canada as a threat to their vision of Canada. However, the tactics used by the churches in the campaign were different from other white Canadians. Most Protestant clergy believed that the solution for the Chinese problem was not the exclusion or deportation of Chinese immigrants from Canada. Instead, it depended on the Protestant churches being able to convert these Chinese heathens to Christianity. This belief came mainly from their Christian belief in the equality of all human beings before God and the confidence of Protestantism in its ability to convert the Chinese and mould the nation's culture.

Moreover, the missionary impulse also came from the Protestant church's concern for the evangelization of China. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, like other Canadians, Protestant clergy believed that no Chinese immigrants would make their permanent home in Canada; instead, all the Chinese would finally return to China. No matter how one evaluates white Canadians' judgement on Chinese immigrants' sojourn character today, it is an indisputable fact that at that time most clergy considered Chinese immigrants as potential helpers who would help to determine

the future of the evangelization of China when they returned to their motherland. Thus, the transformation of the Chinese immigrants in Canada into a missionary force for evangelizing China was always a major part of the motivation underlying missionary work among the Chinese in Canada.

However, from the 1920s, when Protestant clergy realized that the Chinese remained permanently in Canada, they became the first group of white Canadians who worked toward assimilating the Chinese into Canadian society. The clergy believed that the only hope for the Chinese immigrants' future in Canada was that they be finally integrated into Canada's white Anglo-Saxon and Protestant culture, for Canada must be homogenous in culture and religion.

Since the Canadian Protestant churches blessed Anglo-Saxon nationalism as being willed by God, Christianizing the Chinese was thought of as a complementary to the work of assimilating the Chinese into Canadian society. Therefore, when Protestant missionaries came to the Chinese immigrant, they carried not only the Christian gospel with them but also white Anglo-Saxon Canadians values. Their identification of the values as Christian made acculturation an inescapable part of their mission. In particular, when they gave a negative evaluation of Chinese culture from their view of the superiority of Western culture, the missionaries began to package their message of Christianity with white Canadian

social and cultural values. Here, since the ideal of cultural uniformity exerted a dominating influence on Protestant clergy thought, the missionaries intensified pressure on the Chinese to abandon their way of life which was condemned not merely as un-Christian but as un-Canadian. They had few qualms about pressing their programs by all available means, including the power of the state. The Protestant campaign of winning the Chinese to Christianity thus made it clear that the assimilation of the Chinese became a precept so deeply engraved on the missionary mind that no missionary could conduct his work without carrying on this secular task. However, clearly identifying the Christian gospel with the interests of secular society seriously damaged the church's image among Chinese immigrants. And, worse than that, the mission encountered considerable resistance from the Chinese.

Indeed, a basic contradiction always existed in Protestant clergy thought. This contradiction was the tension between the twin motives of Christian evangelism and Anglo-Saxon nationalism—between the desire to include the Chinese within a Christian community and the desire to remove the Yellow Peril. Most Protestant clergy proved unable to transcend the prevailing prejudices against Chinese immigrants. Their approach to the Chinese was deeply rooted in the hard clay of white Canadian nationalism. Even while they strove hard to bring Chinese immigrants into Canadian society,

the clergy believed that the nation's rightful destiny lay along the path of cultural uniformity, and that Canada could only achieve social stability and national greatness if the Chinese rejected their past and accepted white Canadians' values.

Without doubt, the commitment to Christian evangelism and humanitarianism made Protestant missionaries truly believe that their ultimate aim was to evangelize the Chinese immigrant; and what they were doing was the best for the Chinese. However, for most missionaries, the gospel of love was subordinate to the campaign of nationalism. In their work of evangelizing Chinese immigrants, the missionaries asked Chinese immigrants not only to accept the Christian faith, but also to adapt to a white Anglo-Saxon value system. Meanwhile, the Chinese culture was thought of as the major hindrance to Chinese immigrant entry into Canadian society. And the missionaries rarely thought to make concessions to Chinese taste when they sent their message to the Chinese. Instead, the Chinese had to change everything to adapt to the new faith, even abandon their culture and traditions. In other words, the missionaries attempted to make the Chinese a more socially and culturally accepted group by making them English-speaking Protestant Christians. As a result, although many Chinese became Christian, Christianity did not become Chinese.

And, at this point, the Chinese mission seemed to do nothing but destroy the Chinese way of life.

However, it should be noted that Protestant missionaries were also men of their time. The mindset of the time, namely, the sense of the superiority of Anglo-Saxon culture had to frame their thinking and activities. They had to carry a heavy cultural baggage with them when they came to preach the Christian gospel. In particular, after they made their first contacts with the Chinese, the missionaries found that they were totally surrounded by an "inferior" race. This first impression not only made the missionaries' sense of the superiority of Anglo-Saxon culture more evident, but also called forth a strong feeling of lifting the Chinese out of the situation. And the more contacts with the Chinese the missionaries made, the more urgent they felt it was to bring the Chinese out of the darkness of uncivilized heathenism. As a result, the missionaries focused their mission work more on the implanting of Anglo-Saxon culture into the Chinese community. The message of Christianity was put in a package covered in a culture formulation. The mission of sending the Christian gospel therefore became a cultural crusade, the aim of which was to impose Anglo-Saxon values to the Chinese.

Without doubt, for the missionaries, the Chinese really needed the Christian gospel. The problem was when the missionaries made this cultural-Christian package, they

covered it with so many cultural values that these hid the real substance—the Christian gospel. The initial aim of evangelization, which brought the missionaries to Chinese immigrants, became the secondary. In other words, the presuppositions that shaped the package determined the missionaries' attitudes to the people that they met, the ways that they dealt with their religious missions, and the methods they used to reach the aims of their mission. It always seemed that while the love of Christianity attracted Chinese to the church, the superiority of Anglo-Saxon culture made it impossible for them to become real Christians.

Consequently, on the one hand, prejudice resulted in a cold behaviour on the part of the white Protestant community, which never accepted the Chinese as a part of the community. On the other hand, the new Christian faith and social values made Chinese Christians feel that they had already cut off their relationship with the old value system and the old way of life. Thus, while the Chinese community, as a whole, was isolated from the larger society, the missionaries drew Chinese Christians out of their community and made them experience further separation from their countrymen. For many years, the missionaries have faced such a dilemma of evangelization and Canadianization.

The Protestant mission to Chinese immigrants suffered a serious setback because of the racial tension between the

Chinese and the dominant white group during its more than one hundred year history. Since most early Chinese immigrants came to Canada simply for an economic purpose, settlement was not the priority. The Chinese, therefore, preferred to adapt the way of Canadian life to their purposes, rather than to adopt it as their own. This brought the accusation from white Canadians of that the Chinese refused to assimilate into Canadian society. Many Canadians also feared that the Chinese would perpetuate the customs and institutions of a pagan land on Canadian soil. Thus, white Canadians often saw the encounter with the Chinese as a great struggle between eastern and western civilization. A kind of racial conflict arises. On the one hand, white Canadians tried to exclude the Chinese from the country. They denied Chinese immigrants' rights of citizenship and put the Chinese in the lowest strata of the overall social system. Consequently, the situation became self-contradictory: while white Canadians blamed Chinese immigrants for not being willing to assimilate into Canadian society, they did everything possible to prevent them from assimilating by discriminating against them.

On the other hand, not accepting the exclusion, Chinese immigrants were prompted to act collectively to cope with the discriminatory social environment. The earliest established community action was the formation of secret societies in the 1860s. Later, other community organizations were established

to protect the Chinese from unfair treatment by the dominant white group and government legislation. Finally, all community organizations united in a form of Chinatown. With the characteristics of geographical isolation and social segregation from other groups, the Chinatowns made the Chinese almost completely separate from the larger society. While social segregation was utilized by the Chinese as a defence method to survive in a hostile social environment, maintaining ethnic identity became more important for the Chinese to consolidate the community force to fight against racial discrimination. Without doubt, the sense of ethnic identity would help to consolidate the Chinese community as a whole. However, when maintaining ethnic identity was identified with building racial boundaries that kept the Chinese isolated from the larger society, any attempt to break racial barriers was thought of as the invasion to the community. In fact, when Protestant missionaries came to the Chinese community, few Chinese, especially the Chinese elite, saw the missionaries as helpers for bringing them into the larger society; instead, the missionaries were thought of as intruders who attempted to break their community. Confucianism and other traditional Chinese religions were used to offset the influence of the Protestant missions. And, frankly speaking, the Chinese were more successful in strengthening community members' sense of ethnic identity than are the missionaries in pulling the

Chinese away from the influence of traditional Chinese religions. It was in this sense that the Chinese community became stronger in resisting the Protestant campaign of evangelizing the Chinese immigrants in Canada. This was particularly true in western Canadian provinces like British Columbia. However, the consolidation also brought the Chinese community further isolation from the larger society at the same time. At this point, the Protestant mission played an important role that the missionaries would never be willing to play.

According to the conflict theory of sociology, the conflict between the dominant group and a minority ethnic group will produce internal solidarity in the minority group: first, repression and hostility by outsiders tend to create a feeling of common plight and common destiny. And the more external animosity neighbors direct toward the minority people, the more inner unity is normally created within the minority community. Secondly, a common rejection of something helps articulate one's own beliefs. It is usually easier for a group to agree in the rejection of something than it is to formulate a constructive statement about what its members do believe.

Applying this theory to the history of the Protestant mission to the Chinese immigrants in Canada, it can be found that the Protestant mission caused a cultural conflict between

the dominant Anglo-Saxon group and the Chinese. Although one of the initial goals of the mission was to break racial and cultural barriers and bring about interethnic group contact, the members of the Chinese group drew more ethnic boundaries when they encountered Protestant missionaries. This was because the Chinese were convinced that only by maintaining their ethnic identity could they survive in a hostile social environment. In other words, with the heightening of self-consciousness in the group, Chinese immigrants were more tightly bound to each other along their traditional cultural lines to resist the outsiders' invasion. As a result, Chinese immigrants separated themselves more distinctly from the dominant group and larger society, especially when they received harsh discriminatory treatment from the dominant white group. The Protestant mission, thus, to a considerable degree, helped to slow the process for the Chinese immigrants to enter the larger society.

However, for the history of the Protestant mission to the Chinese immigrants in Canada, the most valuable part is that at a time when no other groups stood forward as solidly and positively in defence of the hated Chinese, the action of Canadian Protestant missionaries, particularly men like J.E. Gardiner, might be regarded as a bright page in an otherwise dark volume. Their tactics might be mistaken and misguided, but their sense of justice and right remained steadfast.

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