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Canada

**Chinese-Canadian Women in Montreal:
Case Studies in the Importance of Education**

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McGill University, Montreal

July 1995

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts**

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ISBN 0-612-07939-2

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ABSTRACT

Chinese immigrant women constitute a wealth of untapped potential for Canadian society. Unfortunately their talents have not resulted in self-actualization after immigration. This is because they are among the most disadvantaged groups, being discriminated against on the basis of race, class and gender. Chinese women encounter difficulties in integrating into Canadian society. The two major barriers are: the immigration policies towards Chinese, especially in previous generations, and the women's inadequate language skills, even today.

In the preparation of this thesis, an appreciation of the obstacles faced by Chinese immigrant women was gained by reviewing the relevant literature and government documents. The concerns of Chinese-Canadian women were placed in context by reviewing the history of women's status in China and their gradual influx into Canada. Participant observation of groups and case studies of individual women revealed that immigrant Chinese women are a heterogeneous group in terms of their backgrounds but homogeneous in terms of their tenacity and their aspirations and hopes for the future. The present study is the first attempt at recognizing Chinese immigrant women in Montreal. The conclusion was reached that through education, hard work and persistence in learning the official languages of Canada, they can triumph in face of societal barriers.

RÉSUMÉ

Les immigrantes chinoises ont beaucoup à offrir au Canada, leur pays adoptif. Malheureusement, leurs talents n'ont pas abouti à leur épanouissement personnelle après immigration. En fait, elles sont parmi les groupes les plus désavantagés, et sont victimes de discrimination à cause de leur classe sociale, leur race et leur sexe. Les femmes chinoises rencontrent des difficultés lors de leur intégration à la société canadienne. Les deux barrières majeures sont, d'abord, la politique d'immigration envers les Chinois, surtout pour celles des générations précédentes et, ensuite, leur maîtrise inadéquate du français et de l'anglais.

En préparant cette thèse, une compréhension approfondie des obstacles auxquels doivent faire face les immigrantes chinoises fut acquise en considérant les documents gouvernementaux, les recherches passées et l'histoire personnelle de certaines immigrantes. Cette étude représente la première tentative de reconnaissance des immigrantes chinoises à Montréal. En conclusion, elles peuvent vaincre les obstacles sociaux qui existent actuellement en s'éduquant.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish first of all to thank Dr. Margaret Gillett for her tremendous patience and tolerance in correcting my thesis. I am also indebted to her for her guidance in the organization and direction of my studies. She has elevated my work to a level of scholarship that is more than I could possibly have achieved on my own. I thank her for encouraging me and teaching me to expect more of myself.

Secondly I wish to acknowledge the invaluable help of Janet Sader from McGill Tutorial Service of the Centre for the Study and Teaching of Writing, Faculty of Education. She spent countless hours helping me correct and improve my writing.

I wish to thank Dr. Gary Anderson and Dr. Ratna Ghosh who gave me helpful ideas and suggestions for my proposal.

The generous contributions of my interviewees is greatly appreciated. Their stories are integral to the completion of this thesis.

Lastly, I wish to thank my family for their support, particularly Giselle who has patiently edited my rough drafts during busy studies of her own. I thank my husband, Pierre, for giving me elbow room, Maria and Janet for their emotional support and Linda for providing me with a computer.

Chinese-Canadian Women in Montreal:
Case Studies in the Importance of Education

PART I

Introduction

*Where are the coolies in your poem, Ned?
Where are the thousands from China who swung their picks
with bare hands at forty below?*

*Between the first and the million other spikes they
drove, and the dressed-up act of Donald Smith, who
has sung their story?*

*Did they fare so well in the land they helped to unite?
did they get one of the 25,000,000 CPR acres?*

*Is all Canada has to say to them written in the Chinese
Immigration Act? (F.R. Scott, 1899-1985)*

The Canadian national dream was achieved when the Canadian Pacific Railway was finished in 1885. Thousands of people died for this transcontinental railway. Among them there were many Chinese men. They were assigned the hardest work, placed at the most dangerous places and paid the lowest wages (Berton, 1974).

The lives of these early Chinese labourers, well described in government archives and historical literature, were marked by prejudice. The Chinese were discriminated against in all respects. They were viewed and treated as dirty, unimportant and ignorant men while they worked to pay off a "head tax" collected by the Canadian government on all Chinese immigrants. These men either returned to China or stayed on in Canada suffering from poverty and loneliness

in Chinatown where they formed a bachelor society. Their mothers, wives and children were, out of necessity, separated from them. These women had to raise their children alone and to struggle to survive; neither in China nor in Canada were they able to express their feelings and thoughts.

The purpose of the study

The status of immigrant women in Canada has become an important issue in the analysis of immigration policy, social welfare, the labour market and educational participation (Poirier, 1985). Many scholars and policy-makers have discussed the disadvantages these women face in Canadian society, yet relatively few specific studies have been conducted. As the former President of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Sylvia Gold, said, "...the major gaps in policies and programs can only be closed if the voices and experiences of immigrant women are taken into account" (Gold, 1989, p. ii). The present research seeks to add to the literature on this subject which becomes increasingly significant as Canadian society becomes more and more multi-cultural.

The main purpose of the study is to explore the importance of education in Chinese-Canadian women's lives in the past and in the present. The study also considers the impact of Canadian immigration policy towards Chinese immigrants, in particular on Chinese-Canadian women's social activities, on their employment and on their education. The results may help policy makers or educators find better ways to improve our immigrant women's status and their

participation in Canadian society.

Justification

As will be seen in Chapter 2, Canadian immigration policies towards the Chinese have had an extremely negative effect on Chinese-Canadian women's lives. The lives of the early Chinese women immigrants in Canada were full of hardship and isolation. Two major factors were the discriminatory Canadian immigration policies and the immigrant women's inadequate language skills. Together, these assured Chinese women's alienation from Canadian society.

Chinese women were unable to reunite with their husbands in Canada because of the 1885 head tax and the 1923 Exclusion Act which were in effect until 1947. Because of Canadian immigration policies, Chinese immigrant women who seriously needed language training could not benefit from government programs and were thus unable to function in English or French. They were considered illiterate, even though some may have been quite literate in Chinese. Functionally illiterate immigrant women had to work in factories and in domestic jobs that demanded long hours of low-paid work. Similar hardships are still felt by today's new immigrant women. Many scholars have pointed out that literacy affects health, employment, social life and educational participation (Lorenzetto, 1968; Hinzen, 1989; Grosse and Affrey, 1989; & Joron, 1992).

Since the abolition of discriminatory immigration policies in 1967, the numbers of Chinese immigrants have increased, especially, in the three large metropolitan cities. Comparatively, there are

fewer Chinese immigrants in Montreal than in Vancouver or in Toronto. According to the 1991 Census of Canada, there were 34,355 people of Chinese origin in Montreal. Meanwhile there were 231,820 in Toronto, and 167,420 in Vancouver. Existing research on Chinese immigrants mainly deals with the Chinese in Vancouver and Toronto. The experience of Chinese Montrealers, especially the women, has been essentially ignored. As an immigrant woman myself, I feel obliged to understand the problems that marginalize immigrant women. My own experiences and those of my personal acquaintances in Montreal have inspired me to do the research in the Greater Montreal area.

The statement of the problem

Before the founding of the Republic of China in 1911, Chinese women were excluded from participating in public life and developing full citizenship in China. They were isolated from education, employment and political participation. Lacking formal education, the majority of Chinese women were illiterate. What was the status of Chinese women in the family and society under imperialism? What kind of education did they receive over the centuries? What is the meaning of literacy for them? Did Chinese women's status in the family and society change under Nationalism after 1911? Have Chinese women been emancipated from the old traditions under Communism?

During the last three decades, Chinese women have greatly improved their status, and have excelled in both their personal and

public lives. Having had access to education, Chinese women, both in Taiwan and the mainland China, have shown that they are as capable as men. In contrast to the earlier generations of immigrants who had come from rural areas of China and had little formal education, most Chinese immigrants today are from urban centres and are well-educated professionals. More than half are women who are literate. Do these women feel more accepted than the earlier Chinese immigrants did? Did they adapt well to Canadian society? What are their social and educational concerns? The purpose of this research is to seek answers by reviewing the literature and obtaining first-hand data from interviews with a selected number of Chinese immigrant women currently living in Montreal.

Organization

The study consists of three parts. The first part introduces the topic, describes the methodology and presents the literature review. The second part is divided into three chapters which explain the status and education of Chinese women in China, the history of Chinese-Canadian women from 1885 to 1993 as well as the social and educational concerns of contemporary Chinese-Canadian women. The third part describes the background and presents the cases of three Chinese-Canadian women in Montreal. The final chapter summarizes the findings, and suggests future research into the lives of immigrant women in Canada.

Methodology

This study mainly used qualitative or ethnographic research methodology. The data came from both primary and secondary sources. The former were derived from participant observation and interviews. Consent forms (see Appendix I) have been signed by all participants. The background of this study was obtained from secondary sources such as government documents and research literature. The approach is historical. Materials from the past that relate to present events have been selected. The study has a feminist perspective and the history of women's lives is used as an extension of ethnographic techniques (Measor, 1985, & Purvis, 1985). As Broch-Due (1992) put it,

For sociological purposes it is possible to do research based on one life history, or to construct the life histories of a number of people concurrently and to work with them as a collection of parallel histories (p. 93).

Permitting women themselves to tell their life stories is a very important approach in feminist research. This life-course approach recognizes the elements ignored in quantitative research (Hellbrun, 1988 and Broch-Due, 1992). This is particularly suited to my goal which is to understand the impact of social climate on individual lives (Bogdan, 1974).

During the interviewing process, I was conscious of my position as a researcher and aware of the two-way communication. In the process of communication, a researcher has to pay attention to both verbal and nonverbal behavior which affect both parties' linguistic messages (Philips, 1993). The significance of an

incident is influenced by the psychological disposition of both interviewer and interviewee. As Broch-Due (1992) stated, "Qualitative interview as a research process in itself is also a process of a change" (p.98).

I drew my data from various sources. First I found those important Chinese communities through the *Chinese Directory of Greater Montreal* (1992). Then I contacted the presidents of the important Chinese organizations and got to know the administrators of their sub-organizations. I first obtained the permission to visit their sites and to participate in their activities. I was also referred to other individuals whom I contacted and interviewed. The research began with participant observation in Chinatown. The data collection took six months, from February to August, 1994.

Participant observation

Collecting data through participant observation in a community is one important approach in ethnographic research. Recently, educational anthropologists pointed out that research can use the microethnographic method in participant observation to fill gaps in the traditional ethnographic methodology (Philips, 1993).

Based on the above theories, I observed and participated in the activities of the members of the Chinese Catholic Mission in Chinatown, Montreal. The participation began with the celebration of the Chinese New Year (February 12, 1994) in the Mission's Centre. The Mission is the most important Chinese organization in

Montreal for the Chinese community. It includes 300 families with different backgrounds. I participated in their Sunday mass and the social activities of the Women's Committee as well as in other Chinese festivals. Though I had attended their activities before, I had not really tried to understand those elderly Chinese members who do not speak Mandarin as I do. As a participant observer, I attempted to understand them through the face-to-face interactions and to analyze their attitudes through microphenomena in their social lives (Philips, 1993). I realized that their religious lives reflect their needs and adaptation to the changing society. During three months of participant observation, I selected five female members from this group to interview.

Interviews

I began with the Chinese Community United Centre where I interviewed the administrator (February, 3rd) who recommended other communities and individuals. On February 4th, 1994, I interviewed Father Tou, the priest of the Chinese Catholic Church and he referred me to many professional Chinese women. The process of approaching interviewees went very smoothly and I did not encounter any difficulties during the interviewing process itself. The 35 participants were from the following six organizations: The Chinese Community United Centre, The Chinese Catholic Mission, The Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal, The Montreal Metropolitan Chinese School, The Quebec Taiwan Business Development Association and literacy classes at John Rennie High School.

Of the 35 participants interviewed, 20 female members of the Quebec Taiwan Business Development Association were interviewed in a group. Their opinions reflected the general opinions of recent immigrant investors coming from Taiwan and living on the South Shore and in the West Island. These results were incorporated with those of the administrators whom I had selected from the remaining 15 female members of the above six organizations.

Finally, 11 individuals were chosen from among the 15 interviewees. I assembled them into two different groups and the data categorized as "general" or "individuals" are presented in Chapter Four. The "general" section consists of the interviews with eight directors and/or administrators of the Chinese communities (see Appendix II). Their experiences in the Montreal work place reflected the stories of Chinese women from different backgrounds in terms of social class, financial situation, and education.

In the "individuals" section, three Chinese-Canadian women, referred by the administrators, were interviewed and their life stories were analyzed in depth. The life stories of these three women allowed me to analyze the importance of education in their lives. These three women's lives are unique and represent individual Chinese women's experiences and thoughts on Canadian society; yet I believe that numerous Chinese, as well as other immigrant women, may find here many experiences with which they can empathize.

Limitations

Most of the elderly people who live in Chinatown only speak Taishanese or Cantonese, neither of which I understand. They were similar in many respects to the elderly Chinese immigrants who appeared in the film "Moving the Mountain" (National Film Board, 1993). While their lives and opinions had some bearing in this study, they were only included in the general section which was researched from a variety of publications or through administrators of their organizations.

The internal validity of the above results is dependent upon the insights and interpretation of the researcher because there were no available records of these women's lives prior to these case studies. Using the microethnographic approach in the participant observation and having the same cultural background as the interviewees helped.

The research is not intended to develop a general theory or rule; therefore, the small number of women participants would not be considered a serious limitation in terms of external validity.

Literature Review

The literature was handled as follows: (1) I searched the literature that deals with the status and education of Chinese women in China. (2) I looked into the works that deal with the history of Chinese-Canadian women from 1885-1993. (3) I examined works that deal with the social and educational concerns of

immigrant women at large.

The Status and Education of Chinese Women

Chen (1967) wrote *Chung-Kuo Fu-Nu Shenghuo Shi (The History of Chinese Women's Lives)* which describes the development of Chinese women's education prior to 1949. This book is the most comprehensive study of Chinese women's education under Imperialism and early Nationalism. Under Imperialism, Chinese women were encouraged neither to be intelligent nor knowledgeable. The main purpose of Chinese women's education, formal or informal, was to enable women to fulfil Chinese traditional female roles assigned by the Chinese elite. According to *Chinese Women Through Chinese Eyes (Li, 1992)*, the ideal traditional role for Chinese women was that of a good wife and mother. Therefore, many talented women, regardless of their achievements, had to assume the duties enshrined in Confucian ideology.

During the late Qing Dynasty and early Nationalism, Chinese women's schooling was initiated by Christianity (Chen, 1967 and Kwok, 1992). Both Chen and Kwok acknowledged the contribution of Christianity to the promotion of Chinese women's education. Yet they took different approaches to analyze the effects. Chen considered the missionary schools as a groundwork of Chinese girls' formal education. Kwok (1992) believes that Chinese women have found comfort in the faith of Christ. Christianity has had a great impact on Chinese women's lives. This is still true today in the Chinese Community in Montreal (Mandel, 1982 and Behiels, 1991).

Missionary girls' schools inspired the Chinese government and wealthy families to establish public schools for girls; yet, prior to 1949, female students still came from the families of the elite and wealthy, rather than from the rural families and lower classes (Chen, 1967). According to the *Achievement of Education in China (1949-1983)*, in 1974, seventeen percent of rural children above school-age could not attend elementary schools. Taiwan also had difficulties enrolling all school-age children during the 1970s, particularly, the daughters of poor farmers (Wolf, 1972; Diamond, 1973; Arrigo, 1984 and Hemmel & Sindbjerg, 1984). According to Diamond's research in Taiwan in 1973, girls were often given away as adopted daughters or child brides. These girls had less chance to attend school. However, it is important to understand that Diamond's research was mainly done at Peitou, a suburb of Taipei which was characterized by low class hotels and bar restaurants where young girls accompanied or "entertained" men. The custom of having young women companions (not wives) or entertainers originated in the Tang Dynasty (618-907) (Chen, 1967), and was reinforced by the Japanese for the purpose of exploiting the colonized Taiwanese. Many of the negative Japanese customs were still being practised when Diamond conducted her research in Taiwan.

Most Western scholars highly appreciate Mao's contribution to women's emancipation. Yet, they also note that women's liberation in China is still incomplete in the eyes of Western feminists (Smedley, 1976; Broyelle, 1977; Croll, 1978; Andors, 1983; Johnson,

1983 & Arrigo, 1984). Croll (1978) believes that there is a conflict between the goals of feminism and socialism under Communism. She questioned, "... can the struggle between the sexes and between the classes be combined in one strategy?" (*Feminism and Socialism in China*, p. 8). Andors (1983) took the theories of modernization and feminism to analyze the problems of Chinese women's development and concluded that the Chinese women's traditional roles in the family and society had hindered their liberation.

In addition, Johnson (1983) pointed out that family kinship practices are the major factors causing Chinese women's oppression and limitation in Chinese society. Therefore family reform became a crucial issue under Communism. The 1950 Marriage Law, the collectivization in the 1950s, the Cultural Revolution during the late 1960s and the Anti-Confucian campaign in the mid-1970s as well as the recent policies of population control have changed Chinese women's family lives in many respects. However, Hemmel and Sindbjerg (1984) found that Chinese women work even harder than before and still have not obtained real equality with their male counterparts. An ideal wife is the one who can support her husband and yet who is careful not hurt to her husband's feelings if he is a male dependent. This point of view continues to affect some of the highly-educated immigrant Chinese women living in Montreal today.

The History of Chinese-Canadian Women, 1858-1993

Diverse publications, such as the *Report of the Royal*

Commission on Chinese Immigration: Report and Evidence (1885) and Pierre Berton's *The National Dream: The Last Spike* (1974), give graphic pictures of the lifestyles and problems of the Chinese men in Canada. The Royal Commission to Inquire into Chinese Immigration into British Columbia revealed that Chinese labourers were useful to Canadian society. It also showed how prejudiced against them Canadian society was. Berton's work examines the hard-working Chinese men and analyzes the anti-Chinese situation which resulted in many discriminatory regulations. He gives the most in-depth analysis of the situation of Chinese labourers from 1858 to 1885.

The *Immigrant's Handbook* (The Law Union of Ontario, 1981) stated that only three Chinese entered Canada during 1924-30 after the Exclusion Act became law in 1923. The Exclusion Act was repealed in 1947 after many Chinese Canadians fought in the Second World War. This meant that Chinese male immigrants could then send for their wives and children. The numbers of Chinese immigrant women thus increased significantly after 1947. According to Statistics Canada (1986), 4,240 Chinese women immigrants came to Canada between 1946 and 1955 compared to 515 in the previous decade. In 1967, a new immigration law was introduced. Under this new law, immigrants were selected according to a point system and this meant that Chinese women could apply independently from their husbands or families for immigration status. From then on, the male-female immigrant ratio shifted slightly in favour of females. This shift was in sharp contrast to the past (Li, 1988; Statistics Canada, 1991 and Knowles, 1992). Chan (1983) and Li (1988) wrote

about the Chinese immigrants' story from the men's perspective.

In 1992, the Chinese Canadian National Council conducted a series of interviews which are recorded in *Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women*. This book is the first that has dealt mainly with the lives of immigrant Chinese women and will be discussed in the next section. In addition, the National Film Board produced the documentary film, "Moving the Mountain", in 1993. This film revealed that 81,000 Chinese males and females had paid the head tax between 1885 and 1923. There are 1000 of these head tax payers still alive, and some of them are living in Montreal.

The Social and Educational Concerns

Recently, many researchers have pointed out that most immigrant women have had difficulties adapting to Canadian society because Canadian government policies have contributed to class, racial and gender inequalities (Delphy & Roberts, 1981; Seward & McDade, 1987; Boyd, 1987; Paredes, 1987; Naidoo, 1988; Roberts, 1990 and Wittebrood & Robertson, 1991). Seward and McDade (1987) have done an in-depth analysis of the disadvantages immigrant women faced because of immigration policies. In their research, *Immigrant Women in Canada: A Policy Perspective*, they pointed out that most immigrant women were sponsored. Sponsored immigrant women did not have access to basic language training allowances and were not eligible for social services. If the relationship between the sponsor and the immigrant became problematic, the immigrant would have to resort to working in the clothing industry or domestic

areas and had little opportunity to learn an official language or other job skills (Boyd, 1987; Paredes, 1987 and Naidoo, 1988).

Many highly educated and skilled immigrant women could not work in their professional fields because their credentials were not recognized in Canada. Thus they were doomed to stay in low-paying, low-status jobs, particularly, the newly-arrived immigrant women from Southern Europe and Asia, who comprised the majority occupying the lowest ranks of the employment ladder (Seward and McDade, 1987; Naidoo, 1987; Pendakkur & Ledoux, 1991). Robert (1990) identified the cause of their disadvantages to be the "triple oppression" of ethnicity, class and gender.

In addition, *The Glass Box: Women Business Owners in Canada* reported that immigrant women have more difficulties in establishing their own businesses (Belcourt, Burke and Lee-Gosselin (1991). According to the *Canadian Immigrant Women in Transition* (Wittebrood and Robertson, 1991), immigrant women are a "high risk group" (p.171) because of the tremendous disadvantages they encounter while adapting to their new environment. Chinese immigrant women are a minority within the ethnic groups and their experiences have long been neglected.

Chinese Canadians: Voices from a Community (Huang and Jeffery, 1992) consists of four Chinese-Canadian women: a community leader, a lawyer, an investment professional and a television producer. All four of these women came from English speaking backgrounds, were well-educated in Canada and also received the support from their families and friends. Compared with the early immigrants,

they did not experience the extreme discrimination nor the long separation that some women had endured.

Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women (Chinese Canadian National Council, 1993) includes forty women's life stories. The eldest woman included is eighty-five and the youngest is nineteen. Their life stories span three generations. They talk about their personal experiences, their relationships with their parents and spouses as well as their problems in childrearing. Some women had been discriminated against in school, in the workplace and in society. *Jin Guo* also contains many examples of Chinese women who paid the \$500 head tax. The majority of women represented in this book agreed that education is the most important factor contributing to women's empowerment. This book is a good example of life-course approach in doing feminist research because it reflects the impact of governments' policies on women's lives and the changes in society.

The more recent immigrant women from China and Taiwan have different backgrounds in terms of educational and political systems, and face different difficulties in terms of their employment and social lives. However, while *Jin Guo* tells their stories, to date no published works have dealt specifically with Chinese immigrant women in Montreal. One purpose of this thesis is to fill this gap in the literature.

According to 1991 Statistics Canada, there were 34,355 residents of Chinese origin in the Montreal region, and more than 50 per cent were females. These Chinese immigrant women came from

different social, economic and political systems, and their personal backgrounds affect their adaptation to Canadian society. Their experiences deserve to be documented. To begin my study of immigrant Chinese women in Montreal, I will describe the traditional education of Chinese women in China in order to provide meaningful background material.

PART II

Chapter I

The Status and Education of Chinese Women

In the late nineteenth century, while Western women were struggling to gain access to higher education, the majority of Chinese women were still illiterate. However, throughout Chinese history, there were exceptional women who achieved high levels of literacy. This helped make Chinese women gain power and have influence on men as well as other women. Under imperialism, there were female scholars, rulers and revolutionaries. After the 1911 Revolution, when the Nationalists took power, an increasing number of women participated in cultural, social and political movements. Then, in 1949, Nationalists and Communists terminated their alliance and divided the country into two different territories, Taiwan and mainland China. Women's concerns were always incorporated with political and economic reforms and the status of Chinese women was mainly determined by the established political system.

Under Imperialism (206 B.C.-1911 A.D.)

A large body of classical literature was written before the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.) and was passed down for thousands of years. Many literary works were in the form of songs and poems. They

described love from a woman's point of view and voiced female sorrow resulting from miserable treatment by husbands or in-laws (Chen, 1967). Some of these songs and poems were written by women. Their names were only mentioned in men's writings and a few of their literary works occur only in books written by men. The tradition of unequal treatment thus originated even before the Han dynasty.

The Han and Tang were the strongest and most prosperous dynasties in Chinese history. During these two dynasties, increasing numbers of elite families educated their daughters for the sole purpose of marrying them into the ruling class. These two periods produced the two most famous and talented women.

Pan Chao (-100 A.D.-) was the first woman author whose writings were officially published during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-219 A.D.). She is generally acknowledged as the first great female scholar in Chinese literature. She completed the *History of the Former Han Dynasty* which was left unfinished by her brother, Pan Ku ². Pan Chao was also a teacher in the imperial court and her students included the empress, other court ladies and even male scholars. She advocated the education of women and suggested that girls should have the same opportunities as boys in learning to read and write (Hu, 1992). She elaborated many rituals and rules for girls to follow and her best known collection of these is *The*

². Pan Ku was a great historian in the Han Dynasty. He was taken to prison by one of the favourite eunuchs of a Han Emperor and died in the prison. Later, the Han Emperor found out that Ku had been punished unjustly and returned his title and possessions and also asked Pan Chao, his sister to finish his work.

Lessons for Women (Chen, 1967). In this book, she taught the virtue of humility which gave girls an inferior position to boys in the family and in Chinese society. She probably did not expect her training for elegant ladies to result in the systematic oppression and subordination of Chinese women for the following 18 centuries. Yet this is what happened and it may be partly because Pan's ideas of refining women were manipulated by later authorities and scholars to serve their own needs and purposes.

Between the Han Dynasty and the Tang Dynasty (220-617), there was an unstable period when many dynasties succeeded one another. The literature of this period reveals the inhumane treatment of women. Women's lives were miserable and their writings expressed their sorrow. Talented girls from poor families were often sold to rich families or brought to the ruling classes to be servants. They were trained to be literate for the purpose of understanding men's writing and serving them better (Chen, 1967). However, many capable girls advanced themselves and were able to become involved in politics. When a king fell ill or died and his heir was too young, the dowager empress took control and gained power through regencies. This was often the case in the Tang Dynasty (618 A.D.-959).

In that period, one woman even managed to become Emperor. Wu Chao founded her own dynasty (690-705) and invented many new Chinese words. She made a sharp break from Chinese tradition when she invited Buddhists to be her advisors and changed the official Dynasty's name from Tang to Chou. These actions eventually caused

her defeat. She was severely criticized by later Confucianists and the old Tang Dynasty's ruling family. When she died, the Li family reestablished the Tang Dynasty immediately. Compared to Pan Chao, Wu Chao was considered an aggressive and rebellious woman.

Towards the end of the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Li-Huang had a preference for girls with small feet, he ordered one of his ladies to dance for him with bound feet. This marks the beginning of women in the court having their feet bound (Chen, 1967). According to Ch'en Heng-che ², the practice of foot-binding "never became a universal custom [in China] until the Sung Dynasty [960-1276] and was practised only in tolerable measures, perhaps not any worse than the tight shoes and high heels that our modern ladies wear, East or West" (cited in Li, 1992, p. 61). Yet this cruel custom was able to spread gradually in China, and it showed that men inflicted an incredibly painful practice on women for their own pleasure. Mothers had to bind their daughters' feet when they were young, otherwise they would have difficulty in marrying off their daughters with big feet. Throughout Chinese literature, while male writers describe the beauty of small feet, female writers reveal the pain and torture caused by foot-binding. According to Blake (1994), foot-binding represents "the historical domination of women's bodies" (p. 677). Those Chinese men who encouraged the dehumanizing custom did so because they saw women as toys. In the early Ching Dynasty (1644-1911), when the Ching Court and many

². Ch'en Heng-che (1890-1976) was notable writer and historian. In 1920, she became the first woman professor at Peking (Beijing) University (Li, 1992, p. 59).

scholars tried to free Han women's feet, Neo-Confucians opposed the proposals (Chen, 1967). This physical and mental torture of women lasted for a thousand years and even continued well into the 20th century (Ch'en, 1992). It is highly symbolic of women's servitude and oppression in human history.

The form and style of Chinese literature changed over the years. The Han Dynasty was noted for its fu (essay), the Tang Dynasty was famous for its poems and the Sung Dynasty (952-1279) for its new poetic styles. As women were becoming more literate during the Tang Dynasty, they participated in the literary trends of the period. Thus, Tang women wrote mainly poetry. Their ability as poets helped them master the tz'u (a new form of poetry) which reached its peak in the Sung Dynasty.

Li Ching Chao (1081-1141?) wrote many high quality tz'u and was one of the most famous and talented writers in the Sung Dynasty (960-1276). She and her husband both came from cultured and refined families. When her husband died, Li Ching Chao never thought of earning her own money because in her time, a woman from a good family was not supposed to be self-sufficient. A woman's talents served her primarily in becoming a good wife. In her later tz'u, she achieved the peak of her expressive powers; yet, these literary works mainly describe her self-pity and loneliness during widowhood. Many later poets, particularly women, imitated her style in writing and admired her married life to a loving scholarly husband.

Both Li and Pan, coming from scholarly families, were not as

offensive to the elitist, patriarchal society as Wu Chao. Thus they were both highly praised by men and women of the upper classes. Although not many of their writings were preserved, they were well known and valued for providing female role models according to the Confucian ideology.

Confucian ideology had been changed and blended with Buddhism and Taoism by Neo-Confucians in the Sung Dynasty. The Neo-Confucians became the leading philosophers during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1643). They urged increasing control over women, advocating premarital virginity and celibacy after widowhood (Lin, 1992). *Lie-Nu Chuan* is a book which glorified such behavior. During this period, even women of the elite, were usually only taught the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic by their mothers or members of their family. More serious education for women was not encouraged. The saying that "lack of talent is a virtue in women" originated during the Ming Dynasty (Chen, 1967). It continues to affect Chinese thought even today. Although women's education was limited in this period, the number of women's writings increased and continued to increase in the Ching Dynasty (1644-1911). Unfortunately, most women writers did not have a chance to publish their works.

Nevertheless, in 1931, Hu Shih ³ identified the existence of

³. Hu Shih (1891-1962) is a famous modern Chinese scholar, writer, educator, and diplomat. He had a great impact on Chinese modernization, especially in the areas of education and philosophy. He was from a high class family, studied in westernized schools in Shanghai and travelled to the United States in 1910, when he was nineteen, on one of the scholarships that the Americans had established with Boxer indemnity money to bring bright young

2,310 female writers from the previous three hundred years and showed that ninety-nine percent of their work was poetry. Hu Shih also claimed that many great politicians and scholars became great because of their literate widowed mothers. He believed that the status of women in the family was elevated because of the positive effects of this education (cited in Li, 1992).

This informal literary education was inaccessible to the majority of Chinese women before the modern era when formal schooling, following the industrial model, was first established (Hayhoe, 1987). The first school for girls was founded by a Christian missionary in 1847 at Ningpo, Fujian Province. In 1849, 1851 and 1853, other missionary schools were opened. They readily accepted illiterate girls from poor families and wealthy families as well (Kwok, 1992).

The first reliable statistics of missionary schools appeared in 1902. At that time, there were 4,373 female students among the 10,158 students and female students were represented at all levels of schooling (see Table 1). The majority were at the high school level (Chen, 1967 and Kwok, 1992). This shows that many girls had already received basic education before entering the missionary schools.

Chinese to U.S. schools. Hu took his B.A. in philosophy at Cornell University and then enrolled at Columbia University to study philosophy with John Dewey among others. Hu invited Dewey to visit Chin during 1919-20. In his speech in 1931 at the American Association of University Women in Tientsin, Hu revealed his thoughts about Chinese women's liberation (Spence, 1990 and Li, 1992).

Table 1

Female students in China, 1902

School	Number of schools	Total student	Total females
Bible Ins.	66	1,315	543
College	12	1,814	96
Elementary	6	194	97
High school	166	6,393	3,509
Medicine	30	251	32
Vocational	7	191	96
Total	287	10,158	4,373

Source: Missionary schools cited in Chen (1967, p. 349)

Moreover, at this time, some girls went directly abroad to pursue higher education. When they returned to China, some of them established girls' schools and promoted women's education. They also inspired women to become involved in political, educational and social activities.

Literacy has been defined by Freire (1970) and others as a political act which empowers and emancipates. Literacy did empower and emancipate some Chinese women, for example, Qiu Jin, an early female activist and revolutionary. Qiu Jin was born into a family of government officials in 1875 and received a classical education before going to Japan to study. There, she joined the Revolutionary Alliance which was to lead the 1911 Revolution. She returned to China in 1906 to devote her life to the emancipation of her country and Chinese women. She founded a women's association and a women's magazine as well as a branch of the Revolutionary League. In 1907, she was arrested for her role in an uprising against the Qing government and was subsequently executed; but her ideas and spirit

inspired many young women to continue her work.

Qiu Jin wanted to do more than just stimulate Chinese women's awareness of their inferior status in the family and society. She urged Chinese women to advance their educational and social status. She empowered people to improve their health and economic and political situations. She died because of her role in overthrowing the Ching Dynasty. Qiu Jin devoted her life to the liberation of China and of Chinese women and is considered by both Nationalists and Communists as a heroine in the history of Chinese modernization.

During the Nationalist Regime (1911-) ⁴

From 1911 to 1927 there was a period of cooperation between the ruling nationalist Guomindang Party and the Communist Party. They both fought against imperial-feudalistic traditions and directed China towards democracy and modernization (Djung, 1934 and Löfstedt, 1980). Modernization pitted traditional Chinese attitudes towards women against Western feminist ideals. For example, the Education Act of 1907 had recommended the establishment of new educational facilities for women, but at the same time it declared that women should remain subject to their fathers, mothers and husbands. Women's freedom in public and social activities was still limited by traditional ideas (Croll, 1978). The Act certainly did not encourage women to question and criticize their status in the

⁴. The Nationalist Regime started in 1911 and moved to Taiwan in 1949. The Regime is still in power today in Taiwan.

family and in society. However, female Chinese teachers did contribute a great deal to increasing the Chinese population's literacy during the Nationalist period. At the beginning of the 20th century, the majority of the Chinese population (about 90%) was illiterate. The Nationalists recognized this as a crucial problem for China's development. Therefore, since 1911, literacy has been a major focus for the modernization of the country (Djung, 1934).

One of the most significant reforms in Chinese literature resulted from the Cultural Renaissance begun in 1916. This "literature revolution" was inaugurated by Hu Shih and Chen Duh-Xiu^a in 1917 and helped make mass education possible. Reformers encouraged scholars to write in a more informal manner resembling the way they spoke. Chinese written language was traditionally highly structured and stylized. Even a simple letter when read aloud was incomprehensible to the majority of the Chinese population. In 1920, the Minister of Education established Pai-Hua (Mandarin) as the language of instruction in elementary schools (Djung, 1934 and Spence, 1990). Learning to read and write Mandarin was easier for children and illiterate adults than learning to understand classical literary Chinese.

The development of women's education in China was slower than that in Canada. For example, in China, the leading educational

^a. Chen Duxiu (1879-?) was from a wealthy official family and he studied in Japan and join sun Yat-sen's revolutionary Alliance. In 1920 he became one of the first members of the new Chinese Communist party. He advocated women's liberation and he wrote many articles to help bring it about.

institution, Beijing University, only opened its doors to female students in about 1920. Meanwhile in Canada, McGill University had been admitting female students since 1884 (Gillett, 1981), thirty six years earlier than Beijing University. However, once female Chinese students were permitted into higher education and co-educational institutions, more of them participated in the political movements. For example, Dong Ying-chao (Chou En-lai's wife and already a Communist) was one of the students involved in the May 4th movement in 1921. Students were being influenced to participate by both the Guomindang and the Communist parties during this period. The students' political movement was not well organized and that caused chaos in terms of social order and national stability. This was the beginning of a pattern. The May 4th movement of 1921 was very similar to the June 4th, 1989 student protest in Tiananmen Square.

In 1922, students in the Women's Higher Normal School and the Peking Law College founded the Women's Suffrage Association. The Association worked for the establishment of equal rights to be guaranteed by a Constitution. It also insisted on the prohibition of licensed prostitution and foot-binding, equal pay for equal work and paid maternity leave (Croll, 1978). Their claims were addressed in 1924 at the First National Party Congress where resolutions on improving women's status were passed. The most important resolution required equality between men and women in ownership, marriage, employment, education and child care. These resolutions led in the 1950s to the Marriage Law and a law

prohibiting the sale of women.

From 1927 to 1949 China was in a period of transition. The Goumindang and the Communist parties united to fight against the Japanese invasion during World War II. However, the parties continued to attack each other and to fight for their own expansion. The situation of peasants in China during this period of struggle did not improve. The majority of Chinese remained very poor. Most of the farm work was still done manually, infant mortality was high and life expectancy was low (Spence, 1990). The situation of Chinese women varied greatly as did that of the Chinese in general. The wealthy, living in large cities like Shanghai, were as comfortable as those in any modern Western city. However, the majority of the people lived in poverty. Spence (1990) described the situation of Chinese women:

Many girls were still made to bind their feet, the practice of arranged marriage endured, village localisms were perpetuated, education was minimal or nonexistent... In cities and towns, younger women wore short skirts and high heels... (p. 368).

From 1927 to 1945, while China was fighting against the Japanese invasion, male labourers were replaced by women both in the industrial and the agricultural sectors. The women's movement was directed by the two parties under two different political and social systems. In 1934, the Nationalist Guomindang in reaction to the Communist movement and socialism, launched a New Life Movement. Chiang Kai-shek was the nationalist leader and his wife, Song Meiling, was director of the Women's Department of the Guomindang. The New Life Movement reinforced Confucianist ideologies concerning

family discipline, social order and national unity. It hoped to achieve the social and moral rejuvenation of the Chinese people as well as a weakening of Socialism and Communism. Chinese women had to maintain their traditional female roles in the family and society even under the New Life Movement:

Chinese women were urged to cultivate the "four virtues" of "Chastity, appearance, speech, and work," and were told not to be hoodwinked into blindly following feminist ideas.... [Chiang Kei-shek] left no doubt that Chinese women's central tasks were "to regulate the household" through chores, sewing, cooking, arranging the furniture, and designing the home and garden." (Spence, 1992, p. 416).

The principles of the New Life Movement were upheld even after the Guomindang moved to Taiwan in 1949. They continue to affect many Chinese women from Taiwan living in Montreal today.

When World War II ended and Taiwan was returned to China after fifty years of Japanese colonization, the Guomindang moved to Taiwan and the Communists gained control of the Chinese mainland. The Nationalist government implemented land reforms, made nine years of public education mandatory and sponsored a rapid industrialization program (Salaiff and Sheridan, 1984). Equal rights for women were guaranteed in the Constitution which was officially passed in 1946 and is still in effect in Taiwan today (Chung-Hua Book Publisher, 1956). At that time, the goal of the New Life Movement was transformed into fighting the Communists, and it continued to affect the organizations and institutions of the Guomindang party. It also affected the educational system up to the late 60s in Taiwan.

The women in Taiwan never participated in political activities

as fully as those living in Communist China. Those who did were mainly either members of the Guomindong or students in high schools and universities. Although the women's movement only existed as a part of the Guomindang ideology, the status of Taiwanese women improved from what it was under the Japanese. Now many women occupy high government positions in Taiwan. For example, Li Chung-Guei studied in France in the late 1960s and is the director of the youth department of the Central Committee of the Guomindong party; Su Wan-Rung, a former graduate student from the United States, was the Minister of Finance in 1992; and other female scholars had been appointed to academic and administrative positions in universities throughout the country (Chung-Kuo Guomindang Fu-Nu Gung-Zuo Wei-Yan-Huei, 1995, April). However, the Taiwanese still maintain traditional Chinese culture and values in terms of the moral expectations of men and women. When Communist China rejected all Confucian teachings and Chinese traditions, Taiwan used them to promote anti-Communism. Meanwhile, under Communism, education developed differently.

Under Communism (1949-)

As early as 1927, Mao Zedong (Mao Tze Tung), the Communist leader, called for women's support in the fight against imperialism and nationalism. He also used the issue of women's liberation for his own economic and political purposes. To gain more support, in 1931, his Communist Party guaranteed women's suffrage and let women join the Red Army. It encouraged women to participate in land

reforms and class struggles. However, the issue of women's oppression was a delicate one at that time, because if Mao emphasized women's rights, he would risk losing the support of his male soldiers and peasants. Thus, in spite of the Communist official policies, women were really brainwashed to devote their talents and efforts to the Communist revolution, not to gender equality. They were expected to fight for Mao's revolution rather than for their own.

The Marriage Law of 1950 defined marriage as an equal union between men and women. It forbade child wives and concubinage and permitted women to own property and upgraded the status of women in the family (Johnson, 1983). However, implementation of the Law was still hindered by traditional culture and the roles it assigned to women (Mackie, 1991 and Folbre, 1991).

During the Collectivization drives of the 1950s and the Great Leap Forward, women became an important labour force in the agricultural and industrial sectors. Women were also involved at all levels of sociopolitical activity in the Cultural Revolution from 1966-75 and the anti-Confucian Campaign in the early and mid-1970s (Croll, 1978; Johnson, 1983 and Andors, 1983). The implementation of population control programs in the mid-1970s is another reform which gave women more time to participate in economic production outside of the domestic sphere.

Mao asked women to participate fully in economic development and political affairs. Women then dared to challenge their husbands' authority in the family. The results did not bring

happiness to women as Johnson (1983) commented:

Just as the increase in women's participation in collective remunerative labour outside the home did not bring about an automatic redefinition of their family roles and status, women's public political participation and status did not automatically increase along with increases in their labour participation....The Cultural Revolution..., merely tried to override them with the necessarily temporary mobilizational force of the movement (pp. 186-7).

Mao's regime also encouraged women to pursue education in the scientific fields, and, by 1957, one-seventh of the researchers at mathematics research institutes were women. Yet, Chinese women's education did not grant them equality with men. Andors (1983) concludes that, "... , the process of female liberation in China remains unfinished" (p. 174). Andors found that even in 1978, male workers held the higher positions and made the economic and political decisions in the work places, although women had made significant progress by the end of the Cultural Revolution. In the countryside, despite the fact that boys and girls had equal educational opportunities, many girls still had difficulty in getting an education. Poor peasants often chose to keep their daughters from school to help work in the fields or help with family affairs (Hemmel and Sindbjerg, 1984).

According to *Achievement of Education in China, 1949-1983 and 1978-90*, the majority of female students remained in the lower levels of education (primary and high school) and less than two per cent of female students went on to higher education (Ministry of Education, 1991). However, the number of female graduate students has increased in the last 10 years (see table 2). Many Chinese

women who graduated during that period went abroad and began new independent lives. This will be illustrated by the case studies in Part III of this thesis.

Table 2

Female students in China, 1978-90 Unit:10,000

year	Postgraduates	Postsecondary	Secondary
1978	.082	20.65	2,715.48
1979	[na]	24.57	2,410.52
1980	.260	26.81	2,180.08
1981	.270	31.24	1,895.37
1982	.360	30.54	1,777.44
1983	.530	34.49	1,735.12
1984	.920	39.98	1,821.87
1985	1.620	51.06	1,893.13
1986	2.270	59.35	1,987.86
1987	2.480	64.66	2,018.62
1988	[na]	68.94	1,951.18
1989	2.000	70.16	1,887.32
1990	[na]	69.51	1,920.11
Total	11.530	589.96	26,194.10

Adapted from *Achievement of education in China, 1978-90* (pp. 39-43)

In summary, although Chinese women were freed from many Chinese traditions, they were still disadvantaged. For example, although the Marriage Law was passed in 1950, implemented in 1953 and revised in 1980, the sale of women and girls into marriage and wife beatings remained common (Spence, 1990). According to Bossen (1991), during the Collectivization, "...women do not inherit individual legal rights to control ... household land" (p. 60). The highly educated women were those from wealthy and modern families. In rural area, women's status in the family and society was still low despite many social and policies changes.

Chapter II

History of Chinese-Canadian Women, 1885-1993

In the mid-19th century, foreign invasions and civil wars caused the collapse and economic ruin of the Ching Dynasty. The Nanjing treaty following the Opium War (1839-42) forced the Ching Dynasty to open China's doors officially to foreigners for trading and missionary preaching (Hayhoe, 1987). This treaty with the British and other treaties with other powerful capitalist countries had a strong impact on Chinese development. The negative effect was the weakening of China's economic and political power during the period from 1842 to 1945; the positive effect was the awakening of the Chinese people both at home and abroad and their search for modernization.

The immediate reactions of the modern-minded authorities were to look for change and to attempt to learn new technologies from the Western World. However, the conservatives of the Ching Court expected some sort of protection in the old Chinese religions and Buddhism, so that internal tensions were inevitable. In 1900, the Boxer Rebellion, a conflict between the Chinese and foreign missionaries, broke out. This struggle caused eight stronger countries, Britain, France, the United States, Russia, Germany, Italy, Austria and Japan to unite and to send their armies to China on the excuse of protecting their citizens there. China was defeated by their modern weapons and signed unequal treaties with

each country. In general, those treaties satisfied the other countries' demands in terms of money, land, power and rights in China to the detriment of China itself.

In addition to the humiliating international relationships and the internal conflicts between the old and new philosophies which led to civil war, China suffered many natural calamities such as floods, typhoons, earthquakes, droughts, plagues, and famines (Chan, 1982). These caused tens of millions of Chinese to be killed or left homeless. The surviving Chinese poor looked for somewhere else to live. They migrated to Southeast Asia and Indonesia, to the Caribbean, to Australia, to the northern countries of Latin America, to the western coast of the United States and to Canada. The gold rush of 1848-1849 attracted many Chinese to California, and from there they moved to Canada (Spence, 1990).

Chinese Immigration to Canada

In 1858, many Chinese migrated to Canada from California in response to the gold rush in the Fraser Valley, British Columbia. They found employment as domestic workers in Victoria, as coal miners' helpers at Nanaimo, and as seasonal workers in the New Fraser River salmon canning industry (Tan and Roy, 1985; Con et al., 1982 and Li, 1988). When in 1881, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway faced financial problems and the most difficult work in the Rocky Mountains wanted to be done, the Company brought 17,000 coolies directly from Guangdong (Kwantung) Province, China, to do the hardest and most dangerous work (Pierre

Berton, 1974). The low wages Chinese men accepted for their work angered the white labourers. Economic fears and racial prejudice soon developed into antagonism. When the issue was brought to the attention of the "Royal Commission to Inquire into Chinese Immigration into British Columbia", Sir Matthew Begbie, Chief Justice of British Columbia, commented, "I do not see how people would get on here at all without China men. They do, and do well, what white women cannot do, and do what white men will not do" (Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, 1885:75).

However, despite their clearly recognized usefulness, Chinese men were not welcomed by Canadians. According to Pierre Berton (1974), the strong "Anti-Chinese feeling" (p.359) spread:

By 1878, when their employment in public works was banned, there were some three thousand Chinese in the province. All were prepared to work for lower wages than any white labourer, and that was the chief cause of the discontent. It was considered political suicide for a public figure to take any stand but one that was anti-Oriental (p. 359).

Thus, without any defenders, the Chinese became scapegoats, and the federal government enacted the Chinese Immigration Act. The first anti-Chinese bill, which introduced the "head tax", was issued in 1885 immediately after the completion of the CP railway. The major provision was that:

Chinese immigrants had to pay a \$50 head tax to enter Canada,... Once the Chinese person was admitted, he or she was issued a certificate containing a personal description. In order to leave and return to Canada, Chinese required special certificates. Chinese who violated the Chinese Immigration Act were subject to a general penalty of \$500 or 12 months in jail or both (The Law Union of Ontario, 1981, p. 22 and Statutes of Canada, 1885, ch.71).

In 1903, the head tax was raised to \$500. This only applied to the Chinese immigrants because China, at this time, was a weak country with no international power. Therefore, the Canadian government was able to enact anti-Chinese immigration laws without fear of reprisal (The Law Union of Ontario, 1981). This again reflected the unequal relationship between China and the Western capitalist countries. The Chinese government had no power to protect its overseas citizens. For example, in the 1850s, after an influx of immigration following the discovery of gold, the Australian colonies began erecting a "great white wall" to terminate further Chinese immigration. This became the avowedly exclusionary "White Australia" policy that was not revoked until the second half of the 20th century. In 1882, the United States also passed an exclusion act on Chinese (Tan and Roy, 1985). This had made Overseas Chinese very patriotic and willing to fully support the Nationalist Revolution in the late Ching Dynasty.

The Canadian head tax was not only a discriminatory policy in terms of race, but was also based on class distinctions. Diplomats, merchants, tourists and scientists were exempt from paying the head tax. Only the labourers, the "undesirables", were affected by the tax once the railroad was completed. The labourers were exploited and oppressed (Li, 1993). They were forced to live in an isolated place named "Chinatown". However Chinatown became a place to escape discrimination and a place where Chinese immigrants could maintain their identity and self-esteem (Kwang, 1972).

Racial hostility did not end with the head tax, but was

extended to the school system. Chinese children were humiliated in the public schools. For example, Li described discrimination in the schools of Victoria:

In 1901, there were only sixteen Chinese students attending the public schools in Victoria and the public revealed a strong desire to segregate them from white students. In 1908, the Victoria School Board accepted a recommendation to have separate classes for Chinese children. In 1922, the Board decided to put all the Chinese students in one separate school....By that time there were 216 Chinese students in four city schools. When the principals of these schools called out the Chinese students and marched them to King's Road School, the Chinese students and their parents started a boycott that lasted a year, until the board permitted the Chinese students to return to their schools (Li, 1988, P. 33).

We have the testimony of one Chinese girl of the period. She is Jean Lumb who was born in Nanaimo, B.C. in 1919 and whose father was a coal miner. She went to school in Nanaimo. Only children whose parents were black, native or Chinese went to her school. The segregation was a very painful experience for her. She wrote:

I had a terrible feeling of guilt or shame that I was born Chinese....For a long time afterwards I had that terrible feeling that the English, the white people, were *fan gui* - foreign devils or ghosts, really bad people. That feeling stayed with me because the only time that the parents of these white kids allowed them to come to our Chinatown area was once a year on Hallowe'en night. On that night they had their masks on, with coloured hair or whatever. They came here and broke our fences down. They marked windows, drawing all kinds of very bad things. This is how we grew up,...(Chinese Canadian National Council, 1993, p. 51).

Discrimination also tainted other aspects of the immigrants' lives. In British Columbia, the 1893 Provincial Home Act excluded Chinese from admission to homes for the elderly. The Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1903 banned Chinese labourers from working

underground and occupying skilled jobs in mines (Tan and Roy, 1985). However, the matter did not stop there.

In 1923, the Canadian federal government passed the Act Respecting Chinese Immigration or in short, the "1923 Act" or the "Exclusion Act". This prevented further "entry into or landing in Canada of persons of Chinese origin or descent, irrespective of allegiance or citizenship..." (Statutes of Canada, 1923, Ch. 38 and Malarek, 1987, p. 9). Thus, Chinese immigration was totally banned, so that there was not one single Chinese entry into Canada from 1924 to 1928. Later, during the economic depression, from 1929 to 1945, all Asians were banned from entering Canada except the wives of the labourers, their unmarried children under eighteen and Asians who were Canadian citizens.

From 1929 to 1935, only seven Chinese entered Canada (Malarek, 1987). Due to the difficult living conditions in Canada, the number of Chinese in Canada declined during the twenty years from 1931 to 1951 because many Chinese-Canadians left for China. According to Li (1988), the "Chinese population in Canada shrank about 12,000 from 46,519 in 1931 to 34,627 in 1941, and it continued to decline slowly from 1941 to 1951" (p.85). It decreased by around 2000 people from 1942 to 1951. The decrease during that decade was less than that of the previous decade for two reasons. Firstly, few Chinese wanted to go back to China or settle in other places because of the instability caused there by World War II. Secondly, there was an increase of Chinese immigrants who came to Canada after 1947 when the Act of 1923 was repealed.

The period from 1947 to 1967 was significant for both the Chinese in Canada and their relatives in China. Most of the Chinese Canadians had suffered a long separation from their families in China and wanted to reunite with them. Therefore, they lobbied for changes in the Chinese Immigration Acts. The 1923 Act was repealed only in 1947 after many Chinese-Canadians fought in World War II (Li, 1988). In that same year, the Chinese in British Columbia were allowed to vote (Li, 1988). Because of the Japanese invasion of China (1937-1945), World War II in the Pacific (1941-1945), and the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists (1946-1949), many Chinese hoped to find refuge away from China or Taiwan. Those with relatives in Canada, usually women with husbands or fathers, hoped to reunite with them. Though the Chinese Canadians were still subjected to many restrictions as an Asian immigrant group, many of them were allowed after 1947 to sponsor their wives and dependent children. Because of this, the number of Chinese immigrants increased by about 25,000 in a ten-year period, "from 32,528 in 1951 to 58,197 in 1961" (Li, 1988, p.61).

During the 1960s and early 1970s, it was very hard for the people to emigrate from Communist China. When Prime Minister Trudeau visited China in 1973, he signed an agreement which facilitated the immigration of the relatives of Chinese Canadians. In one year, 1973-74, 15,000 visas were issued to Chinese immigrants so that the number of Chinese immigrants doubled again in the 1970s (Li, 1988). In 1978, the point system first introduced by the federal government in 1967, formally replaced the old

immigration regulations. The point system removed all legal discrimination (The Law Union of Ontario, 1981). Points were allocated according to age, education, adaptability, occupational demand, occupational skill, pre-arranged employment, knowledge of English and French and whether the candidate had relatives in Canada (Seward and McDade, 1988 and The Law Union of Ontario, 1981). Thus, the number of Chinese immigrants doubled that of the previous decade (Li, 1988). More unsponsored women, including educated professionals and skilled workers, entered Canada in this period.

In spite of this positive development, in 1994, potential Chinese immigrants still faced many barriers. The "adaptability" criteria in the point system is a measurement that can be easily used by an immigration officer to judge a Chinese applicant unfit to enter Canadian society. "Knowledge of Official Language(s)" is another major barrier to non-English-speaking or non-French-speaking Chinese. This barrier not only lowers their possibilities of immigrating to Canada, but it also limits their integration into Canadian society once they arrive.

The language barrier was also a major problem for pioneer immigrant Chinese women; yet, most of those women stayed home and did not need such a broad range of skills as do today's immigrant women. The only documentation we have of the pioneer days concerns the numbers of Chinese women in Canada but little is known of the quality of their lives.

Immigration trends of Chinese women to Canada

Although there were about 1,577 Chinese men in Victoria's tent town, no Chinese female appeared there until 1860. At that time, Chinese men were already isolated in "Little Canton" which was named by Amor de Cosmos, the future premier of British Columbia (Chan, 1982, p. 49). The street in Victoria where Chinese immigrants lived and operated shops became Chinatown. There, a merchant from San Francisco called Chong Lee opened a store selling Chinese goods. His wife and child came from China in the spring of 1860. Thus Mrs. Chong Lee was the first Chinese woman in Victoria and she helped form the first Chinese family in Canada (Chan, 1982; Tan and Roy, 1985). Later, their family business expanded to Vancouver.

The significance of Mrs. Lee's arrival in Canada was to bring Chinese culture and traditions to Canadian society. Her home became the spiritual centre of the Chinese community. Later, a few other Chinese men brought their wives and children. Chan (1982) commented that the frontier Chinese families "blended Confucian values with Christian teaching; these families were to provide stability and continuity in a Chinese community that was overwhelmingly made up of bachelor workers" (p. 49).

By 1885, in Victoria there were about 53 Chinese women compared to 1,495 Chinese men. In 1902, in Victoria there were only 92 Chinese women compared to 3,263 Chinese men, whereas in Vancouver there were 27 Chinese women to 2,053 Chinese men (Chinese Canadian National Council, 1992). Between 1885 and 1947,

the discriminatory Chinese Immigration Acts previously described made it very hard for Chinese men to build a family here, for the number of Chinese women compared to the Chinese men remained very low.

Nevertheless, the trend was upwards. Table 3 shows the rising percentage of female Chinese immigrants from 1858 to 1986:

Table 3
Chinese Immigrants in Canada

Year	Total immigrants	Total female immigrants	Percentage of Female
1858-1945	2,280	515	23%
1946-1955	12,240	4,240	35%
1956-1966	23,905	13,840	58%
1967-1977	118,100	60,565	51%
1978-1982	90,520	46,065	51%
1983-1986	43,740	23,650	54%
Total	290,790	148,875	51%
Total Chinese in Canada	414,040	208,100	50%
Total Chinese in Montreal	24,185	12,215	51%

Derived from Table 2, 1986 Census of Canada (93-154, p. 2-25 and p. 2-27).

The increase from 1946 to 1966 can be attributed to the repeal of the 1923 Act (the Exclusion Act) in 1947 after World War II, and to the unstable political situation in China. This table also shows clearly the effect immigration policies have had on female Chinese

immigrant populations. The majority of these Chinese women, who applied for immigration status before the point system was introduced in 1967, were sponsored by their Canadian relatives. As sponsored immigrants, they were not entitled to the training programs and social services offered by the federal and provincial governments. In the following section, these programs and services will be presented in detail. In contrast to the sponsored immigrants, independent immigrants, mainly men, could benefit from such programs and services. Thus, it is clear that the introduction of the point system was advantageous for female immigrants because those with professional skills and higher education could apply independently without sponsors. Once they had arrived in Canada, they could benefit from training programs and social services, establish themselves more easily and then sponsor their own families. This will be demonstrated in chapter four.

Chinese female immigrants in Montreal

The earliest Chinese immigrants to Montreal came in 1863. They came from the western part of Canada. In 1880, there were 30 residents who worked in laundries and other small family businesses in the city of Montreal (Chan, 1982). In 1900, there were almost 1,000 Chinese in Montreal which was then Canada's largest city with a population of more than 328,000. Yet, the Chinamen were still not welcomed (Lazar & Douglas, 1992, Law, 1967 and Officer, 1979). Many of them first came to Montreal as teenagers to work as domestic servants or other cheap labourers. Later, they went back to China

to marry and returned there periodically to visit their wives and to father children. They were forced to do this because the immigration policies and poverty prevented them from bringing their families to join them in Canada (Tan & Roy, 1985 and Lazar & Douglas, 1992). Thus, there were almost no Chinese women in Montreal or in other Canadian cities (Tan & Roy, 1985 and Lazar & Douglas, 1992).

The experiences of some Chinese immigrants to Montreal during the era of the "head tax" were presented in the National Film Board's 1992 documentary "Moving the Mountain". In this film, some elderly Chinese Canadians who paid the "head tax" described their long separation from their spouses. When James Wong, a 75-year-old resident of Montreal, referred to his separation from his wife, left behind in China, he said, "My wife already prepared for that...." Some women also talked about the long separation they had endured and their situations after arriving in Canada. These women agreed that they were able to tolerate this situation because of the passivity instilled in them by their traditional upbringing and because of their inadequate education (Li, 1993).

Since they had very little education in China and were illiterate in both Canadian official languages, their whole sphere was their family. Some of them helped in the family business or worked in Chinese-owned factories that did not require more language skills than the Chinese dialects. The majority came from the villages of the province of Guangdong. However, today's immigrant Chinese women are different.

Today's Chinese immigrant women are skilled workers, educated professionals and students with the knowledge of one or both of the Canadian official languages. They are from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the bigger cities of China. Table 4 shows the number of women from these three different political regimes:

Table 4
Chinese female immigrants in 1991

Country	Total	Females	Percentage
Hong Kong	22324	11830	53%
Taiwan	4488	2260	50%
China	13913	6695	48%
Total	40743	20785	51%

Data extracted from Table 1m7, Immigration Statistics (1m-087-12-92).

Women from Hong Kong now represent about 53 percent of the total immigrants from Hong Kong. Women from Taiwan represent about 50 percent of its total immigrants while women from China represent about 48 percent.

Chinese immigrant women in Montreal are as much affected by their family backgrounds as are women of any other nationality. Girls from wealthy and educated families are more likely to achieve their life goals than those less fortunate. Most of the new immigrant women from mainland China start as employed workers and/or students in the city of Montreal. Rich investors from Hong Kong or Taiwan, however, live in the suburbs where they have bought houses and cars. Table 5 shows that half of the Chinese live in the

city of Montreal and the other half is spread throughout the different municipalities of the Greater Montreal:

Table 5
Total Chinese population in Montreal in 1991

No. of column and row	Name of City (1)	Population of Chinese by mother tongue (2)	Population of Chinese by ethnic origin (3)	Family's average revenue (\$) (4)
1	Montreal	12985	15700	40000-50000
2	St- Laurent	3430	3985	48330
3	Brossard	3315	4500	60150
4	LaSalle	940	1380	44960
5	D.D.O.	635	820	63187
6	Longueuil	605	960	45561
7	Verdun	560	825	44626
8	Pierrefonds	500	965	54105
9	Laval	415	600	51582
10	Kirkland	265	410	79397
11	Pointe Claire	255	300	65033
12	Greenfield Park	245	285	46946
13	Côte-Saint-Luc	235	390	69199
14	Outremont	220	350	80538
15	1. Saint-Léonard, 2. Saint-Hubert	210*2	1. 240 2. 280	1. 43912 2. 49073
16	1. Lapraire 2. Dorval 3. West-mount	180*3	1. 160 2. 215 3. 430	1. 52001 2. 57924 3. 140102

No. of column and row	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
17	Anjou	160	260	
18	Beacons- field	155	270	92200
19	Mont-Royal	135	250	104549
20	other cities	less than 100	Less than 150	
Total	Greater Montreal	26695	34355	
Total females	Greater Montreal	13500	17400	
Column	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

Data extracted from Table 2, 1991 Immigration Canada and Profile of Census Tracts in Montreal (Catalogue 95-329).

The places they choose to live depend on their financial resources. For example, there are 3,430 Chinese-speaking immigrants living in St-Laurent and 3,315 in Brossard. The latter are newly-arrived immigrants who still speak their mother-tongue at home. The majority of Chinese residents in St-Laurent are middle-class owners of small businesses or are skilled workers. Those in Brossard are mainly investors from Taiwan or Hong Kong. They have established Chinese shopping centres, Chinese schools and are served by a branch office of the Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal. The Chinese who live in Town of Mont-Royal and Westmount belong to rich business families or professionals having higher revenues. In column (4), the family's average revenue is the average income of all the families who live in the same city. Most of the families' revenues consist of more than one person's incomes. In particular,

the newly-arrived immigrant women who live in the city of Montreal and work in the low-paid jobs, contribute to their family revenues.

However, all of the newly arrived Chinese immigrant women still face problems in adapting to Canadian society. Their concerns, compared with those of the earlier immigrant women, are far more complex. These will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Chapter III

Social and Educational Concerns of Chinese-Canadian Women

Chinese immigrant women face many disadvantages as do many other immigrant women in Canada. According to Seward and McDade (1988), most immigrant women come to Canada as family members or sponsored relatives which means the women are sponsored by someone who financially supports them for a designated period of time. During this period they are neither entitled to training allowance offered by Employment and Immigration nor able to access social welfare programs. In addition, these women are among the most disadvantaged of immigrants having comparatively little knowledge of English or French. They usually form the majority of the immigrant women working in the clothing industry.

Roberts (1990) states that most immigrant women in Canada and Quebec suffer from triple oppression or triple jeopardy. She means that:

In Canada the ethnicity and femininity systems are linked to the class system, which distributes inequality along what used to be called race and sex lines...."Ethnicity" in Canada and Quebec is a system, and is not the same as simply being an immigrant. In thinking about the fact that some people who are legally immigrants are not treated as such and are not subordinated, and others who are not immigrants are subordinated, it becomes evident that class, gender, and ethnicity are intertwined (p.6).

Witteabrood and Robertson (1991) also pointed out that immigrant women are a "high risk group" (p.71) because they encounter tremendous disadvantages and experience much stress while

adapting to their new environment (Canadian Task Force on Mental Health Issues Affecting Immigrants and Refugees, 1988; Naidoo, 1987 and 1988; Boyd, 1987; Seward & McDade, 1987 and daCosta, 1993). Weatherford (1986), has described all the difficulties that immigrant women faced in America from 1884 to 1930. Those immigrant women's experiences are still common to our immigrant women in Canada in the 1990s. They must face changes in weather, environment, food, facilities, educational systems, social interactions and childrearing. Minority immigrant women who are wives, mothers and labourers face even more disadvantages (Naidoo, 1980; Boyd, 1987 and Roberts, 1990). These women need support and help in coping with their difficulties adjusting, yet research shows that minority groups generally have smaller support systems available compared to people of Anglo-Saxon origin (Knowles, 1992).

In addition, if women start a business, they experience more difficulties than their male counterparts. They are faced with "eight obstacles [that] prevent women entrepreneurs from breaking through the walls of the glass box" (Belcourt, Burke, and Lee-Gosselin, 1991, p.66). The three most important obstacles are that:

1. Women entrepreneurs are discriminated against based on their gender. They are often treated differently by creditors, suppliers, customers, and even by their employees.

2. Women do not change their workload and status in a family according to their role as female entrepreneurs. Successful male entrepreneurs are assumed to be real providers and praised as good husbands and fathers, yet female business owners are judged

differently. For example, one woman testified:

While some of our respondents claimed that they received emotional support from their husbands, few were able to rely on their husbands for anything but token help. This contrasts starkly with most businesses run by men, where the wife is the (often unpaid) book-keeper, secretary, or office manager. The help given by the husbands tends to be one-shot (such as helping with an office move), but nothing close to the continuing responsibility taken on by many wives of male small business owners (p. 69).

3. Women are rarely perceived as business leaders; they are not even trained in the family business by their husbands or fathers. Besides, these women work in an isolated environment because of language and cultural differences which limit their ability to tap sources of peer financing and informal advice needed for survival and growth.

Furthermore, Griffiths (1993) points out that two groups of immigrants, the domestic servants and the children, need the most help and protection and that both of these groups are composed mainly of females. Despite limited government aid, immigrant women manage to achieve a great deal. They also manage to help those who are suffering (Weatherford, 1986) and give the same kind of help that Anglo-Saxon immigrant women have provided by their Christian and social service organizations (Knowles, 1992).

Usually, Chinese women seek support from their Chinese relatives or others in the Chinese community (Nann and To, 1982). According to Christensen (1987), Chinese immigrants in North America usually do not use mainstream mental health resources and social service agencies, probably because of the typical Chinese emphasis on individual responsibility and reluctance to expose

personal problems to strangers. However, recent immigrants and Canadian-born Chinese are more aware and accepting of the help that is available and they are starting to look for help through interpreters and Chinese community organizations. Mandel stated in 1982 that there were increasing numbers of Chinese women actively involved in Church activities and voluntary works in various Chinese organizations. Now, in Montreal, Chinese women help each other deal with their personal problems, as well as share and solve their social and educational concerns through different programs offered by the public and private sectors.

Personal Problems

Though personal problems vary due to the individuals' personalities, economic and educational background, in general, immigrants seem to have more personal problems than non-immigrants (daCosta, 1993). For Chinese immigrants, any problems related to their family (even employment and education) are considered personal problems. However, in this study, the context of personal problems is limited to the socialization between the family members and friends. Problems within each age group are different. The elderly Chinese immigrant women are lonely and isolated. The middle-aged women have conflicts with their husbands, children and in-laws and the younger women struggle with their cultural identity.

Most elderly immigrant women (75 and up) came to Canada at an

advanced age * because of the discriminatory immigration policies. Their ignorance of English and French as well as their lack of education in China made it difficult for them to adapt to Canadian society. These women expected to live with their children and grandchildren in their later years. Their Chinese upbringing caused them to view extended families as the norm. However, their sons, daughters or relatives have their own affairs and families to take care of. When the women are placed in senior citizen's homes, they feel lonely, ostracized and often turn to religion. Now, the federal government, local social services as well as charity organizations have designed programs for these senior citizens.

The recent immigrant women, 50 years and over, who have no knowledge of English or French, often find it hard to communicate with their grandchildren or in-laws who do not speak the same language as they do. Nevertheless, their Chinese education helps them to participate in many activities in the Chinese community and they are able to do some volunteer work in Chinese organizations. Some of these women had a high school education and now feel more comfortable learning new languages and trying to associate with Canadian friends.

Middle-aged women without professional skills and with school-aged children mainly stay at home to manage family affairs. These

*. Examples were illustrated in the Chapter of *Marriage and the Family* (Li, 1988), one woman was only able to join her husband in Canada in 1964 which was 45 years after her marriage, her husband testified that: "I came in 1913.... I got married in 1919.... I went back to China My parents matched us. I was back for one year or so.... My wife came when she was sixty-three years old [1964]. Now [1980] she is seventy-nine (p. 64).

women often become depressed (Stoppard, 1993). According to the 1993 *Annual Report of the Chinese Family Service in Greater Montreal*, Chinese women are looking for help with their personal problems.

The young Chinese in Canada often realize that they have to struggle to understand their original culture and learn their parents' language to be able to appreciate their heritage. Some young Chinese-Canadians who were educated in Canada have difficulty identifying with the Chinese community. Some feel rejected because of their inability to speak Chinese or their different values. Mandel (1982) found that Chinese immigrant women are inclined to identify with their Chinese background more easily than Chinese men. In general, young Chinese women seem more concerned with their identity than young Chinese men. For example, Ramona Mar said that in *Jin Guo*:

...., when I walk down the street, people don't say, "Her family's been here for generations." They say, "There's a Chinese woman." They don't say "Chinese Canadian." ...It identified something I had yet to label: Chinese Canadian culture. It is not solely Chinese, nor is it white Canadian.... We have a history here in this country: the railroad, the head tax, the exclusion Act....Chinese Canadian culture is something entirely different from Chinese culture. We need to correct images of ourselves...., we have to be more vigilant monitoring the images which appear, or more often than not, the images which do not appear. Also, I think we all need to see ourselves in non-traditional roles. We might still run restaurants, laundromats and corner stores, but we should also see ourselves as politicians, scholars, firefighters, and so on (Chinese Canadian National Council, 1993, p. 177).

Most of the Chinese immigrant women encourage their children to maintain their Chinese culture and family traditions. In

particular, the first-generation immigrant women have greater influence than subsequent generations on their children's attitudes and values. This is regardless of their economic background.

Economic dependence

Most elderly Chinese Canadian women (more than 10 years in Canada) who live alone or in senior citizen homes, receive government pensions or social welfare. The recent elderly immigrant women (less than 10 years in Canada) are either dependent on their families or on their savings (retired immigrants). Two decades ago, most of the middle-aged Chinese women with small children stayed at home to raise their children or help in the family business. Now, there are increasing numbers of Chinese women working outside the home or doing piece work in the house in order to survive (Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal, 1993).

Those without professional skills, or with inadequate language skills, have to take low-paid positions or work long hours yet they are not considered breadwinners. Rather, their incomes are considered a supplement to the family revenue because their jobs are not important and their pay is low. Once these women take these jobs, their occupational mobility is very limited because they will have little opportunity to learn an official language or other job skills. In recent years, the clothing industry is one of the most vulnerable industries in the Canadian economy and workers are often laid-off. If some are home-workers, they must have their own equipment and pay all the costs. They do not have job security,

employment benefits, yet they must take care of their children and shoulder other domestic responsibilities (Roberts, 1990). Their long hours of work and contribution to the family do not bring them economic independence. They are still considered "unproductive housewives" (Folbre, 1991).

Many Chinese women workers experience unfair treatment or sexual harassment in their workplace, but they dare not voice their grievances because they fear losing their jobs, they have poor language skills and they are not aware of their legal rights (Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal, 1993). This situation is similar to that of all other immigrant women from minority groups (Seward and McDade, 1988).

Though the Department of Secretary of State offers free official language courses, it offers no living or travel allowances. Without financial aid, immigrant women obviously cannot attend as full time students. Women with low incomes and long working hours cannot possibly attend part time classes either (Boyd, 1987 and McDade, 1987). Their low economic status hinders their development.

Education

Education is the most important thing for all immigrants. However, the research in this study only deals with the problems that the Chinese immigrant women encounter in their adaptation to Canadian society. Statistics Canada showed that in 1991, Chinese women immigrants still had very low levels of literacy, and, further that Montreal had the greatest number of Chinese immigrant

women who were unable to speak English or French (Statistics Canada, 1991 and Pendakkur & Ledoux, 1991).

Chinese women try to register in language courses and professional training programs to advance themselves in order to get established in Canadian society. Most immigrant women come to Canada as family members or sponsored relatives and they are not able to access income assistance and social welfare programs. However, they have to learn English and French in the workplace or through religious organizations. They often feel that their language skills are inadequate. Lily Welsh made a very interesting remark in *Jin Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian women*,

Sometimes I feel very inadequate in my English. Maybe it's because I went through so many years of being very quiet. I find that that's the case with a lot of Chinese. When you're in a minority, you feel different. And when you feel different, you feel kind of inadequate. It's only when you get older that you realize how silly that thinking is. But then, the thing is that when you go through life being so quiet, that quiet becomes a part of you. (Chinese Canadian National Council, 1993, p. 171).

Walsh points out that language skills are not only a tool to survive, but also allow one to lead a more comfortable social and political life.

In addition, Li (1988) points out that Chinese Canadians lack political power in Canada due to the discriminatory immigration policies which delayed the birth of second generation Chinese-Canadians ⁷. The policies not only produced broken families, but

⁷. Li (1988) claimed, "75 per cent of the Chinese in Canada remained foreign-born as late as 1981, 123 years after the arrival of the first Chinese in Canada.... In 1981, for example, 86 per cent of the employed Chinese in the Canadian labour market, 15 years of age and over, were foreign-born." (p. 68).

also hindered Chinese Canadians' participation in education which leads to better employment opportunities and social life. Indeed, those Chinese Canadian women who succeeded in their professional lives were educated in Canada, for example, Susan Eng and Adrienne Clarkson (Huang and Jeffery, 1992). They represent women who have no language barrier and have access to higher education in Canada so they can fully develop their potential. The Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, David Lam (1995, January), suggested the A B C method of integrating into Canadian society. Coming from Hong Kong, he had no language barrier and certainly did not experience the hardship of learning the official languages; but for others, "Acceptance [A], Belonging [B] and Contribution [C]" (Lam, 1995, p.29) are difficult to achieve when individuals are rejected because of their inadequate language skills. Some recent immigrant women, even those with professional skills and higher education, also face difficulties in finding jobs or establishing businesses and furthering their education because their professional or academic preparation is not recognized and their language skills are poor (see example in the case studies).

Chinese immigrants' greatest concerns are accessing the opportunity to learn new languages and professional skills and advancing their children's education. Without Canadian education, the majority of immigrants feel inadequate in many ways. The Secretary of State helps permanent residents become citizens. When individuals obtain their citizenship, they are no longer eligible for language courses (Boyd, 1987 and McDade, 1987). For example,

Wong Sin was refused the English courses of the immigrants' program because she was born in Victoria and thus was a Canadian citizen. However, she never had the chance to learn English since she had gone back to China at the age of six. When she returned to Canada, she was a middle-aged woman without language skills or job training and could only find work in a factory (Chinese Canadian National Council, 1993).

Chinese immigrant women have one of the highest unemployment rates in Canada. Because of their responsibilities in the family, many Chinese immigrant women cannot attend training courses. The universal phenomenon for most immigrant women (Paredes, 1987) is one of triple oppression.

In Quebec, the Ministry of Immigration has established the Adaptation Department through community groups and ethnic organizations to help immigrants establish themselves and adjust in Quebec. Its main focus is on language training. The Centre d'orientation et de formation des immigrants (COFI) offers intensive French courses at different levels. The Bureau des services aux communautés culturelles (under the Ministry of Education) has many programs to help immigrant children and adults learn French. In addition, the Programme d'enseignement des langues d'origine (PELO) is one of Quebec's "intercultural education" programs *. Its main goal is to integrate immigrants into Quebec's

*. While the federal government promotes multiculturalism as its goal in political socialization in education, Quebec government uses "intercultural education" to achieve its goal of socializing the non-French into Quebec society. In 1977, the Quebec Ministry of Education established the PELO (Programme d'Enseignement des

society while maintaining their own identities. Now, in Montreal, many Chinese communities receive funds from these programs to help Chinese workers, especially Chinese women workers, get into training classes in their workplace. Chinese women have improved their social lives by attending language training courses in the factories. In the meantime, Chinese immigrant children are able to learn their own language and the official languages at school through the PELO (see example in the case studies).

The meaning of literacy includes essential knowledge and skills in reading, writing and arithmetic which enable a person to function in his group and community. These skills lead people toward their own and their community's development (UNESCO, 1962, U.S. Census, 1962 and Statistics Canada, 1992). Chinese women understand that they need to improve their language skills so they can break their silence and enable themselves to act in solving their own problems (Sleeter, 1991). Furthermore, they then can not only express experiences of their community, but can also learn from the experience of other immigrants (Giroux, 1988). In these ways, they are able to improve their status in the family and in Canadian society.

Most immigrant women experience many disadvantages during their integration into Canadian society. Chinese women are particularly disadvantaged in the work place, as well as in social

Langues d'Origine, i.e., Heritage Language Program). It supports the students of minority groups learn their own languages and also funds 80% of costs in ethnic private schools that meet the province's requirements for curriculum and language of instruction (McAndrew, in press).

and educational situations because of their inadequate language skills in English and French. The next chapter will reveal some of the problems that three Chinese-Canadian women have encountered.

Chapter IV

Case Studies: Chinese Women in Montreal

General

Chinese Community

Chinatown is no longer the place where wealthy and new Chinese immigrants choose to live yet, in Montreal, it remains the centre of the Chinese community. It is where the Chinese seek business opportunities and re-connect with Chinese culture, heritage and society. The three important non-profit organizations, namely the Chinese Community United Centre, the Chinese Catholic Mission and the Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal which I visited are located there. They are interrelated and serve the Chinese population. They not only provide social, cultural and educational services, but also actively help Chinese immigrants integrate into Canadian society. In addition, these organizations occupy a large part of Chinatown and have played an important role in Chinatown's new image. They have contributed to upgrading Chinatown's former rundown aspect and transformed it into a structured community. A brief description of each one of these organizations follows:

1. The Chinese Community United Centre is an umbrella organization helping the Chinese community to gain access to government funds. In the 1980s, the federal government had a

special fund to finance the Chinese community's development. This fund was used to build the Montreal Chinese United Building in 1984 and to renovate the Montreal Chinese Community Centre in 1988. Both buildings are located in Chinatown where there are apartments for low income residents as well as a centre for social and cultural activities. For example, the Chinese Family Services hold their activities and programs in the Community Centre.

2. The Chinese Catholic Mission started in 1917. It is the oldest religious organization for the Chinese community in Montreal. Now, it has 300 family members. Most of them are Cantonese. Besides a historical Church, the Mission owns a building including apartments, offices, shops, a Chinese school and a community centre. In addition, it administers three senior citizen homes. Father T. Tou, the priest of the Mission, is often considered as a leader of the Chinese community as well as a religious leader.

3. The Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal was established in 1976. It is a member of Centraide and is financed by both the federal and provincial governments. The Service also raises money through fund-raising campaigns. It has four branch offices in other parts of Greater Montreal. Its 1992-93 annual report stated that there were 16 paid professional staff and 78 volunteers who had helped more than 10,000 Chinese immigrants with social, employment, educational and family problems. It also helps prepare Chinese immigrants, particularly women, to achieve their full Canadian citizenship.

Chinese society is still a patriarchal society. Women do the work and men hold the titles. All the important organizations that I visited have at least one significant characteristic in common: women are the majority. Despite the fact that the members of the organizations - volunteer and paid, professional and support staff, administrators and directors - are overwhelmingly female, all the presidents of these organizations are male. For example, all three organizations mentioned above have always had male presidents, even though the Chinese Family Service group was founded by women. I interviewed many female directors and administrators (see Appendix II). They provided helpful information about Chinese women's problems. I summarized the data they provided under the following headings: family life, social activities and educational concerns. It might be noted that there are many other organizations that deal with these issues. However, they are not directly relevant to my topic and I will introduce them only to describe their roles in different areas of activity.

Family Life

The old large Chinese traditional family is rare in the 1990s, even in Montreal. In recent years, the nuclear family has undergone a sad change as far as elderly Chinese are concerned. Old people feel isolated and rejected. They are not respected as their parents were in the past. They must adapt to the new situation and either live alone or stay in a senior citizen's home. They also have to adjust their social lives.

Most Chinese women still believe that marriage is important for both men and women, that family life is essential for women and children. In a middle class family, wives usually stay home to raise the children. When the children grow up, mothers find jobs or enjoy social life. Because of financial pressures, however, more wives have to work outside of the home in order to make ends meet. According to Cynthia Lam (see Appendix II), some restaurant owners' wives have to work in the factories.

Young Chinese, born in Canada or not, are inclined to adopt Canadian lifestyles and live according to western norms. Yet most Chinese families still maintain their Chinese culture. Parents try to raise their children with their Chinese norms and inspire their children to excel in school. According to these criteria, Yin-Ru Hsu (see Appendix II) is an exemplary mother. She said:

We are always very busy with our tofu factory and Chinese school. I don't have time for social activities. During the day I work in the factory's office. After, I have to go home to manage our family affairs. Our children always help with the family business, take good care of themselves, study hard and do well in school. I have never had any problems while raising them. I prefer that they marry someone from the same background and they have the same belief too. I think that it is best for the younger Chinese to maintain the traditional Chinese culture.

However, not all Chinese families are like that. Cynthia Lam pointed out that there are marriage problems. She said:

Conjugal violence has become more and more serious. Since 1988, the amount of conjugal violence has increased. Thus the Service has started a series of consultation programs and sent out information pamphlets to where women can be reached. The Service has also advertised on Chinese T.V. and radio stations. It also encourages Chinese women to use government or social services which offer women help. Now, more Chinese women

change their attitudes towards family problems and male abuse. They don't consider these matters as a privacy and to be discussed only with immediate family. They are more open and try to get outside help. They also like to join various social activities.

In addition, Cynthia Lam pointed out that most investors from Taiwan return there and leave their children here. Sometimes, the mother stays as well and must encounter the difficulties of raising the children alone. One of the major difficulties is education which will be discussed later.

Social Activities

Ming-Sinm NG. (see Appendix II) said that most residents who live in the Senior Citizen Homes of the Chinese Catholic Church are not financed by their families. They depend on government pensions or welfare. The majority of elderly Chinese women (75 and over) who live in Chinatown did not have much schooling in China and are illiterate in both Canadian official languages. Illiteracy has obviously hindered their social and educational participation. In their loneliness and isolation, they turn to God for comfort. They entrust God with the remaining years of their lives. In the meantime, they preserve their old Chinese traditions and culture. Actually, they believe in Christ because Christians uphold the same moral standards and values as Confucianists. They believe that God will bless and reward them based on merit. Therefore, they live modestly, save money and participate in Church activities. Besides going to Church and playing Mah-Jong at the Community Centre, they watch Chinese T.V. and video tapes.

The healthy and active elderly Chinese join the Long Life

Association which was organized by Wei Wu (see Appendix II) who is vice president of this group organized under the Family Service of Greater Montreal. Wei Wu felt that elderly Chinese people were very lonely and isolated from both Canadian and Chinese communities; therefore, five years ago, she gathered ten people to organize the Association. It now has 400 members and three quarters of them are women. Most of the male members are female members' husbands. Very few single men have joined. The Association only accepts people who are 55 or older. The aim of the Association is to help old people have better social lives. Most of them are Cantonese. The Association's activities include singing in the choir, participating and /or attending performances of Chinese opera, playing games and visiting elderly and sick people. The Association also gets government allowances to buy equipment and gains access to free language courses. Wei Wu said proudly,

Once, the Chinese Family Service invited government officials to attend our activities. I represented the elderly people and spoke in front of a large audience. Government official were very pleased to see me stand up to express my opinions about Canadian policies and programs for Chinese immigrants. The government officials were happy to know that today's immigrants are different from those of earlier times.

Some earlier immigrants who had paid the "head tax" still live in Chinatown and are members of the Association, too. They are becoming more active and are willing to participate in social and public activities.

Middle-aged investors, recently arrived from Taiwan, have contributed to the development of Quebec's economy by investing money in the province, establishing businesses in Montreal and thus

creating jobs. They organized the Taibec Investments Group in 1991. Huei-Fen Chan (see Appendix II) was the first female member to be elected president in 1992. She and other female members have planned many social, cultural and educational activities for adults as well as youths. For example, special language courses were established for Chinese immigrant women lacking the opportunity to practise their English or French conversation skills. These women felt embarrassed by their inadequate language skills which made them reluctant to communicate with any non-Chinese. The Taibec Investment Group also regularly invites special guest speakers to discuss social and educational problems.

In general, most young Chinese are adapting easily to the Canadian lifestyle. This does not mean that young Chinese immigrants do not have adolescent problems. Often living separate from their parents who have returned to Taiwan, young Chinese immigrants, lacking parental supervision, are less disciplined than they were in Taiwan. They are inclined to go out during the school week as well as on week-ends. Their parents feel alarmed by the potential problems this could cause.

Educational Concerns

The main educational concern of newly arrived Chinese immigrant women is language. It prevents Chinese immigrant women from furthering their education, communicating in the workplace and communicating with their children who do not speak Chinese. Meanwhile, the educational concern of most Chinese women in

Montreal is how to educate their children. Not only do they want their children to excel in school, but they also hope to instill a sense of cultural identity in their children.

There are highly educated Chinese immigrant women who have learned English or French before arriving in Canada yet, they still feel that inadequate language skills prevent them from furthering their studies. For example, Florence Fan (see Appendix II) had taught Chemistry at the National Normal University in Taipei for 18 years. She decided to pursue her studies at McGill's Faculty of Education in 1971 when she arrived in Canada. However, due to her inadequate proficiency in English, she had to work twice as hard as her anglophone classmates although she was already a knowledgeable educator.

Many professional immigrants from China have had to be retrained or study to again in a Canadian educational institution to be able to continue their careers. But they find that their lack of language skills, in both conversation and writing, hinder their advancement. Since 1989, there has been a wave of Chinese students who have decided to stay in Canada. Because of financial pressures, they have been forced to accept any available jobs. Thus, many highly educated female students from China work as sewing machine operators. For example, Roying (see Individuals Section), who was an English teacher in China, finds that her language skills are still not adequate to allow her to finish her studies in a short time. Under economic and family pressure, she has had to take any job she could get, despite low wages.

Language also affects immigrant women in the workplace. For example, women working in factories are unable to communicate in French or English with their colleagues and supervisors. They are often treated unfairly, or misunderstood in arguments. Sometimes, regardless of their health, they are forced to work overtime to meet factory deadlines. They work long hours and have no time to improve their language skills. The Chinese Family Service of Greater Montreal has negotiated with factory workers' union and the Minister of Immigration to initiate a program whereby the union gives workers paid time to learn French from 4:00 to 6:00pm. Since 1992, this French language course has been given twice a week for a maximum of 200 hours.

The women who have taken the French courses say that they can now communicate with their children and voice their concerns in the factory. They are much more respected by their children as well as by their colleagues and supervisors.

The idea that a scholar is a first-class citizen is still rooted in Chinese society. Most Chinese mothers in Montreal push their daughters as well as their sons to excel in school. For example, there are scholarships awarded to young Chinese students. One of the Chinese Youth Scholarships is donated by a group of rich Chinese business men who entrust the Chinese Catholic Church with the funds. Every year, the Church's Selection Committee chooses five outstanding Chinese students from all the high schools in Montreal. Cecilia Lai (see Appendix II), member of the Committee said:

During the last few years, it has become very competitive. The students' academic performance has been

During the last few years, it has become very competitive. The students' academic performance has been very similar. The averages of the students were 97%, 96%, 95%,... It was very hard to judge them because the applicants almost all had the same marks. Therefore, starting last year, we not only looked at their academic achievements, but also measured their extra-curricular and social activities as well as other rewards won outside of school. For example, last year, the one who won first prize was the Canadian judo champion and he will represent Canada in the next Olympic Games. The one who won the fourth prize won many contest in the piano contest... The last few years, girls have won more times than boys.

Shirley Tam (see Appendix II) stated that most Chinese mothers encourage their children to learn the Chinese language and culture and to participate in Chinese community activities. Many are volunteers in Chinese schools. There are more than 2500 Chinese students attending Chinese language and culture classes on weekends in seven Chinese schools in Montreal.

The Chinese Catholic School is the oldest (1957-) and biggest of all the Chinese schools. It has more than a thousand students whose mother tongue is Cantonese. The principal, staff and 95 per cent of the teachers are females. The Metropolitan Montreal Chinese School is the first Mandarin Chinese school. It has existed for 18 years and is the only one that registered with the Ministry of Education to give credit courses. Yin-Ru Hsu (see Appendix II) said:

In the beginning, both federal and provincial governments financed Chinese schools under the multicultural education program. But since three years ago when governments funds were cut, Chinese schools are self-supporting and this school has 482 students so there is no finance problem. The school has 25 classes, 26 teachers and only three of them are male.

In general, today's Chinese immigrant women are different from those of the past. They are more liberated and active. They have achieved economic independence through education. Thus, they are able to make their own personal choices and have the right to make family decisions.

Individuals

"Norla," "Lilia" and "Roying" are the three women whom I have chosen as case studies because they represent three different cohorts of Chinese women in Montreal. Norla is a retired senior citizen of the Town of Mont-Royal and has done volunteer work in both Canadian and Chinese organizations. She represents Canadianized Canadian-born Chinese women. Lilia has been in Canada for over 25 years and owns a small business in N.D.G. During the 1970s, the political tension between Communist China and Taiwan made many Chinese seek refuge overseas. Lilia's family represents a large number of Chinese families that came during that time. Lilia's story is the saddest and most complicated of all the three and is known by most of the older immigrants from Taiwan. The story not only reveals her personal and family life, but it also shows how the Chinese community helped her and demonstrates Canadian society's attitudes toward poor widows and single mothers. Roying is the youngest woman of the three. She lives in St-Laurent. Her story represents those newly-arrived immigrant women from the Chinese mainland. They are very competent and able to overcome

their difficulties relatively quickly. Each of these three women is different from the others in terms of age, family, political and educational background. Pseudonyms have been used to protect their privacy.

Norla

As a third generation Chinese-Canadian, Norla is fully integrated into Canadian society. She attributes this facility to her parents' giving priority to her education while raising her. Her story is representative of many earlier Chinese immigrants who considered education extremely important. Their encouragement and support have made a positive impact on their children's lives. Norla's views also illustrate many thoughts and attitudes towards life shared by numerous fully Canadianized Chinese.

My grandfather came to Montreal in 1893. He came from the United States and my grandmother came from Hong Kong. My father came to Montreal to work as a house boy at age 18. My mother was born here. She supported herself while getting an education and learned to play the piano too. She was a soloist in a Church choir. My father did not have much education, yet he was nonetheless very capable and never let it hinder him. My father spoke English well, without an accent. He learned to speak English from an English lady at a Protestant Church. He became an insurance agent at the Sun-Life Insurance Company. He was the first Chinese insurance agent in Montreal. He also opened a restaurant in Chinatown. He was a good provider and never asked us to help in the family business. He wanted us to be educated. He encouraged both his daughters and sons academically. If I had wanted to be a doctor like my brother, my father would gladly have let me. However, girls were not as ambitious then as they are today. Due to peer pressure, marriage was considered more important than a profession. Becoming a nurse was considered appropriate for a girl. My sister applied to the Royal Victoria program to be a

nurse but she was refused. So she went to Toronto to finished her nurse's training, then went to Chengdou in 1939 to work. There she met my brother-in-law. He was a doctor. I too became a nurse. In 1942, I was the first Chinese woman to enter the nurse training program at the "Royal Vic."

After graduation, I married a gentleman from Shanghai. I did not work, but stayed home and took care of our four children. In 1963, as my children no longer occupied my time, I enrolled at Concordia University. Then I continued to study at McGill. In 1982, I obtained a teacher's certificate enabling me to teach English as a Second Language. From 1982 to 1988, my husband went to Taiwan to teach at Tai-Ta University. Meanwhile I taught English at both the Chinese Culture University and Taiwan Normal University. Also, we visited China in 1982. It was the first time my husband had been back to China in forty years. We returned a second time.

Besides teaching, I have done much volunteer work. I was the President of Royal Victoria Alumnae Association and on the board of YWCA. I was president of the latter in 1968. In 1975, some friends and I started a Chinese family service centre under the Ville Marie Social Service Centre. Later other social workers continued the service and it became an independent social service for the Chinese community. From 1988 to 1991, I worked in the Chinese United Centre. Since my husband's death in 1992, I am retired.

I play golf, visit friends and my families. My two daughters and sons were very good children, good students and I did not have any serious problems raising them. Now, they all have their careers and family. However, today's society has a stronger influence on the younger generation than before. It is much harder for parents to raise children now because they have less influence over them.

I don't encounter any difficulties socially. I have friends from many different backgrounds. Their ethnic backgrounds do not affect my relationship with them in any way. Although I only speak English, I don't have any problems communicating with people. I only learned a little Mandarin when I was in Taiwan; most of my friends speak English with me.

Although I am a feminist and am very actively involved in the YWCA in helping the women's movement, I still think it is worthy for women to stay home and raise their children properly. I don't view it as necessarily

negative, it is a personal choice. A lot of women don't want to be considered as feminists. They think that feminists are misogynists, aggressive and radical. They have the wrong image of feminists.

Norla did not encounter any major difficulties while growing up, neither in her education nor in her marriage, and she attributes this to her supportive parents. Indeed, both her grandparents and her parents made a great difference in Norla's and her siblings' lives. As in the lives of many earlier immigrants, the first generation struggled and endured more hardships than the subsequent generations and this is still true.

Lilia, a first generation immigrant in Canada, was not as fortunate as Norla for she had to overcome many hardships.

Lilia

Lilia was born in China in 1934 and educated in Taiwan. Since she has been in Canada, she experienced sickness, the death of her husband and the difficulties of being a single mother. She struggled against poverty and prejudice. Her story was chosen because it illustrates the importance of education in overcoming obstacles. Her experiences are shared not only by other female Chinese immigrants, but also by many other women immigrants who have come to Canada.

The following excerpts from the interview have been translated from Mandarin.

During the 1970s, Taiwan and Communist China fought over who should represent China in the United Nations. When Communist China entered the U.N. in 1972, Taiwan lost its membership to many other

international organizations as well and was denied state status by many countries. People living in Taiwan were afraid of the Communist invasion and rushed to move off the island. Overseas Chinese also wanted to find a secure country in which to settle down, instead of returning to Taiwan. Lilia's family was among the Overseas Chinese who had roots in Taiwan and a relationship with the Nationalists.

People who are born in Canada take the privileges and benefits of Canadian citizenship for granted. Most immigrants must go through many difficult procedures before obtaining them. Lilia begins her story by telling us how her family came to Canada.

In 1969, our family travelled to Montreal and applied for immigration status. Before it was approved, my husband was offered a job in England and we went to London instead of waiting here without a job. At that time, our passports had almost expired, so we asked Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to extend them. They did not reply. An English friend from my husband's workplace helped us by calling the Chinese Embassy in London to issue our passports. The Chinese Embassy agreed to issue the new passports for us. At that time, there was much political tension between China and Taiwan. If we had become citizens of China, my father (a general in Taiwan's Army service) and my family would have been in a very difficult position. The Taiwanese government might have accused us of political involvement. Then, my family's situation would have been dangerous. We dared not communicate further with the Chinese embassy and were scared to continue staying in London. Therefore we returned to Montreal in April, 1970, before our passports expired.

While we were waiting for immigrant status, Father Tou from the Chinese Catholic Mission helped us obtain permits to stay in Montreal. I had my fourth child on December 18, 1970. The delivery was very difficult and I lost too much blood. I had to stay in the hospital longer than was normal. We had to pay all the expenses as our immigration permits had not been approved yet. On January 22, 1971, our immigration permits were issued and my husband learned that he had passed the Canadian Medical

Board exam, becoming qualified to work in Montreal as a doctor.

Had matters rested there, Lilia's life would have been a happy one. Unfortunately, that was not to be. Her husband's sudden death left Lilia in a very miserable and poor situation. She recalled:

In February, 1971, we celebrated Chinese New Year's Eve by inviting a few friends over. As soon as the guests left, my husband told me that he had to go to the hospital. I was shocked and sensed the seriousness of his illness...so we went to the Royal Victoria Hospital. My husband had to stay in the Hospital and I had to go home to take care of my children. It was too late to call anybody to help me. I remember there was a storm that night. It was freezing cold. The road was very icy and slippery, I could not walk. Whenever I stood up, I fell down again. As I kept crawling, I lost sensation in my toes and fingers. Normally, it only takes 20 minutes to walk home. That night it took me two hours.

The next morning when I went to the hospital, I found out that my husband had liver cancer... A doctor told me that they did tests on my husband and found out that an operation would not help him at all, suddenly I felt the blood drain from my head towards my toes. When I woke up I found myself lying on my bed with many Chinese women around me. I also found a group of Chinese men in my living room. Father Tou had sent the Church's members there.

Father Tou went to the hospital to talk to my husband and asked him to write his will and give me the power of attorney. I would be able to withdraw the money from the bank in New York. Since I had never gone anywhere in North America alone, and I did not have a visa allowing me to go to the U.S., Father Tou wrote a letter to the immigration office asking for a special permit.

He also accompanied me to New York to get the money that would pay for the funeral expenses. After I came back from New York, I spent the last day in the hospital with my husband. I was holding him while he was dying. As soon as the nurse removed his body from my arms, I lost consciousness. When I regained consciousness two days later, my apartment was full of people. They had come to take care of the children and myself as well as to arrange my husband's funeral. There were Chinese, Hungarians, Greeks and many others I did not know.

After my husband died, the landlord asked us to move out for fear I would not pay the rent. One of my friends helped me look for an apartment. We visited 32 apartments, but no one wanted us as tenants. At that time, I had four children aged eight, four, two years and two months. I had no marketable job skills. Finally, we moved to a 75 dollar month basement and one of my friends signed the guarantee.

For most immigrants, learning a new language is an important step towards integrating into Canadian society. In Lilia's case, she not only had to learn a foreign language, but also had to learn a marketable job skill in order to support her family. In addition, she had to deal with the hardships of raising children. Her story shows the many obstacles a single mother faces when she goes back to school.

Father Tou advised me to take a French course offered by the immigration office. I would receive family allowance while studying. However, I could not learn any French because whenever I entered the classroom I would begin crying. After a week, the teacher proposed I leave whenever I felt like crying. She would not mark me absent so I could continue receiving the family allowance check. Then, I decided to improve my English. I hoped it would be easier than French because I had learned a little English in Taiwan.

Every morning I woke up at 5.00. I had to prepare milk and all the food for the baby and lunches for everyone else. I would first take the baby to the baby sitter before bringing my two children to my English course and letting my eldest daughter go to school by herself. The three of us travelled by bus and during the trip, both children would eat their breakfasts while I combed and braided their hair. At the school, I would take them to their nursery class while I went to my classroom. During lunch time, I would feed the children and eat whatever was left for me after they had finished. After classes, I would pick them up, go home, cook and bathe them. Then, I would do my homework.

After finishing my English course, I took an accounting course offered by Manpower at a high school. The course was from 7:00 to 10:00 at night. Every evening

before I left for class, I would set three different coloured alarm clocks. The ringing of the white alarm announced the beginning of the children's television program I had chosen for them to watch. The blue alarm reminded Lucia to feed the baby a bottle of milk, and the yellow one signalled her to change the baby's diaper. When I came home, I would bathe them and put them to bed before 11.00 p.m. Usually, my neighbours and friends would check on them during my absence.

I remembered how the teacher used to pick on me. Every time he asked me a question, I could not answer. He asked me questions often, believing me to be the worst student. He thought that if I could understand, then the other students must also understand. This upset me and one day as I discussed it with a group of classmates, a solution was found. My classmates suggested I prepare a note in English explaining the difficulty language was causing in my accounting studies and read it to him.

Next class, I was very careful in reading my note. I said that I could not answer his questions only because I did not understand English well. Thus my inability to answer was not a sign of my ignorance of accounting concepts. In fact I had already covered most of the material before in Taiwan. He was furious and said, "Fine, come to the board and do this problem. If you can prove that you know the material, I will stop bothering you." The exercise was on the Trial Balance. I went to the board, my mind blank. Yet I wanted to show him that I knew how to do it. I blocked everything out and focused on the problem on the board. Finally, I was able to work it out correctly. He came to me, shook my hand and, from then on, he never bothered me again.

After she graduated from the training program, Lilia found a job. But her children often got sick and she had to quit. Lilia's case was just like that of most women who have family responsibilities which greatly limit their employment possibilities. With younger children, Lilia had to be self-employed. Despite the help of friends and her father who was still in Taiwan, she experienced many difficulties. She attributed her hardship to inadequate language skills and the lack of special knowledge in Canadian business. She said:

When we moved into the triplex, I found that there were three unpacked boxes of merchandise my father had given to me. A friend and I discovered that the three boxes were full of small Chinese gift items. Christmas was near. My friend helped me sell them to her friends and I made \$300. I sent back the \$300 to my father and asked him to buy some more merchandise. When the merchandise arrived, Father Tou bought it for the Church's bazaar and paid me \$500. I again sent my father the money and asked for more goods. This time the goods were not sent directly to my home, instead, I had to pick them up at the Canada Customs Office and pay duty because the goods were over the 500 Dollar limit. I did not know how to do it. At this point, I met Mr. Lai, from Hong Kong who had much experience in importing and exporting of goods. He helped me fill out all the forms needed for the goods to pass through customs.

Later, Mr. Lai helped me find a lawyer so I could officially open a company in which he was an equal partner. In 1972, we found a place in a shopping mall to open a gift shop. The business occupied a lot of my time, so I asked social services to find foster parents to take care of the two youngest children. They were fostered for four years and came back home when they started school.

In 1975, the shop was forced to close because of the problem of relocation. I did not know that the landlord had informed us to change locations. Mr. Lai had not told me. When I went to see our company lawyer, I also found out that Mr. Lai had named himself president while I was only recognized as a secretary. He owned half of the company's shares which in reality should have belonged to me. I told the lawyer that Mr. Lai had cheated me. The lawyer said that when we had both come to sign the contract I had nodded my head in agreement to all that was said. I told him that I did not understand English then. I had mistakenly trusted Mr. Lai to handle our affairs. I decided to sue Mr. Lai and asked the lawyer to help me. He referred me to another lawyer yet, it was a hopeless case because I had signed my name to every paper.

In 1976, Mr. Lai got half of the company's shares. He opened another shop and we separated our business. In 1978 my company participated in an exhibition to promote Chinese (Taiwanese) products at Place des Arts and I opened a shop there. In 1980 my company became an agent of the General Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of China (Taiwan). My company participated in many exhibitions and shows in many places as well as in various trade fairs.

In 1985, I used my big house in N.D.G. to open a day care centre. It was only opened three weeks. I decided to close it because the children were continually fighting with each other and the teachers could not control them. Later, my housekeeper suggested I open a senior citizens' home. I found elderly people very quiet and much easier to take care of than children. So, in the beginning, I joined Villa Maria Social Services and worked with them. Seeing older people everyday, I felt very depressed. In 1986, I decided to open the extra rooms to tourists.

In 1989, I bought two triplexes, rebuilt, and renovated them according to the city laws. There, I opened a private senior citizens home. In 1990, I sold my business at Place des Arts. Now I manage my businesses well. I have doctors and ambulances nearby. The elderly people are well cared for. My rooms for tourists are also renting well. I hire people to work for me and language is not a problem any more.

Lilia's strong and compassionate personality was demonstrated in the way she accompanied her husband to the hospital and cared for her children at home. She had to overcome many difficulties to survive in the Canadian society after her husband's sudden death. Despite her helplessness and poverty, she preferred to stay alone in Canada to raise her children rather than return to Taiwan, or to remarry. This shows her devotion to her husband and her great strength and willingness to take on a hardship that was almost impossible for a woman with four toddlers and no language or marketable job skills. Lilia's hard work, courage, self-denial and intelligence show that women have the potential to be independent and capable of achieving their goals. Another factor contributing to her success was the Canadian government's immigration policy at that time whereby recent immigrants were offered language and job training. She also benefitted from social services usually reserved for independent immigrants because of her status as a single

mother. Meanwhile, her business flourished because of the special rates the Taiwanese government offered her on merchandise. Her business acumen also enabled her to take advantage of the economic recession of the early 1980s. She purchased old houses at cheap prices and subsequently renovated and transformed them into hotels and senior citizens' homes. She also got subventions from the city of Montreal to complete these projects in the late 1980s.

Lilia's story reflects the economic situation of both Nationalist Taiwan and Canada. Taiwan has emerged as an economic power on the international scene since the 1980s while Canada suffered from a recession in the early 1980s. In addition, Lilia's adaptability allowed her to change from a traditional Chinese woman to a successful entrepreneur. Roying's story is different.

Roying

Roying came to Canada as a visiting scholar at the McGill Faculty of Education. She was sponsored by a McGill medical professor who had visited China in 1978. At that time she was teaching English at Beijing University and became a translator and interpreter for him. After one year of studies, she found her language skills were not good enough to enable her to finish her degree as she had planned at the beginning. She had to work harder and spend more time to prepare her assignments. She could not afford to continue her studies. For economic and family reasons, she had to find any available job to stay in Montreal. She worked very hard and saved enough money to bring her daughter, husband and

mother to Canada in 1992.

Roying's story typifies those of the modern Chinese female students who come to Montreal alone, then sponsor their families to come. Their success is attributed to their education in China. However the conflict between Chinese traditional female roles and Western women's liberty remains a problem. Roying gave her opinions about this matter while telling her story (translated from Mandarin).

Chinese women who immigrate to Canada are eager to adopt Canadian ways of living which are very liberating compared to traditional patriarchal Chinese society. Their potential can be developed here. When they compare their status here with that of women in China, they realize how much better off they are in Canada. On the positive side, they gain independence and power as they become bread-winners of the family. However, on the negative side, they must assume responsibility for their husbands, children and parents. Family crises and divorces are often the result when the wives arrive in Canada before their husbands.

I maintain my traditional Chinese female role. I worked as a janitor in a restaurant because my inability to speak Cantonese prevented me from being hired as a waitress. I had to take on odd jobs and worked as a domestic servant, a cleaning lady and a housekeeper. Finally, I found a job cooking and cleaning in an English lady's house. She provided me with food and board. In fact, we became friends.

I worked very hard, saved \$30,000 in three years and helped my husband and daughter come to Canada. I also helped my husband establish a small business. I hardly spent any money except for groceries. I had everything else I needed brought from China. In 1992, I joined Sun Life of Canada as a life insurance representative and I sponsored my mother to come to Canada. My mother helped me take care of my daughter. I could work longer hours than ever; I earned the highest commission among Sunlife representatives in Canada in 1993. Most of my customers are from China. They feel insurance is important and are willing to pay for it no matter how hard they must work.

In the beginning, my husband could not get used to

Canadian life. We argued a lot. But now since I can provide a comfortable life for the family, my husband has agreed to stay here. We are planning to buy a house where we will live with my mother and our daughter. My daughter is unhappy because we hardly see each other.

Roying tried very hard to keep her female role in the family and society according to Chinese tradition. Being a wife, mother and career woman is certainly not easy. She has had to work very hard to bring her family here. She feels that pursuing a career has conflicted with her ability to fulfill the traditional Chinese woman's role. Although her husband and her mother take care of her daughter, she still feels guilty that she cannot spend more time with her. Her situation is becoming increasingly common among professional women, yet this conflict is never felt by professional husbands and fathers.

However, Roying's education and training during the Cultural Revolution have had a great impact on her. She was involved in the Red Guard Revolution. She also witnessed the Tiananmen Square massacre on June 4, 1989. She does not adhere to any religion. In keeping with Mao's theories, she is atheist and believes people have to work hard to get what they want. Mao radically changed Chinese mentalities, especially concerning women. Women were freed from the bondage inherent in the old traditions and absorbed the new attitudes of modern societies.

Summary

The three women's stories show some similar characteristics. All three women hold positive attitudes and believe in the

importance of education. Meanwhile they are also devoted to their families and try to instill Chinese values in their children. All three had to struggle to attain their goals because of their gender. Even Norla, who was fortunate compared to Lilia and Roying, still gave up her profession and stayed at home to raise her children because it was the mentality of her times. She was able to go back to university and change professions because of her good language skills, higher Canadian education and family support. All these factors helped her to advance herself after so many years of staying at home. Lilia is the most unlucky one of the three. She has had the most setbacks in life yet, she overcame all the hardships and finally achieved her goals. As an entrepreneur, she feels that Canada is still the best place to live and develop one's potential. Roying is the youngest and most recent immigrant woman among the three. She was able to attain independence in a short period because of her education and training in China which prepared her to accept new challenges and work hard. Compared to Lilia, she was able to achieve her life goals more easily because her English skills are valuable in the workplace. She also has fewer family responsibilities because she receives help from her mother and her husband.

Lilia and Roying both preserve more Chinese culture and socialize more with other Chinese than Norla who is more Canadianized. Norla participates in various non-Chinese social, political and educational activities. In particular, she is more open in her discussion of personal and family problems, women's

issues and retirement as well as social problems concerning the younger generation.

In general, Chinese immigrant women are similar to all other immigrant women in their adaptation to Canadian society. They are affected by national and provincial immigration policies, their own personal characteristics and their family backgrounds as well as by their education. These case studies showed that all three women have improved their personal and public lives through education.

Chapter V

Summary and Conclusions

One hundred and thirty five years ago, in 1860, the first Chinese woman arrived in Victoria. Her arrival marked the beginning of the Chinese family in Canada and the establishment of the Chinese community. Throughout the community's development, the experience of its women remained a mystery: the voices of Chinese-Canadian women were hardly ever heard. Their silence was an extension of a thousand-year-old tradition in which women's lives were entirely dictated by men.

Traditionally, Chinese women were tolerant, passive and submissive. In addition to their illiteracy, they suffered from physical torture and emotional pain, for example, a thousand-years of foot-binding, unhappy-marriages, and inequality in the family and society. In reaction to that negative environment, they learned to manage money wisely, to work hard, to establish very strong ties to their family, and to preserve Chinese culture and traditions in their lives and childrearing customs. Their Chinese upbringing continued to affect them when they joined their husbands in Canada. In order to understand the history of Chinese women in Canada, the history of Chinese men must be known.

The history of Chinese men in Canada was marked by prejudice and hostility. The anti-Chinese pressure, in the early days, led the federal and provincial governments to adopt many discriminatory

policies towards the Chinese. Thus, they were the only immigrant group which was officially discriminated against for over 82 years (from 1885 to 1967). The "head tax" was enacted by the federal government in 1885 after the Canadian Pacific Railway was finished. This head tax made it very difficult for the Chinese labourers to bring their wives to Canada. Furthermore, the Exclusion Act of 1923 excluded Chinese from migrating to Canada from 1923 to 1946. In fact, these two severe Chinese Immigration Acts prevented Chinese women from joining their husbands in Canada and resulted in Canadian Chinatowns becoming "bachelor societies". This situation was changed only after 1947 when the 1923 Act was repealed and Chinese Canadians could reunite with their families. However, even then, Chinese-Canadians continued to be subjected to many other discriminatory immigration regulations until 1967.

From 1967 to 1978, the new immigration policy, the point system, was gradually implemented. Many Chinese from different places migrated to Canada because of the threat of a civil war between the Chinese Communists and the Nationalists in Taiwan. Most of the Chinese women who came to Canada during this period were sponsored, but were treated as second class immigrants. Indeed, they did not qualify for certain types of financial aid available to independent immigrants. In 1978, the point system was officially implemented and replaced all the earlier discriminatory practices. Thus, after 1978 many more Chinese women came to Canada as independent immigrants. They were able to gain access to training programs and benefit from social services, which helped them

integrate into Canadian society more easily than earlier generations of women immigrants.

However, many Chinese immigrant women still face difficulties integrating into Canadian society. Inadequate language skills are a major obstacle, especially for those immigrants who want to develop their potential through higher education. Women who are sponsored by their relatives or husbands may also have particular difficulties because they could be ineligible for government financial aid to attend training programs. Lack of fluency in English or French and lack of professional training are serious barriers to their economic independence.

In Montreal, there were approximately 40,000 people of Chinese origin in 1991. Fifty two per cent of these were women. Of these, 35 women were interviewed and three told their stories in detail. Their autobiographical accounts reveal immigrant women's problems and concerns as well as illustrate the importance of education in helping women achieve self-fulfillment. The stories of Norla, Lilia and Roying exemplify the experiences of third-generation and first-generation Chinese immigrant women of today.

Norla, a third-generation Chinese-Canadian, was the first Chinese woman to enter the nurse training program at the Royal Victoria Hospital in 1942. By then, the Chinese were less discriminated against and Norla experienced less hardship than earlier Chinese immigrants. She was also able to integrate more fully into Canadian society because of her family background and Canadian education.

Lilia is a first generation Chinese immigrant. She experienced more difficulties than the other Chinese immigrant women of the 1970s because of her husband's sudden death leaving her with four young children. Fortunately, with the help of her family in Taiwan, her Canadian friends and the Chinese community, she was able to overcome her difficulties. In addition, she also benefited from Canada Manpower's language and job training courses as well as Québec social services. Her financial acumen contributed to her success in the business world. Besides the support of the Taiwanese government, she also profitted from low prices during the economic recession in Canada to re-direct her business.

Roying is from mainland China where equality between men and women is apparent through the distribution of work. Roying is typical of women from mainland China who, in the last decade, have adapted to Canadian society relatively easily. They are more accustomed to hardship and more willing to accept challenges. This is in contrast to the investors from Taiwan or Hong Kong (several of whom were interviewed).

All the women in the case studies believe that women can be empowered by education. Education enables them to develop their potential and become productive citizens whose stories can help others in society to understand our world better and encourage them in their struggles. It is very important that the traditional silence of Chinese women be broken. The telling and recording of life stories can contribute to the further education of Chinese Canadian women. These three biographies, while typical, do not

encompass all the experiences of Chinese Canadian women. There are many more stories to be told. Perhaps the format of individual case histories may be used in the future as an example or prototype from which others may learn.

Until recently, there has been a paucity of research about Chinese-Canadian women. There are many areas which still need to be examined:

1. The stories of the elderly Chinese women who endured a long separation and then had to pay the head tax to enter Canada.

2. The situation of women who have no choice but to work in factories or menial jobs.

3. The difficulties of the investors from Hong Kong and Taiwan who are an important group bringing money into Canada and creating new jobs.

4. The problems of immigrant women in their marriages and the conflicts between being a traditional Chinese woman and being a Chinese-Canadian woman.

5. The difficulties encountered by Chinese immigrant children and adolescents in Canadian schools.

6. The achievements of students who attend Chinese schools compared to that of students who do not attend heritage programs.

Findings on these issues will greatly facilitate government policy-making in economics, social services, multicultural education and immigration.

Although Bissoondath (October, 1994) states that multiculturalism has negative effects on the culture of immigrants,

the Chinese have been able to benefit from federal programs and yet preserve their culture. First generation Chinese immigrants usually maintain close ties with their families in the mother country. For example, they often send their children to visit China. Their strong links to their families and friends in China encourage them to succeed in their careers and to emphasize their children's education. Indeed, their reputation among friends and family in China depends on their success in their adopted homeland (This situation is also observed among Portuguese immigrants as demonstrated by the research of Anderson and Higgs, 1976). As a result, second generation Chinese immigrants are usually high achievers; however, they are also less traditional and do not preserve their culture.

The recent history of Chinese immigrants in North America and their aspirations for the future may be seen in microcosm in the following statement made by a third-generation Chinese student:

My grandfather was a labourer who built the Canadian Pacific Railway, my father is a businessman who owns a restaurant, I want to be a scholar who speaks at conferences.

Indeed, the student traces her family's rise from lowly labourer to respected scholar, a success achieved through education. The progression towards prosperity and professionalism through education is apparent. F.R. Scott would rejoice to know that Canada has provided more opportunities for them than what was "written in the Chinese Immigration Act".

Appendix I

CONSENT FORM

For all research undertaken by a member of the Faculty of Education, McGill University, the Research Ethics Committee requires, as a rule, a written consent of all participants. This measure is only meant to assure total respect and confidentiality for the participants.

I freely accept to participate in this study, I grant Sharon Li, a M.A. student of Administration and Policy Studies in Education, permission to use, for research purposes only, all personal information furnished. In return she is to keep under the seal of secrecy the information contained in this questionnaire or interview.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix II

List of Interviewees

1. Cynthia Lam is the General Director of the Chinese Family Service. She came from Taiwan and graduated from McGill University in Social Work. She has worked in the Service since 1981. She speaks Mandarin, Cantonese, English and French.

2. Wei Wu is the Vice President of the Long Life Association (Centre Man-Sau Des Aînés Chinois), a sub-organization of the Chinese Family Social Service in Great Montreal. She is also a member of the Chinese Catholic Mission and presently lives in the Senior Citizen Home of the Chinese Catholic Church in Chinatown. She was an actress and was featured in many movies which were produced in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Montreal. She speaks Mandarin, Cantonese and some English.

3. Yin-Ru Hsu is a teacher and administrator, who takes care of the finances of the Montreal Metropolitan Chinese School. Her husband is the principal. She and her family immigrated to Canada in 1967. She stayed at home to raise the children and helped with her husband's business. She graduated from a special business college in Taiwan. She has adequate language skills to function professionally and socially.

4. Florence Fan is an administrator in the Montreal Metropolitan Chinese School. She immigrated to Montreal with her family in 1971. She graduated from McGill University with a Master's Degree in Education and worked there. Now, she is retired from McGill, lives alone and does voluntary work for the Chinese

community.

5. Ming-Sinm NG is the responsible person for three senior citizens' homes of Chinese Catholic Church in Chinatown. She and her husband, Deacon Wang, have worked for the elderly people in the Chinese Catholic Mission for more than 15 years. Mrs. Wang also teaches French on a voluntary bases on week-ends. She learned her French in the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. She also graduated from the Quebec Hotel Management School and worked as a hotel manager for many years. She has adequate language skills both in Canadian official languages and Chinese dialects.

6. Cecilia Lai worked in the Chinese Catholic School as the principal from 1987 to 1990. In 1989, she was the chairperson of the Third National Conference on Chinese Education in Canada held in Montreal. The Conference is held every two years and gets funds from the Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada and the donations of Chinese communities.

7. Shirley Tam, a member of the Chinese Catholic Mission where she has done a lot of voluntary work. Since she was a teacher in Hong Kong and her English is good, she often translates Church documents from Chinese into English. Sometimes she acts as an interpreter for the Church's big celebrations when there are Anglophones present. Presently, she is a teacher of handicapped children in Montreal.

8. Huei-Fen Chan was the President of Taibec Investment Group in 1992. Now, she is a representative of Sun-Life Insurance Company and an organizer of a social group for new immigrant Chinese women.

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