THE CHINESE IN CANADA:
A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Introduction

The first Chinese immigrants came to Canada in 1788. They were 50 in total and landed at Noothka Sound, B.C. to help build the North west America.\(^1\) When gold was discovered in Fraser Valley in 1858, a small number of Chinese in California started to move to Barkerville, B.C. By 1860 the Chinese started arriving in larger numbers. They were patient and invariably industrious, and were willing to take whatever job they could get. This made the white people very jealous and angry. An anti-Chinese feeling started growing. In 1875 the British Columbia government announced that the Chinese were not eligible to vote, and were not allowed to study medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, law, education and social work. In 1879 the Province passed more anti-Chinese laws which roused the Chinese indignation. As a result the Chinese in Victoria, B.C. went on strike which lasted five days. Although the Federal government did not approve of those laws, the anti-Chinese sentiment kept getting worse. During the construction of the western end of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1880–1884, there were 17,000 Chinese working on the 127 mile-long railway which passed through the most difficult and dangerous Fraser Valley. During the entire period of construction, more than one hundred Chinese were killed, almost one person

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for every mile. The contribution of the Chinese labour not only
saved millions of dollars for the Canadian Federal government,
but also shortened the construction period. But the treatment
of the Chinese workers was very unfair. Lower wages and lack
of medical care even when they were sick or wounded were very
common. There was no provision for separation pay after the
completion of the Railway.

In 1885 Prime Minister John Macdonald levied a tax of
$50 on each Chinese immigrant. In 1901 Sir Wilfrid Laurier
raised the head tax from $50 to $100. Two years later Laurier
further raised the head tax from $100 to $500. According to
the Dominion statistics the Canadian Federal government had
collected the head tax of $2,300,000 from the Chinese immigrants
from 1885 to 1947.

While the Canadian Federal government legalized discrimina-
tion against the Chinese, some Canadian provinces also adopted
oppressive measures against the Chinese. In 1909 the Saskatche-
wan government prohibited the Chinese to vote. In 1915 Quebec
levied a special licence tax on Chinese laundry. Such policies
were followed by other provinces too.

The anti-Chinese movement reached climax in 1923. On
July 1, the Federal Liberal government under Prime Minister
William L. Mackenzie King passed "The Chinese Exclusion Act".
As a result only 8 Chinese came to Canada in the next quarter
century from 1923 to 1947.

Because of the increase in native Chinese in the 40's and
because of the contribution of the Chinese-Canadians to the
Second World War Prime Minister Mackenzie King, under pressure,
agreed to relax the Exclusion Act to allow a limited number
of Chinese immigrants into Canada in 1947. It was not until 1949
that the civil rights were restored to the Chinese.

The new Chinese immigration policy brought profound
changes. "By mid-1947, some 2,000 Chinese had departed for
their home-land, many to return with their wives and children
whom they had not seen for many years. Others awaited patiently
the arrival of relatives by the long sea route, while still others, perhaps with less patience and more money, met wives and children as they stepped from the Empress of Hong Kong, Canadian Pacific's new airliner which had replaced the old ocean steamers of the past." Mr. Douglas Jung was elected M.P. in Vancouver and Mr. Peter Wing was elected mayor of Kamloops, B.C. But the first immigration law which put Chinese immigration on equal footing with other nationalities was enacted in 1967. After this the Chinese no longer limited their careers in restaurant, laundry, and gardening, but they entered every kind of profession, including accounting, engineering, architecture, law, university teaching, etc.

Although legally speaking a Chinese in Canada has the same rights as anybody else, the anti-Chinese prejudice remains among the die-hard white Canadians. For example, the CTV network made a vicious attack against the Chinese when it showed a report entitled "Campus giveaway" in its W5 program in winter in 1979. This program claimed that too many Chinese students were being admitted into the University of Toronto leaving no room for many Canadian students to study in that University. Under the strong protest and the threat of court action by the Chinese communities throughout the country the CTV finally apologized to all Chinese in Canada and promised to make another program to correct its wrong attitude towards the Chinese.

The Chinese in Canada have indeed a long history of difficulties and hardships. This select bibliography lists English language books and theses concerning the Chinese in Canada.

The compiler has no intention to expose the racial discrimination against the Chinese by the white Canadians, rather, the compiler wishes to offer the scholars a useful tool for their researches.
Entries


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3. Ibid., p. 242.
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