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Gender, Race, and Power: The Chinese in Canada, 1920-1950

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May, 1998**

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

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ABSTRACT

From the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, the experiences of predominantly male Chinese migrants in Canada, their relationship with each other, and their interactions with Chinese and Canadian society were influenced by each society's patriarchal nature. Each society had a culturally-specific patriarchal system that perpetuated the interests of a few elite men over other groups and cultures, and each portrayed this group as the masculine ideal. Since each viewed events through this lens, racism frequently took on a gendered language. The construction of culturally-specific notions of gender helped maintain each community's culturally-specific patriarchal system. Furthermore, racialized gender constructs and gendered constructs of race legitimized existing patterns of domination both within each group and in these groups' interactions with each other. This thesis shows that the categories of race and gender were linked and that a feminist approach is useful for the study of immigration history.

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I. INTRODUCTION

From the mid-nineteenth century to 1923, the year when the *Chinese Exclusion Act* was passed, economic and political instabilities in China and better employment opportunities in Canada encouraged thousands of Chinese migrants to come to Canada. Most emigrated from a small number of districts in Southern China. The Chinese population in Canada consisted mostly of male labourers, a small group of merchants, and a very small group of women. Most male migrants left their families and wives in China and hoped that their sojourn abroad would allow them to retire comfortably in China. For most, their emigration abroad and their remittances improved their social status in their home villages. Despite the respect that they received there, most encountered both institutionalized and informal racism on a daily basis in Canada. Racist legislation and attitudes tended to feminize male Chinese migrants by categorizing them in the same subordinate group as white women, by denying them political and economic privileges that white male settlers enjoyed, and by ghettoizing them into jobs traditionally held by white women.

This thesis examines how both the Chinese and Euro-Canadian communities in Canada used gendered constructions of race to define community boundaries and to assert dominance over outsiders. It argues that racially specific notions of gender and gendered notions of race mutually reinforced the dominance of white and Chinese men in their respective communities. It looks at how Chinese migrants' interactions with China, their home villages, other overseas Chinese, other groups in Canadian society, and each other all influenced their construction of new and the modification of traditional gender and cultural identities and hierarchies. It examines how Chinese male migrants eventually constructed an all-encompassing masculine migrant identity that drew on elements of the Chinese past and present, and elements of what they saw as modern Canadian culture to enhance their position in their interactions with these groups and to justify their experiences in Canada and in China.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The introductory one briefly describes the background to Chinese migration to Canada, and critically assesses existing studies on Chinese-Canadian immigration history. The second and third chapters examine the relationship between race, gender, and power in both the Chinese and Euro-Canadian communities. The second chapter is further divided into several sections. The first examines how before large-scale emigration occurred, notions of Chinese cultural superiority and male supremacy mutually reinforced each other's existence and perpetuated and justified the dominance of Chinese men over women, and other racial groups. The rest of the chapter demonstrates how changes during the last few decades of the Qing dynasty and the Republican era had the potential to undermine both the gendered cultural hierarchy and the culturally-specific gender hierarchy for overseas migrants. These changes, including the decline of China's international status, overseas migration, and anti-Chinese sentiments in Canada, had the potential to blur the constructed boundaries between the superior and civilized Chinese masculine "we" and the barbaric and inferior feminine "them." The third chapter shows how male migrants adapted Chinese masculine ideals to create a new nationalist, hyper-sexualized, and situational masculine ideal that allowed them to portray themselves simultaneously both as modern and westernized patriotic national saviours and preservers of Chinese tradition. These new ideals reinforced their sense of cultural and gender supremacy and strengthened the boundaries between themselves and external groups.

THE CONTEXT

From the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, China experienced a series of crises that threatened its survival as a nation and the livelihood of its people. Beginning with its defeat in the Opium War of 1840, military defeats by various foreign powers forced the Qing government to sign a series of unequal treaties that ceded territories to foreign powers, carved out spheres of influence in China proper, promised to pay large war indemnities, and granted extraterritoriality to foreigners in China.¹ From the fall of

¹ Bo Yang, *Zhongguo Renshi Gang (The History of China and Its People)*, (Taipei: 1986), 923-993.

the Qing in 1911 to the reunification of China by the Nationalists and the Chinese Communist Party in 1928, China was ruled by various regional warlords and was in a state of constant civil war. Warfare broke out again from 1939 to 1945 as Japan invaded China and the second Sino-Japanese War was declared. Due to social chaos at home, economic opportunities in Canada, and improved trans-oceanic transportation methods, many young men, especially those who lived in Siyi (the Four Districts), which consisted of the districts of Kaiping, Xinhui, Enping, and Taishan, and those in Sanyi (the Three Districts), which included the districts of Panyu, Shunde, and Nanhai, in South China looked to migration to Canada as a way to earn a livelihood.² Once in Canada, their lives were shaped by their desire to support their families, preserve their cultural background, and combat anti-Chinese sentiments in Canada.

For Euro-Canadians, the belief that all Chinese migrants were sojourners who could not be assimilated into the Anglo-Saxon race justified discrimination against them. Many white Canadians saw them as sojourners who had no intention of settling in Canada because they did not bring their families over, worked in industries such as restaurants and laundries that could be easily sold, and retained distinct Chinese customs.³ They also argued that Chinese workers weakened the Canadian economy through their remittances.⁴ Even though many more Chinese migrants would have stayed if racism was not so prevalent, the assumption that they were "non-settlers" led to anti-Chinese laws which further discouraged them from settling in Canada.⁵

² This thesis uses the pinyin system. Wickberg et al., *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 3-13, June Mei, "Socioeconomic Origins of Emigration, Guangdong to California, 1850-82," *Modern China* 5:4 (Oct. 1979), 464-476, Anthony Chan, "Social Roots of Chinese Emigration to the New World," *Asian Profile* 10:5 (October 1982), 427-429, Sucheng Chan, *This Bitter Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1886-1910*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 16, and Kil Young Zo, "Emigrant Communities in China, Sze-yap," *Asian Profile* 5:4 (1977), 313-315.

³ A. Chan, "The Myth of the Chinese Sojourner in Canada," in *Visible Minorities and Multiculturalism: Asians in Canada*, edited by K. V. Ujimoto and G. Hirabayashi, (Toronto, 1980), 36, Patricia E. Roy, "Protecting Their Pocketbooks and Preserving Their Race: White Merchants and Oriental Competition," in *Cities in the West*, edited by A. McCormack and I. MacPherson, (Ottawa, 1975), 117-134, and Paul C. P. Siu, "The Sojourner," *The American Journal of Sociology*, 82(1952), 34-44.

⁴ Gunther Baureiss, "Chinese Immigration, Chinese Stereotypes, and Chinese Labour," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XIX: 3, 1987, 241-261.

⁵ Gillian Creese, "Class, Ethnicity, and Conflict: The Case of Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1880-1923," *Workers, Capital, and the State in British Columbia: Selected Papers*, edited by Rennie

Anti-Chinese sentiments led to the passage of legislation that reduced the flow of Chinese migration into Canada. Beginning in the 1880s, the legislature in British Columbia repeatedly pressured the federal government to further limit Chinese immigration on the grounds that Canada should not be "contaminated" by an inferior and unassimilable race.⁶ As the number of migrants and anti-Chinese sentiments grew, the federal government finally imposed, in 1885, a fifty dollar head tax on every Chinese migrant entering Canada. This was raised to one hundred dollars in 1901 and five hundred dollars, or the equivalent of a labourer's annual wage, in 1904.⁷ In 1923, the federal government introduced the *Chinese Immigration Act*, which was known as the *Exclusion Act* in the Chinese community, in response to rising Chinese migration and anti-Chinese sentiments during the depression after the First World War. Under this *Act*, only diplomatic officials and their retinues, Canadian-born children of Chinese origin who had been away for education or other purposes, students attending a degree-granting institution, and merchants were granted admission into Canada.⁸ The term "merchant" was later narrowly defined as a person engaged in "an import or export business for at least three years with a minimum investment of \$2,500." This *Act* effectively stopped the predominantly male labourer migration to Canada. From 1925 to 1947, the year when the *Act* was repealed, only eight Chinese men legally entered.⁹

From the 1920s to the 1940s, several factors led to the formation of an aging and shrinking Chinese community consisting mostly of married-bachelors, men who were married and had families in China, but lived on their own in Canada. The ability to bring

Warburton and David Coburn, (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 62-63, and for statistics on the number of Chinese immigrants who visited or returned to China, see Census of Canada, 1881-1981; *Canada Year Book*, 1927-1968 as cited in Baureiss, "Discrimination and Response: The Chinese in Canada," *Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations in Canada*, (Toronto, 1985), edited by Rita Bienvenue and Jay Goldstein, 247.

⁶ Howard Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century," Paper Presented to the Second Biannual Conference of the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism, Ottawa, February 13-15.

⁷ Baureiss, "Discrimination and Response," 243-244.

⁸ Statutes of Canada, 1923, 13-14 George V. Chapter 38, 301-15 as cited in F. J. McEvoy, "'A Symbol of Racial Discrimination': The Chinese Immigration Act and Canada's Relations with China, 1942-1947," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XIV: 3, 82.

⁹ McEvoy, 25.

one's family over depended largely on one's economic resources and while most merchants brought their families over, the majority of male labourers did not. For example, in 1902, out of the 96 women living in Victoria, 61 were married to merchants, 28 to laborers, 2 to interpreters and 1 to a minister. The population had a high ratio of men to women. For example, according to the Canadian census, in 1911, there were 26,813 Chinese men and 961 women in Canada, in 1921, 37,163 men and 2,424 women, and in 1931, 43,051 men and 3,468 women.¹⁰ The average age of the Chinese in Canada rose steadily because the *Act* prevented the legal entry of both Chinese men and women. The lack of Chinese women meant that the reproduction of a second generation was delayed and that the population remained a predominantly male one. The size of the Chinese population decreased after the early 1930s because some migrants passed away, many left before the implementation of the *Act*, and few new ones were admitted. Even though a new generation of Canadian-born children grew up, this did not compensate for the death and departure of older migrants. Table #1 shows that the decline in the size of the Chinese population was particularly noticeable in British Columbia because many moved eastward to other provinces to escape anti-Chinese sentiments there.¹¹

Table 1: Distribution of the Chinese Population in Canada, 1901-1941

Year	British Columbia	Prairie Provinces	Ontario
1901	87.7%	N/A	N/A
1921	59.41%	19.1%	14.2%
1941	53.8%	20%	17.7%

Gradually, the ratio between Chinese men and women improved and migrants' attitude toward Canada changed. The ratio between men and women gradually balanced. For example, in 1921, the ratio between Chinese men and women was 10 to 1 and 6 to 1 in Vancouver and Victoria respectively; in 1931, it was 11 to 1 and 6 to 1 respectively; by 1941, the ratio had decreased to 5 to 1 in both cities.¹² This change can be attributed both to the departure and death of male migrants and to the birth of a small group of children.

¹⁰ J. Tan and Roy, *The Chinese in Canada*, (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1985), 9.

¹¹ Census of Canada, 1901 to 1951, as quoted in Tan and Roy, 21.

¹² Census of Canada, 1921-1941, as quoted in Wickberg et al., 306-307.

Furthermore, the birth of children, the outbreak of war in China, and improved relations between the Chinese and other groups in Canadian society encouraged more Chinese to think of Canada as their permanent home. Until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, most saw China as the place for their retirement and burial. However, the war, and later, the establishment of the People's Republic of China, made their return no longer possible. Furthermore, their children increasingly identified with Canadian society.¹³

The composition of the Chinese community changed as a result of events and attitudes toward them in China and Canada. Throughout this period, it remained a predominantly married-bachelor society. The appearance of an entire generation of children who were born and raised in Canada added another dimension to this community as their relationship to both China and Canada differed from those of the previous generation. Both generations' responses and reactions to events in both countries influenced how notions of Chineseness, femininity, and masculinity were constructed within the community and how they were expressed to external groups.

SOURCES

This thesis draws on many different types of primary sources in both English and Chinese to understand how Chinese migrants perceived and interpreted their situations. It draws extensively on the *Dahan Gongbao*, a Chinese-language daily newspaper published by the Chinese Freemasons in Vancouver.¹⁴ It also examines several issues of the *Juzhen Yuebao*, a monthly magazine that was published by the Huang lineage in Taishan for its members abroad.¹⁵ Another group of Chinese-language sources used consists of various

¹³ Wickberg *et al.*, 94-97, Evelyn Huang and Lawrence Jeffery, *Chinese Canadians: Voices from a Community*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992), 4-8 and 57, Carol Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement: Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia," *BC Studies*, 30 (Summer, 1976), 50-65.

¹⁴ The *Dahan Gongbao* is available at the National Library in Ottawa under its Wade-Giles romanization: Ta Han Kung Pao and will be referred to as *Gongbao*. When it was first published in 1907, it was known as the *Ta Han Pao*. From 1915 to 1925, it was known as the *Ta Han Kung Pao*, and from 1925 to the 1970s, it was known as the *Ta Han Rih Pao* or the *Chinese Daily News*. It is the longest running Chinese-language newspaper in Canada. See *Union Catalogue of British Columbia Newspapers*, (Vancouver: British Columbia Library Association, 1987), 312, Wickberg, "Chinese and Canadian Influences on Chinese Politics in Vancouver, 1900-1947," *BC Studies* 45 (Spring, 1980), 42, and Wickberg *et al.*, 76.

¹⁵ *Juzhen Yuebao (Behaving Uprightly Monthly)* Vol. 4:5-8, August 1930, Vol. 4:12, December 1930, Vol. 5:5, May 1931, and Vol. 5:8, August 1931. All the issues are located in the Foon Sien Wong

publications published by different Chinese organizations in Canada to commemorate special occasions. They include publications by various clan and district associations, Chinese-Canadian Benevolent Associations in Vancouver and Victoria, and Chinese-language schools.¹⁶

Even though all the publications tend to report events from biased perspectives, they nevertheless help to reconstruct the activities and concerns of various community groups. Even though each publication tends to portray its organization in a favourable light, these biases are reduced by comparing sources left by several institutions, including those that had conflicting interests.¹⁷ These publications, such as the *Gongbao*, emigrant magazines, and to a smaller extent, commemorative issues published by various institutions, all devote a significant amount of attention to reporting news and events in the various Chinese communities across Canada and emigrant communities in China. They also report extensively on incidents, such as pending anti-Chinese legislation or random acts of anti-Chinese violence, that affected Chinese people in Canada. Most

Collection, Special Collections Division at the University of British Columbia. The Cantonese romanization which appears on the title pages is *Gui Ching Monthly*.

¹⁶ *Jianada Wengao* *Yungao* *Huiguan Baogao Shu* (Reports by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Vancouver, Canada), (Vancouver, 1938), *Huang Jiangxia Zhongtang Dierjie Quanjia Kenqinhui Shimo Ji* (An Account of the Second Canada-wide Lineage Reunion Hosted by the Main Huang Lineage Association), (Vancouver, 1929), *Taishan Ninyang Huiguan Liushi Zhounian Jinian Tekan* (A Special Edition to Commemorate The Sixtieth Anniversary of the Taishan District Association), (Vancouver: Taishan District Association, 1957), *Jianada Yungao* *Huiguan Taishan Ningyang Huiguan Jiuji Yinei Nanmin Zoujuanchu Zhengxinlu* (Correspondence Records for the Vancouver Taishan District Association's Taishan Refugee Rescue Fund, Vancouver's, Canada), (Vancouver: Taishan District Association, 1941), *Jianada Weiduoli Taishan Ningyang Zhonghuiguan, Yungao* *Huiguan Taishan Ningyang Huiguan Zoujuan Yishu Mihuang Zhengxinlu* (Correspondence Records for the Taishan Rice Famine Rescue Fund Organized by the Main Taishan District Association in Victoria, and the Taishan District Association in Vancouver, Canada), (Victoria: Taishan District Association, 1942), *Quankan Taiqiao Shoujie Kenqin Dahui Shimoji* (An Account of the First Canada-wide Taishan Emigrants' Reunion), (Vancouver: Taishan District Association, 1931), and *Zhuyun Quanjia Kaiping Zhonghuiguan Tekan* (A Special Issue to Commemorate the Main Kaiping District Association, Vancouver), (Vancouver: Kaiping District Association, 1947). All the above are stored in the Foon Sien Wong Collection, Special Collections Division at the University of British Columbia.

¹⁷ Conflicts within the community developed between different district or surname associations. Conflicts in China, especially those between surname associations, frequently carried over and influenced relationships between surname associations in Canada. For information on surname associations, see Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850*, (Seattle, 1988), 83. Another source of conflict was between the Freemasons and the Nationalist party. See Wickberg et al., 104.

importantly, since there were so few Chinese women in Canada and their actions were closely observed, these publications provide insights into how the community, in particular male elites, constructed and reinforced gender ideals. The reports on emigrant communities, especially the reports on extramarital affairs of emigrants' wives, reflect male migrants' concerns about their families' behaviour during their absence.

These publications were published by many of the most important institutions and some were very influential in the Chinese community. The Chinese Freemasons was one of the two major political parties during this period and it competed fiercely with the Nationalist Party over the control of resources and membership in Canada.¹⁸ The Taishan and Kaiping District Associations in both Vancouver and Victoria were the two most influential district associations because most migrants came from these two districts.¹⁹ Both Benevolent Associations organized events and protests throughout this period and were particularly effectively in providing leadership on issues that concerned the entire community.²⁰ The *Gongbao*, in particular, is a valuable research tool for understanding the Chinese in Canada because it was the longest running Chinese-language newspaper before the 1940s. The fact that none of the other Chinese-language newspapers prior to the 1940s ran for more than ten years and the *Gongbao* was in print from 1907 to the 1970s without interruption shows that it received continuous support from the community.²¹ Even though it is unclear what the actual circulation of this newspaper was, there is evidence that it was an important institution in the Chinese community and that it was easily accessible to Chinese people. For example, Denise Chong, a Chinese-Canadian

¹⁸W.E. Willmott, "Some Aspects of Chinese Communities in British Columbia Towns," *BC Studies*, 1 (Winter, 1968-1969), 30-31 and Wickberg *et al.*, 104.

¹⁹David Chuen-yan Lai, "Home County and Clan Origins of Overseas Chinese in Canada in the Early 1880s," *BC Studies*, 27, (Autumn, 1975), 6, Lai, "The Demographic Structure of a Canadian Chinatown in the Mid-Twentieth Century," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XI: 2, (1979), 53-54, and Lai, "An Analysis of Data on Home Journeys by Chinese Immigrants in Canada, 1892-1915," *The Professional Geographer*, Vol. 29, (1977), 361.

²⁰Wickberg, "Some Problems in Chinese Organizational Development in Canada, 1923-1937," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XI: 1, 1979, 90 and Lai, "Chinese Attempts to Discourage Emigration to Canada: Some Findings from the Chinese Archives in Victoria," *BC Studies*, 18 (Summer, 1973), 33-49.

²¹For example, the *Da Lu Bao* (*Mainland Times*), a paper published by KMT supporters, existed from 1908 to 1909, and the *Yat Sun Bo* (*Daily News*), a paper sponsored by the Empire Reform Association, existed from the mid 1900s to 1910. See Wickberg *et al.*, 76.

author, recalls that her grandfather, a migrant who came to Canada before the Exclusion Era, was able to read the paper daily because it was posted on the walls of the Chinese Benevolent Association in Vancouver.²² The tendency for other institutions to advertise their events in the *Gongbao* shows that they endorsed the way they were portrayed and the newspaper itself. The influence of the *Gongbao* was not limited to Vancouver, because readers could also subscribe to it from other cities in North America and China.²³

All the different types of Chinese-language sources are uncensored by external expectations. Since very few non-Chinese, especially non-East Asians, read or understood the Chinese language, these publications were written purely for Chinese people. Since the publishers did not have to worry about how others, especially white readers, would react to the contents, these publications included blunt judgments of Canadian society and other ethnic groups. Since they were published specifically for Chinese migrants and their descendants, their contents reflect the issues that most concerned them.

Other sources are examined to understand how masculinity and femininity were represented in the Chinese print media and literature in Canada. These sources consist of advertisements for aphrodisiacs in the *Gongbao*, several pornographic stories, romantic fiction, and collections of essays on sexual intercourse and sexuality which were popular among Chinese migrants.²⁴ With the exception of the stories in the *Gongbao*, the other works were published in China and sent abroad to different Chinese communities overseas. The circulation of these texts in Canada reflected the increased concern with sexual practices and hygiene in China. Due to these concerns, there was a growing list of cheap self-guided manuals, marriage guides, and primers on sexual hygiene that were

²² Denise Chong, *The Concubine's Children: Portrait of a Family Divided*, (1996), 36.

²³ *Gongbao*, June 22, 1941.

²⁴ The pornographic novels include *Azhen Ziji* (*The Autobiography of A Zhen*), *Fengliu Nugui* (*The Sexy Female Ghost*), *Chi Pozi* (*The Foolish Woman*), (China), *Hong Xing zhuan* (*The Story of the Red Apricot Blossom*), and *Shiye Lian Tanlang* (*Ten Beauties In Love With One Man*). The collections of essays on sexual intercourse include Dr. Zhang Jinsheng, *Xinyu Congtan* (*A Discussion on Sex*), (Shanghai, 1927). Zhang, *Xin Shi*, (*A History of Sexual Intercourse*), vol. 2 and 3, (China), Ai Lisi, *Xinde Gongneng* (*The Functions of Sexual Intercourse*), edited by Zhang, translated by Hui Ying, (Shanghai, 1927) and Xiao Jiangping, *Xin Shi* (*A History of Sexual Intercourse*), Vol. 5, (Beijing, 1928). All these works are found in the Foon Sien Wong Collection, Special Collections Division at the University of British Columbia.

published cheaply in vernacular Chinese in China.²⁵ These popular works give insight into the sexual fantasies of male migrants.²⁶

To understand how individual Chinese men and women perceived and interpreted masculinity and femininity, and how these notions were influenced by patriotism, this thesis relies on several different sources. To understand the meanings of these notions to individuals during peacetime, it examines several collections of oral interviews and autobiographies.²⁷ These sources provide insights into how individuals conceived of these concepts independent of influential institutions in the Chinese community. Most importantly, they allow us to hear the voices of marginalized groups, such as those of working-class men and women. Several Chinese-language patriotic magazines published during the Sino-Japanese War are particularly useful in revealing how nationalism influenced the construction of masculinity.²⁸ A comparison of the pictures and texts in these magazines and those published in other publications during peacetime makes it possible to analyze the flexible nature and multiple uses of gender construction and cultural identity.

This thesis relies on various other Chinese-language sources to reconstruct how gender constructs changed in Siyi and Sanyi before and after large-scale emigration occurred. For this purpose, it examines various folk songs, county gazetteers, a collection of biographies on female communist martyrs from these areas, oral interviews, statistical

²⁵ Frank Dikotter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1995), 1-3.

²⁶ Many of the romantic stories were published regularly in the *Gongbao* in serial forms and many of the novels and collections of essays that I found were regularly and aggressively advertised in the *Gongbao* at low prices. The fact that all the novels that I found were collected by Huang Wenfu, a prominent and well-educated leader in the Chinese community, shows these novels were probably an accepted and popular form of entertainment. Since many of the works were written in easy to understand Cantonese vernacular, they would have been accessible to many migrants who were not well educated.

²⁷ For oral interviews with migrants in Canada, I rely on Huang and Jeffery which contains mostly interviews with migrants in Vancouver and transcripts from the Oral History Project of the Montreal Chinese Community conducted in the 1980s by Anthony Kwon. Chong's *The Concubine's Children* tell the story of the Chinese in Canada and Victor Nee and Brett de Bary Nee's *Longtime Californ': A Documentary Study of an American Chinatown*, (New York, 1972) examines the experience of those in the United States.

²⁸ These magazines are *Juri Tekan* (*Resist Japan Magazine*), (Vancouver: The Public Relations Department of the Overseas Chinese's Save the Nation and Resist Japan Association, Vancouver, Canada), Vol. 1, December, 1931, and Vol. 2, January, 1932.

studies, Chinese-language newspapers and other publications from and about these regions. Since the gazetteers are written in a didactic way to preach Confucian virtues upheld by elite members, they are used to understand these ideals.²⁹ The folk songs and oral interviews, on the other hand, reflect the concerns of non-elites.³⁰ The oral interviews with migrants and fictional accounts of emigrant communities help me understand social structures and conditions in emigrant communities both before large-scale migration occurred and as it was occurring.³¹ The collection of biographies of female communist martyrs and the various Chinese-language print sources offer a diverse range of information on emigrant communities. The publications, even though they are written from a male perspective, allow me to reconstruct how migration influenced social conditions in these regions over a period of time and how these changes influenced these regions' economy, political and social structures, and most importantly familial relationships.³²

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Many studies on Chinese-Canadian immigration history focus on the actions and attitudes of the host society and not the experiences of Chinese migrants. For example, W. Peter Ward, Patricia Roy, and Kay Anderson examine exclusively the experiences of the host community in their attempts to discover the root of racism and racial stereotypes. In these studies, the migrants are always spoken for and represented by Euro-Canadians: in other words, they are objects and not subjects of the studies. The focus is on how they were treated, how white racism was expressed, and these works ignore how they interpreted their situation, the decisions behind their actions, or how non-white groups in Canada influenced the behaviour of white Canadians and Chinese migrants. The problem

²⁹ *Taishan Xianzhi (County Gazetteer of Taishan)*, *Enping Xianzhi (County Gazetteer of Enping)*, *Kaiping Xianzhi (County Gazetteer of Kaiping)*, and *Xinhui Xianzhi (County Gazetteer of Xinhui)*.

³⁰ Chen Tianzhu, edited, *Taishan Geyaoji (A Collection of Songs from Taishan)*, (Taipei, 1960).

³¹ Huang and Jeffery, *Chinese Canadians*, transcripts from the Oral History Project by Kwon, Chong, *The Concubine's Children*, Nee and de Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ*.

³² Guangdong Funu Yundong Lishi Jiliao Zhu (The Team for the Research of The History of Guangdong's Women's Movement), *The Biographies of Female martyrs in Guangdong (Guangdong Nuyinglie Zhuan)*, (Guangdong, 1983), Vol. 1-4, selections from the *Gongbao*, 1920s to the 1940s and the *Juzhen Yuebao*, 1930-1931.

is aggravated by the fact that these authors rely exclusively on historical sources left by Euro-Canadians and do not examine sources left by Chinese migrants.³³ Another group of scholars marginalizes the choices made by the Chinese by seeing them simply as reactions to racism. Scholars such as Gunther Baureiss, Yuen-fong Woon, Gillian Creese, Peter Li, Jin Tan, David Chuenyan Lai, Anthony Chan, Timothy Stanley, and Miriam Yu all tend to take this approach. "Discrimination and Response," the subtitle to one of Baureiss's articles, summarizes this approach. By explaining the experiences of the Chinese in Canada simply as reactions to white racism, these authors fail to take into account the influence of other groups and factors, such as migrants' continued ties to China and their home communities, their relationships with other overseas Chinese groups, their relationships with other community members, and their interactions with non-white groups in Canada.³⁴

Other scholars have an essentialistic view of Chinese migrants and Chinese and Canadian cultures, and argue that the experiences of migrants were shaped by both cultures' permanent characteristics. Scholars, such as Li, Yu, Woon, Chan, Siu, and Tan, emphasize that it was the migrants' cultural backgrounds that shaped their interactions with mainstream society. Li, Chan, and Tan argue that both mainstream attitudes and Chinese cultural baggage shaped the migrants' reactions, while Woon and Siu give more

³³ W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia*, (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1990), ix-xviii, and 6-21, Roy, *White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989), vii-xvii, Roy, "A Choice Between Evils: The Chinese and the Construction of the CPR in British Columbia," Hugh Dempsey ed., *The CPR West*. Vancouver, 1984, 13-34, Roy, "The Illusion of Toleration: White Opinions of Asians in British Columbia, 1929-1937," in *Visible Minorities and Multiculturalism: Asians in Canada*. Edited by K. Victor Ujimoto and G. Hirabayashi, (Toronto), 81-91, Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 3-73, and Anderson, "The Idea of Chinatown," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 77:4 (1987), 580-98.

³⁴ Baureiss, "Discrimination and Response," 241-261, Baureiss, "Chinese Immigration," 15-34, Creese, "Immigration Policies and the Creation of an Ethnically Segmented Working Class in British Columbia, 1880-1923," *Alternate Routes: A Critical Review*, Vol. 7, (1984), 1-34, Creese, "Class, Ethnicity, and Conflict," 55-85, and Creese, "Organizing Against Racism in the Workplace: Chinese Workers in Vancouver Before the Second World War," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XIX: 3, 1987, 35-45.

weight to the influence of Chinese culture.³⁵ Siu and Woon both argue that it was the sojourning mentality of the migrants, a product of Chinese culture, that made them withdraw into ethnically segregated neighbourhoods which fueled anti-Chinese sentiments among non-Chinese people.³⁶ Their studies have the potential of blaming the Chinese for white racism by implying that white racism was justified because it was simply a response to concrete elements in Chinese culture. These authors also misrepresent Chinese culture and the migrants. Even though most migrants came from a small region in Guangdong, spoke a distinct dialect, and were influenced by the regional culture of their home villages, these authors misleadingly portray them as being a representative sample of the Chinese population and ignore China's regional, cultural, and linguistic diversity.

Despite their different approaches, these scholars share many assumptions about the Chinese in Canada. All of them, with the exception of Anderson, assume that notions surrounding race are based on permanent and biological features instead of seeing them as social constructs.³⁷ As a result, they do not examine how racial group boundaries were constantly realigned and reconstructed in both Canadian and Chinese communities to create new insiders and outsiders. For example, even though a distinct white racial hierarchy existed for white immigrant groups, when different white ethnic groups interacted with the Chinese community, they coalesced into a single group held together by their created whiteness. Similarly, in China, various dominant groups imposed an ethnic-like identity onto other groups to justify and perpetuate their social dominance.³⁸

³⁵ Peter Li, "Canada Immigration Policy and Assimilation Theories," in John Fry ed. *Economy, Class and Social Reality*, (Scarborough, 1979), 411-422, Li, "Immigration Laws and Family Patterns: Demographic Changes Among Chinese Families in Canada, 1885-1971," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 12:1, (1980): 58-73, Li, *The Chinese in Canada*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1-42, A. Chan, *Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World*, (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1987), Chan, "Orientalism and Image Making," 37-46, Chan, "Social Roots of Chinese Emigration," 421-32, Chan, "The Myth of the Chinese Sojourner in Canada," 241-261, Tan, "Chinese Labour and the Reconstituted Social Order of British Columbia," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 1987 XIX (3): 68-88 and Tan and Roy, *The Chinese in Canada*, (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1985), 3-22.

³⁶ Yuen-fong Woon, "The Voluntary Sojourner Among the Overseas Chinese: Myth or Reality?" *Pacific Affairs* 1983: 673-690 and Paul Siu, "The Sojourner," *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(1952), 34-44.

³⁷ Anderson argues this point well in her two studies. See Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown*, 3-73 and "The Idea of Chinatown," 580-98.

³⁸ See C. Fred Blake, *Ethnic Groups and Social Change in a Chinese Market Town*, (Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii, 1981), 2-5 and Emily Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei People in Shanghai, 1850-1980*, (London: Yale University Press, 1992), 1-7.

However, since these authors believe that racism was based on the reaction of one distinct race to another, they imply that racism was inevitable. Despite their different emphases, their studies imply that the experiences of the Chinese in Canada were predetermined by factors, such as white racism, the capitalist economy, or Chinese culture, that were outside of their control.

By examining the experiences of the Chinese through a binary discourse, these scholars deny migrants voices to negotiate their own identities and imply that they were passive victims who internalized and accepted an externally imposed identity. Viewed through this perspective, the migrants are viewed purely through their interactions with the dominant white Canadian community and are constantly placed in an inferior power position in this relationship. These authors do not question how migrants perceived and constructed their own identities and assume that they all shared the same identity. By disregarding the internal discourse and conflicts within the community, and class, gender, generational, religious, and ethnic differences within both the host society and the Chinese community, these scholars actually reinforce certain racist stereotypes by portraying both groups as monolithic, unified, and opposing entities. Wing Chung Ng sums up the problems with this approach:

Chinese people [were] stripped of their power of self-definition... What is historically and sociologically important is not the things these Chinese did or said, but simply how they were abused and why. Fully preoccupied with the western perceptions of Chineseness,... the ethnic Chinese [were deprived of] their own voices.³⁹

This binary approach further pits the two groups against one another and favours the host society by portraying it as the aggressor and the actor. The tendency to view the interactions between the Chinese and various groups in Canadian society as one of domination and resistance needs to be more nuanced. By viewing the experiences of the Chinese in Canada through a binary focus, the shifting constructions and boundaries of

³⁹ Wing Chung Ng, "Ethnicity and Community: Southern Chinese Immigrants and Descendants in Vancouver, 1945-1980," (Ph.D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1993), 8-9. The historiographical section is excellent and many of my critiques are influenced by it.

“whiteness” and “Chineseness” are rigidified and the influence of non-white groups on ethnic relations is ignored.

Furthermore, these studies tend to ignore the influence that gender construction and women had on ethnic relations. Racism and racist stereotypes were frequently constructed in conjunction with racially specific notions of femininity and masculinity. These constructs and the belief in each race’s ability to live up to them further justified existing patterns of racial and gender domination in both the host society and the Chinese community. Shared notions of gender further helped to reinforce and validate existing community boundaries. Since gender roles played an integral part in perpetuating existing group boundaries, both Chinese and non-Chinese women’s challenges to these ideals weakened the ability of their groups to maintain their group boundaries. Since racial constructions are frequently gendered and gender constructs are often racially specific, the categories of race and gender cannot be studied as two separate factors. They should be studied as two interlinking and co-dependent forces and hierarchies that mutually reinforce each other’s existence.

I examine the experiences of the Chinese in Canada through a feminist perspective and argue that racism and the reactions of the Chinese to racism were shaped by the clashing of two culturally specific patriarchal systems. I will show that for both Chinese and white groups, hostility toward other racial groups and the construction of racially specific notions of masculinity and femininity were essential in the maintenance of its racially-centred patriarchal system. Furthermore, the construction of racially specific notions of gender, especially notions of masculinity, became powerful tools in justifying patterns of domination within each community and in its interactions with other groups. Interestingly, even though each community was divided by class, gender, and ethnic conflicts, the existence of these shared culturally specific ideals and gendered cultural identities helped each construct seemingly unified and permanent boundaries. Furthermore, despite the existence of various internal conflicts and identities, in their interactions with one another, each community tended to perceive the other as a monolithic feminized other. In short, I argue that sexism and racism are closely linked and

that as a result, the study of racism, in terms of both anti-Chinese and anti-Euro-Canadian sentiments, must take into account prevalent sexist attitudes in both Canadian and Chinese communities.

II. SUBVERSION OF CHINESE CULTURAL SUPERIORITY AND MALE SUPREMACY?

Before the nineteenth century, most Chinese people believed in their cultural superiority and felt that the fulfilment of Confucian gender constructs was an integral part of this cultural identity. At the heart of this order was a patriarchal system where male household heads exercised complete control over their family members. Many men, especially Confucian elites, placed themselves at the top of this order, and believed in both their cultural and gender superiority over non-Chinese groups and women. Many men in Siyi and Sanyi, areas that later became emigrant communities, shared this sense of superiority. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, many people from these regions migrated to North America and carried these beliefs with them. However, in the next century, migration and internal and external threats to China's survival threatened to dismantle both sets of hierarchies that defined male migrants' identities and justified their dominant social position. The Confucian gender constructs and the patriarchal family that had marked the difference between Chinese civilization and barbarian cultures were increasingly displaced by new western gender ideals. Since male migrants' Chinese masculine authority over other groups and women depended on the existence of these hierarchies and gender ideals, their social dominance was increasingly challenged.

This chapter examines the pressures that emigration and western imperialism exerted on the cultural and gender identities of male emigrants in Canada. The first section begins by examining how Confucian gender ideals were used as Chinese cultural markers to distinguish superior civilized Chinese from inferior non-Chinese barbarians. An examination of intellectual thought and popular literature reveals that the Chinese masculine ideal was rooted in a patriarchal and polygamist culture that sanctioned men's domination over women. It then asks how the Punti, the group to which most migrants in Canada belonged, used these gender constructs as group markers to construct a Chinese identity for themselves to justify their dominant social position in their home villages over other groups. The second section examines how emigration and changes in China threatened to undermine both male migrants' gender and cultural domination by examining

their interactions with China, their home villages, with each other, and other groups in both countries.

GENDER ROLES AND CHINESENESS BEFORE EMIGRATION

Prior to the nineteenth century, most Chinese people believed that their empire was the height of civilization and that all the other less civilized groups, depending on their degree of achievement, were placed on the peripheries of this cultural system. Even though there was a racial element to defining Chineseness, non-Chinese people were usually defined as people who did not follow the Chinese way marked by the Chinese patriarchal system and Confucian virtues and gender roles.⁴⁰

Chineseness was frequently defined in terms of a group's ability to fulfil Chinese gender roles, use Chinese institutions, and carry out Chinese rituals; the belief that only "Chinese" people could fulfil these ideals justified Chinese people's sense of cultural superiority. Some Confucian scholars, such as Peng Yu, a Ming official, equated being Chinese with being civilized and civility with the ability to fulfil gendered Confucian ideals, such as righteousness for men and sexual purity for women.⁴¹ Since most aspects of Chinese society were implicitly gendered, to be Chinese implied that a person had to learn the proper rules for being a Chinese man or woman. It included observing the proper division of labour encapsulated in the phrase "men till and women weave," and the proper separation of spheres where women remained in charge of domestic affairs, while men controlled affairs outside the home.⁴² Furthermore, by the Ming dynasty, certain gendered beauty ideals, such as foot binding for women, were used to physically inscribe both gender and cultural identities onto Chinese subjects.⁴³ The emphasis on female chastity established a double-standard where women were forced to support and perpetuate the interests of their husbands' patriline by remaining faithful to their husbands at all costs. For men, the opposite applied. Since the reproduction of sons was deemed

⁴⁰ Dikotter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*, (London: Hurst and Company, 1992), 2-4.

⁴¹ Mark Elvin, "Female Virtue and the State in China," *Past and Present*, (1984), 111-154.

⁴² Francesca Bray, *Gender and Technology: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 183.

⁴³ Glenn Roberts and Valerie Stale, "The Three Inch Golden Lotus: A Collection of Chinese Bound Foot Shoes," *Arts of Asia*, (March-April, 1997), 69-85, and Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 55-57.

essential to the continuation of the patriline, men's abilities to have access to more than one women became a status marker.

Even though many northern elites considered the people from Guangdong as somewhat "barbaric," the people from this region believed that they were part of the great Chinese cultural system.⁴⁴ The areas of Sanyi and Siyi were characterized by a large linguistic and cultural diversity. The three main groups in this region were the Cantonese-speaking Punti, the group to which almost all the migrants belonged, the Cantonese-speaking boat people, and the Hakka. The term Punti literally means "locals" in Cantonese and the term Hakka means "guest people." Even though these constructed group boundaries were frequently crossed, each group maintained that its members were culturally and ethnically distinct from the other groups.⁴⁵ More importantly, the Punti used Chinese gender ideals to construct a Chinese identity for themselves while imposing an ethnic-like identity onto other groups in the region to maintain their dominant position.

The Punti portrayed themselves as the true inheritors of Chinese civilization and justified their claim by showing that they maintained the patriarchal social order and that they fulfilled proper gender ideals. They proudly displayed lists of their ancestors who had succeeded in the civil service examinations and published, in county gazetteers, the biographies of men and women who had fulfilled Confucian virtues.⁴⁶ They also emphasized that they observed the proper separation of spheres and division of labour between men and women.⁴⁷ The sections on rituals and family organization reveal that the Punti consistently depicted themselves as observing Chinese patriarchal and hierarchical family structures where husbands were superior to their wives, fathers to their sons, and elders to their juniors.⁴⁸ Since these Confucian virtues and gender ideals were values

⁴⁴ Wickberg et al., 7 and *Kaiping Xianzi*, 177.

⁴⁵ Helen Siu and David Faure, "Introduction," *Down to Earth: The Territorial Bond in South China*, edited by David Faure and Helen Siu, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 11.

⁴⁶ *Enping Xianzhi*, 15:2a, 167 and *Kaiping Xianzhi*, 5:1 ab, 46 and *Xinhui Gazetteer*, 2:62-63.

⁴⁷ Bray, 173-181.

⁴⁸ Patricia Ebrey, "Women, Marriage and the Family in Chinese History," *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, edited by Paul S. Ropp, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 197-223.

upheld by the state as markers of Chineseness, the achievements of these individuals reinforced the Punti's claim that they were followers of "the Chinese way."⁴⁹

The Punti reinforced their dominant social position by imposing an ethnic identity onto the Hakka and the boat people that depicted them as non-Chinese. For example, they claimed that the Hakka belonged to "another race," consistently referred to them as "Hakka bandits," and portrayed them as "mass murderers," "cold-blooded rapists," and "ruthless looters" especially during the Punti-Hakka War (1856-1867).⁵⁰ Similarly, they depicted the boat people as possessing non-Chinese and non-human characteristics, such as possessing six toes on each foot, being naturally "aggressive and disposed to stealing," and being "raw fish eaters."⁵¹ The claim that boat people ate raw fish established their uncivilized status because Chinese people classified themselves as "cooked grain eaters" and barbarians as "raw meat eaters."⁵² The ability to use fire, in the minds of the Punti, signified the presence of civilization.

The Punti further portrayed the Hakka and the boat people as uncivilized savages who did not follow the gender ideals and the patriarchal order that marked the Chinese way. They claimed that both groups deviated from the Chinese mode of social organization by pointing to the tendency for Hakka and boat women to be engaged in paid employment outside the home. They further used these women's economic roles to show that these communities did not observe the Chinese division of labour and separation of spheres.⁵³ Furthermore, since bound feet by this time were an integral part of the Chinese feminine ideal, the large unbound feet of Hakka and boat women were upheld as an outward sign of their non-Chineseness.⁵⁴ The boat people's ignorance of and refusal to

⁴⁹ Mark Elvin, "Female Virtue and the State in China," 111-126.

⁵⁰ *Kaiping Xianzhi*, 171-175 and Blake, 50.

⁵¹ *Kaiping Xianzhi*, 21, Barbara Ward, *Through Other Eyes: Essays in Understanding 'Conscious Models' - Mostly in Hong Kong*, (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1985), 3, *Panyu Xianzhi*, 49, and Ye Xian'en, "Notes on the Territorial Connections of the Dan," *Down to Earth*, 83.

⁵² Dikotter, *The Discourse of Race*, 8-9.

⁵³ Blake, 51 and Ward, *Through Other Eyes*, 47, and Nicole Constable, "What Does It Mean to be Hakka?" in *Guest People: Hakka Identity in China and Abroad*, edited by Constable, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1996), 25.

⁵⁴ Roberts and Stale, 69-85, and Mann, *Precious Records*, 55-57.

accept elite gender roles, such as widow chastity, further reinforced their non-Chineseness.⁵⁵

The Punti effectively used their constructed Chinese identity to enhance their own social status. They justified their control over the most fertile and productive land by claiming that they were the original settlers and that they were the only civilized and knowledgeable Chinese producers in the region.⁵⁶ By portraying the other two groups as barbarians who threatened the peaceful Chinese social order, the Punti were able to justify these groups' exclusion from the civil service examination, other lucrative professions and trades, and their brutal suppression of the Hakka during the Punti-Hakka War.⁵⁷ The social barriers against these two groups prevented them from acquiring features that would help them discredit their non-Chinese image. For example, the ability to acquire Chinese cultural markers and fulfil gender ideals, such as observing the separation of spheres and training sons to succeed in the civil service examinations, depended largely on a group's financial resources.⁵⁸ However, the continued exclusion of the Hakka and the boat people from fertile land and lucrative professions prevented them from accumulating the resources needed to put these ideals into practice.

POLYGAMY, SEXUAL POTENCY, AND MALE SUPREMACY

In this Chinese world order, Punti men placed themselves on top of a constructed gender hierarchy. The supremacy of men over women was condoned by various gender roles and social structures that were deemed to be essentially Chinese. In many ways, the domination of Punti men was complete because it was justified by Chinese polygamist patriarchal social structures, gendered cultural ideals, legal codes, and cosmological

⁵⁵ Ward, *Through Other Eyes*, 41-78.

⁵⁶ Even though the Punti claimed to be locals in the area, an examination of their surnames show that many of them had emigrated from the North. See Helen Siu and David Faure, 11.

⁵⁷ For references to the Punti's treatment of the boat people, see Ye Xian'en, 87 and Choi Chi-Cheung, "Reinforcing Ethnicity: The Jiao Festival in Cheung Chaw," in *Down to Earth*, 104-122. For references to the Punti's treatment of the Hakka, see Stevan Harrel, "Introduction," in *Negotiating Ethnicities in China and Taiwan*, edited by Melissa J. Brown, (Berkeley: University of California, 1996), 8, and *Kaiping Xianzhi*, 171-180.

⁵⁸ See *Kaiping Xianzhi*, 170-175, Blake, 50, Ward, *Through Other Eye*, 3, and Constable, 10-15.

thinking. This section examines how all these factors worked together to reinforce and justify Punti men's power over women.

Chinese men's superior position over women was rooted in and sanctioned by cosmological beliefs and the Qing legal code. In cosmological terms, even though *yin*, the element associated with women, and *yang*, the element associated with men, began as different yet complementary equals, beginning in the Han dynasty, people increasingly saw *yang* as the more desirable and positive element. Eventually, *yang* was equated with moral superiority and *yin* with uncontrollable emotions that needed to be controlled by the rational *yang*.⁵⁹ These cosmological beliefs sanctioned patriarchal family structures, and men exercised near complete control over their children and wives. As patriarchs, men commanded obedience and respect from their children and wives, and had the legal power to sell them as property.⁶⁰ The husband's domination over his wife was further sanctioned by Qing legal codes: for example, while the husband had many grounds for divorcing his wife, including barrenness, jealousy, and his parents' dislike for her, the wife did not have the legal power to initiate a divorce. In cases where the wife committed a crime against her husband, Qing law reinforced the social domination of the husband by subjecting her to the harsher punishments reserved for crimes committed by social and legal inferiors against their superiors.⁶¹

The polygamist nature of Chinese society enhanced the power of men over women and the differences in gender roles. The need to reproduce sons to continue the patriline encouraged the creation of institutions, such as remarriage for men and concubinage, that sanctioned men's access to more than one sexual partner. This, combined with the need for women to remain faithful to the patriline that they served, created a double-standard of sexual behaviour for men and women that reinforced women's inferior position in the

⁵⁹ Ann Anagnost, "Transformation of Gender in Modern China," *Gender and Anthropology: Critical Review for Research and Teaching*, edited by Sandra Morgan (Washington D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1989), 321 and Benjamin Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), 350-382.

⁶⁰ Ebrey, "Women, Marriage, and the Family in Chinese History," 205.

⁶¹ Kathryn Bernhardt, "A Ming-Qing transition in Chinese Women's History: The Perspective From Law," *Remapping China: Fissures in Historical Terrain*, edited by Gail Hershatter, et. al., (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 42-58.

family. While men's sexual exploits were sanctioned and even encouraged if they were expressed through the right channels, women were seen merely as objects who produced sons. While female sexual fidelity became a Chinese feminine ideal, the ability for men to have access to, be able to afford, and sustain many relationships with women, including those with their concubines and courtesans, became parts of the Chinese masculine ideal and signs of status.⁶²

The Qing rape law perpetuated the polygamist order and protected male sexual interests at the expense of women. Even though the Qing court during its later years promoted female chastity, its rape law placed the burden on women to prove that they were raped. It explicitly stated that it was designed to protect the reputation of "innocent men" from being ruined by "calculating women." Since a woman's reputation was ruined and her chastity called into question the moment she reported a rape, it is difficult to imagine that many women would use it to blackmail men. It further stipulated that for the court to convict a rapist, the accused had to demonstrate that she resisted violently throughout the attack by being either seriously crippled or killed in the attempt. The law further stipulated that if a woman had had an extramarital affair before she was raped or if the rapist raped a woman knowing that she had had affairs before, neither act constituted rape because her chastity was already damaged. These cases were treated as illicit sexual encounters between two consenting parties and both were severely punished.⁶³ The law clearly defended male offenders' interests by making it almost impossible to get a conviction.

In several fictional works that were circulated in emigrant communities, Chinese men, armed with their secret potency pills and knowledge, emerged triumphant in the battles of the bedchamber. These works shared many of the features that were common to vernacular erotic novels elsewhere in China. During the period from the late sixteenth century to the early twentieth century, vernacular erotic novels and stories which centred around the sexual affairs of polygamists became increasingly popular. These works

⁶² Bray, *Technology and Gender*, 351-358.

⁶³ Vivien Ng, "Ideology and Sexuality: Rape Laws in Qing China," *Journal of Asian Studies*, (February 1987), 46:1, 58.

frequently depicted sex as a battle between men and women.⁶⁴ Sexual intercourse, especially on the first night, was portrayed as an occasion for the more experienced man to serve notice of his domination to his inexperienced wife. In one story, on their wedding night, Huishen, a Confucian homosexual scholar, decided that he would “show his wife who was the boss” by being particularly rough and violent during her first intercourse despite her protests.⁶⁵ In other cases, sexual intercourse was described in terms of a fierce battle where the man used his “weapon,” typically his “spear,” “lance,” or “sword,” to break down the woman’s defensive “shield.” Many male heroes used their sexual potency pills to “conquer” many women and force them to “surrender” everything.⁶⁶

In these stories, a man’s ability to dominate his partners in sexual intercourse translated into his physical and psychological control over them. *The Flirtatious Female Ghost* made the connection between sexual prowess and actual domination explicitly clear. The sexual intercourse between the beautiful and experienced female ghost and a self-professed sex addict who was known for his abilities in bed was depicted as an actual battle where the victor gained control over the conquered party. Before the intercourse began, they agreed that if the merchant proved himself to be superior in bed, he would keep her as his concubine and be able to control her sexual activities. In the end, he used his superior techniques to “break down her defenses,” emerged victoriously, and won her undivided attention and sexual favours.⁶⁷ In other stories, a man’s sexual prowess secured him financial security, access to many beautiful women, their unwavering devotion, and health benefits associated with proper sexual practices. In two similar stories, the hero, a Confucian scholar, through his sexual abilities in bed, secured all the imaginable material comforts and influence over women. As he improved his techniques, he attracted more and more beautiful women who “surrendered” themselves and their material possessions

⁶⁴ Keith McMahon, *Misers, Shrews, and Polygamists: Sexuality and Male-Female Relations in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Fiction*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 1-54.

⁶⁵ *History of Sexual Intercourse*, Vol. 3, 17-18.

⁶⁶ *History of Sexual Intercourse*, Vol. 3, 53-54.

⁶⁷ *The Happy Female Ghost*, 1-25.

to him, and they all lived harmoniously together in a community dominated by and centred around his *yangness*.⁶⁸

In this polygamist order, female sexual aggressiveness was condemned and punished. Even though in some stories, many women initiated sexual intercourse with the hero, their roles were always defined by their devotion to and relationship with him. Women who had access to more than one man were always punished. For example, in *The Foolish Woman*, Ms. Tang, the narrator, recounted how her sexual appetite and initiative ruined her life. After learning about the joys of sex, she began experimenting by seducing her younger male cousin, and later, her father's young male lover. She married into a gentry family at fifteen, fooled them into thinking that she was a virtuous virgin, and initiated sexual relationships with two male servants, a monk, and her young son, and was coerced into having sexual intercourse (raped) by another servant, her father, father-in-law, and two brothers-in-law during her husband's trips away from home. Despite all these partners, she was not fulfilled sexually until she met Gu, her son's private tutor and the only sexually potent man in the story. Interestingly, her devotion to him caused her downfall: after she refused to have sexual intercourse with her other partners, they became jealous and told her husband about her unchaste behaviour. In the end, even though she was coerced into most of her relationships, only she and her lover were punished. The story shows that regardless of a woman's responsibility in initiating a relationship, she was blamed for being unfaithful. Even though her partners violated equally sacred Confucian principles, such as incest and rape, her unchaste behaviour was considered more serious than other transgressions. It also implies that sexual initiatives were seen as male privileges.⁶⁹

Punti men placed themselves on top of both the Chinese polygamist patriarchal order and the Chinese racial hierarchy and used both systems to enhance their control over women and other men. Even though polygamy and access to many women remained an ideal for most men, the creation of a potent polygamist as a masculine ideal reinforced

⁶⁸ *The Foolish Woman*, 28. See also *History of Sexual Intercourse*, Vol. 3, 7-98 and *Story of the Red Apricot Blossom*, 36-60.

⁶⁹ *The Foolish Woman*, 1-31.

images of women as sexual toys and conquests for men. For Punti men, their cultural and masculine identities and privileges were interlinked and mutually reinforced each other. Since patriarchal ideals expressed in Confucian gender constructs were used to mark group boundaries, Punti men's privileges and position as patriarchs were protected by the need to distinguish themselves from the Hakka and the boat people. Since both hierarchies remained firmly in place by the mid-nineteenth century, many migrants brought this mind-set with them to Canada.

CHINA FROM THE OPIUM WAR TO 1949: CHALLENGES

The period from 1842 to 1949 was one of the most tumultuous periods in Chinese history. It began with China's defeat in the Opium War at the hands of Britain's superior military power and ended with the establishment of the People's Republic of China. During this period, the various governments faced a series of internal tensions and foreign imperialist encroachments that threatened China's territorial integrity, its ability to survive as a nation, and Chinese people's sense of cultural superiority. As these threats intensified, governments, intellectuals, and mass movement organizers began to question whether their Chinese culture and the patriarchal system were the source of their problems. As a result of these changes, the racial and gender hierarchies marked by Chinese patriarchy and gender ideals were challenged and undermined.

1841-1911

During the last few decades of the Qing dynasty, a series of military defeats and unequal treaties shattered China's long held sense of cultural superiority. In 1842, China suffered its first major defeat at the hands of Britain over the import of opium, and this was followed by a series of military defeats at the hands of France, Russia, Japan, and other nations. These defeats were accompanied by several unequal treaties that forced China to acknowledge the equality of other nations. In the Treaty of Nanjing signed in 1842 after the Opium War, China, for the first time, was forced to recognize Britain as an equal nation and to use egalitarian language in dealing with foreign countries. Other

imperialist powers quickly obtained the same agreement with China.⁷⁰ Its defeat by Japan, a former supporter of its cultural supremacy, during the Sino-Japanese War in 1890 made it no longer possible for China to pretend that it was the superior culture in Asia.

At the same time, several massive internal rebellions threatened the viability of the Manchus Qing court and its officials. Major rebellions included the White Lotus rebellion in the North in the 1810s, the Taiping rebellion in South China from 1849 to 1864, the Nian rebellion from 1851 to 1868, and the Muslim revolts in southwest China in the 1850s. The Taiping and the Nian in particular, posed a threat to the Qing court. The Taiping, at the height of its movement, had over 60,000 followers, was a very effective fighting force, and established a kingdom around the city of Nanjing for eleven years.⁷¹ Collectively, these rebellions questioned the legitimacy of the central government and its ability to rule China.

Many Qing intellectuals and revolutionaries began to believe that their heritage was causing China to be weak. Influential thinkers, such as Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Tan Sitong, argued that Chinese culture had to be modified because it prevented China from modernizing and defending itself. Liang, the most radical of them all, saw the need to destroy the Confucian tradition to save China:

What is the way that will save us from danger and destruction, and enable us to pursue progress? I say that we must smash to fragments, that we must pound into powder, the tyrannical and confused political structure that we have had for the last few thousand years.... We must sweep away and refute the rotten and effeminate scholarly theories of the last few thousand years.... This done, we shall be able, with our sensibilities renewed, to achieve the reality of progress.⁷²

Liang blamed Confucianism and the Chinese bureaucracy, sources of cultural superiority and identity just a few decades earlier, as the reasons for China's weakness. He further blamed the scholar-gentry elite, formerly the most prestigious social group, for

⁷⁰ Jonathan Spence, *In Search for Modern China*, (New York: Norton and Company, 1990), 145-162 and Rhodes Murphey, *East Asia: A New History*, (New York: Addison Wesley Longman Inc., 1997), 267-285.

⁷¹ Spence, 165-187.

⁷² Liang Qichao, "Theory of a New Citizenry," as quoted in Mark Elvin, "The Double Disavowal: The Attitudes of Radical Thinkers of the Chinese Tradition," in *China and the West: Ideas and Activities*, edited by David S. G. Goodman, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 11.

mismanaging China and for perpetuating destructive Confucian values at the expense of China's survival.

At the same time, an increasing number of intellectuals and missionary groups attacked the Chinese patriarchal order and male supremacy. Among urban intellectuals, the idea that men and women had equal rights began to take root and many formed women's rights advocacy organizations to press for gender equality. Some sought to undermine institutions, such as concubinage and female slavery, that perpetuated male supremacy and polygamy, while others tried to weaken the control of the patriarch over his children and wife by encouraging them to be economically independent and educated.⁷³ Tan Sitong and other intellectuals questioned gender hierarchy by pointing out that it was not natural or biological and advocated an egalitarian utopia where gender hierarchies disappeared.⁷⁴ Missionaries joined Chinese intellectuals in criticizing patriarchal structures by promoting education for women, anti-foot binding, and health education programs for both men and women.⁷⁵ Even though many of the domestic values that they preached were influenced by western patriarchal values, the presence of female missionaries and wives of male missionaries helped Chinese women see that there were roles for women other than those within the family.

The emphasis on strengthening China led to several reforms that indirectly undermined patriarchal structures and traditional gender ideals. The most important one was an increased emphasis on female education. Previously, only a small group of elite men had access to education, and writing was considered a male activity which belonged in the public realm. A few privileged women were educated at home by private tutors.⁷⁶

⁷³ Charlotte Beahan, "In the Public Eye: Women in Early Twentieth Century China," *Women in China: Current Directions in Historical Scholarship*, edited by R. Guisso et al., (New York, 1981), 215-218.

⁷⁴ Ono Kazuko, *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850-1950*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 36.

⁷⁵ Albert Feuerwerker, "Economic Trends in the Late Ch'ing Empire, 1870-1911," *Cambridge History of China*, vol. 11, Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911, Part 2, edited by D. Twitchell and J. Fairbank, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 172 and Kazuko, 28.

⁷⁶ See Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chamber: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 14-23 and Ko, "Pursuing Talent and Virtue: Education and Women's Culture in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century China," in *Late Imperial China*, 13:1. (June 1992), 9-39.

However, by the mid-nineteenth century, an increasing number of intellectuals believed that education for women and girls would transform them from useless parasites into productive, educated, and useful people who increased China's strength.⁷⁷ The Qing court officially committed itself to the establishment of an education system for girls in 1907. As a result, women's access to education increased.⁷⁸ The establishment of public schools for women and girls and coeducational schools challenged the long observed tradition of the separation of spheres among the gentry. Furthermore, the increased demand for women's education created teaching positions for educated women and these opportunities increased their economic independence from their families.

The series of crises that China experienced challenged Chinese people's sense of cultural superiority and forced them to question the appropriateness of their patriarchal and Confucian social institutions. However, even though many felt that China had to reform its institutions and learn from the west, most were not ready to completely reject Confucianism and the Chinese way of life.

1911-1949

From the fall of the Qing dynasty to the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the various governments that attempted to control China, or regions of it, faced another series of crises that called into question its ability to survive. After the fall of the Qing, the country fell into a state of anarchy and regional rule until it was united in 1927 by the Nationalist Party. The period of unity was short-lived as war between China and Japan broke out in 1937.⁷⁹ As threats to China's survival increased, governments and intellectuals looked to more radical measures. Many sought to, or created forces that threatened to, dismantle China's patriarchal and polygamist society.

After 1911, more and more intellectuals completely rejected traditional values and institutions that sanctioned male supremacy and blamed them for China's weakness. During the New Culture Movement in the 1910s and 1920s, intellectuals attacked every

⁷⁷ Mary Backus Rankin, "The Emergence of Women at the end of the Qing: the Case of Ch'iu Chin," *Women in Chinese Society*, edited by R. Guisso and Stanley Johannessen, (Philo Press, 1981). 44-45 and Ono Kazuko, 32-33 and Dikotter, *Sex, Culture, and Modernity in China*, 14.

⁷⁸ Beahan, 233.

⁷⁹ Spence, 271-400.

facet of traditional social structures and culture, including Confucianism, classical Chinese, male supremacy, and the traditional family. For example, Chen Duxiu, an intellectual who later became a prominent Marxist, argued that Confucianism ran counter to values such as independence, equality, human rights, and democracy that were at the centre of a modern and viable nation.⁸⁰ Lu Xun, one of the most influential writers during this period, depicted China's Confucian heritage as a cannibalistic one that literally ate away at its people's spirituality, future, and humanness.⁸¹ Other intellectuals increased their attacks on the traditional family because they believed that it enslaved the people and prevented China from surviving as an independent nation. For example, Wu Fu, an intellectual, argued that this system perpetuated despotic and authoritarian values that ran counter to principles of democracy, individualism, and the pursuit of scientific knowledge that were necessary for China to become a strong modern nation.

The most serious attacks on the Chinese patriarchy came during the 1920s and the 1930s from the Chinese Communist Party. Mao Zedong, a prominent CCP leader, labelled male domination, along with political, clan, and religious domination as one of the major problems in the old social order. The CCP implemented several measures in the areas that it controlled that had the potential to dismantle the Chinese patriarchy. In one area, the constitution stipulated that men and women were regarded as equals in the eyes of the law and that everyone over the age of sixteen had the franchise and was eligible for office. The CCP also carried out land reform and distributed land confiscated from rich landlords equally to both male and female poor peasants. By giving adult women the franchise and the chance to be elected into public office, the CCP effectively removed the basis for the separation of spheres. The land reform undermined the control of the patriarch over his family members and made gender equality possible by giving women equal access to and control over family resources. In 1931, it further attacked polygamy and the legal authority of the patriarch over his wife and children by implementing *The*

⁸⁰ Spence, 335-303.

⁸¹ Lu Xun, 'A Mad Man's Diary,' in *Selected Stories of Lu Hsun*, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1963), 26-38 and Lung-Kee Sun, "The Presence of the Fin-de-Siecle in the May Fourth Era," *Remapping China*, 194-209.

Marriage Regulations which abolished arranged marriages, polygamy, and the sale of one's children into slavery, concubinage, or marriage, and established a minimum marriage age for men and women. A few years later, the Nationalist government incorporated these changes into its marriage laws.⁸²

From the mid-nineteenth century to 1950, the world that had sanctioned Punti men's cultural and gender superiority began to crumble and both Chinese cultural superiority and male supremacy became difficult to maintain. The gender ideals and patriarchal structures that sanctioned Punti men's masculine authority and reinforced their cultural identity were attacked as backward cultural traits that weakened China. They, along with most Chinese men, were placed in a difficult position: they had to make a choice between saving their nation and ensuring their own survival by relinquishing their prestigious position in the crumbling social order or fighting to retain their former privileges and contributing to their nation's downfall.

CHINA'S CRISES AND THE CHINESE IN CANADA

The military threats, especially the Sino-Japanese war, had a profound impact on the Chinese in Canada who also felt that their cultural and national survival was in jeopardy. The realization that their second-class treatment in Canada was directly linked to China's national strength increased their anxiety as both their lives and status in China and Canada depended on China's ability to modernize and to regain international respect. In the publications published by Chinese migrants in Canada, many felt that China's military weakness was caused by the feminine nature of its civilization, and as Chinese men, migrants shared this problem. Since their lives and status in both countries were linked to China's national strength, its declining strength and the feminization of Chinese men doubly challenged migrants' former cultural and gender identities and authority.

Many migrants realized that China's national strength was directly related to how they were treated in Canada. For example, in 1923, an editorial on the *Exclusion Act* in the *Gongbao* stated that "our nation is poor and is looked down upon by Canadians and it

⁸² Judith Stacey, *Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 158-172.

cannot protect its overseas Chinese.”⁸³ The statement revealed migrants’ assessment of their situation: if China was strong and respected by other countries, Canada would not dare to impose discriminatory measures on them. Since their fate and the fate of China was closely linked, many felt that they had to wage war on both fronts, in both countries, to improve their living conditions.

Many migrants shared the fear that the invasion of Japan threatened China’s ability to survive as a nation and its cultural integrity. During the second Sino-Japanese War, the Chinese media in Canada repeatedly asked the community to unite together to ward off the Japanese threat. One typical editorial stated:

Japan invaded China again! Japan invaded China again! Japan took advantage of a time when China was plagued by natural disasters and internal rebellions to invade our land, to kill our people, and to take over our beautiful and fertile land. They swept over the most fertile parts of our Northeastern region. Words cannot describe their barbaric actions and their complete disregard for international law!”⁸⁴

Another editorial concluded that the result of this invasion was the “destruction of China, the end of Chinese civilization, and the enslavement of all the Chinese people.”⁸⁵

The Chinese media in Canada inadvertently painted an image of Chinese people as feminized victims at the hands of masculine Japanese soldiers. For example, one editorial stated that the Japanese tortured “defenseless soldiers and took away their weapons,” arrested and killed “innocent peasants,” “raped countless Chinese women,” and “physically ripped young boys and girls apart.”⁸⁶ Another stated that

last year, the Japanese bandits occupied three of our fertile provinces, massacred our countrymen, raped our women, burned our homes, occupied our important posts, confiscated our property, controlled our politics, destroyed our civilization, and controlled our thoughts....All we can do is raise our eyes upward and cry ‘Heaven! How did we end up in this desperate situation?’”⁸⁷

⁸³ *Gongbao*, June 26, 1923. Another editorial published on June 31, 1937 in the *Gongbao* echoed this sentiment.

⁸⁴ *Resist Japan Magazine*, 1931, February, volume 1, 11.

⁸⁵ *Resist Japan Magazine*, 1931, February, volume 1, 1. Similar sentiments are echoed in various editorials in the *Gongbao*. For specific examples, see *Gongbao*, July 5, 1939 and July 7, 1941.

⁸⁶ *Resist Japan Magazine*, 1931, February, vol. 1, 1.

⁸⁷ *Resist Japan Magazine*, 1933, January, Vol. 2, 1.

In both descriptions, Chinese men, including soldiers, emerged as civilized, effeminate, and defenseless beings who were unable to defend themselves, their loved ones, or their property from the more masculine yet more barbaric rage of Japanese soldiers. The second statement implied that due to China's military weakness and the weakness of its men, resistance was futile. There was a sharp contrast between the Japanese as actors, the ones with agency, control, and military power: characteristics associated with masculinity and *yangness*, and the Chinese as yielding and subordinate victims: characteristics associated with the feminine and the *yin*.

Similar to many intellectuals, many male migrants blamed their culture for China's weakness and their own effeminate nature. One editorial writer explicitly stated that China was weak because it "always preferred the arts over the military and looked down on its soldiers." The writer felt that fundamental changes in the Chinese way of thinking and in the Chinese educational system were needed to change Chinese men from weak, effeminate, and defenseless scholars into strong, robust, and useful soldiers.⁸⁸ Another writer implied that since physical weakness was a national flaw, the Chinese in Canada were also plagued by this problem. He stated that "as a weak scholar, I lacked the physical strength to fight the Japanese bandits....and could only use my pen, tears, and ink to write a few words to awaken the Chinese people."⁸⁹ These writers echoed the sentiments of other intellectuals in China and both felt that the only way to save China was to fundamentally alter their shared cultural heritage.

In Canada, during the Sino-Japanese war, an image of Chinese culture and men as feminine, weak, and powerless emerged in many publications circulating in the Chinese community. For many migrants, this weakness threatened not only China's ability to survive as a nation, it was also used as an excuse by white racists to perpetuate their second-class status in Canada. In a sense, these men were twice feminized: their inability to return to China to fight and fulfil the wartime masculine ideal of being a soldier made them even more feminine than ordinary Chinese men who participated in the war effort by

⁸⁸ *Resist Japan Magazine*, 1931, February, vol. 1, 5-6.

⁸⁹ *Resist Japan Magazine*, 1933, January, vol. 2, 1.

fighting. Furthermore, China's weakness and its inability to defend its overseas Chinese allowed the Canadian government to establish institutional barriers that prevented them from enjoying the privileges that they had enjoyed as men in China and the social, economic, and political advantages that white men enjoyed in Canada.

CHALLENGES TO CHINESENESS AND MASCULINITY IN CHINA

Many Chinese men emigrated to Canada to escape the political situation in China and to support their families with their overseas wages. As overseas emigration became an increasingly prestigious occupation, many hoped that working abroad would improve their social status at home, allow them to fulfil Confucian masculine ideals, and increase their position as patriarchs. Remittances allowed emigrant communities to establish modern institutions and to implement reforms that Chinese intellectuals in other areas believed were needed to save China but lacked the resources to implement. Within a few decades, remittances transformed Siyi and Sanyi from poor regions into wealthy areas with a modern appearance. Few migrants anticipated that migration and the changes that accompanied it would challenge their cultural identity or their supremacy as patriarchs. However, many migrants felt that their long absence away from China and the changes that occurred in emigrant communities as a result of overseas emigration and the presence of remittances challenged their sense of belonging, supremacy as Chinese men, and privileges as patriarchs.

Challenges to Patriarchy in Emigrant Communities

Emigration and overseas remittances contributed to many changes that had the potential to threaten the existence of the patriarchal system in emigrant communities. Even though many changes that occurred in this region occurred elsewhere in China, its wealth increased the pace of change. As emigration and remittances transformed Siyi and Sanyi, the gender roles and household structures that Punti men used to reinforce their masculinity and power over their family members became increasingly difficult to maintain.

Even though education for both men and women was emphasized in other parts of China, emigrant communities' new wealth allowed them to establish schools at a much

faster rate.⁹⁰ As a result of migrants' contributions to education in their home villages, Siyi and Sanyi transformed from areas with very few schools for boys only, to ones with one of the highest literacy rates in China for both men and women.⁹¹ For example, by 1933, there were over two hundred schools in Kaiping, and by 1934, there were over a thousand elementary schools in Taishan.⁹² Remittances helped emigrant communities establish a complete system of modern education including elementary schools, junior and senior high schools, teacher's colleges, and vocational schools. For example, Taicheng, the capital of Taishan, had a high school, a teacher's college, a teacher's college for women, eight private schools, three professional schools, and numerous elementary schools.⁹³ Education for girls and women expanded at an unprecedented rate and by 1949, Siyi and Sanyi had one of the highest concentration of schools for girls and female literacy rates in China. Even though before the mid-nineteenth century, only a handful of women and girls from wealthy families were educated at home by private tutors, by 1949, each district had several elementary schools and several schools above that level that admitted girls and women.⁹⁴ Census material shows that Siyi had one of the highest female literacy rates in Guangdong, a province with one of the highest literacy rates in China. The improvement in the female literacy rate was directly linked to the rate of overseas migration. Census material from Guangdong shows that emigrant communities

⁹⁰ Huang Zhongyan, "An Attempt to Discuss the Formation, Characteristics, and Development Trends of Emigrant Societies, (Shilun Wuoguo Huaxiang Shehui di Xingcheng, Tedian he Fazhan Zuoshi)," *Huaqiao Huaren Shi Yanjiu Ji* (A Collection of Research Findings on the History of the Overseas Research Findings on the History of the Overseas Chinese and the Chinese), Vol. 1, edited by Zheng Min and Liang Zhumin, (Beijing, 1989), 238.

⁹¹ For descriptions of the poor state of education in the emigrant communities, see Yu Renqiu, "Chinese American Contributions to the Educational Development of Toisan, 1910-1940," *Amerasia* 10:1 (1983), 47-49 and *Kaiping Xianzhi*, 66-71.

⁹² Cheng and Zheng, *The Emigrant Community in Taishan and the Sunning Railroad* (Taishan Qiaoxiang Yu Xinling Tielu), (Guangdong Sheng, 1991), 21 and *Kaiping Xianzhi*, 66-71.

⁹³ Zheng Dehua and Wu Xingci, "A Valuable Source of Information on Overseas Chinese History - An Evaluation and Commentary of the Magazines and Clan Publications Published in Taishan before Liberation (Yipi You Jiazhi di Huaqiaoshi Ziliao - Taishan Jiefangqian Zhuban Di Zhazhi, Zhukan Pingjie," *A Collection of Essays on the Overseas Chinese* (Huaqiao Lunwen Ji), (Guangzhou, 1982), vol. 2, 460.

⁹⁴ For descriptions on the state of education for girls and women before the nineteenth century, see *Kaiping Xianzhi*, 66-71. For descriptions of education for girls and women after this period, see *Biographies of Female Martyrs in Guangdong*, vol. 4, 5, and 49, and vol. 4, 33, and 44.

consistently had a higher literacy rate than non-emigrant communities; for example, Taishan, the district with the highest rate of overseas migration, consistently had the highest literacy rate among the emigrant communities.⁹⁵ Considering that the national female literacy rate at the beginning of the nineteenth century was between one and ten percent, the fact that between thirty-five and forty-five percent of all women from the districts of Kaiping, Xinhui, and Taishan were literate by 1949 shows that the female literacy rate increased dramatically within four short decades as a result of emigration.⁹⁶

Women's increased education level and access to paid employment defied preexisting gender roles and challenged notions of male superiority. Since most girls' schools or classes for girls in co-educational schools were taught by female teachers, the increased funding for female education increased the number of professional positions available to educated women.⁹⁷ The emergence of female professionals who played an active and respected role in public community affairs provided role models for a larger group of younger girls and women and inspired them to be educated and enter professional jobs.⁹⁸ Women's enrollment in public institutions to study, their academic achievements, and their entry into professional positions challenged the practice of the separation of spheres and notions of male intellectual superiority.⁹⁹ The income from these paid positions helped some women to become more economically independent from their families and in some cases, enabled them to defy their parents' decisions and leave unwanted marriages.¹⁰⁰ Their achievements challenged the way women were defined. Previously, women were only defined through their relationships with men, and their actions were only recorded if they fulfilled Confucian virtues, such as widow chastity, filial

⁹⁵ Guangdongsheng ji Sixian Di Sanzi Renkuo Puzha Ziliao Huibian (The statistical compilation from the third census in Guangdong and the Four Counties), as quoted in Fang Di, "Cong Renkuo Puzha Ziliao Zhong Fanying Zhuliao di Qiaoxiang Nianlao Nuqiaoshu Tedian (The Special Characteristics of Aging Female Dependents of Overseas Chinese in Emigrant Communities as Shown in the Census Material), *Huaqiao Huaren Shi Yanjiu Ji* (A Collection of Research Findings on the History of the Overseas Chinese and the Chinese), Vol. 1, edited by Zheng Min and Liang Zhumin. (Beijing, 1989), 309.

⁹⁶ Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1979), 1-23.

⁹⁷ *Biographies of Female Martyrs in Guangdong*, vol. 4, 40.

⁹⁸ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:5-8, 98-101.

⁹⁹ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5:5, 32-33, and 4:5-6, 11.

¹⁰⁰ *Biographies of Female Martyrs in Guangdong*, vol. 4, 40.

piety, and other forms of self-sacrifice that furthered the interests of either their fathers' or their husbands' patriline. However, increasingly, women were defined by and recognized for their achievements outside their families. A growing number of women assumed professional roles where they became leaders in the community and commanded social respect from both men and women.

The absence of men also facilitated the breakdown of traditional gender boundaries and hierarchies. Many wives became effective household heads during their husbands' absences and had complete control over their families' finances, land acquisition decisions, and servants.¹⁰¹ For example, May Chow, the daughter of an emigrant, recounted that her mother, during her father's long absence from home, effectively ran her family, rented the family land to tenants, and was an effective landlord.¹⁰² As a result of their wealth, women like her mother were seen as social superiors to some men. For wives who did not receive remittances from their husbands, their families' survival depended mainly on their ability to find outside paid employment and to successfully farm whatever land they had; many worked as farm hands, wood cutters, and manual labourers, jobs that were traditionally associated with male strength.¹⁰³ Women played an increasingly active role in community affairs, especially in curtailing opium addiction and gambling. During the late 1920s, women from several villages in Taishan effectively controlled the gambling and opium problem in their villages by organizing into patrol teams and regularly raiding gambling operations and opium dens. Both teams received wide media recognition and support for their efforts.¹⁰⁴ These all-female organizations allowed women to develop leadership skills, be recognized for their contributions to their communities, participate in activities without being under men's authority, and develop friendship ties that extended beyond kinship relationships.

¹⁰¹ *Gongbao*, Jan 12, 1929, Jan. 8, 1930, and Jan. 14 1930.

¹⁰² For a personal account of the roles that women played in the household see "May Chow." in Nee and Nee. *Longtime Californ* 171-176.

¹⁰³ The Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee in Guangdong in the People's Republic of China (Guangdong Sheng Remin Zhengfu Huaqiao Shiwu Weiyuanhui), *The Labouring People Who Love Their Fatherland (Reai Zhuguo Laodong di Renmin)*, (Guangdong Sheng, 1952), 35, *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:5-8, 98-101, 4:5-8, 29, and 5:5, 22-23.

¹⁰⁴ *Gongbao*, Jan. 2, 1929, and Jan. 21, 1929.

The Chinese media in both countries reinforced migrants' fears that their long absences from home weakened their control over their wives and that remittances made it easier for their wives to be unfaithful to them. The *Gongbao* and the *Juzhen Yuebao* were filled with reports on how migrants' wives used the money that their husbands remitted to them to make themselves more attractive to their lovers in China. Even though these reports may have been exaggerated, they reflected migrants' fears that migration diminished their control over their wives.¹⁰⁵ Two typical reports captured many emigrants' fear that their absence and their wives' new ability to initiate divorces, increased literacy rate, and greater disposable income weakened their control. One recounted how Huang Baorui left for the United States six months after his wedding. His wife was a well-educated woman who repeatedly lied about how her mother-in-law was mistreating her in her letters to him. Since she was the only one in the family who could write, he believed her and sent most of his money to her and not his mother. She used this money to make herself more attractive to men, to entice them into having affairs with her, and later, to have an abortion.¹⁰⁶ Another reported that Huang Hua left China shortly after he married Ms. Chen. Again, Chen used his remittances to purchase nice outfits and to attract men. When he discovered her infidelity, he beat her, and forced her to leave. Her father intervened and filed for divorce on her behalf.¹⁰⁷ In both accounts, ironically, it was the remittances that made these women attractive to other men. Previously, women were considered their husbands' property and those who did not remain faithful to their husbands were socially ostracized, punished, and left at their husbands' mercy. However, the first account implied that due to his absence, the husband was not even aware of his wife's unfaithful behaviour, while the second implied that the ability of angry husbands to punish their unchaste wives was challenged by their wives' ability to leave unwanted marriages.

Migrants' long absences from their children and the need to adopt sons created the perception that another source of their traditional power as patriarchs: their control over

¹⁰⁵ For reports on extramarital affairs of emigrants' wives, see *Gongbao*, Feb. 28, 1931 and May 5, 1932.

¹⁰⁶ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:5-8, 33-34.

¹⁰⁷ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:5-8, 32.

their children, was threatened. Even though many problems that existed between fathers and their adopted children in emigrant communities were shared by families that adopted children elsewhere in China, the absence of migrants increased the frequency of adoption and the severity of these problems.¹⁰⁸ Since many migrants left before their children were born, their children did not even recognize their fathers when they finally returned.¹⁰⁹ Many had little contact with their children and exerted little influence on them during their formative years. The perceived main challenge to the interests of the migrants' patriline and their authority as fathers, however, came from their adopted sons. Since many emigrant families purchased and adopted sons from other regions, these sons had little attachment to their adopted families. As a result, many ran away, spent their adopted families' fortunes, and threatened the livelihood of their adopted parents.¹¹⁰ Headlines, such as "Another Adopted Son Spreads His Poison," and "Another Problematic Adopted Son," revealed migrants' fear that adopted sons threatened the interests of their families.¹¹¹ One account stated:

Huang Jinyao, after a long sojourn in North America, returned home triumphantly. Since his wife produced only daughters and no sons, he adopted a son from another district to continue his family line. The son did not possess a good nature and despite their efforts to educate him, he continued to be very lazy and ran away from school. One day, when Huang's wife was away from home, he broke into their room, and stole all their cash, jewelry, and valuables. Even though they reported the theft to the police, they have not been able to find him.¹¹²

Many migrants feared that adopted sons could threaten their authority in many ways: they could be unfilial, refuse to be educated and bring honour to the family name through their academic achievements, threaten their adopted parents' livelihood, and fail to produce sons to continue their adopted families' lineage.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ For a discussion of adoptions elsewhere in China, see Ann Waltner, *Getting an Heir: Adoption and the Construction of Kinship in Late Imperial China*, (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 1-81.

¹⁰⁹ *Gongbao*, May 15, 1931.

¹¹⁰ Woon, "An Emigrant Community in the Ssu-yi Area, Southeastern China, 1885-1949," *Modern Asian Studies*, 18:2 (1984), 287-300 and James Watson, "Agnates and Outsiders: Adoption in a Chinese Lineage," *Man* 10 (1975), 293-306.

¹¹¹ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:5-6, 10 and 4:5-8, 20.

¹¹² *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:5-6, 11.

¹¹³ *Gongbao*, Feb. 26, 1931, and May 11, 1931.

Reports that migrants' wives had affairs with their adopted sons or their fathers during their absences added to migrants' perception that migration weakened their position in the family. For example, one 1931 *Gongbao* article from Taishan reported:

Li, the owner of a grocery store, was an old pervert. His son had been working abroad for over ten years and Ms. Hu, his daughter-in-law, found her empty bedroom increasingly lonely. Li knew her weakness well and gradually initiated an affair with her. One day, when they were in the middle of an affair, they were caught by his wife. Despite his wife's anger, he moved his daughter-in-law to another village and visited her there frequently.¹¹⁴

This affair was probably many male migrants' worst nightmare. It defied all the sacred hierarchical relationships in a family: the hierarchy between father-in-law and daughter-in-law, father and son, and husband and wife. Affairs between migrants' wives and their adopted sons also violated these hierarchies and challenged the authority of the migrants. For example, the *Gongbao* reported that Ms. Huang, the widow of an wealthy migrant, adopted an adult son to continue her husband's family line after his death. One day, when she was ill and they were alone in her room, he revealed his desires for her and she agreed to have sexual intercourse with him. Ever since that incident, even though they were known as "mother and son," they behaved as if they were "husband and wife." The couple successfully escaped to Hong Kong and away from the scrutiny of their fellow villagers.¹¹⁵ Wives' affairs with both fathers-in-law and adopted sons undermined the authority and sexual privileges that migrants were supposed to enjoy. Even though their wives were supposed to remain chaste to them during their absences, their absence made it difficult to ensure this. These affairs threatened everything the migrant tried to establish: the continuation of his line, accumulation of wealth for his retirement, and most importantly, a respected position in his family during his life time, and a family that honoured his memories after his death. They also mocked several Chinese ideals: a multi-generational patrilineal family, filial piety, and the importance of sons.

¹¹⁴ *Gongbao*, February 19.

¹¹⁵ *Gongbao*, May 19, 1931. For another report on extramarital affairs between emigrant wives and their adopted sons, see *Gongbao*, June 3, 1931.

Ironically, many of the changes that had the potential to weaken male migrants' control over their wives and sons could be attributed to overseas migration or remittances. Their funding to education for women increased women's literacy rate, access to professional employment, and participation in community affairs. Many feared that their absence created more opportunities for their wives to become *de facto* household heads, to assume masculine responsibilities, and to have extramarital affairs, especially with their at home fathers and adopted sons. Many migrants feared that overseas migration made it increasingly difficult for them to impose their authority at home and to ensure their wives' chastity. The transformation that emigrant communities experienced decreased the validity of traditional gender roles and increased the difficulties in reinforcing male supremacy over women.

Challenges to Migrants' Chinese Identity: Alienation from China

Even though most migrants migrated with the intent of returning and retiring as wealthy men in their home villages in China, many felt that it became increasingly difficult to hold on to this dream and to their cultural identity. Long absences from China and the discriminatory treatment that they received during their return visits contributed to their sense of alienation from China. Furthermore, as dependence on emigration and remittances transformed the social organization in Siyi and Sanyi, the ethnic hierarchy where Punti men were placed on top of this hierarchy became increasingly irrelevant. As a result of these changes, male migrants increasingly questioned the validity and significance of their cultural identity and superiority in Siyi and Sanyi.

Many migrants feared that changes created by migration made the pre-existing ethnic hierarchy difficult to reinforce. Even though few Hakka went to Canada, many of them, along with Punti men, migrated to countries in Southeast Asia. The wealth that both groups remitted home, regardless of their place of sojourn, narrowed the social gap between the two groups. Furthermore, their shared identity as overseas migrants was as important, if not more important, than their ethnic group membership. Since the ability to fulfil many gender ideals that had previously separated the Hakka and the Punti depended largely on a group's financial resources, the Hakka's increased wealth allowed them to

acquire these cultural markers. Furthermore, since Punti men's sense of cultural superiority derived from their ability to claim that they followed the proper Confucian gender roles, the perceived transgression of their family members challenged this cultural superiority. The breakdown in the separation of spheres, the difficulties that migrants perceived in forcing their wives to observe the code of Confucian female propriety, and the breakdown in the traditional family structure weakened their ability to portray themselves as the inheritors of the Confucian tradition.

During their long absences from China, migrants increasingly felt a sense of alienation from their home villages. This was particularly common among male labourers who could not afford to visit their home villages frequently. Since many left as teenagers and could not afford more than three to four trips back to China during their lifetime, their memories and attachment to their home villages gradually faded as they became increasingly attached to their lives in Canada.¹¹⁶ The loss of close family members further weakened their ties to China. Even those who returned periodically felt that they did not belong in their villages. For example, one migrant stated that there was "never anything to do in the village. It was better working in America," even though his children and wife were in China.¹¹⁷ As time wore down their bonds to their village and their desire to retire in China, many no longer felt as Chinese as those who stayed behind.

The discrimination that many wealthy returned migrants faced from their fellow villagers, family members, and the government reinforced their sense of alienation from China. For example, in 1931, the Chinese in Canada were outraged when the Nationalist government made it mandatory for overseas migrants to purchase their passports to return to China. They interpreted this move as a way for the government to exploit them, to prevent them from returning, and to show them that they were not wanted in China.¹¹⁸ Aside from these policies, their wealth frequently made them the targets of abuse in their home villages. The fortification of many migrants' homes reflected their fear that their

¹¹⁶ Nee and Nee, 15.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Tom, in Nee and Nee, 18.

¹¹⁸ *Gongbao*, June 8, 1931.

hard-earned savings would be taken from them by local bandits and thieves.¹¹⁹ Despite their efforts, overseas newspapers and magazines were still filled with stories of how corrupt officials, greedy relatives, and calculating villagers cheated returned migrants who were no longer familiar with local customs out of their savings.¹²⁰ Regardless of whether these reports were true, they fuelled migrants' fears that China was no longer the ideal home or retirement place for them.

Many migrants felt that migration and changes that occurred in China, especially those in emigrant communities, threatened to undermine their cultural and gender identities and authority. In a broader national context, as various imperialist powers defeated China, it could no longer assert that it was superior to other cultures. In Siyi and Sanyi, the Punti's constructed cultural hierarchy also crumbled since both Hakka and Punti men emigrated overseas and many migrants questioned the importance of their cultural identity. Changes facilitated by the presence of remittances and the absence of men, such as women's increased access to education and paid employment in professional positions and the fear that migrants' wives were unfaithful, challenged the basis of the Chinese patriarchal system and the gender hierarchy that supported it. Within five short decades, changes created by overseas emigration led to an identity crisis for male migrants as they felt that their former channels of dominance disappeared.

THE CHINESE IN CANADA: RACE AND PATRIARCHY

Many migrants perceived their experiences in Canada to be the greatest challenge to their cultural and gender superiority. In the white racist patriarchal system, the interests of white middle-class men were perpetuated at the expense of women and non-white men. All other groups who did not fulfil white middle-class masculine ideals were treated as feminized others. The feminization of Chinese men in Canadian society was reflected in their inferior social status, the portrayal of them as effeminate beings, their ghettoization

¹¹⁹ Lucie Cheng, Liu Yuzun, and Zheng Dehua, "Chinese Emigration, the Sunning Railway and the Development of Taishan," *Amerasia Journal* 9:1 (1982), 62-72 and Zheng and Cheng, *The Emigrant Community in Taishan*, 87-89.

¹²⁰ See *Gongbao*, May 10, 1947, where the residence of an overseas Chinese in Xinhui was robbed; *Gongbao*, Feb. 19, 1931 contains a report where a wealthy returned migrant was robbed of his life saving by his younger brother; for other examples, see *Juzhen Yuebao*, 8:5, 35 and 8:5, 33

into occupations traditionally held by white working-class women, and the tendency to describe them in the same terms as white women.

As Alicja Muszynski states, patriarchy

can be understood as underlying a certain type of consciousness that dichotomizes the world into categories... This is not simply a thought process but is reflected in the categorizing that excludes the vast majority of people from the human condition in order to appropriate their labour for the maintenance of that small group that sets itself up as superior, as human, as "man."¹²¹

In the Canadian context, "that small group" referred to white middle-class men who used their ability to define what it meant to be "a man" to perpetuate their social dominance. White male domination was justified by their "inherent" cultural and biological superiority over other groups. Male Euro-Canadians' belief in their permanent superiority over other groups was supported by "scientific" studies and social Darwinism. They saw the progression of human development as a linear one where racial groups progressed from barbaric, to semi-barbaric, and finally to a civilized state. They placed themselves at the very end of this scale and believed that Asiatic races were still in a semi-barbaric state.¹²² Even though white women belonged to the same race, they were seen as biologically inferior to men. In many ways, white masculinity was equated with desirable characteristics, such as strength, intelligence, self-control, rationality, and civility. Since only white men fulfilled the criteria for being properly masculine, white women and Chinese men were depicted as feminized beings and associated with undesirable characteristics, such as physical and mental weakness, childlike behaviour, submissiveness, lack of control over their emotions, and inability to function properly without guidance from white men.¹²³

¹²¹ Alicja Muszynski, *Cheap Wage Labour: Race and Gender in the Fisheries of British Columbia*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 75.

¹²² Anderson, "The Idea of Chinatown," 584 and Li Zhong, "Structural and Psychological Dimensions of Racism: Towards an Alternative Perspective," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, (XXVI: 3, 1994), 126.

¹²³ For a discussion of the stereotyping of Chinese men, see Baureiss, "Discrimination and Response," 243-244, Tan, "Chinese Labour and the Reconstituted Social Order of British Columbia," 73-75, and Ward, 12-13. For stereotypes of white women, see Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), and Marilyn J. Boxer and Jean H. Quartaert, "Overview, 1750-1890", in *Connecting Spheres: Women in the*

The emergence of numerous conflicting, yet equally degrading, stereotypes that portrayed Chinese men as sexually deviant from white men further reinforced the image of Chinese men as unmanly and uncivilized. On one hand, they were portrayed as androgynous, docile, "deferential," "childlike" and "submissive" people who were "natural servants" and who lacked the proper sexual drives of white "men." As androgynous childlike beings, Chinese men did not pose any threat to the chastity of white women and the authority of white men.¹²⁴ Another stereotype emphasized their docility, femininity, and lack of initiative by portraying them as being stalked by white women. For example, Emily Murphy, a feminist in the 1920s, stated that "in the marital relations between white women and men of colour, the glove is always thrown by the women, or at least deliberately dropped."¹²⁵ Even though in most other works, the term "man of colour" was used to refer to black man, interestingly, she used this term to refer to Chinese men. Another equally demeaning stereotype was that of "decadent perverts" who had lost their "manhood" and therefore had to use "opium and other drugs to fuel their flagging sexual energies."¹²⁶ Armed with their opium and drugs, Chinese "perverts" posed a threat to white women's valued chastity, stalked them, and lured "good white women" into their opium dens. Despite their differences, these stereotypes depicted Chinese men's sexuality and desires as deviating from the "normal" and "civilized" heterosexual and monogamous sexual behaviours of white men. They reinforced the image of Chinese men as the feminine other to white men: they lacked the manly ability to initiate relationships, lacked control over their sexual desires, and were even androgynous.¹²⁷

Western World, 1500 to the Present, edited by Boxer and Quartaert, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 95-135.

¹²⁴ Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 36, Constance Backhouse, "The White Women's Labour Laws: Anti-Chinese Racism in Early Twentieth-Century Canada," *Law and History Review*, 14:2 (Fall, 1996), 336-337, and footnotes, 76 and 77.

¹²⁵ Emily Murphy, *Black Candle*, (Toronto: T. Allen, 1922), 238.

¹²⁶ Backhouse, "The White Women's Labour Laws," see footnote 74 and Mariana Valverde, "'When the Mother of the Race is Free': Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First Wave Feminism," in *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History*, edited by Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 24.

¹²⁷ During this period, it was commonly assumed that only men had an active sexuality and could seek and commit a sexual crime. See Karen Dubinsky, "'Maidenly Girls or Designing Women?' The Crime of Seduction in Turn of the Century Ontario," in *Gender Conflicts*, 27.

The roles that white men and women were supposed to play in their heterosexual patriarchal households sanctioned white male supremacy over white women and Chinese men. The male household head was expected to control, support, protect, and provide for his family, while his wife was expected to remain at home and to create a spiritually pure and morally righteous home atmosphere.¹²⁸ The depiction of a white man as the sole supporter of his family justified his higher wages, and better access to training and skilled jobs.¹²⁹ Since the ability to work for a fair wage was seen as a manly right, white women, especially white married women, and Chinese men received about one half to one quarter of what white men received, were limited to unskilled jobs that white men did not want, and were depicted as unfair sources of competition that stole jobs away from the only group that had the "right" to earn a living: white men.¹³⁰

The tendency to see white men as the only group with the right to work influenced the formation of policies that excluded Chinese men from the workplace. For example, in 1884, the B.C. legislature disallowed the Chinese from acquiring Crown lands, in 1890, the *Coal Mines Regulation Amendment Act* prevented them from working underground, a further amendment to this *Act* in 1903 barred them from skilled jobs in mines, a 1897 statute prohibited them from working on public works, and another 1899 statute prevented them from obtaining liquor licenses. In 1919, in B.C., a policy that targeted both Chinese men and white women was the passage of the *White Women Employment Act* which prohibited the employment of "any white woman or girl" in restaurants, laundries, places of business or amusement owned, kept, or managed by "any Chinese person." In 1923, the province replaced the racially specific language and left it to the discretion of police officials to decide whether white women and girls were allowed to

¹²⁸ Carolyn Strange, "'Wounded Womanhood and Deadman,' Chivalry and the Trials of Clara Ford and Carrie Davies," in *Gender Conflicts*, 152.

¹²⁹ Strange, "Wounded Womanhood and Dead Men," 152.

¹³⁰ For a discussion of white women, see Creese, "The Politics of Dependence: Women, Work, and Unemployment in the Vancouver Labour Movement before World War II." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 13(1-2), 1988, 124-128 and Josie Bannerman, et al., "Cheat at Half the Price: The History of the Fight for Equal Pay in BC," in *Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia*, edited by Barbara K. Latham and Roberta Pazdro, (Victoria, 1984), 299.

work in restaurants or laundries.¹³¹ Other legislation that did not mention the Chinese was in reality aimed at them. For example, the *Factories Act* of 1922 disallowed night employment in laundries and shortened the hours of operations. Since Chinese laundries were the ones that operated late into the night to remain competitive with their white competitors, this legislation was obviously passed with them in mind.¹³²

From the 1880s to the 1940s, the work world of the Chinese men was gradually feminized as they were pushed out of jobs that Creese, a labour historian, classified as “men’s jobs” into “women’s jobs.” She argues that prior to the Second World War, jobs and professions were clearly defined as “women’s work,” “coolie labour,” and “men’s work.” White middle-class men monopolized the highest paying skilled jobs, such as professional positions, political offices, and skilled trade positions, and the training for and entry into these positions. Most of the low paying unskilled jobs were either defined as “women’s work,” which included jobs that involved domestic cleaning, cooking, serving people, and jobs associated with the production of textile goods, or as “coolie labour,” which included jobs that required unskilled physical strength. Table Two shows that even though in the 1880s, Chinese male labourers were mostly employed in jobs that required physical strength, by the 1920s, they were increasingly employed in jobs that were originally defined as “women’s work.”¹³³

Table 2: Occupations of Chinese in British Columbia, 1884, 1931, and 1941¹³⁴

Year	Laundry	Restaurant	Labour
1884	1.5%	1% ¹³⁵	51% ¹³⁶

¹³¹ See “*An Act to amend the ‘Municipal Act’*,” Statutes of British Columbia 1919, chapter 63, section 13 and “*An Act for the Protection of Women and Girls in Certain Cases*,” Statutes of British Columbia 1923, chapter 76 and section 3 as cited in Backhouse, “White Female Help and Chinese-Canadian Employers: Race, Class, Gender, and Law in the Case of Yee Clun, 1924,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XXVI: 3, 1994, 48. For a more detailed discussion of the meanings of the *Act* as it was applied in Saskatchewan, see Backhouse, “The White Women’s Labor Laws,” 313-368.

¹³² See the Statutes of BC 1884, c. 2, Statutes of BC, *The Coal Mines Regulation Amendment Act* of 1890, c. 33, Statutes of BC 1903, c. 17, Statutes of BC 1897, c.1, Statutes of BC 1899, c. 39, and *The Factories Act* of 1922 (Statutes of BC 1933, c. 25) respectively as cited in Li, “The Economic Cost of Racism to Chinese-Canadians,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, XIX: 3, 1987, 103-104.

¹³³ Creese, “The Politics of Dependence,” 123.

¹³⁴ Table 13, in Appendix: Tables, and Census of Canada, 1931 and 1941 as quoted in Table 14, Appendix: table, in Wickberg et al., 309-310.

1931	3%	16%	45%
1941	3%	20%	28%

From the perspective of the white community, Chinese men were feminized beings who did not measure up to the socially approved and sanctioned images of white masculine supremacy. Chinese men were depicted as springing from a “feminine” race that lacked the intelligence, physical strength, civilized nature, and rationality of the “masculine” white race dominated by white men. The belief and constructed stereotypes of Chinese men as unworthy feminine beings justified denying them the rights, privileges, and wages of white men. In this case, racism took on the language of sexism because the aim of Canadian patriarchal society was to perpetuate the interests of white men at the expense of all other groups. As white masculinity, a concept associated with and rooted in the white Canadian heterosexual monogamous household, came to be the only definition and source of masculinity, Chinese men were denied of their masculine identity.

Reactions and Impact

The anti-Chinese laws and institutional racism that the Chinese in Canada confronted influenced their lives both in Canada and in China. Since publications, such as the *Gongbao*, frequently translated English articles into Chinese, the Chinese community was well aware of the stereotypes that Euro-Canadians had constructed about them. Anti-Chinese laws, such as head taxes, the *Exclusion Act*, and several laws that curtailed Chinese men’s economic competitiveness meant that racism influenced Chinese migrants’ employment patterns and their relationships to their families either in China or Canada. Since most of these measures were only applied to Chinese migrants and not to other groups of migrants, they felt that they were placed at the bottom of the Canadian hierarchy. This section examines how many migrants perceived that white racism and discriminatory laws subverted their constructed racial hierarchy and masculine authority by blurring gender lines and preventing them from fulfilling Chinese masculine ideals.

¹³⁵ The percentage of Chinese workers who worked in restaurants was actually less than one percent because this figure also included people who were merchants.

¹³⁶ This category included people who worked as railway construction workers, coal miners, sawmill hands, general labourers, woodcutters, and cannery workers.

The fact that many of the discriminatory laws were only applied to Chinese migrants and not to groups that both the Canadians and the Chinese regarded as inferior subverted the Chinese racial hierarchy that had existed before the mid-nineteenth century. For many, this made the already harsh discriminatory laws harder to swallow. One 1928 editorial in the *Gongbao* lamented that “the harsh rules of the *Exclusion Act* were not applied to Japanese or Indians, nor people from Southern European countries, Africa, or South American countries.” Similarly, another 1924 editorial in the *Gongbao* mourned:

What can be more intolerable when Canadians dare not impose measures that they imposed on us on refugees from barbaric countries, such as niggers and Indians? What can be more humiliating than to be regarded by Canadians as inferior to black slaves, red Indians, and refugees from India?¹³⁷

Many Chinese people had regarded all these groups as inferior and uncivilized barbarians and countries like Japan had actively reinforced China’s cultural superiority. From the migrants’ perspective, to be ranked under these groups shattered any possibility of clinging onto their old Chinese cultural hierarchy and made them aware that they were placed at the bottom of the Canadian racial hierarchy.

The many pieces of anti-Chinese legislation that curtailed Chinese men’s economic ability to compete with white men decreased their ability to fulfil Chinese masculine responsibilities. As a result of large-scale overseas migration, one of the main criteria for defining a good husband was whether he regularly remitted money from abroad to provide for his family in China.¹³⁸ Many publications published in China for migrants specifically stated that the main goal for overseas migration was so that “they would be able to remit their wages back to their ancestral land to support their wives and children.”¹³⁹ By decreasing Chinese men’s competitive edge, these anti-Chinese law not only threatened their survival in Canada, but also their opportunities to be good providing patriarchs and contributing village members in China. Their decreased economic resources further prevented them from fulfilling traditional masculine ideals that would bring them public

¹³⁷ *Gongbao*, July 4, 1924.

¹³⁸ *The Second Lineage Reunion Organized by the Huang Jiang Xia Main Chapter*, 32.

¹³⁹ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5:8, 78.

recognition in China, such as the acquisition of concubines, servants, the funding of charitable organizations, and the ability to educate their children, especially their sons.¹⁴⁰

Canadian immigration law directly challenged the source of Chinese migrants' patriarchal power: the ability to establish their own households in Canada. The head taxes and later the *Chinese Exclusion Act* made it difficult for male migrants to establish their households and to reproduce a next generation in Canada. Since a father's control over his children and a husband's authority over his wife were fundamental patriarchal values, most migrants' inability to bring their wives and children to Canada made it difficult for them to exercise their roles as patriarchs. Only a small group of male merchants and even fewer male labourers were able to establish their own households in Canada. As a result of the absence of Chinese women in Canada, there were few Chinese children in Canada and most of them were children of merchants.¹⁴¹ The high number of married- bachelors in the community meant that while many had the responsibility to financially support their families in China, few enjoyed the privileges of being Chinese patriarchs.

The shift in male labourers' employment pattern from coolie's labour to women's work blurred constructed Chinese gender boundaries and gender hierarchies. Many of the jobs that Euro-Canadians classified as "women's work," especially cooking, cleaning, and serving women, were also considered by migrants as women's work because they were traditionally done by Chinese women and occurred in the inner sphere. Their increased ghettoization in women's work meant that they were increasingly drawn into the inner sphere, and in the case of domestic servants, under the control of white women in their sphere. Even for those who worked independently, such as laundry workers, the need to handle polluting substances, such as semen, menstrual blood, and other bodily excretions, on dirty laundry made the laundry business one associated with women's work and a dirty

¹⁴⁰ Francis C. K. Hsu, "Influence of Southsea Emigration on Certain Chinese Provinces," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 5, 1945, 48-58 and James Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage: The Mans in Hong Kong and London*. (Berkeley, 1975), 205-211. The next chapter will discuss the emergence of new masculine ideals in emigrant communities further.

¹⁴¹ Timothy Stanley, "Schooling, White Supremacy, and the Chinese Merchant Public in British Columbia," *B.C. Studies* 107 (Autumn 9 1995), 19.

and degrading one.¹⁴² For example, one Chinese woman angrily recounted how when her husband went to collect dirty laundry from a customer, a white woman forced him to crawl under her bed to collect her dirty laundry. Another remembered that her husband had to light incense to clear the air when he received a bag of dirty laundry that had bodily secretion and menstrual blood on the clothes.¹⁴³ In China, the disposal of the menstrual blood was done secretly by women and the cleaning of used menstrual pads was strictly a chore for women because menstrual blood was regarded as dirty and potentially harmful to men's *yangness*.¹⁴⁴ The act of being ordered to crawl under a white woman's bed to collect her dirty laundry violated Chinese men's gender propriety and exposed them to substances that they considered to be degrading and harmful to their masculinity.

From the perspective of male migrants, white racism challenged both their cultural identity and channels of exercising their masculine authority. Increasingly, they found themselves portrayed as feminine beings, denied the rights and privileges enjoyed by white men, attacked for the privileges that they enjoyed in a Chinese polygamist society, and unable to establish their own households so that they could exercise their role as household head. As second-class citizens in Canada, male Chinese labourers found themselves exposed to polluting elements and demeaning jobs that were reserved for women in China. To complete this feminization process, from their perspective, their cultural heritage, a source of pride and identity for them before the nineteenth century, was depicted as a backward and barbaric one and used as a main justification for treating them as the inferior feminine other.

CHALLENGES FROM WITHIN THE COMMUNITY IN CANADA

As a result of the *Exclusion Act* and events in China, during the 1920s, 1930s, and the 1940s, the demographic characteristics of the Chinese community gradually changed. After the implementation of the *Act*, the remaining population in Canada was dominated

¹⁴² Emily Martin, "The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women," in Margery Wolf and Roxanne Witke eds., *Women in Chinese Society*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 206-209.

¹⁴³ Kwok Ban Chan, *Smoke and Fire: The Chinese in Montreal (Ye Yu Huo: Montelir de Huren*, (Beijing: The University of Beijing Press, 1991), 33 and 66.

¹⁴⁴ Martin, "Power and Pollution of Chinese Women," 193-214 and Gary Seaman, "The Sexual Politics of Karmic Retribution," in *The Anthropology of Taiwanese Society*, edited by E. Martin Ahern and Hill Gates, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981), 381-396.

by an aging male population and a small but growing group of second generation Chinese youth, mostly children of established merchants. There was also increased visibility of Chinese women, mostly wives and daughters of merchants, in community affairs. As a result of the second Sino-Japanese War, a new generation of youth grew up in Canada, had little attachment to China, and used tools in Canadian society to break away from their parents' authority. Both the Sino-Japanese War and the Second World War provided opportunities for both first and second generation women to break away from Chinese gender roles. Combined with their own inability to return to China, the emergence of increasingly active youth and women, these three decades presented new challenges to first generation male migrants' authority as parents and as men.

Challenges by Women

The unbalanced sex ratio between Chinese men and women and the increased public visibility of Chinese women blurred notions of Chinese gender roles and realms. During the 1920s and the 1930s, the number of women's organizations grew and their activities became increasingly visible in the Chinese print media.¹⁴⁵ This marked a departure from the traditional emphasis on women's exclusion from public view, participation in political affairs and assumption of leadership roles. The presence of both first and second generation women was strongly felt in all major community events, such as fights to repeal the *Exclusion Act*, events in Chinese schools in Canada, fundraising and publicity efforts for the Sino-Japanese War, campaigns to sell Victory Bonds during the Second World War, and meetings held by district, lineage, and political organizations.¹⁴⁶ Their roles included being keynote speakers, ticket sellers and servers for various events, and actresses, musicians, choreographers, and dancers in various performances hosted by various organizations.¹⁴⁷ At the same time, as many male labourers increasingly had to carry out domestic chores that were done by women on a daily basis and as a livelihood,

¹⁴⁵ Wickberg et al., 167.

¹⁴⁶ *Resist Japan Magazine*, vol. 2, 1931, 37 and 71.

¹⁴⁷ For references to Chinese women as public speakers, see *Gongbao*, July 3, 1928, May 3, 1927, May 9, 1927, and May 31, 1927; for references to women as performers, see *Gongbao*, January 3, 1931, June 26, 1931, 1931; for references to women as organizers of events, fund raisers, and servers, see *Records of the Vancouver's Chinese Benevolent Association*, 5-24.

from their perspective, traditional gender roles were no longer visible either in their daily lives or in the Chinese print media.

Even for the small group of men who brought their families to Canada, many felt that their lives in Canada introduced many new challenges to their authority over their wives. The following legal battle demonstrated how the Canadian legal system posed a serious threat to male migrants' authority. It began in 1923 when Huang Bao, an established first generation migrant, married Ma Ruixiang with Chinese wedding rituals in B.C., and had three sons and a daughter together. In 1927, Ma went to Vancouver with her children to visit her parents, while Huang stayed behind to work. Ma, "for some inconceivable reason," began working as a waitress in a restaurant despite her husband's objections. In 1928, Huang filed a law suit against his in-laws when he discovered that they were trying to take his children back to China without his consent. He lost the case and his children because the court did not consider Ma and Huang to be married and under Canadian law, children born out of wedlock were automatically awarded to the mother. The editorialist's comment summed up many male migrants' concerns:

according to the customs of our country, once men and women exchanged their names and bowed to each others' ancestors, the marriage was official. Their children, even after the death of the man, would be awarded to his family to continue his patriline. However, this is no longer recognized in Canada.¹⁴⁸

This report conveyed many male migrants' frustration and fear that the Canadian legal system did not accept their culture and their authority over their wives and children, and that it could destroy their claims to their wives and children, "properties" that they had worked hard to acquire.

Other less spectacular lawsuits involving Chinese women reinforced male migrants' fear that the Canadian system worked against their interests. The *Gongbao* regularly reported how Canadian immigration officials prevented Chinese women from entering Canada if they thought that these women were holding false or purchased identification papers.¹⁴⁹ Since these women were brought over, either illegally or legally,

¹⁴⁸ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5:5, 41-44.

¹⁴⁹ *Gongbao*, July 24, 1931, July 26, 1931 and July 27, 1931.

at a fairly expensive price to be waitresses, prostitutes, concubines, or wives, their inability to enter after a costly voyage was a blow to their purchasers' interests. The *Gongbao* also reported cases where Chinese women successfully used the Canadian legal system to initiate divorces against their husbands. In one case, a woman successfully sued her husband for material compensation for kicking her out of her house.¹⁵⁰ In another, a sixteen year old woman successfully got the judge to annul her arranged marriage on the grounds that when the marriage took place, she was only fifteen and below the legal marriage age.¹⁵¹ In both cases, the Canadian legal system did not recognize Chinese customs that favoured Chinese men's power over their wives and daughters, such as the fathers' ability to arrange legally binding marriages for their children regardless of their age and the husbands' power to initiate a divorce or kick his wife out without compensation, that Chinese men had enjoyed for centuries.

Challenges by Youth

The presence of a well-educated second generation Canadian-born Chinese youth threatened the prestige of first generation male migrants in the community. Unlike most first generation migrants who were semi-literate or illiterate in English, the new generation had a higher English literacy rate. For example, while in 1921, the majority of the youth population was formed by first generation migrants who were illiterate or semi-literate in English, by 1931, seventy-five percent of the Chinese children and youth in Canada were Canadian-born and the English literacy rate was over eighty percent among this age group.¹⁵² Since they felt comfortable in both the Chinese and Canadian communities, the elder generation increasingly depended on them, especially when they or the community had to deal with non-Chinese people.¹⁵³ These youth played an important role in fighting racism in the educational system and raising public awareness and support for eliminating anti-Chinese laws.¹⁵⁴ Especially during the Sino-Japanese War, and later the Second World War, they worked with white Canadian groups to raise awareness for the situation

¹⁵⁰ *Gongbao*, June 24, 1931.

¹⁵¹ *Gongbao*, June 25, 1931.

¹⁵² Wickberg et al., 149.

¹⁵³ Chong, 141-143.

¹⁵⁴ Wickberg, et al., 167.

in China and to win white Canadians' recognition for Chinese efforts to support the Canadian war effort.¹⁵⁵

The emergence of a new generation of Canadian-born youth who felt more attached to Canada than China increased the difficulties of first generation migrants in passing down their culture and values to the next generation. Since they were born and raised in Canada and could not visit China because of various wars, their bond with it was weaker than those of their parents. As a result, many favoured their Canadian values and identities over their Chinese ones. For example, Dock Yip, the son of the wealthiest merchant in Victoria, stated proudly that "racially I am Chinese, but from the point of view of nationality or citizenship, I am a Canadian."¹⁵⁶ Bob Lee echoed Yip's sentiments by stating that "I am a Canadian first....Secondly, I am Chinese and if I want to follow traditions, fine, but I have to be a Canadian first."¹⁵⁷ Both statements implied that many Canadian-born youth rejected the values and teachings of the first generation migrants they regarded as incompatible with their Canadian identity. The existence of Canadian-born youths' dual identities weakened their parents' absolute control over them because they could pick elements and values from whatever they defined as the Chinese and Canadian way of life that suited them the best.

The younger generation's familiarity with the Canadian system made it possible for them to use it to help them defy the authority of their parents. Even though traditionally, the parents had absolute control over the arrangement of their children's marriage, in some cases, second generation Chinese used the Canadian legal system to challenge this authority. For example, in 1938, the *Gongbao* reported that Ma Fongxi, a nineteen year old woman, asked the local court to allow her to marry Peter Huang against her father's wishes. In this case, the judge completely sided with the young couple and disregarded the father's concerns and demands. For example, Mr. Ma asked that Huang pay him a thousand dollars as the bride-price and to begin saving for the future. However, the judge ruled that all Mr. Ma wanted was money, that if Huang could not support his daughter, he

¹⁵⁵ *Gongbao*, June 27, 1942.

¹⁵⁶ Huang et al., 8.

¹⁵⁷ Huang et al., 57.

had the obligation to support her, and overruled his objections.¹⁵⁸ Ms. Ma succeeded in using Canadian law to challenge her father's authority and to deny him the material privileges that a Chinese father enjoyed in marrying off his daughter: the presence of a bride price, and his control over the process.

The emergence of a well-educated and well-organized second generation of Chinese women further facilitated the breakdown of gender and generational hierarchies. In a similar way to their male counterparts, young women formed their own organizations and gained access to leadership roles free from the influence of older men and women.¹⁵⁹ Many attended both Chinese and regular schools and their attendance challenged traditional gender roles.¹⁶⁰ The *Gongbao* frequently published the achievements of female students and this constant public recognition signaled a further departure from the Chinese past.¹⁶¹ Even though it is unclear how many women received a professional education, personal accounts and reports in the *Gongbao* show that a significant number of women did. After 1924, young Chinese women frequently worked as clerks in fruits and vegetable stands and an increasing number of them entered the industrial sector.¹⁶² Even though most were blocked from professional positions, most probably obtained a higher level of education than their fathers which was a remarkable accomplishment in itself.

Changes within the Chinese community made traditional gender ideals and hierarchies increasingly difficult to observe and uphold. The first generation male migrants' authority over their children decreased as the younger group was more at ease in dealing with non-Chinese groups, had a higher level of education, and frequently earned more money as a result of their higher education level. Both youth and women began creating separate organizations that were relevant to them and allowed them to assume positions of leadership independent of the more established men. Chinese gender ideals and notions of cultural superiority and identity became less relevant in a changing

¹⁵⁸ *Gongbao*, July 4-7, 1938.

¹⁵⁹ *Gongbao*, June 22, 1939.

¹⁶⁰ Stanley, 27.

¹⁶¹ *Gongbao*, July 3, 1947.

¹⁶² Tamara Adilman, "A Preliminary Sketch of Chinese Women and Work in British Columbia, 1858-1950," in *Not Just Pin Money*, 67-8.

community increasingly dominated by a growing group of youth who grew up in a different culture from their parents.

CONCLUSION

The cultural and gender dominance of Punti men over women and men from other groups was justified by their belief in their cultural and masculine superiority. They constructed mutually reinforcing and co-dependent sets of cultural and gender hierarchies to reinforce their dominant position. For them, an important way of differentiating between the superior Chinese masculine us and the barbaric non-Chinese other was through the use of culturally specific gender constructs. In turn, Chinese men's superiority over women became an integral part of being Chinese. Even though what it meant to be a Chinese man changed over time and varied regionally, many Punti men selected essentialized notions of Chinese masculinity and femininity, such as the observation of certain rituals, the division of spheres, and the fulfilment of gendered Confucian ideals, to perpetuate their position in Chinese society.

However, from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, the decline of China's international status threatened the basis of Punti men's constructed cultural and gender hierarchies. Many of the values and institutions that Chinese men had relied on to reinforce and justify their Chinese masculine authority were increasingly labelled as sources of China's weakness. The need to choose between making an individual contribution to saving China and retaining cultural markers that helped them construct their identity put them in a difficult situation. If they chose the patriotic option and encouraged changes that helped China modernize, adopt western institutions, gender roles, and increased education for both men and women, it would destroy their constructed hierarchies between themselves, non-Chinese westerners and Chinese women. However, the other option would lead to the destruction of China, the source of their masculine power. As the attacks on Chinese patriarchal and polygamist institutions and values increased in the early twentieth century, the power of Chinese men was no longer assumed, but one that had to be justified.

In emigrant communities, the absence of many men and presence of overseas remittances triggered a series of unintended changes that threatened to eliminate the very gender and racial hierarchies that male migrants sought to protect through emigration. Most had migrated to Canada hoping that it would allow them to fulfil their responsibility as good providers and improve their social status in their villages. However, their funding for education, including for women and girls, led to the production of a new generation of youth who challenged their fathers' authority with their superior training. Increasingly, migrants' daughters defied Confucian gender boundaries by enrolling in public school, entering into professional jobs, and supporting themselves. The absence of husbands created the perception that migrants were losing control over their wives and children and that gender boundaries at home were blurred. Adding to their fears, the Chinese media reinforced the image that their absences created opportunities for their family members, especially their adopted sons, wives, and fathers, to behave in barbaric and non-Chinese ways by having incestuous relationships with each other. These changes and fears not only challenged the authority of Puntí men, they also made it difficult for them to retain their former sense of cultural superiority over the Hakka and the boat people. Previously, they had used their group's ability to fulfil Chinese gender ideals to mark their differences from these "non-Chinese" groups. However, these changes made these claims and boundaries increasingly difficult to maintain.

Many first generation male migrants felt that their lives in Canada posed new challenges to their generational, cultural, and gender authority over other community members. Since there were only a few adult Chinese women in Canada and most were married to more established merchants, most labourers rarely had opportunities to demonstrate their masculine influence. Many felt that Chinese gender roles ceased to be relevant in their daily lives as they depended on doing women's work for survival and had to carry out domestic chores for themselves. After the Sino-Japanese War broke out and reunion with their families in China became more difficult, the possibility for most elderly migrants to return to China to enjoy a comfortable retirement diminished. The growth of a second generation youth posed another challenge to first generation male migrants'

authority. Since survival and success in Canada depended on their ability to function in mainstream Canadian society, many youths favoured their Canadian connections over their Chinese ones. Many were also able to use Canadian systems to disobey their parents' authority.

In many ways, male migrants emerged as the feminized non-Chinese other in their interactions with China, their home communities, and other groups in Canada. While their wives in China assumed more masculine roles in their absences, they entered "women's work" in Canada to earn a living. As Chinese people, their cultural status denied them the privileges and advantages that white men as "men" enjoyed. Even in comparison to the image of weak and defenseless Chinese soldiers fighting against Japanese soldiers, they appeared as even more feminine and non-Chinese because they did not even try to defend their country. In an effort to improve their lives and support their families by emigration, they appeared to have inadvertently dismantled the cultural and gender hierarchies that defined their Chinese masculine identity and justified their social dominance.

III: NATIONALISM AND MASCULINITY: THE CREATION OF NEW IDENTITIES

Despite the various challenges to their cultural and masculine identities, male migrants created several seemingly conflicting self-images that reaffirmed their masculinity and cultural superiority. They portrayed themselves both as traditionalists who actively defended elements of Chinese culture from disappearing and as masculine men with unprecedented access to Chinese patriarchal structures and privileges. Interestingly, they also portrayed themselves as westernized and modern national heroes who used their superior western education to lift China out of its dark past. Combined together, these three images created a powerful and all encompassing image of male migrants as masculine and ultra-Chinese men who embodied the best of the Chinese past, present, and future, and the best of the “western” world. This chapter examines how these images were created, their meanings, and how actual changes that occurred as a result of overseas migration interacted with the creation of these images.

STRUCTURE OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter is divided into five main sections and each examines how events in both China and Canada helped male migrants create various seemingly conflicting identities and self-images. The first section shows that overseas migration and their new wealth perpetuated and popularized their access to patriarchal power and increased migrants’ control over public institutions and spaces in both countries. The second demonstrates that their new wealth and their ability to preserve Chinese structures and fulfil constructed Chinese gender ideals validated their self-image as the preservers and protectors of Chinese civilization. The next section examines the construction of another identity by showing how they portrayed themselves as modern national heroes who saved China from its backward past with their superior western education. These two identities provided two different ways for migrants to portray themselves as superior to any other groups in China. The fourth section analyzes how the migrants simultaneously portrayed themselves as culturally superior to and more masculine than white men in Canada by showing that they fulfilled white masculine ideals and that they responded to white racism

with forgiveness and kindness. The fifth section asks how these three seemingly conflicting images helped create a new polygamist, sexualized, and masculine Chinese identity. It examines how this identity was further reinforced by migrants' increased access to polygamist patriarchal institutions in both China and Canada and their perceived monopoly on magical sex potions.

PRESERVATION OF MASCULINE AUTHORITY

In China, the traditional way of life that sanctioned patriarchal authority came under attack. However, most male migrants' new wealth allowed them to preserve this way of life in emigrant communities in China and in Chinese communities in Canada. Their new wealth and their families' growing dependence on remittances increased their ability to establish patriarchal institutions and the number of ways that they exercised domination over their family members, especially their wives and adopted sons. This section examines how overseas migration and male migrants' new wealth strengthened their access to patriarchal power and popularized the establishment of patriarchal institutions.

Popularization of Male Supremacy in China

Despite the absence of young men from emigrant communities and many male migrants' long absences from their families in China, migration increased many male migrants' control over their family members and patriarchal structures. Punti men, especially male migrants and their lineage members, retained their monopoly over public institutions, such as schools, lineages, and the print media. In many ways, emigrant communities' increasing reliance on remittances earned by predominantly male migrants validated patriarchal power and structures, and increased the value of sons over daughters. This section examines how the print media, men's continued control over public institutions, and migrants' increased ability to perpetuate patriarchal power and institutions all increased the strength of male domination over women.

Publications in China

Since Punti men maintained complete control over publications in China, these publications portrayed events through a male-centred lens and favoured the actions of

Punti men over women, and over men from other groups. This bias was reflected in their language which implicitly reinforced male supremacy. For example, many portrayed men as individuals who had both gendered and un-gendered identities and who had identities both within and outside of their families. They were identified in numerous ways, including by their kinship positions, district, political, or religious memberships, and most importantly, by their public achievements.¹⁶³ The only time their gender was explicitly referred to was when they were identified by their kinship positions, such as in marriage announcements, obituaries, and in family matters. In most cases, the print media did not mention men's gender and emphasis was placed on their achievements outside the family.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, even though the honorific titles for men were gender specific, the absence of a title for men that referred to their marital status reflected the tendency to see men as not being limited by their marriages. For example, titles, such as "*xiansheng* (Mister)" and "*jun* (Mister)," merely signified men's status as adults, and did not refer to their marital status.¹⁶⁵

Various publications reinforced the legitimacy of patriarchal structures and their control over women through the way they identified women. Even though women became increasingly active outside of their homes, these publications frequently identified them not by their names or achievements, but through their relationships with men, for example, as mothers, daughters, and wives. For example, a typical article read "Huang Zongfu, a resident of the Jinjiao Village, returned from England a few years ago with Baorui, his son, to select a bride for Baorui. He arranged for Baorui to marry the daughter of a man from Hegaoshan Village." It continued by stating that after Baorui returned to England, his wife had several extramarital affairs secretly until she became pregnant.¹⁶⁶ It clearly traced the events through the men's point of view by beginning the account with the two men's names and occupation. Even though it was about the daughter-in-law's actions, only the two men were identified by name and both the mother-

¹⁶³ For example, see *Gongbao*, May 3, 1927, May 5, 1927, and May 31, 1927.

¹⁶⁴ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:1, 3, and 6-7.

¹⁶⁵ These examples can be found in all the publications published in China for overseas migrants. For some examples, see *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:5-8, 85-89.

¹⁶⁶ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:5-8, 33.

in-law and the daughter-in-law remained nameless. Even when women were identified by their names, these publications almost always attached honorific titles, such as “Mrs. (*furen*)” or “Miss (*mushi*),” to their names that explicitly referred to their marital status, and therefore, relationships to patriarchal families.¹⁶⁷ The absence of a honorific title for women that was devoid of this meaning revealed the tendency to see women’s identities as deriving simply from their positions within their families.

The way children were identified also reinforced and validated these structures. They were identified primarily by their patrilineal identity; for example, most were identified by who their fathers were, and their mothers were seldom mentioned.¹⁶⁸ Chinese grammar further emphasized the importance of the patriline in shaping a child’s identity; for example, one would write, “Ma Dachun’s son X” instead of “X, the son of Ma Dachun.” This syntax placed a greater emphasis on the father’s identity than the child’s identity.¹⁶⁹ A direct translation of a typical wedding announcement contained all these trends:

Huang Huayi’s son Qilin, is the president of the Hong Kong Yonghe Company and contributes significantly to his community.... Yesterday, on May 1, Qilin hosted a new style wedding for his fourth son, Yuanjun, and Miss Wu Bixia....¹⁷⁰

This report began by stating the grandfather’s name, then the father’s name, and finally the groom’s name, implying that Yuanjun’s identity derived from being his father’s “fourth” son and his famous grandfather’s grandson.

Male Control and Public Institutions in China

Overseas migration and remittances strengthened the lineage system in China, the ultimate patriarchal and patrilineal organization that perpetuated male domination. Since most women married out of their lineages and into their husbands’ lineages, they never

¹⁶⁷ *The Resist Japan Magazine*, Jan. 1933, 95-98, and *The Taishan Ningyang Huiguan Refugee Fund*, 11. In lists like these, men’s names were simply listed. See also *Gongbao*, May 4, 1927, June 27, 1942, and May 31, 1927.

¹⁶⁸ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5:5, 2-3, 16.

¹⁶⁹ *Gongbao*, May 9, 1927.

¹⁷⁰ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5:5, 3.

fully belonged to one during their lifetime.¹⁷¹ Prior to marriage, they were considered temporary members of their fathers' lineages; after marriage, they were seen as partial members of their husbands' lineages. Lineages tended to reinforce the importance of sons because while sons were crucial to their continuation, daughters were not. Even though the power of lineages weakened elsewhere in China, they became increasingly powerful in emigrant communities and were strengthened by various factors. For example, since they played important roles in helping migrants migrate overseas and migrants continued to identify with them while living abroad, most contributed heavily to lineage projects. Furthermore, since most saw China as their permanent home and their retirement place, many willingly financed lineage projects, such as the building and maintenance of schools, libraries, orphanages, and hospitals, to ensure that they would have a nice retirement place and be welcomed when they returned.¹⁷² These contributions strengthened lineages, expanded their control over their members' lives, added to their prestige, and increased their ability to survive.¹⁷³

Despite women's growing activism and access to education, they continued to be excluded from leadership roles, including those in lineage structures and in public institutions. Even though the print media reported that a few women were doctors and administrators, they were clearly the exceptions. Furthermore, even these women depended on the support and acceptance of prominent men in their communities and only occupied leadership positions in all-women institutions, such as the few girls' schools.¹⁷⁴ Punti men maintained firm control over most community organizations, especially those that influenced the entire community, such as the police force, large schools, factories, newspapers, and stores. Since most institutions and organizations increasingly depended

¹⁷¹ A minority of marriages were uxori-local ones where the husband married into his wife's family and the children, at least one son, assumed his mother's last name and took over the worshipping of his mother's ancestors. However, this type of marriage was generally frowned upon. See Rubie Watson, "Afterword," in *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), edited by R. Watson and P. B. Ebrey, 362 and Martin, "Ancestral Tablets," *The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), 116-138.

¹⁷² Yu, 47-48.

¹⁷³ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 203-214.

¹⁷⁴ See *Biographies of Female Martyrs in Guangdong*, vol. 4, 40, and *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:5-8, 98-101 and 5:5, 32-33.

on overseas remittances, migrants' superior economic power increased their influence over these institutions despite their absence.

Emigration and Patriarchy in China

From the late 1880s to 1949, both China and emigrant communities increasingly depended on overseas remittances and this dependence increased migrants' authority at home and their ability to perpetuate patriarchal structures. Even during peacetime, China relied on remittances as a major source of revenue. A comparison between its exports, imports, deficits, and remittances sheds light on the importance of remittances to China's economy. Table Three shows that the amount of remittances doubled within four years and that they constituted a major source of China's revenue.¹⁷⁵ Even though these numbers include remittances from countries other than Canada, Canada was an important source of remittances.

Table 3: Comparison of Overseas Remittances, Exports, Imports, and National Deficit, 1934-1938 (in Millions of Chinese Dollars)

Year	Exports	Imports	Deficit	Remittances
1934	538	N/A	494	242
1936	706	942	236	304
1938	763	886	124	479

At the local level, as more and more young men migrated abroad to work, their villages increasingly relied on their overseas wages. For example, a 1949 survey of emigrant communities in Guangdong shows that one-third of the families depended solely on remittances and another third depended on them for part of their income.¹⁷⁶ The *Kaiping Gazetteer* stated that remittances were its district's most significant source of revenue.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Wu Chun-hsi, *Dollars Dependents and Dogma: Overseas Chinese Remittances to Communist China*, (Stanford: The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1967), 16.

¹⁷⁶ Glen Peterson, "Socialist China and the Huaqiao: The Transition to Socialism in the Overseas Chinese Area of Rural Guangdong, 1949-1956," *Modern China* 14:3 (July 1988), 310-311.

¹⁷⁷ *Kaiping Xianzhi*, 2:20b and 2:21a, 30-31.

Migrants' new wealth increased their ability to establish patriarchal families in China, a goal that eluded many poor men, and their authority at home. Since most women married in their late teens, the following charts reveal the divorce and marriage rates for women who grew up during the 1920s and the 1930s, and who married by 1949. The district of Panyu makes for an interesting comparison because it was a wealthy region where some men migrated overseas and where many women worked outside the home for pay and practiced marriage resistance.¹⁷⁸ The charts show that areas with the highest rates of migration had the highest marriage rates and the lowest divorce rates. For example, Taishan, the area with the largest percentage of migrants, had the largest percentage of married women, and the lowest percentage of divorced and single women, while Panyu, the area with the lowest migration rate, had opposite results.¹⁷⁹

Table 4: The Percentage of Single Women Above the Age of 60 in 1982

	Prov. Average	Panyu	Taishan	Kaiping	Xinhui
60-79 yrs	0.43	5.07	0.06	0.02	0.29
80+	0.7	7.53	0.04	0.02	0.3

Table 5: The Percentage of Divorced Women Above the Age of 60 in 1982

	Prov. Average	Panyu	Taishan	Kaiping	Xinhui
60-79 yrs	0.2	0.1	0.03	0.07	0.08
80+	0.06	0.12	0.09	0.03	0.05

Emigrant families' growing dependence on remittances strengthened male authority at home. Since most migrants were men, their wives, daughters, and mothers depended on their goodwill to remit desperately needed money. Some migrants deliberately used their wealth to control their family members and to command their obedience.¹⁸⁰ Since

¹⁷⁸ For discussions of marriage resistance strategies see Janice Stockard, *Daughters of the Canton Delta: Marriage Patterns and Economic Strategies in South China, 1860-1930*, and Helen Siu, "Where are all the Women? Rethinking Marriage Resistance and Regional Culture in South China," *Late Imperial China* XI: 2 (December, 1990), 32-62.

¹⁷⁹ Fang Di, 310.

¹⁸⁰ *Gongbao*, Feb. 26, 1936 and Feb. 28, 1931.

migrants also controlled their return visits and departures, this gave them another way to shape their family life. Many wives felt that as a result of overseas migration, their control over their family finance and marriage decreased. Many lamented that they “could only wait” at home and “hope that their husbands remitted money to sustain them and their family.”¹⁸¹

The fear that migrants’ wives would be unfaithful or neglectful of their family obligations during their husbands’ absence led to increased vigilance about these women’s behaviours. The print media frequently mentioned that villagers intervened and punished unfaithful wives on behalf of their absent husbands.¹⁸² These reports implied that villagers looked out for the interests of their absent male friends and that as a result, many migrant wives’ behaviours were even more closely guarded than before. Similarly, many publications reported that villagers punished unfilial daughters-in-law who disobeyed their parents-in-law. For example, one 1930 article in the *Gongbao* reported:

Woman Xu, the wife of Zheng, frequently fought with her mother-in-law and a week ago, became physically abusive. The villagers were appalled by Xu’s shocking behaviour, caught her, put her in a pig’s cage, and left her in the public square to serve as a warning to others.¹⁸³

The villagers’ defense of the mother-in-law, a woman who had a stronger attachment and firmer position in the family, reinforced the interests of the patriline shared by the mother-in-law. Since filial piety and devotion to ones’ parents-in-law were important Confucian female virtues, this report and many others like it, showed that villagers actively upheld these virtues and imposed them on migrants’ wives on their husbands’ behalf.

Migrants’ superior economic power and social prestige increased their control and authority over their sons, especially adopted sons. Adoption of sons was a fairly common practice among emigrant families because the absence of men decreased the likelihood of reproducing children. Many purchased boys from poor families from other districts for adoption.¹⁸⁴ This method ensured the parents’ complete control over their adopted sons

¹⁸¹ Zheng and Wu, 466.

¹⁸² *Gongbao*, July 2, 1931 and January 13, 1930.

¹⁸³ *Gongbao*, Jan. 30, 1930.

¹⁸⁴ Woon, “Emigrant Community,” 287-300.

by severing the boys' ties with their biological parents and their native villages.¹⁸⁵ Even though, in theory, these sons became the patriarchs of their own families, their inferior social position meant that they were always criticized when they had a conflict with their adoptive parents, and that they were not seen as grown adults regardless of their age. Headlines, such as "The Never Ending Problems With Vicious Adopted Sons" and "Another Typical Unreliable Adopted Son" reflected the tendency to blame adopted sons for family conflicts.¹⁸⁶ Even when the adoptive father failed to fulfil his obligations to his family and the son tried to fulfil his obligations to his biological family, the son's actions were condemned. For example, Huang, a migrant in North America who refused to marry, was an only child. To continue his line, his uncle adopted an adult son for him and found a wife for the son. However, the son ran away and returned to his biological father's house.¹⁸⁷ Even though Huang was unfilial and failed to continue his patriline, his superior wealth allowed him to purchase a son to take on these responsibilities for him.

Overseas migration increased the importance of sons and decreased the value of daughters. Since most migrants, especially those who went to North America, were men, overseas migration increased the economic values of sons to their families. Since most daughters did not migrate, they became a liability for their families and were occasionally sold to finance their male relatives' voyages.¹⁸⁸ A Taishan folk song revealed that the tendency to regard daughters as financial burdens remained strong in migrant families:

¹⁸⁵ Watson, "Agnates and Outsiders," 293-306.

¹⁸⁶ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5-8:4, 20 and 5-6:4, 11.

¹⁸⁷ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 8:5, 3-4.

¹⁸⁸ Woon, "Emigrant Community," 273-320.

Father writes from Singapore,
 Tell mother not to keep her precious daughter.
 A daughter is a fragile flower,
 A wind will blow her to someone else's home.¹⁸⁹

Despite their long absences from their families in China, male migrants' increased wealth, higher social status, and their families' increased dependency on their remittances strengthened their authority in both the home and in the community. Their ability to establish patriarchal institutions in emigrant communities also increased; their continued attachment to their lineages and their contributions to lineage projects increased the prestige and financial might of these institutions. More importantly, their financial power increased their control over their family members and public institutions. Furthermore, the economic stratification that occurred between wealthy migrant families and poor families created both the market and the demand for the purchase and selling of adopted sons. Since most adopted sons lacked the seniority, social status, and wealth of their adopted fathers, their social background added to their adopted fathers' authority over them.

Patriarchy in Canada

In Canada, just as in China, overseas migration strengthened patriarchal institutions and male migrants' authority as patriarchs. For the few migrants who could afford to bring their wives and children to Canada, their authority as the experienced patriarch increased. Furthermore, even though many of the problems that troubled Chinese women in Canada, such as sexual and physical harassment, existed in China, their scarcity and the constant attention that they were under intensified these problems. This section examines how the absence of Chinese women in Canada and the continued dominance of the male elite strengthened the male-centredness of the community in Canada. In particular, it asks how the biased print media, male-controlled public institutions and the continued patriarchal nature of the family all increased male domination in Canada.

¹⁸⁹ Chen, 204.

Seeing Through Male Biases: The Chinese Print Media in Canada

The publications in Canada shared many of the linguistic habits and biases of those in China. Their language reinforced the ungenderedness of the male gender and implied that women's identities were constrained by their gender. Like those in China, Canadian Chinese-language publications referred to men using gender neutral terms. For example, Chinese men were referred to as "compatriots (*bangren*)," "overseas Chinese (*huaqiao*)," or "Chinese people (*huaren*)." Similarly, they referred to white, black, and Jewish men as "*xiren* (western people)," "*hairen* (black people)," and "*youtairen* (Jewish people)" respectively.¹⁹⁰ Since these terms were used to refer to all members of these communities, including women, they implied that men's interests reflected those of the entire community.¹⁹¹ The gendered and racially-specific labels that they used to refer to women reinforced the visibility of the female gender. As in China, women, regardless of their race, were identified both by their gender and race.¹⁹² These examples show men, regardless of their group membership, were only gendered by the tendency not to gender them. As in China, men were identified by their outside achievements and referred to using titles that made no reference to their marital status, while women were referred to using honorific titles that explicitly referred to their marital status.¹⁹³ This double-standard was reinforced by the absence of honorific titles for men that referred to their marital status and titles for women that did not mention their marital status in English.

The assumption that men were not limited by the male gender and that women were confined by the female gender was revealed in the use of the terms "*mujie* (women's circle or world)," "*nanjie* (men's circle or world)," and "*huajie* (Chinese circle or world)."¹⁹⁴ While the term "*mujie*" was used to describe activities involving only Chinese

¹⁹⁰ *Gongbao*, May 3, 1927, July 7, 1942, May 12, 1927, June 25, 1947, and May 7, 1927.

¹⁹¹ *Gongbao*, May 7, 1927, May 25, 1927, February 13, 1924, and July 9, 1928.

¹⁹² *Gongbao*, February 14, 1924, September 7, 1925, February 23, 1926, and February 13, 1926; for references to white women, see *Gongbao*, May 6, 1927, and May 5, 1927; for reference to black women, see June 7, 1927, and May 2, 1927.

¹⁹³ *The Resist Japan Magazine*, Jan. 1933, 95-98, and *The Taishan Ningyang Huiguan Refugee Fund*, 11. In lists like these two, the men's names were simply listed. Also see *Gongbao*, May 4, 1927, June 27, 1942, May 31, 1927, and June 23, 1942 and *To Commemorate the CCBA and the Chinese Public School*.

¹⁹⁴ Stanley translates the term "*jie*" as "domain" or "district." See Stanley, 24.

women, the term “*nanjie*” was hardly used at all. For example, during the Sino-Japanese War, the Resist Japan and Save the Nation Committee declared that it would establish a “*Nujie* Outreach and Publicity Team” to mobilize Chinese women in Canada.¹⁹⁵ In this case, the term “*nujie*” referred to all Chinese women in Canada. Even though the activities in the community were dominated by men and frequently involved only men, in these situations, the term “*huajie*” was used instead of “*nanjie*.”¹⁹⁶ When women played a prominent role in community affairs, the *Gongbao* frequently described these events as efforts of the “*nujie*” taking place under the male-led “*huajie*.” For example, a 1923 report stated that the “*nujie*” played an active role in raising money to repeal the *Exclusion Act* and that members of this domain sold tickets, acted as hostesses, and organized and participated in community concerts and theatrical performances. However, the *Gongbao* implied that they worked under the all-male led Repeal the Exclusion Act Committee which supposedly represented the interests of the entire community.¹⁹⁷

Many publications, including the *Gongbao*, tended to objectify women as sex objects who fulfilled the desires and fantasies of Chinese men. Since there were few Chinese women in Canada, they were placed under intense public scrutiny and their actions and misdeeds were constantly reported.¹⁹⁸ Many reports involving Chinese women had a sexual overtone to them and they tended to portray women as victims of men’s sexual aggressions, as potential sources of sexual gratification for Chinese men, or as transgressors of the Chinese female code of conduct.¹⁹⁹ For example, the Chinese print media reported many rapes, physical assaults, fights in teahouses involving waitresses, and family feuds in a sexual context.²⁰⁰ Even in reports regarding accomplished women who were active in community affairs, the sexual overtone was frequently present. For

¹⁹⁵ *Resist Japan Magazine*, vol. 1, 30-31. One of the few times I have seen the term “*nanjie*” used was in an advertisement for a pill to cure impotence. See *Gongbao*, May 27, 1947.

¹⁹⁶ For example, see *Gongbao*, June 5, 1933, and June 6, 1933.

¹⁹⁷ *Gongbao*, May 11, 1923.

¹⁹⁸ Almost all the Chinese-language sources that I have examined frequently mentioned Chinese women. They include *Reports by the CCBA, The Second Huang Lineage Reunion, To Commemorate the Taishan District Association, The First Canada-wide Taishan Emigrants' Reunion, To Commemorate the Main Kaiping District Association, and To Commemorate the CCBA and the Chinese Public School*.

¹⁹⁹ *Gongbao*, July 2, 1930, and January 6, 1930.

²⁰⁰ *Gongbao*, May 25, 1927, June 24, 1931, and June 3, 1931.

example, in a 1937 report on a famous female Chinese opera choreographer's visit to Canada, the *Gongbao* spent much time describing her beauty and claimed that she "is naturally beautiful, has a lovely exterior and an intelligent mind, and this beauty is enhanced by little makeup."²⁰¹ Its tendency to describe, in detail, the appearance of Chinese women, regardless of their accomplishments, reinforced their image as objects of beauty and potential sex objects.

The tendency to portray Chinese women as sexual objects was particularly evident in advertisements for aphrodisiacs and romance stories that regularly appeared on the *Gongbao*. For example, in 1943, it ran a serial story in its daily fiction section about a lesbian couple in China which strongly hinted at the sexual nature of this relationship. The writer described this couple as "doing the deeds of husband and wife, even though they were mistress and servant," and that "there was much affection in the bedchambers." Since this couple was severely punished at the end of the story, the story made clear that it did not promote or condone homosexuality, but rather it was written to put women on display as a source of entertainment for the paper's male readership.²⁰² Many advertisements for sex toys and aphrodisiacs in various Chinese-language publications further reinforced the image of Chinese women as sex objects waiting to serve and be conquered by Chinese men. For example, the advertisement for the "Chemical Lover," an inflatable rubber doll, drew on and validated the stereotype that the ideal wife should be docile, obedient, and willing to please her husband. In this advertisement, next to the picture of a beautiful Chinese woman, it stated that,

I, the chemical lover, am seeking a husband. If you love me, please purchase me from my handlers and I will arrive at your door shortly. I will serve my man... Please come and get me quickly so that I can entertain you in your golden years....and take care of your affairs for you.²⁰³

Organizations and Community Space in Canada

In Canada, the importance of lineages increased. Even though lineages were not directly transplanted to Canada, these modified lineage organizations retained their

²⁰¹ *Gongbao*, July 7, 1937.

²⁰² *Gongbao*, June 25, 1943.

²⁰³ *Gongbao*, June 4, 1940.

patrilineal nature and tendency to reinforce male domination. In China, most lineages were localized associations based on blood, geographical, and district ties. However, in Canada, most were not localized or based on blood relationships, but were based on a small group of common surnames that were believed to be related to each other.²⁰⁴ Migrants' lives in Canada increased their attachment to their lineages because lineages protected their members, helped them find jobs, accommodation, and transportation, and remained an important source of identification.²⁰⁵ The large number of surname organizations in Canada and the wide range of activities that they offered reflected their importance in the community.²⁰⁶

Since most organizations in the community were organized along patrilineal or fraternal ties, these structures solidified male elites' control over the community and the exclusion of women from leadership positions. These organizations included district and lineage associations, political-fraternal associations, religious organizations, and later on, sports associations for young men. They consistently excluded women from leadership positions and women were only affiliated with them, especially the surname and political-fraternal associations, through their male relatives.²⁰⁷ The numerous lists of executive members for various institutions that were regularly published in the print media in Canada revealed that one of the few times that women assumed leadership roles in an organization was during the Sino-Japanese War as executive members of the Resist Japan and Save the Nation Committee. However, even in this emergency situation, the only division that they were allowed to lead was the Women's Publicity Team, an all-women's team aimed to

²⁰⁴ For references to lineage structures in China, see Woon, "Social Organization and Ceremonial Life of Two Multi-Surname Villages in Hoi-p'ing County, South China, 1911-1949," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch*, 17 (1977), 101-11 and C. H. Yen, "Early Chinese Clan Organizations in Singapore and Malaya, 1767-1855," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, (March, 1981), 62-87. Even though Yen is looking at clan organizations in Southeast Asia, the information still applies to Canada because the migrants came from the same regions in China. For a reference to lineage structures in Canada, see Wickberg *et al.*, 166.

²⁰⁵ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 203-214.

²⁰⁶ *Gongbao*, June 26, 1923, February 11, 1924, and February 13, 1924 and Wickberg *et al.*, Appendix, Table 19, 315.

²⁰⁷ Stanley, 27-28.

mobilize Chinese women and children in Canada. Men, on the other hand, occupied all the other positions, including the director for the community-wide publicity team.²⁰⁸

The community's increased vigilance over women's behaviours and the lack of female-friendly public spaces both created invisible barriers that restricted their movement. Chen Meiyu, a first generation migrant woman, recalled that the public hostility she experienced discouraged her from leaving home. She stated:

if you wanted to go out, you had to find a few female companions to go with you. If you ventured out alone, the men from the neighbourhood would run out, glare at you from head to toe, and discuss which wife was the prettiest. It was very frightening.²⁰⁹

As a result of their household responsibilities, most had few occasions to socialize with one another except during life-cycle rituals, such as weddings, funerals, and births, when they visited each other briefly at home.²¹⁰ Women's social lives were further limited by the fact that most entertainment establishments in Chinatown, such as mahjong parlors, gambling dens, opium dens, and brothels, were built only to serve and entertain men. For example, Ping Lee, a first generation male migrant, recalled that gambling dens served as "a labor hall, a social hall," where "all the Chinese guys" went to socialize, to drink "tea that was free," and to "shoot the breeze,"²¹¹ women had no such place.

Especially during the first few years after their arrival, wives' dependency on their husbands increased because they were in a completely foreign environment where they did not speak the language, had no friends, and could not easily return to China. Furthermore, since most male migrants who could afford to bring their wives to Canada were well-established men, their age, wealth, and familiarity with Canada added to their authority.²¹² Most women were expected to obey their husbands' wishes after their arrival. For

²⁰⁸ *Resist Japan Magazine*, January 1933, 95-98. The 1931 issue states that the Women's Publicity Team is only responsible for targeting the "Chinese women's circle and Chinese children".

²⁰⁹ Chan, *Smoke and Fire*, 81.

²¹⁰ Lin Yutang, *Chinatown (Tang Renjie)*, 1979, 267 and Daniels, 82.

²¹¹ "Ping Lee," *Bitter Moon: Stories from the Last Rural Chinese Town in America*, by Jeff Gillenkirk and James Mollow. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987), 35. Even though this is a study of a rural town in the United States, the similarities between the people in this study and in my study lead me to believe that the same patterns occurred in Canada as well.

²¹² 'Yut Guine Chin,' "Montreal Oral History Project," 1-10.

example, May-ying, a first generation migrant who was purchased by a male migrant working in Canada as his concubine, was ordered to work as a waitress by her husband, a job that she considered demeaning, against her will.²¹³

The limited types of well-paying respectable work available to Chinese women perpetuated the male-dominated nature of the Chinese community. Before the 1940s, the two most lucrative jobs for first generation female migrants were prostitution and waitressing. Many were brought over from China, often against their will, to work in the sex trade.²¹⁴ Even though waitressing may seem to be a respectable job, many saw waitresses as semi-prostitutes because they “wooed men to spend money,” were there to please and flirt with men, and to present themselves in a sexually attractive light for money.²¹⁵ Both occupations kept women under male control, subjected them to sexual harassment from bosses and customers, and reinforced the image of women as sexual objects for and controlled by Chinese men. Aside from prostitution and waitressing, many women worked at home as sewers for Chinese tailors. Even though this work was more respected, the pay was poor.²¹⁶ Since the wages were low and these women remained at home, this work did not challenge husbands’ perceptions of themselves as main breadwinners.

The events in both emigrant communities in China and Chinese communities in Canada mutually reinforced the validity of patriarchal structures and increased many male migrants’ access to patriarchal authority. The distinct demographic characteristics of each community created new forces that favoured the perpetuation and popularization of these structures and values. Although these values and structures were strongly attacked by intellectuals in China and Canadian feminists in Canada, overseas migration helped make this way of life even more entrenched than ever before in both countries for Chinese men.

²¹³ Chong, 33.

²¹⁴ Adilman, 57.

²¹⁵ Adilman, 62.

²¹⁶ Adilman, 59.

MALE MIGRANTS AS PRESERVERS OF CHINESE CULTURE

Even though the presence of a national identity in European and North American countries emerged in the nineteenth century with the nation state, a cultural identity had long been widely shared by the Chinese despite the absence of a modern state.²¹⁷ In the early twentieth century, as a result of overseas migration, many migrants' attachment to and identification with this identity increased. During a time when the validity and viability of Chinese culture was questioned, their ability to preserve what they perceived as essential elements of this culture validated their self-image as the saviours and preservers of the Chinese way of life. This new identity helped them feel more Chinese than those who remained in China, especially those who actively questioned these values and structures.

MIGRANTS AS ULTRA-CHINESE MEN IN CHINA

In China, elements of Chinese culture and the patriarchal family, an integral part of this culture, were both increasingly attacked by intellectuals who blamed them for China's weakness. As its exposure to different cultures increased, many feared that foreign ways would replace the traditional Chinese way of life. In this context, male migrants, with their superior wealth and their increased attachment to their Chinese identity, emerged as the preservers and defenders of Chinese tradition. In emigrant communities, their new ability to fulfil traditional gender roles, to preserve cultural elements, and to perpetuate Chinese patriarchy, helped them feel superior to "Han-traitors" who sought to destroy Chinese culture. This new identity and their new wealth further reinforced the racial hierarchy in emigrant communities that existed before large-scale migration occurred.

Locally, the emigration patterns of the Punti, Hakka, and boat people reinforced pre-existing racial hierarchies between these three groups. The Punti migrated to North America, countries in Southeast Asia, and other destinations; the Hakka went mostly to Southeast Asia; and the boat people seldom migrated. The lack of boat people migrants perpetuated their social inferiority and reinforced their placement at the bottom of the

²¹⁷ Prasenjit Duara, "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 39, (July 1993), 1-25.

social hierarchy in emigrant communities. Furthermore, since migration to North America, or Gold Mountain, remained the most prestigious and lucrative destination, Punti men used this to retain their socially dominant position in their communities. The different labels that people in emigrant communities had for migrants in Southeast Asia and North America reflected the allure and mystery that many felt about North America. For example, while migrants in Southeast Asia were simply called “sojourners in Southeast Asia (*nanyang ke*),” those in North America were referred to as “Gold Mountain sojourners (*jinshan ke*),” and not as “sojourners in North America (*meizhou ke*).” Furthermore, while many myths existed about the wealth in North America, similar beliefs did not exist about working in southeast Asia. One fictional story captured this sentiment: “Gold Mountain could be one of three cities: San Francisco, Victoria, or Vancouver....Most people in China believed that even the streets were paved with gold... When relatives returned to China with enough gold coins sewn into their clothes to keep a family comfortable for years, the dream became fact.”²¹⁸ The mystery, distance, and potential wealth of Gold Mountain added to the prestige of sojourning in North America, and this increased Punti men’s dominant social position in their home villages.

Many migrants used their increased wealth as one way to, and the ability to fulfil gender ideals that came with it to validate their self-image as the preservers of Chinese culture. Their higher overseas wages facilitated their ability to fulfil Confucian virtues and to put them on public display. For example, when they visited their home villages, to demonstrate their filial piety, many hosted village-wide feasts in their parents’ honour. Others gave their daughters lavish weddings to demonstrate their wealth and their ability to be good providing fathers.²¹⁹ An article in an emigrant community publication provided insights into how other villagers perceived these feasts:

Huang Jijian is a Gold Mountain sojourner who left home during his childhood.... He has a pure heart, is interested in serving his community, and has a benevolent nature. Last month, he returned home triumphantly with his wife. He will host a village-wide banquet to better acquaint himself with his village brothers.²²⁰

²¹⁸ Ivy Huffman et al, *The Dream of Gold Mountain*, (Winnipeg, 1991), 15.

²¹⁹ Siu, 40.

²²⁰ *Juzhen Yuebao*, Vol. 5: 5, 16

This feast was clearly perceived as a generous gesture which facilitated Huang's return to China and improved his status in his village. It also earned him the coveted reputation of being generous, pure at heart, and humble, all desirable Confucian characteristics. Others contributed to the building of schools, roads, railways, hospitals, orphanages, old age homes, and other public projects in their district or lineage and were publicly recognized for these actions.²²¹ These contributions gave individual migrants and overseas Chinese, as a group, higher social status in emigrant communities.²²²

The fact that male migrants and their actions became integral parts of a modified masculine ideal in emigrant communities revealed that migrants' self-image as ultra-Chinese men was accepted by others. For example, the *Kaiping Gazetteer* implied that it considered migrating overseas as a new Chinese marker by proudly stating that their "men were particularly adventurous and that their footprints were found on all five continents."²²³ Interestingly, in most county gazetteers, the many accounts of migrant men who contributed significantly to their communities were found in the section traditionally reserved for Confucian scholars and men who fulfilled Confucian virtues. This implied that emigrant communities included overseas migration as part of the new masculine ideal.

Most migrants' increased wealth made it possible for their female dependents to fulfil many traditional gentry feminine ideals, such as female literacy and acting as managers of the inner sphere. Beginning in the eighteenth century, many intellectuals regarded female literary talent as a desirable characteristic in women because it enabled them to better educate their children and entertain their husbands. Even though most women in Siyi and Sanyi were illiterate prior to the twentieth century, by the early 1900s, an increasing number of migrants' daughters acquired an education.²²⁴ Another ideal that an increasing number of migrants' wives fulfilled was that of household managers who

²²¹ The *Gongbao* regularly published donation lists for various causes; see May 13, 1931. Most organizations also acknowledged their donors; see *The Taishan Refugee Rescue Fund*, and *The Taishan Rice Famine Rescue Fund*.

²²² *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5-8:4, 86 and 84.

²²³ *Kaiping Xianzhi*, 30.

²²⁴ Woon, "Emigrant Community," 273-306.

supervised the daily operations of their complex households and property. Previously, few fulfilled this ideal because most did not have much property to supervise and women worked alongside men in agriculture or sericulture. However, migrant families' new wealth, property, and ability to acquire servants helped them fulfil this ideal by removing wives from the outside workforce and placing them into the role of household managers.²²⁵

Many migrants' new ability to fulfil elite gentry gender ideals encouraged them to see themselves as more Chinese and masculine than most men who remained in China. Their ability to preserve what they perceived as essential elements of Chinese culture validated their self-image as the defenders of Chinese culture. More importantly, as their communities increasingly depended on their remittances, their actions and lifestyles became an integral part of a new masculine ideal.

Creation of an Ultra-Chinese Identity in Canada

Despite their long absences from China, migrants' daily interactions with non-Chinese groups in Canada increased their attachments to their Chinese identity and their tendency to defend this identity. Even though most continued to identify themselves in various ways, including by their lineage, political, religious, generational, district, and linguistic identities, their lives in Canada encouraged them to define themselves as Chinese and to develop a shared national identity that transcended these internal divisions. Furthermore, their absence from China during a time when many traditional cultural markers were attacked by various groups, especially the CCP, encouraged them to see themselves as the inheritors of the pure and traditional Chinese ways. This identity was further reinforced by their new ability to fulfil traditional gender ideals, another important marker of Chineseness. This section examines how migration strengthened migrants' attachments to their Chinese identity, how their new ability to fulfil traditional gender ideals and to impose these ideals on their wives, and how their distance from what they perceived as an increasingly un-Chinese China validated their image as ultra-Chinese men who preserved Chinese culture.

²²⁵ "May Chow," in Nee and De bary Nee, 171-176.

In Canada, the Chinese-language print media's tendency to differentiate between Chinese and non-Chinese people validated and reinforced migrants' shared national identity. It created Chinese insiders and non-Chinese outsiders through the use of opposing terms when referring to these two groups and through its tendency to identify individuals and groups by their cultural or racial membership. As mentioned before, it referred to members of the Chinese community as "compatriots," "overseas Chinese," or "Chinese people;" it identified Caucasians as "white or western people;" and it referred to other groups by using more specific labels, such as "Japanese people." This tendency to group people by their race or culture reinforced migrants' ties to each other and their alienation from others. The use of all encompassing terms, such as "*huajie* (the Chinese circle or world)" and "*xijie* (the western circle or world)," to refer to people and events in these spheres further marked the separateness of each community. The word "*jie*," which implied that fixed and permanent boundaries existed between these two groups, solidified Chinese people's alienation from other groups, especially from western groups.

Contact with other groups further facilitated the creation of a national Chinese identity among migrants. When they interacted with one another, they identified themselves using various internal identities, such as their lineage and district ties, and not by their common Chinese identity. However, since other groups only understood and recognized their national identity, they had to identify themselves as Chinese to the outside world. The racial barriers and discrimination that they experienced further helped them identify with each another and with their shared identity.²²⁶ For example, Jean Lamb, a Chinese-Canadian born in Nanaimo, B.C., remembered that parents told their children that white people were "devils" and taught them 'to be afraid of them.' As a result, they were "scared of white people, scared that they would harm us....so we stayed in our ghettos and played with our own people and spoke our own language."²²⁷ Migrants' shared experiences with racial discrimination reinforced their shared distinctness and increased the need for them to remain together. Anti-Chinese laws, such as the *White Women*

²²⁶ For discussion of anti-Chinese laws and sentiments, see Baureiss, "Discrimination and Response," 252-253.

²²⁷ Huang et al., 32.

Employment Act, head taxes, and the *Exclusion Act*, made this identity relevant to all migrants because these laws treated all “Chinese” the same way regardless of their other identities. Their lives in Canada validated their common Chinese identity as an administrative label, a way to detect friends, and as the only publicly recognized external identity.

Many community institutions’ use of national Chinese symbols to elevate their cause to a national level increased the importance of these symbols and legitimized the importance of the national identity. Many, including lineage and district associations, Chinese schools, and political parties, prominently used and displayed Chinese cultural markers, such as Chinese food, flags, pictures of Confucius, dragon and fan dances, traditional music, and Chinese paintings, in their events. Even though some of these institutions, such as some Chinese schools and the lineage and district associations, dealt only with a small section of the community, these cultural markers created a shared background for their members and suggested that their issues transcended regional boundaries.

Many migrants, especially the Chinese Freemasons, believed that they were morally superior to groups, such as the CCP and the KMT, who were destroying Chinese civilization in the name of modernization. For example, a 1927 editorial in the *Gongbao* explicitly depicted the KMT as power hungry barbarians who destroyed Chinese tradition to strengthen their power base. It claimed that “The Kuomintang destroys Confucianism!” and that the wife of Sun Yat-sen asked her female soldiers to march nude in public to show that they were liberated from “feudal Confucian ideas.” The writer felt that she should have taught her soldiers proper Confucian virtues for women, such as female chastity and obedience. The same article also claimed that the KMT tore down several Confucian temples.²²⁸ While these accusations were false, the article showed that many migrants manipulated Chinese cultural symbols to portray themselves as the protectors of Chinese culture and to legitimate their causes. Similarly, the *Gongbao* severely criticized the CCP for challenging Confucianism and for implementing policies that weakened the

²²⁸ *Gongbao*, July 9, 1927.

Chinese patriarchy. For example, another 1927 editorial claimed that Chinese migrants in Canada “shall raise the bright banner of the Chinese race and save our country ... from the Red Party” which “advocates the communal ownership of property and of women.”

Another 1927 editorial stated that Chen Duxiu, an early leader of the CCP, deserved a horrible death because he was against Confucian values and customs, such as filial piety.²²⁹ Even though most of these articles were written by members of the Chinese Freemasons, these comments, especially those targeted at the CCP, reflected many migrants’ contempt for those people in China who undermined Chinese tradition.

Many migrants felt that they since they played an active role in passing Chinese values down to their children in Canada, they were morally superior to many “Han traitors” in China who tried to destroy Chinese tradition. Many established schools in Canada to ensure the survival of Chinese culture. For example, the mission statement of the Great Han Chinese School (*Dahan Gongxue*) stated that the organizers established the school to “popularize the teachings of our sages, and to increase Chinese children’s access to education.” Most importantly, it wanted to educate “a new generation of youth who would then raise the declining morality in the world and save our nation” during a time when “China [was] in a state of national crisis and Han traitors dominate[d] Chinese politics.”²³⁰ This mission statement defined the decline in morality as a decline in Confucian values and the rise of western consumerism. The school portrayed itself as one of the last bastions of Chinese culture funded by heroic visionaries who actively recruited and trained a new generation of Chinese youth before the entire way of life was lost.

Many male migrants’ confidence in their superior Chineseness was further reinforced by their greater ability to fulfil traditional gentry masculine ideals in Canada. Members of the merchant elite consistently portrayed themselves as the inheritors of the Chinese gentry tradition. For example, they modeled their behaviour after the actions of the literati-scholars of the past and demonstrated their literary skills by writing poems and painting pictures to mark special occasions. Even though most pieces were quite bad, by

²²⁹ *Gongbao*, May 14, 1927. See May 2, 1927 and May 19, 1927 for other anti-CCP comments.

²³⁰ *Gongbao*, June 30, 1941.

engaging in the process of producing literature, writing Classical poetry, and using Classical references, members of the elite demonstrated that they possessed respectable Confucian literary skills.²³¹ Their attempt to portray themselves as the inheritors of this tradition was significant because it occurred as the New Cultures movement in China tried to eliminate the use of Classical Chinese and to modernize Chinese fiction and poetry. Their conscious attempt to identify themselves with the past can be read as defiance of new literary trends and an attempt to show that they defended the Chinese past.

Similarly, the ability of Chinese women in Canada to fulfil traditional feminine ideals validated the image of the Chinese in Canada as the true inheritors of Chinese culture. The presence of many merchants' wives, constant harassment, and the isolation of women facilitated the fulfilment of certain Chinese female ideals, such as the separation of spheres, increased literacy, and female chastity. Since most women were daughters or wives of well-established merchants, they, especially the daughters, had good access to education in Canada and many attended Chinese and regular schools with their brothers.²³² Even though some merchants' wives were active in community affairs, most remained at home to assist their husbands and to carry out domestic responsibilities. Few women, especially first generation migrant women, ventured outside of their homes on a regular basis because they encountered frequent harassment from Chinese men. The dependency of women on their husbands and their isolation made it difficult for them to have extramarital affairs in Canada. Therefore, overseas migration created new unforeseen forces that helped or forced women to be ideal traditional women who remained at home, were chaste, literate, and devoted to their husbands.

Migrants' experiences in Canada reinforced their attachment to their Chinese identity and reaffirmed their belief that they were preservers of Chinese culture. The need to differentiate themselves from other groups, especially those that discriminated against them, strengthened the bonds between them. In many ways, they were more attached to

²³¹ There were many published poems and stories by migrants; the *Gongbao* had a daily poetry section, and the *Juzhen Yuebao* had a regular literary fiction. See *Gongbao*, June 30, 1941, and *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:5-8, 104-105.

²³² Stanley, 3-29.

this identity than people who remained in China. For those who remained in China, their Chinese identity was assumed, and they were referred to by their other identities.

However, in Canada, migrants' other identities were usually ignored by external groups and they were consistently referred to by this identity in the Chinese print media and by other groups. Furthermore, migrants' distance from a declining China and their new ability to fulfil Chinese gender ideals encouraged them to portray themselves as superior Chinese men who valiantly defended the traditional way of life. They felt that while Chinese values were disappearing in China, through the reinforcement of Chinese gender ideals at home and the education of their children in Chinese schools created by them, they were able to preserve the most essential elements of Chineseness abroad.

MIGRANTS AS MODERN NATIONAL HEROES

Since overseas migration allowed male migrants to fulfil more than one set of Chinese masculine ideals, they simultaneously created several conflicting identities to reinforce their cultural and masculine superiority over people who remained in China. Aside from portraying themselves as the preservers of Chinese culture, their new wealth and exposure to western culture helped them see themselves as modern heroes who saved China from its dark past. Their ability to fulfil new modern Chinese masculine ideals that emphasized western education, usefulness to the nation, and a break from the past validated this identity. This new identity provided a way for them to depict themselves as modern, westernized, and well-educated national heroes who were superior in every way to people who remained in China.

Since migrants contributed significantly to the modern transformation of their home villages, their home villages' rapid modernization process justified their self-image as China's modernizing heroes. Overseas remittances allowed emigrant communities to rapidly implement changes that many intellectuals thought were necessary to produce a strong modern China. Within a span of three decades, Siyi and Sanyi changed from regions with very few schools, roads, public infrastructure, and welfare services, to model regions that boasted one of the highest literacy rates for both men and women, the best infrastructure and railroad system, and the highest living standards in China. Migrants

from both regions were particularly proud of the important role that they played in financing the construction of the Xinning Railroad in Taishan, one of the few railroads in China that was owned, initiated, and maintained by Chinese groups.²³³ Their contributions encouraged the Chinese print media in both China and Canada to depict them as the modernizing force in their communities.²³⁴

Many migrants and returned migrants felt that they were superior to and had the obligation to save backward, illiterate, and superstitious peasants in China. It frequently reported that people in emigrant communities were foolishly superstitious and spent outrageous amounts of money preparing sacrifices for various gods.²³⁵ Other reports criticized them for lacking basic knowledge of public hygiene and for disposing of bodily excretions and dead animals improperly.²³⁶ Many migrants blamed “ignorant peasants and women” for China’s backwardness and felt that if they, China’s westernized scholars, taught “basic knowledge, such as mathematics, writing, and science, to peasants, and basic household management skills to women,” China would be strong, its agriculture would improve, and its children would benefit.²³⁷ Elitist reports like this one implied that “stupid, backward, and useless” peasants needed to be saved by educated migrants and that migrants and returned migrants were superior to those who remained in China because they were exposed to a more “civilized” way of life and western knowledge. Other migrants and returned migrants believed that their distance from corrupt Chinese local politics legitimized their leadership position in their community and allowed them to establish modern and objective institutions. Upon their return to China, many established overseas Chinese associations to “eliminate official corruption and local bullies’ abilities to

²³³ Three out of five Chinese-owned railroads during this period were largely financed by overseas contributions. Cheng, Liu, and Zheng, 65. For more discussion of how remittances transformed emigrant communities, see Fang Xionpu, “Wanqing Shiqi Qishou Huaqiao Ciben Di Cuoshi (Measures Used to Absorb the Capital of Overseas Chinese in the Late Qing Period,) *Huaqiao Huaren Shi Yanjiu Ji* (A Collection of Research Findings on the History of the Overseas Chinese and the Chinese), Vol. 1, edited by Zheng Min and Liang Zhumin. (Beijing, 1989), 117.

²³⁴ See *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5: 5, 15. An elementary school credited overseas contributions for improving its improvements. Interestingly, the school did not solicit help from villagers who lived in China. For other examples see *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5: 5, 20, and 5-6:4, 18.

²³⁵ *Gongbao*, May 8, 1931.

²³⁶ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 8:5, 14.

²³⁷ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 4:5-8, 108-109.

exploit innocent people.”²³⁸ Mission statements like this showed that many returned migrants believed that they could save their villages from traditional corrupt local politics.

Many male migrants saw themselves as providers for their nation and villages and believed that their remittances contributed significantly to both the local and national economies. The *Gongbao* frequently reinforced migrants’ self-image as national heroes who fueled China’s economy. For example, one 1932 article stated, “overseas remittances have always been one of the main sources of China’s revenues. They play a crucial role in helping China balance its trade imbalance and national deficit.”²³⁹ Emigrant communities’ increasing dependence on remittances encouraged many migrants to see themselves as providers for and saviours of their villages. By the early 1910s, emigrant communities’ economies were tied to the flow of remittances. For example, during periods when they were cut off, such as during the global depression in the 1920s and during the second Sino-Japanese War, thousands of people starved to death, countless businesses closed down, and the economy of these communities collapsed.²⁴⁰ Most migrants took great pride in “saving” their villages during difficult times, such as famines, rice shortages, and war.²⁴¹ Their self-image was further reinforced by their villages’ frequent pleas for help. For example, in 1941, when Japanese invasions caused a severe rice shortage in Siyi, the *Gongbao* published numerous pleas from leaders in Siyi begging migrants in Canada to remit money quickly to save people from starving to death.²⁴²

During the second Sino-Japanese war, the image of migrants as saviours of China was reinforced by the return of many overseas Chinese to China who contributed their wealth and technical expertise.²⁴³ Since western knowledge was regarded as one of the essential tools for saving China, when students studying abroad returned, they occupied a high status in their villages and were regarded as national heroes. For example, one report on two brothers who returned to China after completing their training as airplane pilots

²³⁸ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5-8:4, 94.

²³⁹ *Gongbao*, May 17, 1932.

²⁴⁰ Zheng and Wu, 460 and Huang, 236-239.

²⁴¹ *To Commemorate the Taishan Ningyang District Association*, 13.

²⁴² *Gongbao*, Sept. 16, 1941.

²⁴³ Since many migrated to different regions throughout their lifetime, their host countries’ geographic boundaries mattered less to them than their shared overseas migrant identity. Roger Daniels, 3-8.

stated that "Lineage Members became the Assistant Leader for the National Aviation School," and that "the two brothers are working for their nation." It proudly stated that these two were trained in the United States and that they were "young," "handsome," and "extremely skilled."²⁴⁴ Other emigrant community publications proudly recorded how returned migrants used their wealth and knowledge to defend their nation and village during Japanese invasions. In a typical account, the Kaiping District Association recounted how several members of the Situ family, all migrants, used their overseas wages to enroll in a Guangdong military school, to organize a local militia in Kaiping, and eventually died fighting to protect their district from the Japanese army. It claimed that this was the "most valiant and heroic" episode in Kaiping's history.²⁴⁵

Migrants' financial contributions to the Sino-Japanese war further added to their belief that they helped save China. Many felt that, in contrast to the incompetence and military weakness of Chinese soldiers who were defenseless against the Japanese army, their financial contributions to China's war efforts and their international boycotts of Japanese goods were crucial to China's final victory. For example, when the war broke out, many communities in Canada responded enthusiastically to the Chinese government's plea to purchase Bonds to Rescue the Motherland (*Jiuguo Gongzai*) and jointly established the Chinese Liberty Fund Association to promote these bonds. In Victoria alone, twenty-three voluntary associations were established to promote these bonds and over eighty percent of its Chinese population purchased them.²⁴⁶ The Chinese in Canada made a significant financial contribution to China's war efforts: from 1937 to 1945, in Vancouver alone, the Chinese contributed approximately one million in Canadian dollars.²⁴⁷ Many communities declared a formal boycott against Japanese goods and businesses, and overseas Chinese felt that these boycotts seriously weakened Japan. One editorialist explained that since Japan, a small island, "depended mostly on exports to feed its army and people," an international boycott led by the overseas Chinese effectively "shut

²⁴⁴ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5-8:4, 28-29.

²⁴⁵ *Special Commemorative Issue of the Main Kaiping District Association*, 67.

²⁴⁶ Lai, "The Demographic Structure of a Canadian Chinatown," 48-49.

²⁴⁷ Wickberg, et al., 190-191.

down its business sector,” “destroyed its ability to feed its army,” and “dealt a fatal blow to these bandits.”²⁴⁸ The repeated appeals that various prominent Chinese leaders, including Chiang Kai-shek, Madame Chiang, and Sun Yat-sen, made to them validated their sense of importance to China.²⁴⁹

Migrants’ wealth allowed them to fulfil new patriotic masculine ideals better than most men and women who remained in China. They portrayed themselves and were portrayed by the Chinese print media as national saviours who gave their nation and districts the financial resources and western training to survive and modernize. Many changes that occurred in emigrant communities, such as the increased literacy rate, women’s increased access to paid employment, and improvements in public infrastructure, validated migrants’ claims that they helped their communities modernize. Since many believed that these changes were crucial to China’s survival, they further validated male migrants’ image as patriotic heroes and agents of modernization.

Fulfilment of Western Masculine Ideals

Since many Chinese, both modern and traditional, and white middle-class masculine ideals all centred around patriarchal notions of masculinity, some of these ideals converged. Concepts, such as being a good provider, commanding one’s wife’s obedience, and ensuring her chastity were some of these overlaps. Since most migrants felt that they carried out these ideals more effectively than Euro-Canadian men, they saw themselves as more masculine than Euro-Canadian men. Furthermore, many felt that they were morally superior because despite the racism that they experienced in Canada, they forgave these past wrongs and came to Canada’s aid when their help was needed. This helped many migrants feel that they were more masculine than and belonged to a superior culture than Euro-Canadian men.

In the Chinese print media in Canada, migrants’ ability to perpetuate and popularize patriarchal structures and to support their families validated their self-image as the ultimate masculine men in Canada. The ability to provide for their families, to ensure

²⁴⁸ *Resist Japan Magazine*, Feb. 1931, vol. 1, 4.

²⁴⁹ *Gongbao*, June 25, 1943.

their wives' faithfulness, and to produce children were all important elements of the white middle-class masculine ideal. Since Chinese and Canadian ideals converged in some places, the print media portrayed migrants as being more able to fulfil these ideals than Euro-Canadian men. For example, while most Euro-Canadian men struggled to provide for just one family, male migrants felt that they provided not only for their families, but also for their villages and nation. Furthermore, while there were growing opportunities for white women in Canada which diminished men's dominance over their wives, social practices and public pressure collectively ensured migrants' wives' chastity and obedience to their husbands in both China and Canada.

Migrants felt that Euro-Canadians belonged to an inferior culture for forgetting the significant contributions that they made to Canada and for discriminating against them. They were well aware that their contributions, such as the building of the trans-Canada railroad, transformed Canada "from a barren wilderness into a prosperous country."²⁵⁰ Since they were discriminated against despite their contributions, many felt that white Canadians were ungrateful barbarians who were ignorant of their own history. Due to this unjust discrimination, the print media in Canada portrayed Chinese migrants as valiant warriors who fought against an evil and racist government to repeal various anti-Chinese laws. For example, one 1927 editorial stated that to survive, the Chinese needed to "unite together, show their unwaveringly manly spirit, and engage in a constant battle with the evil Canadian government."²⁵¹

This moral superiority over white Canadians was further reinforced during the Second World War when the Chinese in Canada contributed greatly to the Canadian war effort. They purchased more Victory bonds per capita than any other ethnic group; many joined the Red Cross and other mainstream social groups to help the war effort; and five hundred Chinese-born Canadian men fought as Canadian soldiers.²⁵² A 1941 editorial made an explicit reference to Chinese people's cultural superiority when it stated that "if we Chinese people" focused on the past racist practices of Canadians and used this as an

²⁵⁰ *Gongbao*, May 22, 1923.

²⁵¹ *Gongbao*, May 9, 1927.

²⁵² Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement," 50-65.

excuse to not contribute to the Canadian war effort, “we would not be demonstrating our superior national character.”²⁵³ This statement implied that the Chinese culture was inherently superior to Canadian culture and that migrants’ membership in this civilization meant that they were morally superior to members of other groups.

Many male migrants portrayed themselves as more masculine than and morally superior to incompetent and racist Euro-Canadian men. The Chinese community did not accept mainstream Canadian society’s negative stereotypes of them. On the contrary, the unjust treatment that they received and these unfavourable images helped them create a new self-image which depicted them as masculine men who, as a result of their superior culture and their overseas experiences, were able to forgive and help racist white Canadians during a time of need.

POLYGAMY, SEXUALITY AND NATIONALISM IN A NEW CONTEXT

A new image of male migrants as sexualized masculine men, along with the other three new images, emerged in both the Chinese community in Canada and emigrant communities in China. All four identities reinforced each other’s validity and existence, and perpetuated the image of male migrants as culturally superior to and more masculine than Chinese people who remained in China and non-Chinese people in Canada. This section examines how overseas emigration increased and legitimized migrants’ access to traditional polygamist privileges, and how their perceived monopoly on magical sex potions validated their self-image as the ultimate masculine men.

Popularization of Polygamist Institutions in China

This section examines how many male migrants’ increased wealth and newly acquired social status increased and sanctioned their access to polygamist institutions in China. As they became wealthier, many were able to acquire concubines and maid servants, and visit brothels. Since migration and their new wealth increased their social status in China, the print media in China sanctioned this behaviour and consistently sided with polygamist migrants over other groups.

²⁵³ *Gongbao*, June 21, 1941.

Even though concubinage and other forms of polygamy were attacked elsewhere in China, migrants' new wealth increased their access to these privileges and this access was seen as a right that they earned as migrants. Previously, access to more than one women was a privilege that only a few affluent men enjoyed.²⁵⁴ However, migrants' new wealth allowed their households to purchase concubines and maid servants. The sojourner lifestyle further encouraged them to acquire maids and concubines because many in Southeast Asia bought concubines to accompany them while they were away from home, and many wives bought maidservants to help them while their husbands were away.²⁵⁵ As migrant families' disposable income increased, the number of brothels in China quickly grew to serve the needs of male migrants and their sons.²⁵⁶ Furthermore, regardless of their roles in family disputes, public opinion in their villages constantly supported their authority over female family members. For example, one report stated:

A lascivious concubine secretly ran away after stealing 1500 in western money.

Huang Ruilang, a lineage member, is 45 years old. After accumulating some wealth from working abroad, he returned to China and purchased Concubine Zhou to entertain him in his golden years. Zhou is a licentious woman with loose morals who feels that he is too old for her. Recently, Huang contracted an illness and brought Zhou to serve him while he sought medical attention in town.... However, she escaped with his money and he has reported the incident to the police.²⁵⁷

This report implied that Huang, a hard-working migrant, earned his right to acquire a young and beautiful concubine. It established its biased tone from the beginning by calling Zhou a "lascivious concubine" who stole money from a "lineage member." Even though it stated that Zhou was trapped in an unhappy union to a plain elderly men who treated her like a servant, it did not sympathize with her plight. Furthermore, it implied that the Huang lineage, the community where this occurred, and the police all supported Huang.

While many in emigrant communities defended male migrants' access to more than one women, they demanded that migrants' wives remain faithful. For example, one report

²⁵⁴ Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Source Book*, (New York: The New Free Press, 1993), 245.

²⁵⁵ Interview with May Low, Montreal Oral History Project, and Zheng and Cheng, 120-121.

²⁵⁶ Huang, 280-281 and Elizabeth Sinn, "The Protection of Women in Nineteenth Century Hong Kong," in *Women and Chinese Patriarchy: Submission, Servitude and Escape*, edited by Maria Jaschok and Suzanne Miers, (London: Hong Kong University Press, 1994), 142-143.

²⁵⁷ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5:8, 16.

recounted the relationship between Yu Yueke, a migrant, and Ms. Huang, his wife. It claimed that they had a happy marriage and that she got along well with his mother. However, Yu, during his sojourn abroad, “like most men, fulfilled his desires by frequently visiting prostitutes,” contracted a severe disease, and died. After his death, Huang stole from her mother-in-law and went back to her parents’ house.²⁵⁸ Like most reports, this one sided with the migrant and condemned Huang for betraying her “loving” mother-in-law and husband. More importantly, it implied that even a dedicated husband like Yu was still entitled to have access to other women to satisfy his “natural” desires as man.²⁵⁹

In China, migrants’ new wealth increased their access to polygamist institutions and their improved social status ensured that public opinion supported and endorsed their actions. Even though these privileges and institutions existed before large-scale emigration occurred, few men from emigrant communities had access to them. Furthermore, while these attitudes and institutions were attacked or driven underground in other urbanizing areas, in Siyi and Sanyi, despite their urban appearance, these practices increased and were publicly sanctioned.

²⁵⁸ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5-8:4, 20.

²⁵⁹ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 5-8:4, 20.

Migration and Polygamy in Canada

Even though fewer men brought their concubines to Canada, the number of brothels that catered to the needs of Chinese men increased rapidly. Aside from these visible institutions, the lack of Chinese women encouraged the smuggling of poor women from China to work as prostitutes and indentured maid servants who were subjected to their male owners' sexual advances. In many ways, living in a predominantly male community legitimized visits to prostitutes.

Despite the small number of women that was recorded by government statistics, the percentage of Chinese men who had access to prostitutes, concubines, and maid servants who doubled as sexual partners was fairly significant. For example, even though government census did not record the number of concubines in Canada, the number was likely to be significant because many women were smuggled into Canada or entered illegally as merchants' wives or daughters; many of them were later sold as concubines or prostitutes.²⁶⁰ Furthermore, personal histories showed that it was not uncommon for men to reside with their concubines while their wives remained in China. For example, even though Denise Chong's grandfather was only a labourer, he managed to purchase and bring a concubine from China while his wife remained in China.²⁶¹ There were other documented cases where a few well-established men lived with both their concubines and wives in Canada. The most well-known example was Yip Sang, the wealthiest merchant in Vancouver in the early 1900s, who lived with his wife and three concubines in Vancouver.²⁶²

Despite the lack of statistical evidence, personal interviews and other evidence revealed that a significant number of Chinese men in Canada had access to prostitutes, and lived with their concubines or maid servants. In many ways, their lives in a married-bachelor society normalized visits to prostitutes. Even though not every male labourer had the ability to acquire a concubine or live with his wife in Canada, the presence of a

²⁶⁰ Karen Van Dieren, "The Response of the WMS to the Immigration of Asian Women 1888-1942," *Not Just Pin Money*, 79-80.

²⁶¹ Chong, 6-28.

²⁶² Huang and Jeffery, 1-3.

few merchants who fulfilled the polygamist ideal by acquiring wives, concubines, and maid servants kept these ideals alive for them.

Aphrodisiacs and Masculinity in Canada

Many migrants felt that they were armed with Chinese aphrodisiacs and Chinese and western medicine that heightened their sexual performance. Many advertisements in the Chinese print media in Canada featured aphrodisiacs and other magic solutions targeted at them. These advertisements gave migrants the perception that they were the only ones with access to these magic potions which promised to give them the ability to achieve the controlled sexual drive that was depicted as masculine and desirable by both white Canadian and Chinese men.

Many of these pills specifically stated that they transformed an effeminate boy into a desirable man who conquered all women, while others gave their customers the perception of control over their lives. Many borrowed the language from traditional Chinese pornographic fiction and described sexual intercourse in a militaristic language where the pills allowed men to “march into battle with a firm metal spear, to fight heroically and fearlessly,” and “be forever victorious in battle.”²⁶³ Pills, such as “Be A True Man Pill,” “Spear Enlargement Pill,” and “Victory Pill,” all boasted that they transformed their customers into real men with male reproductive organs that remained erect for long periods of time.²⁶⁴ They promised to transform ordinary men into men with controlled sexual drives and amazing technique that made them the envy of both communities. Other pills promised to transform their customers’ lives and to help them be in control of their lives. One testimonial stated that “I, a humble person, was born physically weak,” “had problems with premature ejaculation,” and many other physical ailments. “I failed to find a cure until a friend mentioned this pill to me. After only one box, my spirits rose, and after another box, my ailments were cured.”²⁶⁵ For a few dollars, this lucky patient not only regained his energy, he also fixed many sexual problems that

²⁶³ *Gongbao*, June 25, 1939 and June 23, 1942. Advertisement for the Resistance and Battle pill, see *Gongbao*, June 23, 1942. For reference to Chinese pornographic fiction, see McMahon, 1-55.

²⁶⁴ See *Gongbao*, June 22, 1942, June 15, 1939, June 23, 1942, and May 27, 1947.

²⁶⁵ *Gongbao*, May 4, 1927.

had plagued him for years. In a typical wonder drug advertisement, the “Saviour Pill” claimed that it strengthened a man’s *yang*, increased his stamina in the bedchamber, stimulated love between him and his wife and rejuvenated the elderly.²⁶⁶ Pills, like this one, promised their customers a complete life package filled with most men’s dreams, including health, vigor, desirability, youth, and the ability to attract and secure women’s affection.

Many of these pills gave Chinese men the illusion that they controlled the ability to fulfil their most important duty to their families: the reproduction of sons. One advertisement reminded its customers that “it does not matter if you have billions of dollars, if you do not have a son by the time you are old, all your hard work is for nothing.” These words of caution were immediately followed by a man’s testimonial that this pill helped him and his wife produce several plump and healthy sons.²⁶⁷ Several of these pills were targeted at women and promised that all it took was one pill to guarantee the reproduction of a son.²⁶⁸ These pills gave migrants the perception that they controlled the perpetuation of their patriline: their utmost important goal as filial sons to their ancestors.

The ability of Chinese male migrants to fulfil three sets of conflicting masculine ideals validated their self-image as men who were more masculine than effeminate men who remained in China and non-Chinese men in Canada. This image of the migrants was reinforced through their increased access to polygamist institutions in both China and Canada. Their perceived monopoly on magic sex potions gave them the perception that they controlled their masculinity and that they could obtain the sexual prowess desired by both Chinese and non-Chinese men. Overseas migration and migrants’ increased control over their families provided them with the resources to recreate a male polygamist community centred around them.

²⁶⁶ *Gongbao*, June 15, 1939. Another cream, the “Happy Cream,” also guaranteed love between a man and a woman of his desires. See *Gongbao*, May 27, 1947.

²⁶⁷ *Juzhen Yuebao*, 8:5, 108.

²⁶⁸ *Gongbao*, May 4, 1927, and June 23, 1941.

CONCLUSION

From the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, Chinese male migrants in Canada perceived many challenges to their masculinity and cultural identity in both China and Canada. Despite these challenges, overseas migration increased many male migrants' access to patriarchal and polygamist institutions, their attachment to their Chinese identity, and most importantly, their confidence that they were valuable members of Canadian and Chinese society. In China, their higher overseas wages allowed them to contribute significantly to China's modernization efforts while preserving elements of the Chinese past. This new wealth and their new social status gave them unprecedented control over their family members. Similarly, in Canada, migrants' claims to patriarchal control and their attachment to their Chinese identity increased.

During this period, the migrants created three conflicting images for themselves and each helped them reaffirm their masculinity and cultural identity in different ways. Their new wealth, increased attachment to their Chinese identity, and new ability to preserve elements of the Chinese past and to fulfil Chinese gender ideals encouraged them to see themselves as the defenders and preservers of Chinese culture. On the other hand, they saw themselves as modern westernized heroes who used their exposure to western technology and life to implement changes that ushered China into the modern age. Lastly, they portrayed themselves as morally superior masculine men who came to the aid of racist white Canadians during the Second World War. These three images came together and gave rise to the most powerful image that depicted them as masculine men who revived the Chinese polygamist world centred around male interests. All four images portrayed male migrants as heroes who moved between western and Chinese cultural spheres, and between modernity and tradition to create a new China in emigrant communities and in Chinese communities in China.

IV. CONCLUSION

Even though this thesis focuses on the experiences of Chinese male migrants in Canada and their relationship with their home villages, each other, and other groups in Canada, many of the theoretical implications are applicable to broader areas of gender, race, and cultural history. Even though many studies have been written on the experiences of migrants, they have either focused on migrants' experiences in their host countries or on their impact on their home villages. Few, however, have examined how their continuous interactions with both countries influenced their experiences. Many of these studies have been influenced by the tendency in historical research to categorize and organize historical studies along national geographic boundaries. However, my study has shown that this approach is problematic, especially when one is examining a group of people whose experiences are not limited to one geographic area. As people's national and cultural identities become increasingly hybridized in the modern world, there is an increasing need to move away from national histories.

The other theoretical issue that is central to this thesis is the inseparable relationship between the categories of race, gender, and class. Even though much work has been done on each category, most scholars have examined these categories separately. More importantly, most scholars have only applied these labels to people who were placed in inferior positions, such as women, people of colour, and working-class people and have implied that these labels do not influence dominant groups. For example, in the field of immigration history, most scholars have simply examined immigrants' experiences as a question of race relations. The few historians who have examined the issues of race and gender together have reserved these questions for minority women. However, my thesis has shown that since issues of gender, race, and class were about processes of domination and control, the three categories were constantly interlinked. It has shown that white racism took on a gendered and class-specific language as members of the white community, especially white middle-class men, tried to reaffirm their dominant position built on their superior class, racial, and gender identities. Since these three factors were interlinked, this elite group legitimized racism by portraying Chinese male migrants as

uneducated, feminized labourers who needed to be controlled by them. Similarly, from the perspectives of Chinese male migrants, their relationship with Canada and their home villages was shaped by more than issues of race. Their perceptions of how their experiences in Canada affected their masculine identity and access to male privileges embedded in the Chinese patriarchal system influenced how they interacted with and responded to groups in China and Canada.

This thesis has examined race relations, racialized gender constructions, and gendered race constructions from a feminist perspective. It has shown that the patriarchal nature of both societies influenced their relations with one another. In both communities, cultural superiority was frequently expressed as masculinity, while inferiority was equated with femininity. The experiences of male Chinese migrants show that the categories of race, class, and gender are never separated.

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