CHAPTER - I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
The Sino-Canadian relations in historical perspective have been given little systematic and scholarly treatment. However, after 1949 there has been increasing interest among academicians and researchers to study the relationship between the two countries prior to this period. A brief survey with critical analysis of the history is desirable for a better understanding of the Sino-Canadian relations. The Chinese immigration to Canada, the Canadian missionaries in China, distinguished personalities' visits along with official relationship and the bilateral trade dominated the Sino-Canadian relations prior to 1949. The diplomatic and commercial contacts, however, were late developments. The main aim of this chapter is to analyse how the historical factors have contributed to general patterns of relations between the two countries.

EARLY CONTACTS

The roots of Sino-Canadian relations could be traced to ancient times. Canada's aboriginal peoples such as Indians and Eskimos have their origins in Asia and probably what is now China. Racially, native Canadians and the Chinese belong to the same descent, the Mongoloid race. Similarities between the animalistic designs on Chinese bronze ritual vessels of the Shang Dynasty (1766-1122 B.C.) and the designs on totem poles common among Canada's West Coast Indians substantiate to early contacts between both sides of the Pacific.¹

According to many anthropological studies, the first nomadic tribes from East Asia reached North America via the Bering Strait, a narrow body of water that separates Alaska and Siberia. There is, however, disagreement regarding the time and route. A few anthropologists opine that the ancestors of the Indians walked across the Strait when a land or ice bridge was opened, approximately 28,000 years ago.  

China also played an important role, though unconsciously, in the European discovery of China and exploration of the North American continent. The quest for riches in China prompted early explorers to search for a western route from Europe to the Far East. This was in the form of ginseng plant and fur trade. The first recorded commercial links between China and Canada occurred in 1715 when ginseng, a plant highly valued by the Chinese for medicinal purposes, was discovered in eastern Canada. Merchants in France heard about the discovery and exported a considerable quantity of it to China. For example in 1752, Canada exported ginseng to China, worth 50,000 francs. Unfortunately, due to the greed and lack of experience, the colonists picked the plants too early in the season, and artificially hastened the drying process, thus spoiling the quality and the supply of ginseng. This had an adverse effect on the trade.

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3 Wylie, n.1, p.139.

Trade in sea-otter skins in the form of furs which followed the decline of ginseng trade can be treated as the first direct trade between Canada and China. In the mid-eighteenth century, sailors found out that otter skins, which were found abundantly on the north-west coast of America, yielded enormous profits in the Chinese market. In 1784 the news about this discovery attracted sufficient attention towards this new opportunity. Traders and adventurers from Europe and the New World rushed to the north-west coast to compete in gathering furs from the native people and selling them to the Chinese. Despite the fact that the furs were carried in British ships, the trade was considered to be significant in Sino-Canadian relations as the product was sent from Canada to China and initially processed by the Canadians.\(^5\)

The fur trade was followed by the Canadian lumber which penetrated the Chinese market in 1788.\(^6\) China's export to Canada was a later development. The first item directly shipped from China was tea. The earliest recorded shipments were in 1869 to Quebec and Ontario.\(^7\)

**EARLY CHINESE IMMIGRATIONS TO CANADA**

The backgrounds of Asian and in particular the Chinese immigration to the United States, Canada and Australia are very similar.\(^8\) The majority of the Asians who went to Canada

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5 ibid, p.4.

6 ibid, p.209.

7 ibid, pp.209-10.

established themselves on the West Coast. While the majority came directly from China, India and Japan, some emigration also took place from the US or overseas Asian settlements such as Hawaii and the Carribean. The news of gold on the Fraser River attracted thousands of Asians to Canada in the late 1850s and 1860s. According to Lee Tung-hai, the leading Chinese writer on this subject, the first group of Chinese arrived at Fort Victoria, on the southern end of Vancouver, on 28 June 1858. Actually the first Chinese to set foot on North America's West Coast were the crew members of ships belonging to the maritime fur traders. Captain John Meares has recorded the arrival of fifty Chinese at Nootka Sound in 1788 who formed the nucleus of a settlement.

Most of the Chinese who had migrated to Canada in this early period belonged to the delta region of Guangdong province of China. At Hong Kong, the Chinese migrants established the necessary contacts with Western labour recruiters, steamship companies and immigration officers in order to embark on ships bound for North America. By 1860, there were four thousand Chinese in the new colony of British Columbia. However, their numbers fluctuated with the prosperity of the gold mines.

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The second wave of Chinese immigration to Canada began in 1881 with the starting of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (the CPR). In order to minimise the costs and maximise the profits, the major contractor for the construction of the CPR, Andrew Onderdonk, decided to import cheap labour from China. With the assistance of merchants both in Victoria and Hong Kong, the contractors began shipping numerous Chinese from Hong Kong to Canada. The first consignment of five thousand to six thousand Chinese workers from Hong Kong arrived in Canada in 1882. According to the 1885 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, from January 1881 through June 1884, 15,701 Chinese entered British Columbia, “more than half of whom came in the years 1882 and 1883, when the demand for labour for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway was at its height”. From 1881 to 1884, over 17,000 Chinese entered Canada for the railway construction and of these, over 10,000 came directly from China. Most of the Chinese immigrants were impoverished peasants from southern China. Moreover, because of the hardships encountered during their voyages to Canada many Chinese contracted diseases, such as scurvy. It is reported that nearly one-tenth of the Chinese who disembarked from the ships, Escambia and Suez, chartered by Onderdonk, died in the camps at Spuzzum.\(^{14}\)

The rationale or the cause for immigration to Canada by the

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14 Wickberg, n.9, p.21.
Chinese, the Japanese and the Indians were similar. The most significant factor for migration was a desire to improve one's socio-economic position. The early Chinese immigrants were mainly male peasants. Only after the males had become established, would women and children be brought over, but never in great numbers. The lack of land and/or threat of loss of land in China forced the Chinese migrants in Canada to work harder. Predominantly, the desire of the migrant was to save enough to return back to his homeland and lead a comfortable life.

The other significant factor which forced the Chinese to migrate to Canada was the domestic turmoil. The Opium War gave rise to violence and chaos in China and spawned a surge of peasant rebellions. One of the most famous peasants uprising was the Taiping Rebellion led by Hong Xiuquan. It was launched in 1850 from Guangxi and turned out to be a popular revolt of the downtrodden and poor Chinese. The movement "was a social crusade expressing the poor peasants' desire for equality, a national campaign against the foreign dynasty occupying the throne in Peking, and a modernist trend that developed in response to the challenge presented by the West through the Opium Wars".16 In March 1853 the rebels took over Nanjing and declared it as Taiping's capital. The movement then spread northward towards Shanghai, the bastion of Western trade and commerce. The


16 Jean Chesneaux and others, China from the Opium Wars to the 1911 Revolution (New York, 1976), p.93.
Westerners opted to defend the Qing dynasty and the Manchus, who had guaranteed them rights and privileges. Millions of people died due to severe repression. This devastated the countryside in Guanxi, Guangdong, Jiangxi, Fujian, Zhejiang, Anhui and Jiangsu. Other rebellions followed the Taiping movement to fight against the repression of the Qing dynasty. Nevertheless, they too were crushed. As a consequence, the uprisings "created a vast human reservoir of labour in China; millions of peasants and labourers sought a way out of intolerable conditions caused by foreign invasion and exacerbated by domestic warfare."\(^{17}\)

**CANADA'S POLICY OF DISCRIMINATION**

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Canadian society, especially those residing along its west coast, were very hostile to the Chinese immigrants. Although their contribution to Canada's development had been significant, they were not well received by the Canadians. The most visible manifestations of this hostility were racism, nativism and prejudice, which were the consequences of interracial and intercultural contact.\(^{18}\) The Chinese were marginalised in Canada and remained as aliens to the Western civilization. Nevertheless Canada needed the Chinese labour force as "it is [was] simply a

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question of alternatives; either you must have this labour or you can't have railways". 19

The xenophobic feeling against the Chinese immigrants exacerbated because they also usurped the jobs and economic livelihood of the Canadians. The immigrants faced a situation where they had to either work or starve. The white employers realized the immigrants' predicament and took advantage of the situation by paying very low wages which were often half those of a white labourer. 20 Inspite of the fact that a white labourer was given a much better treatment in comparison to a Chinese labourer, the contractors, such as Onderdonk preferred the cheap Chinese labour force because of the profit motive.

Although the Chinese immigration was desirable and necessary, the Canadian Government wanted to put some restrictions on the inflow of immigrants to guard against its least desirable side effects. The result was the introduction of a series of head taxes on the immigrants. Starting in 1886, just after the completion of the CPR and at a time when the Chinese labour force was not so desperately required, a Chinese immigrant had to pay $10 for immigrating to Canada. This tax, known as "head tax", was raised to $50 in 1896, to $100 in 1900, and finally peaked at $500 in 1904. The Chinese were the only ethnic group ever forced to pay a head tax for entering Canada. In contrast, during the

19 It was stated by the Prime Minister John A. Macdonald in the Parliament. Canada, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, 1882, p.1476. Cited in Chan, n.17, p.60.

20 See Chan, n.17, pp.60-61.
same period the immigrants from the UK were given money as a help to pay their way across the Atlantic.\textsuperscript{21}

The head tax did not apply to all Chinese, only to those Canada considered least valuable. The law stated:

Every person of Chinese origin, irrespective of allegiance, shall pay into the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada, on entering Canada, the port or place of entry, a tax of five hundred dollars except -

a) Diplomatic corps of other government representatives, their suites, servants, consuls, and consular agents,

b) Children born in Canada of parents of Chinese origins and who have left Canada for educational purposes or other purposes,

c) Merchants, their wives and children, wives and children of clergymen, tourists, men of science and students.

No vessel carrying Chinese immigrants to any port in Canada shall carry more than one such immigrant for every 50 tonnes of its tonnage.\textsuperscript{22}

This was not the only anti-Chinese legislation. The Canadian Government carried out a steady stream of anti-Chinese legislation to stop the influx, such as, removal of the franchise, residential and employment restrictions and non-institutionalised societal barriers. All these, however, failed to check the influx of Chinese immigrants, legal or illegal.\textsuperscript{23} The worst legislation


came after the fall of Qing dynasty in 1911, in the form of Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 - also known as the Chinese Exclusion Act. This act specifically barred the Chinese from entering Canada. It was finally revoked in 1947.

There was a web of causation underlying this discriminatory policy against the Chinese. The most significant of all was the status of China as a weak and backward nation. At a time when China was being humiliated by foreign powers, the Chinese Government was unable to strive for an equal treatment for their citizens in foreign countries. On the other hand, although the Japanese immigrants in Canada were also victims of the same racial prejudice, the Japanese Government, which was a much stronger power than China succeeded in receiving better treatment from the Canadians. According to the 1923 Act, while the Chinese were not allowed to come to Canada, a limited number of Japanese were permitted to enter Canada each year.24

The economic competition was another factor. Once the railway construction was completed in 1886, the Chinese moved to other occupations and, because of simple living standards and other economic constraints, they usually accepted lower wages. This provoked stiff opposition from the white workers. The abundant evidence for this interpretation is that the anti-Chinese sentiment in Canada was usually stronger when economic conditions were depressed making job competition severe.

24 See, Lower, n.11, pp.180-1.
The antipathy against the Chinese in Canada was also because of the lifestyle they adopted. Many Chinese immigrants had come to Canada without their families and had to live under incredible emotional strain. In an alien and estranged land, separated from their families, they were forced to work for low wages for long hours in degrading conditions of work. Under such strains, some sought solace in gambling and drugs. This reinforced the existing negative Canadian image of the Chinese.

THE ERA OF EXCLUSION: 1923-1947

The MacKenzie King Government of Canada had framed the Chinese Immigration Act 1923 to stop the Chinese immigration to Canada while making a minimal gesture towards protecting China’s image and preserving bilateral trade and missionary relations. It may be stated here that it was a tactful diplomatic manoeuvre on Canada’s part in not jeopardising the relations and at the same time stopping the Chinese immigration. Thus, the Act permitted the Chinese who had legally landed in Canada under the previous head tax regulations to return to Canada after visiting China and allowed the Chinese born in Canada, who had left Canada for educational or other purposes, to return to Canada. The Act also provided special permits for members of the diplomatic corps, other Government representatives, their suites and their servants, consul and consular agents.25 Ironically, the qualifications for entry were so stringent that between 1924 and 1946 only eight

immigrants from China were permitted to enter Canada.  

The Chinese immigrant, one of the oldest ethnic groups in Canada comprised of a disproportionate number of older single men. The composition, however, started changing after the enforcement of the Act. The older generation was dying or heading back to China. A small population of Canadian-born Chinese, containing a normal distribution of sexes, was maturing. According to Wickberg's estimation, "the new or second generation growing up in the 1920s and 1930s was not large enough for there to be more than 10-15 percent of the population as children at any one time". By 1931, 75 percent of the Chinese teenagers in Canada were born in Canada, quite unlike the case in 1921, when immigrant teenagers were in the majority. Thus, greater numbers of Chinese Canadians sought naturalization and, to a greater extent than ever before, Canadian-born and naturalized Chinese adopted Christianity.

During the exclusion period the Chinese community first grew and then contracted. Growing from 27,774 in 1911 to 46,519 in 1931, the Chinese-Canadian population then declined to 32,528 in 1951. In economic terms, the 1920s and 1930s was a better period for Chinese Canadians. Despite the Canadian Government's strict application of marketing laws to the Chinese vegetable growers, enforcement of laws preventing Chinese from employing

27 Wickberg, n.9, p.149.
29 ibid, "Table 11: People of Chinese Origin in Canada", p.9.
white women, the dismissal of Chinese seamen employed in Canadian subsidized lines and discriminatory relief assistance during the depression period, there was little serious objection to Chinese economic competition in Canada.

Another important development was that the various community organizations which represented the Chinese Canadians became more involved politically in Canadian affairs through a societal entrenchment process. The Chinese Benevolent Associations in Canada, in particular tried to respond vigorously to the needs and concerns of the Chinese communities in Canada.\(^{30}\) A steady breakdown of language and cultural barriers occurred with the gradual development of feelings of permanence and belonging and a greater degree of community self-confidence. Though not as assertive as Japanese-Canadians in their fight against their status as second-class citizens,\(^{31}\) the Chinese-Canadians nonetheless were quite active in the battle against disgracement.\(^{32}\) This increased desire to adapt themselves to the majority community was important because it demonstrated the Chinese Canadians desire to integrate themselves with the Canadians.

Since their arrival in Canada, the participation of the Chinese Canadians in the Canadian society had not been welcomed by

30 Wickberg, n.9, p.174.


32 Wickberg, n.9, p.174.
the white community. Powerful elements within Canada did not consider the Chinese as equals nor favoured Chinese assimilation into the Canadian society. However, minority groups of Chinese Canadians got involved in the Canadian domestic scenario, communal isolation and boundaries between the communities were broken down as a greater number of groups were drawn into central, urban-oriented network of social, economic and political transactions.\textsuperscript{33} By the late 1930s although the Chinese-Canadians were still outcastes in the eyes of Canadians, they were no longer considered foreign and alien. The younger generation of Chinese-Canadians' flexible attitude of intermingling with the Canadian society began gradually to force the Canadians to reassess their image of the Chinese in Canada as well as of China.

Meanwhile, the Second World War, which caused a lot of suffering in China, ultimately benefitted the Chinese in Canada. It consequently had a greater positive impact on Sino-Canadian relations. Ever since the Manchurian Crisis in 1931, sympathy for China had been developing in Canada. A strong upsurge in support of China was elicited particularly after the 1937 Japanese invasion of central and southern China and Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. No doubt, China's courageous struggle against the Japanese aggression developed a greater awareness among the Canadians about China. When the wife of Jiang Jieshi visited Ottawa in 1943, she was given a rousing welcome by the Canadians.\textsuperscript{34}


\textsuperscript{34} Tan and Roy, n.12, p.14.
Moreover, Canada and China became allies during the Second World War and the Chinese-Canadians lent their support to both the nations. The overseas Chinese in Canada saw it as an opportunity to support their homeland and to demonstrate their fidelity to their new homeland, Canada. The Chinese-Canadian community which previously limited its support to the overseas Nationalist organizations through monetary support\textsuperscript{35} not only supported the war in China but also supported the war effort in Canada. Their contribution amounted to record purchases of Canadian Victory Bonds, war work in the factories and shipyards, increased farm production for Canadian troops, services as air raid wardens and enrolment in the Canadian military service (over 500 naturalised Chinese-Canadians were called into military service during the Second World War, as compared to some 300 in the First World War).\textsuperscript{36}

As a consequence of the War, the Canadian Government expressed favourable and appropriate sentiments towards its ally, China, which was suffering terribly. Various token diplomatic, economic and military gestures resulted from this growing warmth of feeling for the Chinese.\textsuperscript{37} Even, Canada's West coast which had been previously very hostile to the Chinese overseas community, started showing favourable attitude towards the Chinese-Canadians.

\textsuperscript{35} For details regarding the Chinese-Canadians' monetary support to China, see Wickberg, n.9, p.195.

\textsuperscript{36} ibid, p.200.

In 1941, a federal Government Committee of Canada investigated racial tensions in British Columbia and concluded that the approximately 22,000 British Columbian Chinese did not constitute a serious problem because their numbers were decreasing, because their economic competitive strength is restricted, because their nation was traditionally and is today particularly popular in North America, and because they accept discriminatory treatment with a minimum of expressed resentment.\(^{38}\)

It may be clearly stated that this statement represented a degree of tolerance within the official circles of British Columbia which had not previously existed.

Another important development was the relatively high degree of unity achieved within the Chinese-Canadian community. In this favourable environment, the Chinese-Canadians' cohesiveness allowed for the launching of a concerted campaign for their civil rights. As Wickberg and others succinctly put it:

> When the war ended- and even as the war was still going on-when Chinese Canadians spoke of getting their rights to equal treatment in immigration or rights to vote, hold public office, and practise certain professions- they were not talking about gifts but about things they had paid for.\(^{39}\)

After the Second World War, the Chinese-Canadians shifted their attention to resolving the two most humiliating and debilitating legal constraints blocking their community's development; the granting of the franchise to the Chinese-Canadians in British Columbia and the repealment of the Chinese

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39 Wickberg, n.9, p.200.
Immigration Act, 1923.\textsuperscript{40} In contrast to the attempts made prior to the War, the Chinese community's post-War efforts had the widespread support and sympathy of large and influential segments of the Canadian society.\textsuperscript{41} Furthermore, the Canadian Citizenship Act, passed in late 1946, considered the right to vote of the Chinese-Canadians as a part of the citizenship status. However, substantial resistance was still encountered from certain Canadian groups in British Columbia. This hurdle was soon overcome and the enfranchisement of all Asians who were Canadian citizens (apart from those of Japanese descent) was granted by the British Columbian legislature in 1947.\textsuperscript{42}

In the beginning of 1947, the Chinese-Canadian community was more confident and had more legal and social rights than before, in spite of its declining strength.\textsuperscript{43} Its membership was comprised mainly of single males who had no families in Canada. A large proportion of them were middle-aged or elderly and were planning to return to China. The community, having too few females and families to maintain or augment its size naturally, knew of only one way to ensure its long-term survival and that was to convince the Canadian Government to repeal the Chinese Immigration Act. Although the Canadian Government repealed the Act on 14 May 1947,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{40} By 1947, British Columbia was the only province in Canada to have a legislation preventing Chinese Canadians from voting in provincial elections. The Saskatchewan Government had done away with its law three years earlier. Ibid, p.209.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Canada, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, 11 February 1947, p.317 & p.337.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Tan and Roy, n.12, p.15.
\item \textsuperscript{43} For figures see page 12 of this chapter.
\end{itemize}
the immigration was still limited to dependents of the Chinese-Canadian citizens. However, inspite of the restrictive clauses, the character of Chinese-Canadian society underwent a drastic change as the arrival of the women and children restored the traditional family life.44

It may be rightly said that between 1858 and 1947, when the Immigration Act 1923 was repealed, the Chinese community which migrated to Canada as valuable human resources, had to try to survive in a very hostile atmosphere full of severe legal, institutional and social constraints. Throughout Canada, there were very strong anti-Chinese feelings inspite of the fact that the immigrant Chinese contributed immensely to the development of Canada. China being a weak and feeble power for much of this period, was either unwilling or unable to counter this discrimination, nor did Canada give much consideration to the potential Chinese position on such matters. In Canada primarily racism was responsible for the halt of Chinese immigration in 1923. This created an awareness among the Chinese Canadians of their inferior status. They made concerted efforts to have the Act of 1923 annulled. In 1947, they met with success and this resulted in a new understanding between the two countries.

**CANADA'S MISSIONARY INFLUENCE IN CHINA**

The missionary connection dominated Sino-Canadian relations prior to the proclamation of the People's Republic of China in

44 Lower, n.11, p.193.
1949. Beginning in the late 1880s, when the Canadian missionaries responded to the challenge "to make every Chinaman a Christian", and through much of the early twentieth century, the Canadian missionary community in China was Canada's most organized overseas presence with the exception of wartime military expeditions. While China was sending to Canada its valuable human resources for national development, some Canadians started going to China as missionaries. The Canadian missionary presence in China had contributed to general patterns of contact between the two societies or countries. Thus Canada's missionary influence in China merits considerable attention in any study of Sino-Canadian relations.46

It is quite difficult to pinpoint the beginning of Canadian missionary activities in China as many Canadians were entangled in the British and American organizations. However, the first distinctively Canadian missionaries were the Presbyterians who came to China and founded a mission in the Hunan province in 1888. The group leader, Donald MacGillivray, made a great contribution to the education process by translating works into Chinese and from Chinese into English.47 Another significant Canadian mission was established in the Sichuan Province by the missionaries of Methodist Church. After their arrival in 1892, the Canadians established junior and senior primary schools,

45 Wylie, n.1, p.140.

46 The standard reference for the Canadian missionary movement is given in Alvyn Austin, Saving China: Canadian Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom, 1888-1959 (Toronto, 1986).

47 Woodsworth, n.4, p.255.
hospitals and a printing press. While it is agreed that most of the early Canadian missionaries landed in China with the sole purpose of spreading Christianity, it is acknowledged that many missionaries who arrived in later years were primarily concerned with socio-economic tasks and some involved themselves in politics.

It is difficult to make an assessment of Canadian missionary activities in China, which is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless the role of missionaries has been pivotal in Sino-Canadian relations. During the early twentieth century while Canada's political and economic involvement in the Pacific was insignificant, the influence of Canadian missionaries on official and public images of China were substantial. Canada's missionaries were the only substantial Canadian community in Asia, supported by home constituencies in all regions to which they regularly reported by personal presence or private letters. Angus has rightly stated the importance of the missionaries:

Traditionally, missionaries returning from the countries in which they have performed their duties have been considered authentic source of information. Their views, based often on half a lifetime of experience, have carried great weight and their considered statements have been accepted as more reliable than the day by day stories in the press. Much of the indignation aroused by Japanese military action in North China was strengthened by the unemotional but emphatic stories told by the missionaries.

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48 ibid.

However, there is less documentary evidence of direct efforts of the missionaries to influence Ottawa's policies on China prior to the late 1940s.50

In the early twentieth century the Canadian missionaries in China through letters and addresses conveyed to their Canadian readers a split image of developments in China.51 It was the time when China had been undergoing severe domestic political turmoil. The missionaries while verifying Canada's press and official views on China, conveyed a sympathetic attitude towards the Chinese while depreciating China's political weakness. In other words, they expressed greater hopes for China's future, if Canada and other foreign countries could stand by the Chinese people's struggle for a better life.

Apart from evangelistic activities, the Canadian missionaries promoted modern education in China. Prior to 1949, the Christian missionary in China was deeply involved in educational reform. For example, the West China Union University and the Shantung Christian University (now Shandong University) were supported by several Canadian churches. Both were the "Union Universities" located in China, though multinational corporate structures responsible to boards were in New York and London. Dr. A.E.

50 See, Alain Larocque, "Losing our Chinese: The St. Enfance Movement" (University of Toronto-York University, Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, Toronto, Working Papers Series, no.49, June 1987).

Armstrong of the United Church Board of Foreign Mission has aptly expressed Canada's position:

The United Church of Canada, through its North Hunan Mission, is proud to be the connecting link between the British Board and the United States Boards in the happy fellowship of the Board of Governors of Shantung Christian University of the eleven Boards in that partnership, five are in England, five in the United States, and one in Canada. We rejoice in being the hyphen.52

It may be stated that Canadian missionaries in China reflected growing self-consciousness of the Canadian position between Europe and America. Moreover, with the educational reforms many Chinese students were introduced to Western ideas and technologies.

On the other hand, the presence of Chinese students in Western institutions of higher learning did help in shaping China's future as a modern society. Canada's efforts in giving higher education to the Chinese were mainly spearheaded by the McGill University and University of Toronto. Moreover, these universities were the two major suppliers of recruits for the Canadian missions in China.53 However, sporadic efforts by overseas missionaries, university and business communities failed to increase the very small numbers of Chinese students in Canadian institutions of higher learning. The vast majority of those few who came did so through the network of Canadian missionaries.54


53 Based on the discussions with many prominent academicians of McGill University, Montreal and University of Toronto, Toronto, 1989.

The 1940s witnessed a new political relationship between the two countries. The most significant political development during this period was the establishment of exchange of diplomatic relations followed by aid to the Nationalist forces in China in 1944. For the first time there was an expanded range of contacts between the two countries. In the new environment, the Canadian missionaries in China became closely connected with the new Canadian Embassy in China within the first few months, the Canadian Embassy in Chungking, had to deal with their property rights following abrogation of the old treaties and the first legal cases following the abolition of the extra territorial courts. In different ways the missionaries contributed in providing information to the officials of its Embassy in China. For example, as Peter M. Mitchell has stated,

Bruce Copland frequently reported on conditions in the North (China) and Gerald Bell assessed Sichuan politics from the Vantage point of Chengdu. A few such as Rev. V.J.R. Mills, played multiple roles... Mills also provided contacts to improve post war Canadian trade. Following the example of several other Canadian missionaries, he acted as regional representative for the United Nations Relief and Reconstruction Agency (UNRRA), the Canadian Red Cross and Chinese War Relief fund agencies. Missionaries were also useful in the describing post war conditions in previously-occupied areas, such as Margaret Brown on liberated Shanghai and Dr. Steward Allend on North Henan.  

However, the evidence seems to suggest that direct missionary influence on official Sino-Canadian relations was short lived. The missionaries represented substantial links at a time, when Canada did not have a proper positive Far Eastern policy, although the official and public opinion in Canada supported the evolving

of such policy in the near future. Moreover, the proclamation of the PRC in October 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War nine months later changed the overall policy environment. The end of mission era was swift. In mid May, 1947, the North China mission of the United Church of Canada was disbanded as Communist forces occupied North Henan. As China progressively came under Communist control, the numbers of Canadian missionaries dwindled, though by early 1949 missionaries constituted the largest segment of the 850 Canadians still on Chinese soil. The Korean War ended the various means by which these last remnants of an impressive tradition had remained active in teaching, medical or other services functions. Thus ended more than sixty years of Canadian missionary activity in China.

Unfortunately, the Sino-Canadian relations in the pre-1949 period were overshadowed by the bitter time China was suffering from foreign intervention. The Canadians entered China after the Western powers had imposed unequal treaties and, as members of the British Empire, they enjoyed many privileges under the protection of extra-territoriality. From time to time the whole system of special privileges were being attacked under the influence of the new spirit of nationalism. This background made the Canadian presence in China complicated. Their activities were perceived by the Chinese Nationalists as a kind of ‘cultural invasion’, which,


57 Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Canada and China: a Summary (Toronto, 1936), p.5.
together with military and economic invasions, would eventually turn China into a colony of Western powers. For many years, missionaries had been held in contempt by a large number of Chinese as forerunners of imperialism and colonialism. After 1949, most Canadian missionaries were compelled to leave China.

It is pertinent to state here that although the Canadians were classed with other foreign exploiters, they did not "suffer from any unique odium because of their special position in China". As compared to others they enjoyed a special status in China. The Canadian missionaries in China all along had tried to create a positive and lasting image of China in Canada and vice-versa. A.R.M. Lower rightly noted that on the average, the missionaries from Canada were more highly educated and trained than their counterparts from the US. He further added, "the temper of Canadian life has been less secular than that of American, and at the height of the missionary movement not only was it a national effort, from which few dissented, and to which not many were indifferent but also some of the best brains of the country into it". Many Chinese benefitted from the training provided by Canadian missionaries in hospitals and universities in China and majority of them in the later years were not converted to Christianity. Moreover, the legendary influence of Dr. Norman Bethune upon the Chinese, in a true sense does not suggest Canadian cultural imperialism on China.

58 ibid.
59 Lower, n.54, p.49.
The Canadian missionaries played an important role in promoting mutual understanding between the two countries. Working and living among the classes of the Chinese population, and in different regions, they could acquire a better understanding of China and were in constant touch with the Chinese people than their Government representatives. The first-hand knowledge of China was very important in influencing Canadian public opinion and that of the policy makers. Many Canadian Sinologists and officials have a missionary families background. The best example is Chester Ronning, the former Director of the Far Eastern Division of the Department of External Affairs. Three Canadian ambassadors to the PRC were from missionaries' families. The Chinese provinces of Sichuan and Shandong, where most of the former Canadian missionary activities had centred, still play a leading role in Sino-Canadian exchanges. Today, many Canadian professors are teaching in Shandong University, and several Canadian training centres are located in Sichuan. The Chinese Association of Canadian Studies has been established in Chonqing since 1984. Moreover, now with China opening her door to foreign countries on her own initiative, the role of missionaries in China is being reassessed by the Chinese authorities and historians, generally on an individual basis. Tributes are being paid to some former missionaries, such as Dr. Norman Bethune, for their efforts to promote exchanges and friendship between China and foreign countries.

EARLY POLITICAL CONTACTS OF CHINA WITH CANADA

Long before the forging of official ties between the two countries, politicians from both sides paid visits, for several
reasons. The first important political figure from China to visit Canada was Li Hongzhang from Qing dynasty in 1896. After visiting London and the US, he went to Canada. He first stopped at Toronto and then arrived in Vancouver. The purpose of his world tour was to convince the Chinese-Canadians that the Qing court sympathized with their plight, and to seek the actual material wealth of the overseas Chinese. During the visit, while receiving a warm welcome from the overseas Chinese, he asked the Chinese to stop gambling and opium smoking, probably to arouse a better feeling from the Canadians about the Chinese. Moreover, to forge a better relationship with Canada, Li met Canadian Government dignitaries as well as Chinese leaders while in British Columbia he discussed about Canada's imposition of head tax on the Chinese emigrants and his representation might have delayed the proposed increase of tax for some time.

During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, two renowned leaders of the Reform Movement, Kang Yuwei and Liang Qichao visited Canada several times. Kang Yuwei the famous Confucian scholar of that time, visited Canada thrice in 1899, 1902 and 1904. In the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 the defeat

60 Chan, n.17, p.127.


62 Lee Tung-hai, no.10, pp.263-70; Victoria Daily Colonist, 15 September 1986 and Vancouver Province, 19 September 1896. All cited in Wickberg, n.9, p.74.
of China by Japan was a great shock to the Chinese political system. Proposals for radical changes in the system of the Chinese Government now began to be voiced by the reformers, such as Kang and Liang. Unlike Sun Yatsen, who wanted a revolution and republic, Kang stood for constitutional monarchy based on a Confucian model of Government.  

However, the real power resided with the notorious Empress Dowager, Cu Xi, who forced the reformers into exile and sent the Emperor who stood for radical reforms in China, to exile too.

For the first time Kang made contacts with the Chinese in Canada. This was during his first visit to Canada in 1899. He wanted the funds and support of the wealthy overseas Chinese in Canada. Since Canada was having a substantial number of Chinese by late nineteenth century, Kang, Liang and also Sun Yatsen made an effort to draw support from them. Kang's prestige as a scholar and reformer had attracted many Chinese-Canadians towards the reform movement. During his first visit itself, Kang established the first North American branch of his reform association in Victoria, known as Emperor Reform Association (Tung Wong Hui). By the time of Kang's third visit in 1904, there were twelve local branches across Canada with a membership of seven thousand. However, internal dissension soon split the ranks of his followers. By 1905, Sun Yatsen had set up his Alliance League

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63 Chesneau and others, n.16, p.196.

64 Chan, n.17, p.124. For a detailed analysis of the Emperor Reform Association see, Wickberg, n.9, pp.74-76.
(Tong Meng Hui), a powerful challenge to the Emperor Reform Association which ceased to exist after the 1911 revolution.65

Kang not only attempted to gain support from the overseas Chinese in Canada but also made an effort to influence the Canadian Government. During his 1289 visit Kang met the Canadian Prime Minister, Lawrie, attended a session of Parliament and was received by the Governor General and the Speaker of the House of Commons. During his third and last trip to Canada in 1904 he was entertained, by the Canadian business and political leaders, who saw the Reform Movement as a positive sign for improved trade and political relations with China.66 The Chinese reformer, on the other hand, looked forward to obtaining the goodwill and support of the North Americans in their quest for a change in China. Liang Qichao, the close associate of Kang, in his only visit to Canada in 1903, was the guest of honour at a dinner attended by business and political leaders from Vancouver. Liang Qichao took this opportunity to express his hopes for closer relations between North America and a reformist China.67

The most famous visitor from China to Canada during this period was Sun Yatsen, the father of the Chinese Revolution of 1911. He visited Canada in 1897, 1910 and 1911. His first two visits to Canada were primarily concerned with collecting funds


66 Wickberg, n.9, p.75.

67. Vancouver World, 3 April 1903, in University of British Columbia Library, Special Collection Division, Cumyow Collection, Box 1-5. Cited in ibid.
from the overseas Chinese for his revolutionary struggle against
the Qing Government. During Sun Yatsen's first visit, the Chinese-
Canadians were lukewarm to his overtures. Some found it pragmatic
to support the reformist movement of Kang Yuwei and others, than
the revolutionary cause of Sun Yatsen. However, by 1905 factions
among the followers of the reformist movement started to help Sun
Yatsen's Alliance League which was set up in Canada in 1905.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a time
of great political uncertainty. The revolutionaries reached the
overthrow of the inefficient and corrupt Qing dynasty. Whatever
the political outcome might be, the Chinese-Canadians hoped for a
new, modern, prestigious China which could fight for their cause
in Canada. Thus the Chinese-Canadians had good reasons to get
involved in the Chinese politics. "So long as their opportunities
in Canada were restricted and so long as many saw their futures as
being tied to China, this was inevitable".68

Also, San Yatsen's promise to the Chinese-Canadians that an
imminent revolutionary victory would open the subsequent
investment opportunities in China, did attract the overseas
Chinese for his cause.69 He pledged to give special consideration
in his post-war Government to those who contributed to the cause
during the period of revolutionary struggle. He further stated
that the contributors would be declared as "preferential citizens"

68 Wickberg, n.9, p.102.

69 Harold Z. Schifrin, "The Enigma of Sun Yat-Sen" in Mary
Clabaugh Wright, ed., China in Revolution: The First Stage
who could become citizens of the new Republic without going through whatever restrictions the new Government might decide upon regarding the question of citizenship.70 By the time of his second visit to Canada in 1910, the revolutionary sentiments had developed among the overseas Chinese in Canada. On his third visit to Vancouver in 1911, a crowd more than 1,000 welcomed him as he descended from his car. He spoke on the revolutionary cause to a packed house of 1,000 audience at a Chinese theatre.71 By now, Sun Yatsen's organizing abilities and his charismatic personality as well as the idea of a new Republic had caught the imagination of many Chinese outside China.

When the Qing dynasty was abdicated on 12 February, 1912, the struggle for revolution appeared to be over. There was jubilation among the overseas Chinese in Canada at the fall of an imperial system that had ruled China since 221 BC. However, the Republic could not last long and by 1914 Sun Yatsen was again, in search of donations from the overseas Chinese to finance a second revolution. Although he never visited Canada again the Chinese Canadians remembered him and supported financially and morally in the future course of revolutionary struggle. Moreover, while in Canada, he made acquaintance with Morris Abraham Cohen, a Canadian who later became Sun's personal bodyguard. He was known in China by his nickname - "Two-gun Cohen" due to his habit of wearing a pair of pistols in cowboy style.

The only distinguished Canadian visitor to China was William Lyon Mackenzie King. As the Deputy Minister of Labour in 1909, King was very concerned with the problem caused by the oriental immigrants. He went to China in 1909 as a representative of the British delegation to the Shanghai Opium Conference. Afterwards he moved on to Beijing to discuss the immigration question with the Chinese Government. His meeting with Liang Tun-Yen, the head of the Chinese Foreign Office, was the first official communication between the two countries.\(^{72}\) Liang told Mackenzie King that China adhered to its traditional policy of discouraging contract labour while acting on the principle that there be a liberty of movement for free labourers. He also protested the imposition of Canada's head taxes.\(^{73}\) However nothing substantial was achieved from the official talk between the two countries.

**DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS**

Prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1942, there was hardly any diplomatic contact between the two countries. Canada's political interest and external relations during the pre-Second World War period continued to centre on Britain, the US and Europe. The official contacts between China and Canada was handled by the British Foreign Office or by the the Canadian and Chinese ministers in Washington. In 1929, Canada established a...
Legation in Tokyo to develop trade and friendly relations with Japan, China and the rest of Asia, and to perform consular activities and political reporting. However, as Lester B. Pearson had stated that "none of these concerns made it necessary for Canada to have what could conceivably be called a Far Eastern Policy."  

During the late 1930s, the international arena witnessed growing militancy and aggression in Europe and Asia, when Japan began its undeclared war on China in 1937. At that time Canada sympathized with the Chinese but did not take any diplomatic action against Japan. In 1939 the Second World War broke out in Europe. In the Pacific, Canada followed the lead of Britain and the US in implementing trade restrictions against Japan. When Japan attacked Pearl Harbour on 7 December, 1941, Canada immediately joined the War against Japan. Canada and China became allies in the War. The Canadian participation in the Pacific War took the form of providing back-up support for the United States.

The Pacific War no doubt brought rapid and decisive alterations in domestic Chinese politics and in China's relations

77 ibid, pp.65-73, and pp. 228-32.
with the outside world. Also, the War in Europe and Asia produced a quantum leap in the scope of Canadian involvement beyond North America. Although Canada's participation in the Pacific War was minimal,\textsuperscript{78} but with it came a new political relationship between Canada and China. Seeing as an ally and a great power finally in late 1941, the Canadian Government announced its intentions to establish diplomatic relations with China,\textsuperscript{79} As allies, official channels coordination and communication were necessary for their joint war efforts. Canada and China upgraded their diplomatic relations, first to ministerial status and then, by 1943, to full ambassadorial status. In February 1942, Liu Shishun presented his credentials as the first Chinese minister to Canada. Prior to his appointment, he had served in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1927 and had been in charge of European and American affairs since 1931.\textsuperscript{80} On 4 November, 1942, the Canadian Government announced the appointment of Major-General V. Odlum as the new minister to China. His relation was due to "his intimate knowledge of the war situation in the South Pacific... which... it was thought would stand him in good stead in a China at war".\textsuperscript{81}

\begin{enumerate}
\item For Canadian action between 1937 and Pearl Harbour, see, Gregory Johnson, "North Pacific Triangle?: The impact of the Far East on Canada and its Relations with the United States and Great Britain, 1937-1948" (Ph.D. Thesis, York University, Toronto, 1989), especially Chapters 2 and 3.
\item See for details, Documents on Canadian External Relations 1939-1941 (Canada, 1974), vol.7, pp.89-94.
\item ibid, p.92.
\item Skilling, n.74, p.254.
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However, it was not until 1943 that Canada and China agreed to an actual exchange of full Ambassadors. In February and March, 1944, Liu and Odlum presented their credentials as new Ambassadors, to respective countries and accordingly Embassies were opened in Ottawa and Chungking, China's wartime capital. Simultaneously, on 22 March, 1944, Canada and China signed a Mutual Aid agreement which would allow China to "receive munitions and supplies to the value of $26.6 million". 82 But, "much of this aid lay stranded in Indian and Canadian warehouses, as the programme floundered in the face of American antipathy and the lack of transport facilities into unoccupied territory in West China". 83 On 14 April, 1944, a third agreement was reached by which Canada relinquished its extraterritorial rights in China. The terms of this agreement were similar to ones concluded with the US and Britain. At the same time, the Canadian Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, announced that a draft treaty on immigration, previously submitted to China, would replace the discriminatory Chinese Immigration Act of 1923. It may be rightly said that, although Canada's involvement in the Far Eastern battlegrounds was not that significant, it created a pragmatic "Pacific Policy" by extending full diplomatic relations, material aid and reducing racial discrimination to a frontline wartime ally, China.

Following victory in Europe and Asia in 1945, Canada took an active part in relief and rehabilitation efforts for the economic

83 Mitchell, n.51, p.10.
and political recovery of Europe. In Asia, assistance from Canada came through Mutual Aid loans to China, under the new Export Credit Act. In February 1946, an agreement was reached by which Canada granted China a credit of $60 million. Further efforts to stimulate trade between Canada and China were undertaken in 1946. The two Governments agreed to guarantee a credit advance by a group of Canadian banks to the Ming Sung Industrial Company for the purchase of Canadian-built ships specially designed for service on the Yangtze River. Repayment of this credit advance became a matter of considerable contention in Sino-Canadian relations in the post-1949 period.

In this new era of bilateral relations, attempts were made to foster reciprocal relations outside the Government-to-Government contacts. The most distinguished personality to visit Canada during the 1940s was the wife of Jiang Jieshi. In June 1943, she addressed both Houses of the Canadian Parliament. In Ottawa, she accepted cheques worth $177,000 from the Chinese War Relief Fund, $1 million from the Canadian Red Cross and $10,000 from the Junior Canadian Red Cross. These donations were offered as a sympathetic gesture towards war-ravaged China. These were raised voluntarily by the Chinese-Canadians as well as the Canadians. It signifies the fact that the Chinese-Canadians' concern for their homeland created an awareness among the Canadians.

The Canadian interest in Asia began to change in 1947-1948 when India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Burma gained independence from

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84 Some other important Chinese personalities who visited Canada during the 1940s were Lieu Wei-Chih, Huang Wen-shan, Wong Bock-Yue, Zhao Yu, Tao Hsing-Chih, Seto Mei-tang and Hu Shih.
the United Kingdom and, except for Burma, sought membership in the Commonwealth. Apart from the objections from South Africa and Australia, they were welcomed into the Commonwealth as equal members. Further accommodations were made in 1949 when India became a Republic. In both the instances Canada desired to find an acceptable solution which highlighted its growing awareness towards Asia. By now, for Canada the Commonwealth link had become the most intimate political link between the East and the West. Thus it stood for close association with these Asian countries through the organisation of Commonwealth.

Between 1946 and 1949, Western control and influence in Asia had visibly declined. Asia had become a "turbulent area of acute economic and nationalist ferment passing through the painful adjustments of evolution from dependent status". The European imperial dominance or exploitation had given way to the rise of nationalist resistance to the re-imposition of imperial authority. Also, of almost equal importance was the strong desire for change in the old economic and social order. All these led to political instability in the Asian countries.

By mid-1946 Canada had completed its move to shift its Embassy from Chungking to Nanjing. Between 1946 and 1948, the Canadian Government efforts sought to assist China in its reconstruction from the War. In addition to the credit advances

85 Spencer, n.56, pp.394-02.

to China, Canada became the third largest contributor to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation China programme. In addition to the above, considerable amounts of relief supplies were made available from private sources by the Canadian Aid-to-China Fund.

In the meantime, the Canadian Embassy in China closely watched the developments of civil war between the Nationlists and the Communists. On 1 January, 1948, "Canadian missionaries, many of whom had been re-established after the war with Embassy assistance, were advised to withdraw from North of the Yangtze". 87 In early 1948, Beijing and Tiensin fell to the Communists. Throughout 1948 the Communist forces moved towards south. 88 Their advance was halted at the Yangtze River in the Spring of 1949. In late April 1949 the Communists again advanced towards the South and became successful in forcing the Nationalist forces to retreat. The Nationalist Government withdrew from the mainland and established itself on the Off-Shore Islands and Formosa. From there they voiced claim of being the Government of free China. The Canadian Embassy and its staff did not follow the Nationalists in their retreat to Formosa, rather the Embassy and the Consulate remained in Nanjing and Shanghai respectively.

In the Fall of 1948, and certainly in early 1949, it became evident to the Canadian Government that the Communist forces under

87 Spencer, n.56, p.423.
Mao Zedong were soon to achieve victory in China. Finally, on 1 October, 1949, the Chinese Communist Party officially proclaimed the formal establishment of the People's Republic of China and issued invitations to other Governments to recognize it. Of immediate importance in 1949 was that the Communist Chinese victory posed the problems of recognition and its admittance to the United Nations. The answer to those problems had been central to the Sino-Canadian relations throughout the 1950s and 1960s and early 1970s. Moreover, it can be rightly said that a new era was indeed ushered in after the War, but it was not to prove the kind that had been anticipated by Canada.