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I'd like to propose that we think of Chinatown in six ways. These reflect some of the roles it has played in the past and some of the perspectives from which it has been seen. 1. As a place of residence and a neighbourhood; 2. As a place of business and work; 3. As an extension of China; 4. As an exotic and sinful slum; 5. As a tourist site; 6. As a heritage site and organizing point. I'll more or less organize my comments around these six, talking first about the period 1880s to 1947 and then the period l947 to about 1980.

I.1880s to 1947. Vancouver Chinatown began around the intersection of Carrall and Pender (then Dupont) streets with the complex of Shanghai and Canton Alleys as nucleus, later spreading out to the east, principally along Pender and Keefer streets. Settlement was conditioned by immigration flows which, in turn , were often limited by government policies. Gold Rush and railroad workers were among the earliest settlers. The headtax placed on immigrating Chinese from 1885 to 1923 provided some restraints on further growth, and the1923 Exclusion Law (effective until 1947) even more so. The immigrant enclave that emerged was limited also by residential and voting prohibitions. Chinese could not readily afford to live outside Chinatown, nor were they welcomed. Non-Chinese intolerance was expressed in law and practices that kept Chinese from full participation in mainstream society. It also on occasion expressed itself more violently, as in the case of the 1907 Anti-Oriental Riots, which destroyed or damaged much Chinatown property. But Chinatown was not sealed off from the outside world. Euro-Canadians could enter and Chinese could go out for business. Indeed, laundries and

convenience stores were outside. But in the end, Chinatown was intended by Euro-Canadians as an all-Chinese enclave.

Community institutions developed. Associations of various kinds provided welfare and social control and spoke for Chinatown to the outside world. Their leaders were merchants who made up the governing boards of the Chinese Benevolent Association . Some of the most effective of these were men with one foot outside Chinatown, possessed of interests and skills outside Chinatown that enable them to deal with Euro-Canadians and their government. Some examples are Yip Sang, Won Cumyow and Foon Sien. Though Chinese lacked the right to vote, Chinatown was not completely powerless or lacking in control of its own destiny. Though white people determined Chinatown's limits, as Kay Anderson would argue, the Chinese inside those limits were not mere victims. Chinatown existed both because it was a convenience to whites and – in some ways - to Chinese, especially those single male Chinese who saw themselves as sojourners, wishing little if any contact with the non-Chinese society around them.

By the 1920s families were beginning to appear, some of them living in the multi-ethnic neighbourhood of Strathcona. Families meant schools to teach Chinese skills, but only as a supplement to attendance in Canadian schools. In this, as in so many ways, the new local-born generations lived in two worlds: attending Christian churches (but churches that were exclusively Chinese in membership), balancing English day school with Chinese night school, attending English-language movies and playing Canadian sports, but also learning Chinese arts. And by the 1930s some found jobs outside Chinatown.

As a place of business and work, Chinatown housed some businesses that served the outside world (tailors, shirt-makers, labour brokers, Asian goods importers), but much of its economy was based upon the needs of the community itself (small service shops, groceries, butchers, restaurants, and real estate and insurance brokers) . Chinatown produce wholesalers were also connected to suburban Chinese market gardeners. The kinds of employment for Chinatown residents included jobs in Chinatown itself. But Chinatown was also a retreat for those who worked in seasonal resource industry employment, living off-season in the Shanghai-Canton Alley complex. It was a retreat also – a source of entertainment in off hours – for those with shops in white neighbourhoods: laundries, produce shops, and convenience stores.

As an extension of China (and perhaps a kind of partial substitute for it), Chinatown was a twilight zone, unlike the villages of China, and most resembling Hong Kong and the treaty port cities of coastal south China. Sojourners wanted it to be a bit of China. Families wanted Chinese culture for their children,. And white society forced a concentration of Chinese cultural influence in Chinatown Chinese arts, entertainments and recreation were important. One of the earliest institutions established was the theatre for Chinese opera in the Canton-Shanghai Alley complex. Later theatres showed both Chinese opera and modern style Chinese plays, often the work of Chinese Canadian students. Schools and associations promoted music, martial arts, and literary and fine arts (essays, calligraphy, and painting). Gambling was widespread and the games were Chinese games of chance. Traditional Chinese religion was observed in homes, association halls, and places of business. As far as we know there were never any separate Buddhist or popular religion temples in pre-1947 Chinatown. Chinese churches

were not only Chinese in membership; they were located for a long time exclusively in Chinatown, and they represented Chinese assertiveness, replacing white missionaries with Chinese ministers as soon as possible. Chinese schools proliferated by the 1920s and 1930s. The buildings of Chinatown presented a kind of "Chinese" architecture, picking up on models in places like Canton and Hong Kong, where Western influences had introduced eclectic styles. There were continuing contacts with Hong Kong and China, through letters and remittances sent there, through visits there, and, where possible, new immigration. More than that, Vancouver-based Chinese language newspapers provided not only local Chinatown news, but also news about Hong Kong, south China, Shanghai, Beijing, and other overseas Chinese communities, especially in North America.

China also figured in Chinatown life in the form of awareness of its politics and the intersections of these with the politics of Chinatown itself. This interaction was stimulated by the visits of such notables as Dr. Sun Yat-sen, who came three times between 1899 and 1911. Fund-raising for causes in China – whether national defence or local school-building – maintained a China-focus. And one of the constants of Chinatown life throughout the 20th century was the presence of a Chinese consulate with its varying relationships to the Chinatown population. The struggles over politics, sometimes violent in the first four decades of the 20th century, were never far from erupting, while the rivalry between the Guomindang and the Chinese Freemasons was an ongoing background to all of this.

Many white Canadians saw Chinatown as an exotic and sinful slum. Exotic because it was beyond their own boundaries. Conceptually, Chinatown was a bounded

area of non-whiteness. It was the "other" for whites: what they definitely were NOT. It could easily be seen as sinful because of the presence of opium, gambling, and sometimes prostitution. It was seen as a slum because doing so allowed white condescension or outrage over health conditions – and, over everything that white society supposedly was not. Yet it had a curious attractiveness to whites who wished to dabble in sin. The boundary was semi-permeable: Chinese could go out if they returned; whites could go in as long as they returned. In this it was like Harlem in New York: a site of exotic thrills for those outside its bounds.

By the 1930s Chinatown was becoming a tourist site, seen to have such possibilities both by non-Chinese and Chinese. By this point there was increasing Chinatown participation in civic ceremonies, such as Vancouver's 50th anniversary celebration. At the same time, Chinatown was hit hard by the Depression with its welfare inadequacies. Its population declined by deaths and by departures of some for China.

B. 1947-ca. 1980: During World War II Chinatown probably experienced its greatest unity ever, supporting both China versus Japan and the Canadian war effort. The Chinese Veterans and others made possible the achievement of full Canadian citizenship, the franchise, and changes in discriminatory practices. Immigration policy changes now allowed for family reunification, and women and children now began to arrive, greatly increasing the number of families in Chinatown. Sojourners disappeared and the Chinese population became settlers. Strathcona grew and became a mostly Chinese neighbourhood. In the late l960s and early 1970s the SPOTA organization briefly pulled Strathcona together as a neighbourhood. But new opportunities available to Chinese,

including residential ones, stimulated out-migration from the neighbourhood. So did the increasing professional status of many local-born Chinese and post-1967 new-immigrant Chinese. Even merchants often moved elsewhere, thus separating their business (in Chinatown) from their residence (outside Chinatown). Freer mobility of residence meant that the population outside Chinatown grew rapidly, while that within grew slowly., With so many Chinese living all over the Lower Mainland the boundaries of Chinatown were no longer the boundaries of local Chinese society.

New populations, a new generation, and new problems led to the creation of new kinds of associations, especially by the 1970s. The Chinese Cultural Centre emerged as a leading organization, while the CBA now lost its titular leadership and became just one of three or four "spokesman" associations in Chinatown,. In many of these associations people with professional skills were often chosen as leaders – people who did not live in Chinatown. Unlike traditional organizations, some of these new organizations found more important roles for women. Most of the old style associations declined in membership and activity as older members died, finding it difficult to recruit members of the younger generation. Chinese schools also declined as so many jobs outside Chinatown were now available to Chinese youth that there was no longer an employment reason to study Chinese language and culture. Through the 1960s Chinatown seemed to be in decline. But it was still the only place where Chinese food and recreation were readily available. Opera theatres had closed, but musical societies continued, as did other Chinese arts organizations. Meanwhile, there were continued contacts with Hong Kong and, after 1970, when Canada recognized the PRC, small amounts of sponsored immigration from Mainland China and opportunities to visit relatives and travel within

China. The recognition of the PRC and the subsequent struggle over leadership of the CBA brought about a political change, from dominance of those favoring Taiwan to those with at least an open attitude towards the PRC.

The white population of Vancouver also modified its attitudes. The key event that made this possible was the Canadian government's declaration of a multicultural policy. Canada was declared a multicultural country in which each cultural group was encouraged to maintain its cultural heritage and be proud of it. This policy encouraged a new way of looking at the Chinese population – and Chinatown – on the part of both whites and the Chinese themselves. From a single immigrant enclave slum to be looked down upon, feared, (and be fascinated by), Chinatown became the physical representation of one of many nominally equal parts of a redefined Canada. Chinatown could now be redefined as the centre or core of Chinese culture in Vancouver. And Chinese culture was, as part of the Canadian mosaic, ipso facto, a good thing, something that it was necessary to preserve. The emergence of the PRC on the world stage and its easier access for Canadians after 1978 contributed to a more positive view of things Chinese; but the rethinking of Canada involved in the Multicultural Policy was critical. Non-Chinese increasingly went to Chinatown for restaurant meals. And, as Chinese food was internationally promoted as a "world class" cuisine, the attractions of Chinatown restaurants increased. As "chineseness" became acceptable, Chinatown was seen as a treasure to be preserved, both for tourism (restaurants and chinoiserie trinkets), but also for its historical value to Vancouver. What was once to be plowed over by freeways had become, by city decree in the 1970s, an "historic area."