*Global Chinese Migrants and Performing Chineseness**

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Introduction

It is now widely accepted in the literature that the ethnicity of Chinese overseas varies by place, circumstance, time and other determinants, past and present. "Hybridity" is an often used general term suggesting that variety. Yet there persists among the globally resident persons of Chinese background the notion of some kind of "Chineseness" that ought to be present in "communities," groups, and individual persons of Chinese background. It seems that there should be some discernable characteristics—an essential —or essentialized—something called "Chineseness": something in their hybridity that is classifiable as somehow "Chinese." Efforts to define it are common, especially at popular levels. Global Chinese themselves seem to feel an obligation to find Chineseness in themselves and translate it to their children.

In this essay I will take up the efforts of ethnic self–definition (Chineseness) at the level of the family and individual, especially the task of the new immigrant to a given Global City. My discussion will be at the practical, not theoretical, level. It is based upon both relevant literature and some years of observation and interviewing. I will argue that immigration and settlement stimulate a need to redefine oneself and one's family in ways that will adapt to the new environment yet be consistent with one's values, if possible. I will assume that (1) one's ethnicity is to a large extent self-made and therefore manipulable, and (2) that Global Cities usually contain significant numbers of Chinese and are at least prospectively multicultural in character. The new immigrant, in such cases, is moving to a place where there are already Chinese residing. My Global City example throughout will be Vancouver, where I live and carry on part of my localized research. The task of the new immigrant families, as I see it, is how to present themselves as acceptably Chinese—both to Chinese already present and to the general local society. Thus, new immigrants must both imagine appropriate versions of Chineseness but also be seen by local Chinese and by non-Chinese to be appropriately Chinese by performing some versions of Chineseness.

Immigrant Chinese bring with them a variety of Chineseness of their own, depending upon the Chinese cultural contexts of which they have previously been a part, whether in China or somewhere else. Coming to

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a Global City where there are already enough Chinese residents to form groupings and communities, the newcomers may face pressures from whatever definitions of Chineseness those residents have accepted and sometimes tried to enforce. In Global Cities there may well be several Chinese groupings, each with its own version of Chineseness and perhaps some attempts at discipline through institutions it sponsors: socio-political rituals and "community" events, social and cultural organizations for adults, and Chinese schools for children. The immigrant family may choose to be part of one or more of these. Or it may wish to be independent and chart its own course. Its resources for doing so draw upon its previous experience, trips to China or other sites of Chinese residence, the advice of locally experienced friends, the media, and—over the past fifteen years—the internet.

The internet has been written about mostly as a source of global cyber-communities of Chinese. Less has been said about the individual and family in relation to the internet. In this case, internet websites for Chinese viewers, besides linking families to a local or to a transnational group, can also allow independence from either kind of group and facilitate personalized versions of an essential Chineseness. Of course the internet may also be directly useful to immigrants in other ways: by providing information about migration, settlement, commercial, and other employment opportunities, news from a previous "home," examples of possibilities for a transnational life, integration into the new country, heritage preservation, children's education, news about China, and other subjects. These are likely to be subjects of interest to the new immigrant. Some internet sites can help address one's personal history: these are matters of reflecting on and reassessing previous experience of "Chinese" lives, and concern about definition of heritage to pass on to children. It used to be said that immigrants were too busy getting settled and adapting to a new life and environment to look backward to previous homes and heritages. Their history and experiences were seen as a kind of "cultural baggage," brought with them, perhaps unwittingly. But it is now clear that looking back is part of adapting. And now, with internet websites intended for the Global Chinese, there is instant availability of choices of interpretations of China, examples of Global Chinese lives other than your own, heritage material and more. Thus, one can easily look both outward and backward and thereby facilitate reflecting on one's own life and reinterpreting it as a basis for addressing the present.

But the task of creating—or recreating—Chineseness is only part of what adaptation requires. There is also the matter of the local framework: opportunities, cultural definitions and restraints in the Global City as a whole—matters that may be defined nationally and locally. One must be able to present a version, or versions, of Chineseness that fit relations with both other local Chinese in the city and non-Chinese expectations and assumptions about Chinese as well. In a Global City, if it is at least somewhat

multicultural, multiculturalism itself can be one of the frameworks within which the newcomer must negotiate his route to "success." In this essay, with Vancouver as the example, the frameworks are Canadian multiculturalism and its limitations, and Vancouver rhetoric and its self-definitions.

Mobility and Self-Presentation

In focusing on these problems and ways to address them, I mean to deviate from much of the recent literature on migrant mobility of Chinese and others that makes it appear that individuals move from place to place globally with little or no trauma. That may be true of those whose resources of language, cultural and professional skills, and financial support would ease any shocks. It is not necessarily the case for the majority. Although certain common themes in global consumer culture and popular products provide a familiar carryover, it is still, for most of us, a matter of some effort to adjust to societies where contexts and meanings for commonly known practices and ideas are different from those we are accustomed to. There is the usual resentment of required changes, and there are the all-too-frequent cases of status reduction in the new environment. Even for those with all the skills and attributes needed for a smooth passage to success in work life, there are questions of meaning in their personal lives. It seems to me that in the newcomer situation one must both create personal networks and ways of presenting oneself; there must also be a sense of the validity of what you are doing in terms of your own life as you understand it. In Vancouver, for example, for newcomer Chinese these considerations may lead to joining a Chinese Evangelical Protestant Christian church, even if you were not previously a Christian. This kind of church provides both social networks and personal meaning through what I understand are its sometimes intense practices of fellowship and self-examination. But whether in church or not, self-presentation becomes an important task. In a place like Vancouver, where there is a large and diverse Chinese society, that means presenting yourself as some kind of Chinese to the ethnic Chinese population of interest to you. And, if you plan to stay awhile, it also means a self-presentation that works for non-Chinese as well.

How is this done? Besides resorting to the internet and other sources of information, one may use past experience to organize present life and pursuit of goals. Some of this facilitates both adaptation to the new environment and maintenance of ongoing transnational links to the previous society. For example, the secondary school or university from which you graduated in your previous country may not have been of much importance to you earlier but now becomes an organizing centre for you and other newcomers who graduated from it. The school alumni association, especially popular now among ethnic Chinese in various parts of the world, brings together, typically, middle class Chinese who use the alumni (or, as it's sometimes

called, “Friends of the School”) organization that they form as a device for social support, as a networking cohort, and as a status reference group in their new country of residence. These organizations, which usually also exist in the country where the school is located, provide financial assistance to the school in question. The ability of the organization to do so lends donor status to its individual members. That is particularly important for a migrant who has just suffered a loss of status as a newcomer in the country he is now in. For this person, the school alumni association is a morale-boosting reminder of a certain status enjoyed in the previous country and a supporter of a sense of self-respect in the face of current difficulties in the new country.

Another pre-internet method of self-presentation may also be of use, particularly so for the Chinese male immigrant of modest achievements and resources. It has long been said of such ethnic Chinese migrant males around the world that one of the first things they seek as newcomers anywhere is “to be taken seriously” by Chinese in the new society. That need may be addressed by joining organizations and, as soon as possible, achieving officer status therein, thus producing an impressive personal business card with references to responsible positions in a number of associations. Another rather famous device for positive self-presentation is the acquisition of a prestigious automobile. Or, as a classic family discussion is supposed to have put it years ago: “When shall we buy a Benz?” (These days, the standard for Chinese—and other immigrants—may no longer be “the Benz.”)

But the technology now provides additional, more distant resources for these and other tasks. There are now various websites, in Chinese and in English, aimed at the global Chinese. Some offer commercial networking opportunities. Some are issue-oriented, especially those concerned with discrimination and human rights. Others are project-oriented, such as the promotion of democracy or Christianity in China or among Chinese overseas. Some offer news (and provide for interactive commentary) about China, local or national. Some are targeted at particular groups of Chinese outside of China: the global Hakkas, or the Chinese from the Philippines. Some were organized by Chinese scholars and students in North America. Others are the work of professionals in various parts of the world. In short, the Chinese outside China are served by an unusually rich and diverse array of sites to choose from.

Who visits these and why? One estimate has it that 60% of the Chinese in North America have access to the internet. Does that mean that Mr. and Ms. Average Global Chinese and their family are using their access to read what is available on these? To visit commercial sites in order to improve the family business? To have their children visit the scenic wonders of China with “cultural retention” in mind? Or to participate in the discussions on China’s politics? Most of the research I know about focuses upon diasporic Chinese intellectuals and professionals. They are the originators of many sites, and

the best-tracked participants in discussions. Of course their activities are the most easily researched. Many are university colleagues or professional associates of those researchers who are writing about them. They are highly accessible because they want the understanding and support of their non-Chinese associates. But can we consider them typical of all Global Chinese? Or are they simply the ones most apt to participate in the discourses on the themes listed above? Do Mr. and Ms. Average Global Chinese visit the discourse sites (forums, chat rooms, news groups, blogs, etc.) but passively, and only for information? Perhaps their general Chineseness is already being supported by visits to the commercial and other sites. Their visits to the discourse sites may have only the same general effect.

The websites aimed at the Global Chinese are not only numerous; their discourses are also given over to certain dominant themes. And the migrant who merely seeks information may quickly become aware of where they are attempting to lead him or her. Perhaps the major discursive theme is that of persisting global discrimination against ethnic Chinese and the necessity of uniting Global Chinese to oppose it. The examples given include the Indonesian riots and rapes of 1998, the Wen Ho Lee case in the United States in 1999, and the ongoing effort to require a conclusive apology from Japan for the Rape of Nanking and other atrocities. What is presented here, in terms relevant to historical understanding and its ethnicity consequences, is global Chinese history as victimization. Unfortunately, what may be encouraged by participation in this movement is a backlash in those countries that see any global unifying by ethnic Chinese as another sign that Chinese everywhere owe loyalty only to China and to each other—not to the countries where they reside.

One last point here: what is sustained and developed by some of these websites is the idea of global Chinese as possessed of a single identity, as *huaren*—or Chinese people – not attached necessarily to any nation, including China. The term *huaren*, which has given its name to some websites, may be seen by some ethnic Chinese people as their primary, or even their only, identity. Others may merely choose *huaren* as one of their stock of possible identities. They may visit interactive discursive sites and participate, or they may visit without participating.

Clearly, the internet has now made educating yourself in Chineseness and how Chineseness, in its varying ways, manifests itself around the world, much easier than ever before. One may pose questions, read the experiences and self-expressions of other Chinese around the world, learn what they think about how China figures in their sense of self, and so on. This kind of interest goes beyond adaptation to new local conditions and touches on values and heritage. Migrants are usually interested in having connections, including those of personal identity, with their most meaningful sites of previous attachment. And they want this particularly once their locally born

children are in school. Heritage preservation becomes important. But what was the heritage?

The existence of a "global information society" through the internet facilitates heritage preservation and even heritage development. Parents who have never thought much about their own Chineseness can now educate themselves in its various possibilities and meanings and what parts of it they may want for their children. The creation of family histories and genealogies, which used to be a leisure pursuit later in life, can now be encouraged among newcomers, partly because published or informal genealogies of some families and lineages are now available online, and there are Chinese genealogy specialists who will help you do your own. If you have never thought much until now about how your family's practices fit—or do not fit—into the great generalities of Chinese cultural rhetoric, such as "Confucianism," it is now much easier than before to educate yourself in the norms of Chinese "high culture" of the past and "high" and "not so high" culture of the present. Here, the resort to these sites may produce some problems. Many sites have a tendency to present "Chinese culture" ahistorically, as an ever-the-same package of cultural and moral truths. The possible problem here is for Mr. and Ms. Average Global Chinese, who may find this simplistic version the most convenient answer to the question of what to believe about themselves and what to teach their children. The children, at least, are unlikely to find this entirely satisfactory.

But if the interest is not heritage and "traditional culture" but contemporary culture—the "not so high" culture—there are plenty of Hong Kong data at hand. Thus, if you are not from Hong Kong but wish to present yourself as embodying the legendary business savvy ascribed generally to Hong Kong people, you can readily educate yourself in that.

So the general point here is that in the digital age technology facilitates the acquisition of raw materials and the development of skills that make possible personal identity recasting and personal presentation—for oneself and for one's children. At least part of that will be presentation as a Chinese.

What seems to be happening, then, is that rather than just "cultural maintenance" as a way of keeping open options to return or be transnational, and ways of passing on a supposed heritage to children, there is now also cultural identity manipulation. Besides adjustments to encompass and mutually adjust the past and the present and balancing the "there" with the "here," there are now—or can be—personal research projects based on a much wider understanding than before. Instead of what used to be called "cultural baggage" unconsciously brought from China, there is now cultural information for self-presentation, to make one acceptable to local Hong Kongers, or Taiwanese, or Shanghai people, or Beijing people, and to the non-Chinese in your new global city of residence.

Nationalism and Ethnicity

We have been speaking of Chineseness, as part of the ethnicity of individuals and families of Chinese background. "Chinese," of course, is also a nationality and citizenship term. The cities and countries to which ethnic Chinese migrate, though often de facto multicultural in resident population, retain a national form, as policy maker, as political citizenship certifier, and, unavoidably, as a context in which individuals, families, and organizations define their own ethnicity. The classifications the nation and its local institutions use for new immigrants—and even for residents of some longevity—tend to be nationally derived ones. Thus, despite all their diversity of previous experience, time of arrival, place of birth, class and status, "Chinese" is the term commonly used by governments for all persons of Chinese background. The media do much the same thing. It is easier to speak of "the Chinese community" than it is to deal with the variety of communities, and non-community individuals and families. Thus, "Chinese" in local or national media may refer to nationality; or it may refer to a presumed one-dimensional cultural "Chineseness." Either way, this usage of "Chinese" conceals the variety of local and status identities we have talked about in this essay. In the case of contemporary Vancouver, immigrants of Chinese background come in largest numbers from Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. But they are also from Southeast Asian countries, Latin America, South Africa and Europe. Some of the latter have never lived in China, but may have lived in more than one "overseas" location, with resultant complexities of experience and self-interpretation of their cultural and social status.

Take, for example, the organizing principles under which some immigrant associations come into being in Vancouver. These are voluntary associations that immigrants form once they have settled in a new country. For Chinese, these historically have been usually the so-called social service or 'benevolent" associations. This kind of association still exists. But more recently there are also Chinese associations based on professional status. And, as we have seen, there are also organizations whose members are graduates of a given Chinese school, whether in China or somewhere abroad. In the case of the benevolent associations, the organizing principle may be one of region either within the ancestral country or within a given sender nation where members had once resided. And, if the individual has lived in more than one country before coming to Vancouver, then any of those countries—most often the most recent one—may give name and organizing life to an immigrant association. It can go further. In Vancouver there are two associations of ethnic Chinese who have come to this city from the Philippines. For them, the Philippines is more important than China. But there are two associations because some of these immigrants lived Chinese lives in the Philippines in a Cantonese linguistic and cultural context while

others lived there as Fujianese, or Hokkiens. Or, take another Philippine example: the organization of Hokkien-speaking Chinese from Manila whose members graduated from Philippine Cultural Highschool (a Chinese school) in that city. It is neither simply their putative "Chineseness" nor their putative "Filipinoness" that organizes them. Those are backgrounds to the detailed focus on a specific institution in Manila that organizes them for adaptation in Vancouver and for ongoing transnational social and cultural life in Manila. The point is that using national and broad ethnic labels to identify immigrant settlers now has its limitations.

Chinese Migration to Vancouver

To understand Chinese migration to Vancouver, we need to briefly consider the history of Asian migration to Canada. Like the United States, Canada was settled by Europeans moving from east to west. As in the United States, settlement and control were effected by marginalizing the aboriginal people and limiting immigration from non-European sources, particularly from Asia. Nationalist rhetoric thus made of Canada a nation that was European in dominant population and in dominant culture. Asian immigrants were considered useful and so were allowed to come but limited both in number and opportunities once in Canada. Chinese, between 1885 and 1923, had to pay a substantial head tax to enter Canada (a requirement not made of any other immigrants), though exceptions were possible for established businessmen and a few other favored categories. That method of limitation was followed, between 1923 and 1947, by a policy of outright exclusion. Other Asian-derived immigrant populations and their descendants were limited by the use of other techniques. Even citizenship, when available to these populations, did not include voting and other rights. Thus, by the late 1940s, only a small proportion of Canada's population, most of it in British Columbia—and especially in Vancouver—was of Asian background, and its members were limited in rights and opportunities. There was no doubt who "owned" Canada and Vancouver, and the cultural norm was "Anglo Conformity."

Then, over the next twenty years, from the late 1940s to the late 1960s, citizenship concepts were changed; voting and occupational opportunities, and immigration equality were all achieved. The race-based character of law and policy was changed to something like a norm of skills and assets. In 1971 Canada was declared to be a "multicultural" country. Instead of "Anglo Conformity" there was now to be a multicultural "mosaic" with each nationality group contributing. Moreover, the presumed inherited cultures of immigrants were to be preserved. And not only was Asian immigration allowed; like immigration in general, it was encouraged. That was because the needs of the national economy in general and support of the national retirement system in particular demanded a large amount of immigration. It

was people in Asia especially—particularly ethnic Chinese—who responded to this new opportunity. Chinese immigration now boomed, especially from Hong Kong in the 1980s and 1990s, when anxieties over Retrocession to China fuelled mobilities. Annual immigration figures in Canada averaged about 200,000, and Asian countries were the leading sources. The Asian proportion of the total Canadian population remained modest. But since disproportionate numbers of Asian-derived migrants went either to Toronto or Vancouver, proportions in those places—especially in Vancouver—were much greater.

The Chinese population of Greater Vancouver now reached 350,000, amounting to 15% or more of the total population. And in the City of Vancouver itself, it was as high as 25% or more. Spatially, Chinese were scattered over the entire metropolitan area, present in all occupations, and, as elsewhere in North America, making up a large proportion of the students in local universities. In Vancouver visitors to the city now expressed amazement that almost every other person they saw on the street was—or appeared to be—"Chinese." It is not that the development I'm speaking of was not found in other cities in North America. Nor was it that Vancouver's Chinese population was larger than that of any other city in North America. New York, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Southern California—and even Toronto in Canada—have larger numbers of Chinese. It was the proportion of the population that at least "looked Chinese" that was so noticeable in Vancouver. Likewise, in Canada as a whole, the number of Asian-derived persons in the population was only half that of the United States. But they were part of a total population of Canada that was only about one-seventh or one-eighth that of the United States. It was the visibility of the "Chinese" that was noticed and remarked upon by visitors and even residents of Vancouver as well.

Diversity was another hallmark of Vancouver's Chinese population. What had been an ethnic Chinese group made up almost entirely of Cantonese now included ethnic Chinese from almost everywhere. Now, Mandarin speech, rather than Cantonese, was increasingly heard on the streets. Other dialects of Chinese were also present. Chinese language newspapers that were locally based and served the needs of the "Old Overseas Chinese" (*loh wah kiu*) population, as the earlier wave of immigrants thought of themselves, were now replaced by well-financed local editions of papers published in Hong Kong or Taiwan. Many of the newcomers came with resources of various kinds that eased their path to success in Canada: education, professional or business status, and language skills. This was in line with some of the norms of Canadian immigration policy. Now, the earlier settlers (*loh wah kiu*), with the cultural and other adaptations they had made to western Canadian society, were somewhat intimidated by these new waves of socially mobile and culturally "more Chinese" newcomers. The varieties of Chineseness that were now present and available in Vancouver—and in Toronto—were

astonishing. And, over the thirty-five years since the new policies were established, new Vancouver-born generations have added to the cultural complexity. In other words, settled ways of "being Chinese" and performing Chineseness have been radically challenged and altered.

Multiculturalism, "Minorities," and "Visibility"

When Canada officially declared itself to be a multicultural country, it did so for two main reasons. One was to encourage needed immigration from around the world. But the other reason was to create new players and new balances in Canadian politics by re-imagining the country and its history. Instead of the simple, ancient, and ongoing political struggle of French and English Canada, a third player was now evoked: "all the others," or "the ethnics," brought in by the new immigration, who were mostly neither speakers of English nor of French. The formula for reinvention of the country included the idea of two "founding races": the English and the French and, hence, two official languages: English and French. Aboriginals were a separate, and mostly ignored, category. So the formulation was: two founding "races," two official languages, a separate category for aboriginals, and a multicultural nature for the country.

This formulation has been generally accepted by Canadians, though not without criticisms. The usual question asked has been: if the visual image is that of a mosaic of cultures, doesn't that lead to a population of independent and unrelated cultural units and thereby the loss of needed national unity? Examples of this in other multicultural countries are easy to point out. In the Canadian case, multiculturalism seems to have done a bit better, at least in terms of popular acceptance and actual employment. For Canada, lacking a positive sense of identity as a nation, multiculturalism has become one of two Canadian characteristics (the other being state provided health care) that supply a distinctive and positive identity. For many Canadians, these features are a source of pride and are regularly invoked as if they were unique to Canada. In Vancouver, practical multiculturalism includes conspicuous sharing of cultural features with one another, encouraged in the schools and elsewhere. When this works, the various bits of "mosaic" seem less likely to remain apart and sealed off from one another. Practicalities aside, the Canadian investment in multiculturalism is considerable, especially in terms of identity, where comparisons with the United States are almost unavoidable. The most common identity of Canada used to be a negative one: "we are not the United States." Adopting official multiculturalism and maintaining a publicly supported health care system gives Canadians a formula for positive identity. Canada can now be seen—or at least see itself—as more generous and humane than the United States. At its crudest, most self-flattering and delusional, there is the notion that the United States forces assimilation ("the melting pot") upon newcomers while Canada allows all cultures to survive.

Or, as it is often said: "they have the melting pot; we have the mosaic."

As a part of the re-imagining of Canada, multiculturalism required ways to talk about discrimination and other abuses that might occur in the new multicultural society. Here the definitions were not official, but the result of research and discussion by academics and government. Using the majority-minority conception that democratic regimes (and others) regularly employ, the population was conceptually divided into a majority (mostly Euro Canadians), and various "visible minorities" including, of course, persons of Asian background. They were "visible" by appearance—by apparent physical characteristics, with assumptions about that in the eyes and mind of the beholder. And the beholder—the one to whom they were "visible"—was of course a member of the Euro Canadian majority. "Visible minority" thus became a substitute for the discredited term "race" (except in the case of "founding races"). Because it seemed to reflect the majority's view, "visible minorities" had the sanction of "majority rule." And if the majority was no longer Anglo by the late twentieth century, it was at least of European derivation. This recognition of physical difference had the effect of encouraging continued racism and race-conditioned identities and rankings.

Thus, under multiculturalism all cultures were now supposed to be equal. But there were still founding races, and there was the majority. Majority/minority thinking encouraged thinking in terms of a norm and deviations, or exceptions. And, that, in turn, maintained exceptional attention to the vulnerable individuals and groups defined as minorities under these terms. "Visible minorities" were especially not to be discriminated against just because they had the deficiency, or at least eccentricity, of being "visibly" different from the "majority." Thus, multiculturalism sounded a note of equality of cultures and thereby of their bearers; but in fact there were still national norms that had to do with politics, who "founded the country," and who the most numerous voters might be. The "visibles" were thereby reminded—not that they needed to be—that, at the least, they—alone—would have to go on answering questions about why they appear as they do. In the 1980s my students of Chinese background, though born in Canada, reported regularly being asked "where are you really from?"—a question not asked of Euro Canadians unless their surnames—not their "visibility" —provoked curiosity about ancestral national origin. The question "where are you really from" was shortly after this made famous by Ien Ang in one of her essays.

Thus, despite official multiculturalism and popular Canadian pride about it, the use of the term "visible minority" reminds the ex-Asians and everyone else that there remains a norm and deviations from it.

Vancouver Rhetoric

Besides the nationally used frameworks and terminologies of multiculturalism, "minorities," and "visibility," Vancouver has its own local frameworks of presumed local culture and self regard. Much of that is related to how Vancouver seems to be seen by others. In terms of Canada, with its official history of national creation from east to west, Vancouver was the terminus of the railroad that united Canada. Eastern Canada, with its settlements of Europeans, was the active site of Canadian history. The connection of British Columbia and Vancouver to that was secured by constructing the railroad, a construction in which Chinese from China and California played a role. Vancouver was important only because it was linked to the important parts of Canada where there might some day be serious and sustained interest in the Pacific and Asia. In those terms, Vancouver has always been at "the end of the tracks"—a place that collects strange enthusiasms and people, but where real history never happens.

Then, beginning in the 1980s, as the term "Pacific Rim" began to be used in discussions of trade and other reorientations, Vancouver began to dream of drifting away from unappreciative Canada into some kind of Pacific grouping. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, a new notion developed, encouraged especially by international surveys that found the city to be one of the most livable on the planet. It now seemed possible that what had been last among eastern Canadians could somehow become the first internationally on some basis other than political geography. It could be argued that Canadian multiculturalism seemed to work better in Vancouver than anywhere else in the country. Although there were racist incidents, this local society, on the whole, seemed more harmoniously multicultural than other cities in Canada. Could it be better even than other, non-Canadian "world class" cities? Its success seemed to be because, rather than dividing us from each other as many said multiculturalism would do, individual cultural attributes were shared from one group to another. Vancouver's favorite lunch or snack became Japanese sushi: "Japanese" style, to be sure, but found everywhere in Vancouver at places mostly operated by Chinese and other non-Japanese. The Dragon Boat Races, promoted by two leading Chinese Canadians, became a multicultural festival celebrating Vancouver. The Chinese New Year Parade began to include non-Chinese ethnic organizations. Chinese New Year became a recognized event for the city. One version of a Chinese New Year celebration, called "Gung Haggis Fat Choy," a dinner combining supposedly Scottish and Chinese elements, has become well attended, and there is a kind of mantra one hears around the tables and on the stage: "Only in Vancouver." This, of course, ignores (or is unaware of) the fact that similar cultural fusions are occurring in many cities around the world.

A more sober and better informed example of cultural harmony is the Dr. Sun Yat-sen Garden in Chinatown; "better informed" if for no

other reason than because it is known that the Chinatown architect who designed the overall plan also does Chinese gardens in various American cities. The Sun Yat-sen Garden has many meanings. It brings a kind of classical Chineseness from China to rest in Vancouver, thereby attracting Vancouverites and tourists as visitors. It locates this non-Cantonese style garden in the old Cantonese Chinatown, thereby connecting both China as a whole to this neighborhood and its history, but also connecting to Dr. SunYat-sen's historic visits to this Vancouver Chinatown. It is a civic asset, as one of the most important gardens in the city, and it is an important case of cooperation between Chinese and non-Chinese in its establishment. The *loh wah kiu* and newer Chinese immigrants probably could not have done it by themselves. It became possible because various garden clubs in Vancouver, whose members are some of the city's most affluent and well connected, joined in to make this a city project—one that expresses the city's compensation for earlier negative treatment of the Chinese. The Garden, by its character as a classical version from Suzhou, not identified with Hong Kong, Guangzhou, or other historical sources of Chinese migration to Vancouver, and by its being named after Sun Yat-sen—a Cantonese but a figure of national significance in China—makes a multitude of connections and expresses a variety of unifying ideas.

Conclusion

What is the present state of Chinese populations in Vancouver? What are some possible developments as they affect the Chineseness of groups and of families? A rough estimate of the groupings of Chinese in Vancouver might read something like this: 1. Descendants of pre-1980 immigrants, who call themselves *loh wah kiu* (Old Overseas Chinese); 2. Hong Kong immigrants since 1980; 3. Taiwan immigrants since the late 1980s; 4. Mainland China immigrants, 1970s-1990s; 5. Recent Mainland immigrants from Beijing; 6. Recent Mainland immigrants from Shanghai. There are smaller groupings of Chinese from Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, Peru, and other places. Parenthetically, this six-fold classification of immigrant and settler Chinese does not include those people of Chinese background who are more or less present in Vancouver but not immigrants or residents. As such, they may see themselves mostly as members of virtual communities in cyberspace; as *huaren*, perhaps. In any case, they are largely unaffected by what they may be called by others or are supposed to call themselves.

Of the six immigrant groups just mentioned, members of those who attend Vancouver's universities may choose to join campus Chinese student associations. These are divided approximately into groups one to four above. But many students from all groups cross such lines and interact regularly with one another. It also needs to be noted that within the six

groups there are sometimes subdivisions: for instance, some Chinese from Taiwan are committed to Taiwanese culture and others are not. Some other subdivisions include: occupation, class, timing, and circumstances of one's arrival in Vancouver and, for those born locally, generational status.

What has happened to local sources of Chineseness in Vancouver? In the old Chinatown, the Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA), once the community umbrella organization, became affiliated with Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s and sponsored official Republic of China versions of Chineseness. In the 1970s, the CBA came under the leadership of younger local-born Cantonese (*loh wah kiu*) who then, in a development common in global Chinese societies about that time, created a Chinese Cultural Centre. Although many of its activities were focused on Chinatown heritage and Chinese Canadian culture and the official language was English, Mandarin classes were sponsored. By the 1990s however, newer immigrants from Hong Kong had captured the Cultural Centre and, although they celebrated Chinatown, sponsoring the annual New Year Parade, they also sponsored Hong Kong night markets in the summer, and oriented cultural activities toward Hong Kong and Mainland China. The de facto language became Hong Kong Cantonese, but Mandarin continued to be taught. Young and middle-aged *loh wah kiu*, thus alienated from the Cultural Centre, welcomed the Chinese Canadian Historical Society when it appeared after 2000, and they became the majority of its membership. Meanwhile, new immigrant professionals from Hong Kong created and sustained a social service organization called SUCCESS, based in Chinatown but serving new immigrants throughout the metropolitan area.

Outside of the traditional Chinatown, there are now new Chinatowns in Vancouver neighborhoods and a whole new Chinese-focused area in the near suburb of Richmond, where ethnic Chinese have become almost half of the population. Richmond has no "Chinatown." It is a city of malls, most of which are heavily Chinese. There is no Chinese "community" in Richmond, since it is low housing costs, convenient location, and Chinese stores and restaurants that attract immigrant Chinese, not any sense of shared Chineseness. Indeed, there is no Chinese language common to Richmond's Chinese, who are from everywhere. They also live everywhere in Richmond. In Richmond, as in other near suburbs and Vancouver itself, there is now a rich choice of Chinese-language Christian churches. There are also some major Buddhist temples, mostly the work of post-1980 Hong Kong immigrants. Other forms of Chinese popular religion are still maintained in a few of the older Vancouver Chinatown associations and in the privacy of one's own home.

What will happen to Mr. and Ms. Average Global Chinese and their family over time? Obviously, if they stay they will become settlers, rather than new immigrants. Then, as "oldtimers," they will be deeply

experienced in Chineseness and adaptation. But their involvements—and those of their children—will have become more complicated. Their Chineseness and their adaptive strategies will have become part of a dialectic with the institutions and practices that formed parameters of their opportunities but are now integrated into their lives. The labels put upon them by Canada may still be there: "multicultural"; "minority"; "visible"; "mosaic." If they remain in Vancouver, there will also be the Vancouver labels to deal with: "Pacific Rim"; "Global City"; "Best Place on Earth." There is also updating of other considerations. What are Vancouver's and Canada's relations with China now, and where are they going? How does that affect this family? There is also the newness of the next wave of ethnic Chinese immigrants and thereby the alienation from—and sometimes resentment of—these newcomers and their (apparent or presumed) versions of Chineseness. These developments are all a part of Chineseness as a work in progress.

Besides individuals and families, the various Chinese populations of Vancouver and their "Chinesenesses" are also shaped by these and other issues. How far will the City of Vancouver go in trying to revitalize the historic Chinatown, and what will it then be like? Assuming multiculturalism and its labels continue, will there be any change in the content? For instance, "mosaic" implies that each piece of the mosaic is a homogeneous cultural unity: that there is a uniform Chineseness that fits the "Chinese" piece of the mosaic, though we know this is not the case. Will that change? Will "minority" go on being used in the same way even after the numerical plurality of Euro Canadians has disappeared? Even now, to call the ethnic Chinese populations of Vancouver a "minority," given their share of the total population, seems to be an absurdity. What happens when there is no numerical majority? What happens if the majority becomes "Chinese"? What cultural redefinitions will be needed or forthcoming then—whether by government or by the "ethnic" populations? If there is no majority, then there should be no minorities and hence no visible minorities.

Some second-generation Chinese Canadians would prefer a non-visibility, non-heritage formation of Canada, where the only identity label used is the national one. Yet many second-generation Chinese Canadians in Vancouver are interested in their family's heritage. Vancouver is one Global City (Melbourne comes to mind as another) where ethnic Chinese families are beginning to systematically compile their histories. In the Vancouver case, there is now the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia, which assists this process as part of a long-range plan to rewrite the history of the province in multicultural terms. The hope is to adopt the spirit of Canadian multiculturalism in history writing, by including everyone, through family stories that become family histories and, in turn, part of the written history of the province. The first step, focusing on Chinese families, should help all of us better understand the varieties of Chineseness, past and

present. This Vancouver effort fits well with a trend now in the literature and fuelled by personal stories told by non-academics: to bring the study of Global Chinese identities down from the "community" to the family and individual level.

If multiculturalism continues in Vancouver in some form, what will it mean for some of the range of Chineseness and some of its determinants? Already, with the sharing of cultures that goes on between and among the pieces of the "mosaic," some practices that helped define Chineseness are becoming universalized. If everyone regularly eats Chinese food and celebrates Chinese New Year, then these markers of Chineseness may be subject to appropriation and modification by people with no Chinese background. If, as has begun to happen, university graduates in Vancouver —both ones of Chinese background and non-Chinese—go to Hong Kong or Taiwan looking for jobs, is this dimension of Chineseness taken away? It may not be; it may remain viable as "Chinese" if, as often happens, the ethnic Chinese graduate is there to establish or maintain a link that is part of a family strategy, while the non-Chinese is not yet at that point. If what we see in Vancouver becomes generally the case in Global Cities, then multicultural sharing (as opposed to its alleged dividing) may become a new and influential shaping force. That possibility, along with changing attitudes in Global Cities toward the rise of China, changing attitudes toward religion, and changing meanings of nationalism and modernity may yield totally new perspectives in the history of Global Chineseness and its performances.

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