

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Department of History

#1297-1873 East Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z1

Tel: (604) 822-2561

Fax: (604) 822-6658

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Lynn Copeland, University Librarian
Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive
Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6

Dear Lynn Copeland:

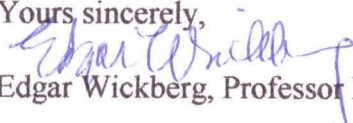
I am writing to express my absolute support of your project to digitize the *Chinese Times (Ta Han Kung Pao)* newspaper and to develop search engines and translations of it. I write as a member of the group that first made use of this paper for research. Our project group, based at UBC, produced the book, **From China to Canada. A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada** (1982). Part of the project included preparing a rough and selective year-by-year contents list to this newspaper, which was already in the Special Collections Division of the UBC Library. On completion of our project we transferred that list along with the archives we had assembled to Special Collections as the "Chinese Canadian Research Collection." The *Chinese Times (CT)* was enormously important in our preparation of **From China to Canada**, as I have indicated in the book. The *CT* has also been used frequently since then by me and by others who read Chinese. It is not only the oldest and longest surviving file of a Chinese newspaper in Canada; it is the single most important source for the history of the Chinese in Western Canada, and one of the most important for Canada as a whole. Over the years I have been repeatedly asked by students and members of the general public about aspects of Chinese Canadian history of research interest to them. Almost always their research efforts are frustrated by their inability to read Chinese and the absence of comprehensive finding aids for the most important source, the *Chinese Times*. I can think of no more important project for understanding the Chinese in our population than the provision of indexes and translations of the *Chinese Times*.

But "understanding the Chinese" now goes well beyond being a matter of interest only to those of Chinese background or specialists like me. As attitudes towards multiculturalism and history writing begin to change, we are moving away from seeing the Chinese as a specialized topic, separate from mainstream history. Instead, we are beginning to think in more expanded and inclusive terms when we think of the mainstream history of, say, British Columbia. In recognition of this development, several of us are in the process of forming the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia. Our initial goal is to promote source preservation and research on the Chinese of this province. But our long-term objective is to stimulate similar activities with

reference to other "ethnic communities," with the end result of truly inclusive multicultural histories of this province. This approach implies a much broader community of researchers of all kinds who will be interested in including the Chinese in larger frameworks of research activity. Let me give some examples. If materials about the Chinese now available only in Chinese language are made available in English with appropriate finding aids, writers of histories of literature in BC can include a Chinese dimension. A translated *Chinese Times* would make available for analysis and commentary the serialized stories by BC Chinese writers and others that appeared there over several years. Or, historians of home-front life in Canada during World War II would have access to the details of how Canada's Chinese supported that war: the debates by young Chinese men on whether to join the military, and the techniques of fund-raising in support of Canada's war effort. Histories of journalism in BC can be extended to include Chinese journalism if the *Chinese Times* can be brought into the discussion. How involved were Vancouver's Chinese in the non-Chinese life around them? Probably more than we have thought. One could research the advertisements of goods and services in the *CT*. At the level of public history, consider the walking tours of Chinatown that various groups promote. Both guides and tourists would have a deeper experience if background material now available only in the *Chinese Times* or other Chinese language sources can be read in English. Translations of the *CT* will also facilitate a much enlarged body of school use materials on the Chinese that all our children can learn from. These are only a few examples of the possible breadth of possibilities implicit in this project.

Now is the time for such a project. I have mentioned our Chinese Canadian Historical Society. Consistent with our goals, we are not an organization of ethnic Chinese people alone. We will affiliate ourselves with existing organizations that study the history and heritage of this province. We will recruit our members from that broader community of interest as well as from those who come from a Chinese heritage. We will take the study of the Chinese as the first step in an inclusive multicultural history enterprise. The timing of our formation responds not only to trends in history study but also to a great deal of activity concerning the Chinese in this city and province. The Data Base Project at UBC and SFU to which you have referred is one aspect. Another is the historical commemorative activity at Canton and Shanghai Alleys in Vancouver Chinatown. Still another is the Virtual Museum of Vancouver Chinatown, which is now associated with the Knowledge Network of BC. There are also the revitalization activities for Chinatown promoted by the Vancouver city government. Finally, there is the arrival this fall of Professor Henry Yu, a native of BC, who has been teaching Asian American History at UCLA and is now on five-year loan to UBC to begin the teaching of Asian Canadian history here. Among other things, Professor Yu's students will be required to do family histories. Those will include oral histories, of course. But if the *CT* can be made available to them (and the majority probably will not read Chinese), then his programme at UBC and its outcomes will be greatly enriched.

I hope I have made it clear why I am enthusiastic about this project – both in its goals and its timing. You have my strongest recommendation.

Yours sincerely,

Edgar Wickberg, Professor Emeritus