

**Gladys Nipp and Stephen Mah Family Award 2020 Recipient
Research Proposal by Lynn (Yu Ling) Ng, Faculty of Social Sciences**

UVic Libraries' Chinese-Canadian collections are a precious resource pool that is testament to the passion of dedicated researchers who have performed the backbreaking labor of archival compilation. As an international student from Singapore, my research interest revolves around immigration rights from a critical historical standpoint. Importantly, research is not simply about writing dissertations but also about community engagement, such as volunteering for the National Library Board (NLB) Singapore. Typical outreach activities include kidsREAD where volunteers narrate stories to schoolchildren of less privileged backgrounds. While browsing through these archives, an immense excitement welled up at the prospect of utilizing this award to enhance intercultural knowledge-building outreach activities in my home community.

The archival collections provide important pedagogical resources for schoolchildren in Singapore who seldom read about Chinese immigration from a broader perspective. Curations of artefacts from Singapore's Chinatown abound in local galleries, yet there is a dearth of awareness about international Chinatowns with whom Singapore's Chinese community has longstanding affinities with. The *Matthew Ko color films: Victoria's Chinatown and Region, c. 1939-c. 1950* offers a glimpse into the life and times of pioneering merchants whose descendants went on to establish lucrative clan-based enterprises. The familial trope of kinship reciprocity in Chinese practices of enterprise runs equally strong especially in a context of anti-immigrant hostility. Interestingly, the Chinese in Singapore have had radically different experiences of racial identity. Singapore's Chinatown is likewise a legacy of British racial segmentation, but at formal independence the Chinese majority were at the helm of governance, and have since achieved an extraordinary degree of socioeconomic standing in the city-state.

In this regard, the *Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) Fonds and online collection* are indispensable guidebooks for learning about the foundational platforms of activism spearheaded by Victoria's Chinese communities who protested against racial discrimination and public school segregation.

Victoria's Chinatown online collection has preserved the Chinatown newsletters of yesteryear, all of which will delight avid young readers in Singapore who crave for this missing chunk of historical memory. Especially thought-provoking is an essay penned by David Lai Chuen-yan who explores the origins and definitions of the term "Overseas Chinese" (*huaqiao*) from 1884-1900. In Singapore's educational curriculum, what is most needed yet in acute shortage are debates surrounding the descriptive terms for Chinese peoples who have formed settlements across the globe. This informative piece, if translated by bilingual volunteers like myself, can be used to teach about the evolving meanings and shifting connotations of *huaqiao*.



黎全恩

「華僑」一詞之起源與定義

近數十年來，我們習慣稱呼居住海外之中國人為「華僑」。於十九世紀末之前，並沒有「華僑」之稱。該詞在清朝末年，才普遍使用。五十年代後，中國與臺灣，對「華僑」一詞，更有不同之定義。

以往歷史記載，用不同之名詞，稱呼僑居海外之中國人。例如，宋元時代，泉州、廈門、潮州等地居民，出洋經商，被稱為「中國買人」、「唐人」、「中國人」等名詞，留居外地一載不返者，稱「住蕃」。滿清初期，官籍記載，多採用「唐人」、「華人」、「內地人」等名詞，並無使用「華僑」一詞。直至鴉片戰役後，西方國家殖民地大量招募中國勞工，「華人」、「華工」、「華民」、「僑民」等詞，便開始普遍使用，僑居海外之中國商人被稱為「華商」。這類名詞，可由歷史文獻引證。

域多利中華會館，於一八八四年成立，尚存有當時與清廷官吏之來往函件，茲節錄數則，作為參考：

(一) 光緒十年（一八八四年），維多利亞商人，具稟三藩市總領事黃遵憲，請在加拿大設領事館及倡建中華會館，函內陳述「英屬哥林比亞省（卑詩省），……商工日多，現華商貿易舖戶約百數十間，其築路、挖金、製魚，各傭作華工約萬六七千人，該國官人向皆厚待華人惟境連美國，近年染其苛刻之習。．．立苛例議，要抽華人工稅銀四拾元……」

(二) 光緒十一年（一八八五年），黃遵憲致函域多厘埠（維多利亞市）中華會館，商遣送失業僑胞歸國：「近來美國華人日益艱難，本署因請各輪船公司，減輕船價，以便華人之窮苦，易於回里，．．．又查貴埠華工近車路停工，無工可做……各華人則窮無可歸……使域多厘車路華人無處訴苦，……使數千華人艱苦……」

(三) 光緒十二年（一八八六年），黃遵憲呈稟駐英大臣曾紀澤交涉苛例：「……域多利各埠，自通商以來，凡我華人到此貿易，舖戶約有百數十間——光緒十年，曾立苛例，禁止華人前往，……凡有華人由中國及別國到來本埠者，每人抽丁稅銀五拾圓……」

(四) 光緒廿七年（一九零一年）駐西班牙大臣代辦王樹善籲請加拿大華僑，捐功名，修葺義和團及八國聯軍進京所損毀之廟城：「……寓美洲一帶華商不乏急公好義之人，迅即廣為勸募……捐數鉅者，自由慶親王奏請破格優獎……（實官虛銜、貢監封典，翎枝俱可）……」

(五) 光緒廿六年（一九零零年），英欽差飭令域多利中華會館調查該埠之華人職業及生意統計，會館呈報：「域多利全埠華人人口，全計三千三百五十四人……華商之營業狀況，商店共一百零六間，買舖置業銀二十九萬六千零九十元零二毛半；各商店營業總數一百零五萬九千八百零五元。……」

Photo: Excerpt from the essay "[Huaqiao] The origins and definitions of the term" in Chinatown newsletter (1994: 9), [UVic Digital Collections](#).



Photo: kidsREAD, [National Library Board](#).



Photo: Mother Tongue reading group, [Community Chinese Reading Project](#)

If granted, this award will be dedicated to expanding the resource package of NLB Singapore. Reproducing the *CCBA Fonds* and Chinatown newsletters would be a remarkable start. Pamphlets containing archival snippets will be distributed at outreach events. Young readers desperately need complementary perspectives to their romanticized worldview of 'Chinatown' as a way of reflective thinking.

Additionally, the award will be devoted to enhancing the Citizen Archivist Project led by National Archives of Singapore. These efforts include transcribing, translating and describing archives from the Chinese-Canadian Collections that will revolutionize the local landscape of heritage learning.

Be a Citizen Archivist

Join in to help make archival records more searchable for all! Select a task, collection or item to get started



Music Scene from Yesteryear: 1920s-1970s

Describe this photo collection



Lyrics from Yesteryear: 1920s-1970s

Transcribe these lyric sheets



Colonial Singapore under Sir Stamford Raffles

Transcribe these letters



