

**Gladys Nipp and Stephen Mah Family Award 2023 Winner
Research Proposal by Mikaela Chia, Faculty of Education**

**Digital Offspring Narratives of Intergenerational Racial Trauma and Resistance of the
Chinese Students' Strike (1922-1923)**

In September 1922, the Chinese community in Victoria bravely began what would come to be a yearlong enactment of resistance called the “Students’ Strike” to protest racist policies and discrimination by the Greater Victoria School Board (GVSB). Over 200 Chinese students and the wider community boycotted the public school system, refusing to accept segregation. This act of defiance against systemic racism ignited a passionate display of transgenerational solidarity within the Chinese-Canadian community.

In September 2022, stories of this momentous event would again be reawakened, as 600 members of the Chinese-Canadian community in Victoria, including descendants and family members of the original strikers and their allies, marched the same route their ancestors fled exactly one century prior. Each step marked an attempt to honour the courage and resilience enacted by their community within this historical event and the harms perpetrated against them. This commemorative march opened space for the reclamation and rewriting of stories in community.

Though largely hidden from mainstream literature, both events send a profound message of ongoing intergenerational resistance and presence. The Chinese Students’ Strike and its anniversary march are commanding counternarratives that have shattered the silence surrounding these historical injustices and they continue to push towards collective liberation.

Project Overview

Through my Master’s thesis, in partnership with the Victoria Chinatown Museum Society (VCMS) and descendants of heroes of the 1922-23 protest, we will co-create a space of

witnessing for and by the Chinese-Canadian community. Using digital storytelling and community-engaged methodologies, living stories of intergenerational racial trauma and resistance around the Chinese Students' Strike will be co-authored with descendants of participants in digital narrative form.

UVic Libraries' Chinese-Canadian Collections

The Chinese-Canadian collections housed at UVic Libraries hold some of the richest knowledge created by the generosity and community care of Victoria's Chinese Canadian community; they preserve the sanctity of stories and lived realities within this city. With respect to this project, such documents are integral in providing context and painting a picture of the longstanding history of systemic racism and wider socio-political background that defined Canada upon which this event occurred, as well as the resistance accompanying it. Even more pertinent to the proposed research, it hosts some of the few remaining pieces of documentation produced from the 1922-23 strike. These collections, particularly those within the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association's archives, offer intimate insight into the policies, documents, dialogues, active discrimination, and, in response, of even more powerful advocacy and courage that characterized the protest. They will support the research process, including literature reviews, digital storytelling processes, and reflexive thematic analysis, ensuring a thorough consideration of historical context.

Contribution and Outreach

The resulting thesis, holding the sacred stories and collaboratively determined themes from the digital narratives, could be hosted at the library and hopefully contributing to UVic's Chinese-Canadian collection and academic literature at-large. Further, the project involves community participation throughout the process. Digital narratives will be shared through outreach initiatives

with the GVSB, and VCMS, who will host an ongoing space for these stories to be witnessed in community.

Word Count: 500