



Finding Memories, Tracing Routes

Chinese Canadian Family Stories
加拿大華人家庭故事集

尋 根 之 道

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**Bilingual Edition
English-Chinese**

英中雙文版

Chinese Canadian Historical Society
of British Columbia
加華歷史協會

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Praise for *Finding Memories, Tracing Routes*, English Edition

"Finding Memories, Tracing Routes gives us the voices of Chinese Canadians so often silenced or missing from our understanding of the past. It is a wonderful reminder of the multiplicity of historical experience, of the challenges and triumphs of Canadians who struggled, often in the face of relentless racism, to build a better future for themselves and their families."

*~Dr. Mona Gleason, Associate Professor, History of Education, Children and Youth,
Department of Educational Studies, University of British Columbia*

"This book is a must-read for anyone interested in Chinese Canadian history and family history. Each piece is just as much about the process of recalling and rediscovering the past as about the families themselves. The eight authors have given us profoundly moving stories of struggle, tragedy, wisdom, and perseverance."

~Dr. Christopher Lee, Assistant Professor, English, University of British Columbia

"In these always poignant and sometimes humorous vignettes, the contributors draw on memories, mainly of childhood and youth, to explore their sense of belonging. Collectively, their stories provide a remarkable insight into the family lives, across the generations, of Chinese Canadians."

~Dr. Patricia Roy, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Victoria

"Finding Memories, Tracing Routes is an important contribution to our understanding of the Chinese immigrant experience in British Columbia. We are presented with eight distinctive and moving perspectives on the challenges faced by new arrivals. These stories linger in the memory."

~Paul Whitney, City Librarian, Vancouver Public Library

"Reading this little gem of a book is like being comfortably settled in someone's kitchen and being entertained by a variety of wonderful storytellers. These family histories provide a rich understanding of life in Canada for people of Chinese origin and of their enormous contribution to this country."

*~Jean Wilson, Associate Director and editor, British Columbia and Western
Canadian History, UBC Press*

"These stories are compelling, funny, and fascinating. Perfect for teaching or as a gift, this book presents stories that rediscover the lost voices of Chinese in B.C. and Canadian history."

*~Larry Wong, Past President, Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British
Columbia*

對 <<尋根之道>> 英文版的讚譽

“<<尋根之道>> 的故事提供給我們那些在加拿大歷史中常被壓抑或甚至失落了了的加拿大華人的聲音。這些故事感人至深地提醒我們歷史經驗的多樣性，以及加拿大華人為爭取一個對於個人和家庭都更好的未來，曾經在嚴酷的種族歧視的環境中，艱苦奮鬥、克服困難，並終於成功的經歷。”

~Dr. Mona Gleason, Associate Professor, History of Education, Children and Youth, Department of Educational Studies, University of British Columbia

“凡是對於加拿大華人歷史和家庭歷史有興趣的人，這是一本必讀之書。每一篇故事既是關於回憶與重新發現歷史的過程又是關於這些家庭本身。這八位作者與我們分享飽含生存奮鬥、人間悲劇、生活智慧以及不屈不撓的深切感人的故事。”

~Dr. Christopher Lee, Assistant Professor, English, University of British Columbia

“在這些辛辣又時而幽默的小品裡，作者通過他們主要是青少年時期的回憶，尋求他們個人的歸屬感。整個來看，這些故事對跨世代的加拿大華人家庭生活，提供了卓越的洞見。”

~Dr. Patricia Roy, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Victoria

“<<尋根之道>> 對我們理解卑詩省加拿大華人的歷史是一個重要的貢獻。本書對新移民所面對的挑戰，提供了八個特殊而又動人的視角。讀過這本書之後，這幾個故事將長久地縈繞在讀者的記憶之中。”

~Paul Whitney, City Librarian, Vancouver Public Library

“讀這本燦爛發光的書好像是舒坦地坐在人家的廚房裡傾聽著不止一個感人肺腑的故事。這幾個家庭故事對華裔在加拿大的生活，以及他們對這個國家的巨大貢獻提供了一個豐富多彩的理解。”

~Jean Wilson, Associate Director and editor, British Columbia and Western Canadian History, UBC Press

“這些故事像真正的寶石。他們有強烈的感染力、趣味盎然而引人入勝，完全適用於教學，或作為禮物，書中故事提供給讀者最新發現的華人在卑詩省和加拿大歷史中經久無聞的聲音。”

~Larry Wong, 卑詩省加華歷史協會，前屆主席

"Writing multicultural histories that include everyone requires ordinary families and individuals to write their own stories as essential components. This volume gives us an excellent start on the journey to recover Chinese Canadian history in British Columbia. It also provides a superb model of the use of writing workshops to develop personal history-writing skills."

~DR. EDGAR WICKBERG

*Founding President
Chinese Canadian Historical
Society of British Columbia*

This volume is dedicated to Edgar Wickberg, whose vision and leadership created the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia, and who has tirelessly devoted much of his long and distinguished career to the study of Chinese Canadian history.

“書寫包括每一個人在內的多元文化歷史，要求普通家庭與個人寫下自己的歷史故事作為它的主體。本書在發掘卑詩省加拿大華人歷史的路途上做出了一個極好的開端。它同時也在運用寫作工作坊發展個人歷史寫作的純熟功夫上，樹立了一個光輝的榜樣。”

~DR. EDGAR WICKBERG

魏安國博士

卑詩加華歷史協會

創會第一屆主席

謹以此書獻給 Dr. Edgar Wickberg 魏安國博士，由於他的先知卓見，并在他的指導下，卑詩加華歷史協會才得以誕生，在他個人漫長而又傑出的學術生涯中，他為加拿大華人歷史的研究，全心全意、百折不撓地作出了巨大的貢獻。

TRANSLATORS' NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SHING CHIT YU

Translation editor and translator of "The Forbidden Palace"; "B.K. Grocery"; "The Beaver Tale and Other Stories"; "The Legend of Lore Neen: The Life of My Grandfather"; Preface; Introduction; and Afterword

It is an honor to present this bilingual English-Chinese edition of *Finding Memories, Tracing Routes* to Chinese readers.

The lives and journeys of immigrant Chinese Canadians are still not well known to most people. The truth remains, without their efforts, Canada would not be the country it is today. And without the eight authors presented in this book, their stories and histories could have otherwise disappeared forever. Because of the significance of the stories, I felt it was important to share them with our Chinese readers, who might benefit from knowing Chinese Canadian history.

At the beginning of this project, I translated one of the stories into Chinese and sent it to five of my friends in China for editing and feedback. I was not certain if they would agree to join me in this project, or if they even felt it worthwhile. But all five were so moved by the one translation draft I emailed to them, they immediately agreed to join me in this project. Throughout the translation process, I have been encouraged by their enthusiasm and spirit of volunteering.

Translating these stories has involved a process of trying to understand what was going through the authors' minds when they revisited their family histories. Therefore, of utmost importance to myself, my team, and the other two translators in this book has been the need to stay true to the authors and their stories. However, because our experience with translation is limited, we must admit that readers might find some mistakes and inconsistencies. Also, Mandarin Chinese and customary Cantonese have both been used in different pieces, due to each translator having his own style and judgement. Hopefully, this will not cause too much difficulty for readers.

I would like to give my gratitude to my team of translators in China: Prof. Xie Qiwen, Mr. Jiang Jianqing, Mr. Zhang Shanjin, Ms. Han Shuxun and Mr. Yu Chengyi. As well, Mr. Chun Kwok

Tang and Mr. Chuan Xiao have done extremely admirable jobs as the other translators in this edition. Finally, many thanks to Linda Joe and Jan Walls for invaluable critique and feedback on early translation drafts.

CHUN KWOK TANG

Translator of "Unidentified Family, c. 1910: The Girl in the Picture" and "Three Voices: A Wong Family Album"

Even though I am an academic at heart, my working abilities with both English and Chinese are limited. However, because the stories in this collection are raw, authentic and heartfelt migrant family stories, I have been able to understand them on a close level due to my own immigrant background. As such, I enthusiastically moved ahead with this translation project and learning experience.

During the process, I encountered numerous challenges. How does one translate English expressions in order to have meaning and significance in Chinese? For example, in English, the general usage of "he" or "she" sometimes raises questions about who "he" or "she" is. Therefore, I had to read the stories over and over again in order to understand the people presented in the stories. In addition, because the stories span generations and locations, I had to maintain a visualization of time and place in order to keep the stories as authentic as possible.

This was my first translation project, and indeed, it was challenging. I hope that after reading these stories, the Chinese-literate audience will offer critical feedback. The most important result of this bilingual edition is that readers can have a better understanding of early Chinese migrants, their lives, and their strong determination and spirit to explore new worlds. These early migrants deserve our utmost respect.

Thank you to Hayne Wai and Shirley Chan for their continued support throughout this process. My thanks also go out to the Chinese Canadian Historical Society for giving me the opportunity to participate in the translation of *Finding Memories, Tracing Routes*. Lastly, thank you to my family for their advice and support.

CHUAN XIAO

Translator of "Luc Gai: Family Dinner at Sixth Ave" and "Collecting Cranbrook: Mining Grandfather's Past"

The authors of the two stories I translated, Gail and Ken Yip, are respected friends of mine. The translation started out as a favour to them, but turned out the other way around. For me, the whole translation process has been not only a wonderful learning experience but also a good opportunity to appreciate the great contribution our pioneering generations made to Canada.

For far too long, the incredible efforts made by older generations have not been recognized or valued, partly due to the fact that Chinese Canadians today have not been playing an active role. The publication of these stories is a worthwhile effort to remedy the situation. What the stories reflect are small but solid pieces of Canadian history. Therefore, the publication of this book bears far-reaching significance. I am proud to be a part of the translation of *Finding Memories, Tracing Routes*.

Being a non-professional translator, I took the liberty to do the translation my own way, without paying much attention to the conventions of translation. I faced all kinds of challenges any translator can't avoid and more. One of these challenges was how to draw the fine line between faithfulness and elegance. Other questions were of the more technical sort, such as how to deal with names of places that already have different Chinese translations. However, the benefit of these obstacles has been the process of overcoming them with friends and colleagues who were generous with their time and efforts. This bilingual edition has certainly been a community endeavour.

Much appreciation goes out to Dr. Catherine Poh, a pathologist with the BC Cancer Agency, who proofread my translations and offered insightful comments. Shing Chit Yu, who beautifully translated the majority of this book, went the extra mile to review my translations and provided helpful advice. Finally, Linda Joe professionally and thoroughly examined my work and gave me extremely detailed feedback.

中譯組譯後記

余成節

我們十分榮幸向中文讀者奉獻這本 <<尋根之道>> 英中雙文版。

我第一次讀完本書八篇故事的英文版時，感動得熱淚盈眶。我們華僑先輩在加拿大的生活歷程，至今仍然不為大多數人所知。如果沒有他們的辛勤努力，就不會有今天的加拿大。同樣，沒有像本書八位作者寫下他們的家史，這些歷史就會永遠消失而不為人所知。正因為加拿大華人家史具有深遠的意義，我感到十分必要與我們的中文讀者分享，並衷心希望讀者能對它產生興趣。

起初，我翻譯了書中一篇故事，電郵給我在中國的五位朋友，徵求他們的意見，並問他們是否願意幫助我。出乎我的意料，他們全都被故事感動並踴躍參與，於是我們就成立了一個小組。我深為他們的熱情和服務精神所鼓舞。

翻譯是一個探索作者心靈的過程：作者重訪親人的過去時，作何感受並從而進一步理解自己。因而，如何用另一種文字來表達作者的真實感情至為重要。然而，因水平有限，難免有差錯或前後不一之處。另外，由於譯者的方言有別，也有普通話與廣東話習慣用法的出現。希望不致給讀者造成過多的不便。

我謹在此向翻譯小組的謝啟文教授、蔣建清先生、張善錦先生、韓姝珣女士和余成義先生致深深的謝意。同樣，向鄧振國先生和蕭川先生致謝，他們也像其他幾位譯者一樣，為本書出版做出了令人欽佩的貢獻。最後，謹向鄭美筠老師和王健老師致謝，他們對本書早期翻譯工作的批評與建議至為寶貴。

鄧振國

當卑詩省加華歷史協會向我提出參與翻譯 <<尋根之道>> 時，我確實感到有點意外。因為翻譯是一科專門學問。大學教育也有翻譯這一科。我雖然比較喜愛閱讀，但自問中英語兩方面，尚未達到融會貫通、揮灑自如的水

平。但協會方面覺得書中各作者都是一些初次嘗試寫作的華裔，他們的文筆真摯簡樸。其次，每篇故事都是華人家族移民歷史，由一位移民和非專業人士來翻譯，也許更能真實地表達這樸素的情懷吧！就這樣，抱著一種邊做邊學、躍躍欲試而又不怕失敗的心情，開始了我的第一次嘗試。

在翻譯過程中，還真的遇到不少難題。尤其是中英文語法運用方面的不同。例如英文原文用 He 這個男性代名詞做句首，但這位男性是什麼人呢？這就要看好幾回，對於故事中各個人物有了一些了解，才分得出這個 He 是誰，那個 He 或 She 又是誰。至於書中描述的情節，多接觸到幾代人物，地域則橫跨中加兩地，只好盡量設身處地於故事之中，然後用中文來確切表達。

第一次從事翻譯工作，無疑是一個挑戰。希望讀者們看後，賜予批評和意見。作為翻譯者，最重要的目的是想透過書中的每篇故事，讓讀者了解先僑們早年在加拿大的生活片段，了解他們堅毅無畏地開拓新天地的精神。先僑的精神值得我們所有加拿大華人學習，并向他們表達無限的敬意。

很感謝韋業慶先生和陳雪英女士給予我的支持和鼓勵來翻譯他們的作品。同時衷心感謝卑詩省加華歷史協會給我這個機會參與翻譯 <<尋根之道>>。最後，讓我謝謝我的家人對我的鼓勵和給我的寶貴意見。

蕭川

我翻譯的兩篇故事的作者劉少珍和葉錦榮都是我所敬重的朋友。開始翻譯是我樂意幫他們忙，而結果卻是我從中受益良多。對我而言，翻譯的過程不僅是絕妙的語言學習經驗，更重要的是使我有機會對先輩們多年來對加拿大所作的貢獻有更多的了解。

長久以來，先輩移民們的奮鬥和貢獻并未得到承認和珍惜，其中的部分原因是華裔加拿大人在本地的政治文化生活中不夠活躍。本書的出版正是針對這一現實並值得珍惜的努力。這些故事呈現的是加拿大歷史中雖小但堅實的組成部份。因此這本書的出版意義甚為深遠。能為本書的翻

譯盡一點力，我深感自豪。

作為一個業餘翻譯者，我完全是跟著感覺走，並沒有刻意遵循文學翻譯的章法。任何翻譯者遇到的挑戰我都經歷了，只是更多。其中之一就是如何在忠實於原著和行文高雅之間求得平衡。其它的只是些技術性的問題，譬如怎樣處理那些已經有不同版本的中文翻譯的地名。然而，在朋友和同事的幫助下克服這些障礙給了我有益的鍛煉。這也表明了中英文對照版是一個華人社區群體的努力成果。

卑詩防癌中心的病理學家 Catherine Poh 女士細心校閱並提供了很有見地的意見。余成節先生在以優美文字翻譯本書的大半篇幅之餘，還盡心盡力地幫我字斟句酌地提出修改意見，使拙譯增色不少。最後，鄭美筠老師專業細緻地審視了我的初稿，並提出了極其精到的見解。對他們的無私幫助特致以由衷的謝意。

PREFACE

We cannot decide from whom we want to descend. Our parents and grandparents have made that decision for us. We are who we are because of our families. Most of us know quite a lot about our parents, less about our grandparents, and almost nothing at all about the generations that came before them. Yet it is their genes that form us and their experiences that make it possible for us to be here today. Our families are the basis of who we are, and it is by learning about our inheritance that we come to know ourselves.

Two of the best ways to trace our roots are through memories and images. A handful of us will have ancestors in the history books as they are usually written, and a few others turn up in newspapers, but most of our families enter the written record only as snapshots in time—a marriage, a death, a census enumeration. It is the memories we have kept alive and the photographs safely tucked away that give the entryway to our inheritance. These are the two fundamental building blocks taking us back in time.

Sometimes we need a little push to take up the challenge. The inaugural Family History Writing Workshop sponsored by the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia in the spring of 2006 gave eight men and women the opportunity to explore the potential in memories and images for finding out about ourselves and, most importantly, the rewards that come from doing so.

The eight stories that grew out of the workshop belie the easy excuse that the passage of time makes it too late for us to trace our roots. It's never too late, but then again it's never too early. Rather than lamenting what has been lost, we want to begin, as the eight writers do, with our own memories and with surviving photographs. It is from such beginnings that we can track down any newspaper accounts and documents traditionally seen as more factual and trustworthy. What the writers discovered was, of course, that memories and images often belie the supposed truth to be found in written records, for the most part created by the dominant society to maintain itself.

The writers have each crafted something far more valuable than the usual family tree. By telling a story that combines aspects of their family's history with their own search for understanding,

starting with their own memories of parents and grandparents, the writers empower readers to begin a similar journey toward understanding.

The importance of the eight stories goes beyond the families themselves. We need to be particularly grateful to the writers for their willingness to share slices of lives that have up to now been hidden away in the shadows of Canadian history. Each of the stories contributes immeasurably to our understanding of the Chinese presence in Canada, and especially in British Columbia. The Chinese were among the first newcomers to British Columbia, yet we know very little about their everyday lives. It is indicative of the lingering conceit in the dominant society that we have paid more attention to attitudes toward the Chinese than about the ways in which individuals and families have survived and thrived through time—that is, until now.

Arrivals from China, both directly and via California, were among the earliest and most intrepid participants in the gold rush beginning in British Columbia in 1858 and then in the construction of the transcontinental rail line across Canada completed in the mid-1880s. The eight stories give us glimpses into both these events. Shirley Chan's great-grandfather came to mine gold in 1879 and, not striking it rich, worked on the railway. Ken Yip's grandfather, Yip Chung Ben, was just sixteen when in 1882 he and his partner Dennis Quong began placer mining at Wild Horse Creek in the East Kootenays.

Rail line complete, the racism of the dominant society in Canada came to the fore with a vengeance. At the time British Columbia entered the Canadian Confederation in 1871, between one in five and one in six of its non-Aboriginal population had been Chinese. Three years later the new provincial government took away their right to vote, which meant they could not enter the professions of law, pharmacy, or accountancy, work for the government, or pre-empt land. Even though almost all of the Chinese in Canada continued to live in British Columbia, away from the centre of power, on the franchise being centralized in 1885 the Dominion government followed suit. The same year, it introduced a head tax of \$50 on new arrivals from China, raised to \$100 in 1900 and to \$500 three years later. No other immigrant group was similarly targeted.

Despite the restrictions, Chinese continued to arrive until being prohibited from doing so altogether in 1923. The reasons 81,000 men, women, and children paid the head tax in order to come to Canada were often traumatic: Candace Yip, for instance, characterizes her grandfather as a political refugee, having been from a very young age on the wrong side after a military rebellion.

The easing of the immigration ban from 1948 initiated another round of immigration that continues into the present day. Hayne Wai's and Roy Mah's families were among those arriving in the 1950s. Hayne Wai's family joined grandparents already in British Columbia; for Roy Mah's parents it meant leaving behind in China everything they had spent a lifetime working for and beginning anew. From a low of 24,000 in 1951, the number of Canadians born in China grew to 635,000 by 2001. The total of Chinese descent went from 32,500 to over a million. Whereas two-thirds of Canadians of Chinese descent lived in British Columbia up to the time of the Second World War, just a third did so in 2001.

The eight stories point to how essential the Chinese have been to the Canadian economy, particularly to the resource and service sectors to which they were long restricted. Joe Hop Lee worked as a houseboy, chopped wood, and sold produce from his orchard and garden. Yip Chung Ben did so well in gold mining that he opened a general store in the East Kootenays boomtown of Cranbrook. On arriving in the 1890s, Gail Yip's great-grandparents established a labour contracting business in New Westminster's Chinatown, as the areas in which many of the Chinese clustered to escape the racism of the dominant society were known. Dan Seto's grandfather Gan Seto ran the New Look Café in High River, Alberta. Roy Mah's father had the B.K. Grocery in East Vancouver. Some jobs were fairly menial, and it may have been his classical training as a scholar and artist, or perhaps his expertise at Kung Fu, that sustained Candace Yip's grandfather Lore Neen while operating the elevator in a downtown Victoria building.

The mostly men who arrived first went to great lengths to have a family life. Gail Yip's grandfather, who had immigrated with his parents to New Westminster at the age of eight, made several trips to China before bringing the woman he had married there and their two small sons back with him to British Columbia in 1913. Joe Hop Lee wed a young woman who had been bought and brought

to Canada to look after the children of a Vancouver Chinatown merchant. Arranged marriages were the rule in China, as in many parts of the world. Hayne Wai's grandmother was sixteen when, in 1914, a Hong Kong marriage broker matched her with a middle-aged merchant, Wong Wah, who had arrived in Victoria three decades earlier and now wanted to start a family. They met for the first time on her wedding day. Dan Seto's mother knew only rural China at the time she married her Canadianized husband in Hong Kong.

Arrived in Canada, these women not only raised families but worked alongside their husbands and also in other jobs bringing a bit of money into the family economy. Hayne Wai's grandmother sewed; Roy Mah's mother worked in a garment factory and peeled shrimp on the Vancouver docks. Young children helped out. Roy Mah recalled, among other tasks, translating for his father in his Vancouver store.

Whatever the time period, the family life obtained in British Columbia was closely guarded. Belinda Hung's grandmother Poh-Poh, who had earlier experienced the discrimination of South Africa, used flowers to create a beauty transcending race in her Burnaby home. The most important lesson Dan Seto took away from his grandfather was for he and his three brothers to respect each other. Being in one of the few Chinese families in town gave young Dan repeated opportunities to protect his brothers and also to represent his family's Chinese culture. Gail Yip and Hayne Wai each lovingly depict their grandparents' homes and ways of life in Vancouver, as they recall them from their early childhoods. Most revealing are the family photos forming part of each of the stories.

Parents and grandparents sometimes modeled for their members little shows of independence challenging the deference expected of them by the dominant society. Dan Seto's grandfather popped a Canadian beaver into the traditional Chinese medicine he brewed for months on end and then gave the beaver to his grandson to take to school for show-and-tell. Candace Yip's aunt Victoria was taken by her artist father Lore Neen to whitewash classical Chinese characters on Mount Douglas outside of Victoria, a feat the local newspaper speculated were local Japanese signaling to invading ships or planes. Roy Mah's father was so fed up with robberies of his grocery store that, the next time, he pulled out the machete he