

The Original Chinese in New Zealand in the 21st Century

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Steven Young

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SUMMARY

The early and post-war history of the Chinese in New Zealand is reviewed. The main changes which have impacted on the community post-1987 are discussed ranging from recent high immigration, the resurgence of China, generational changes in the community leadership, the Poll Tax apology and the community consultation which followed, to acceptance of the Treaty of Waitangi. The popularity of research and conferences on the Chinese in New Zealand is noted and their

topics discussed. Finally aspects of the current scene in the community are briefly reviewed including: immigration, students, the re-learning Chinese, families, political representation, the impact of the Treaty and re-migration. An attempt is made to predict future community development trends.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although migration has increased the Chinese population in New Zealand nearly fourfold in the last 20 years, the descendants of the original Chinese settlers are still easily recognisable as a unique community.

Many of these families have been established in New Zealand for three, four or more generations and are strongly interlinked by marriage. Even though out-numbered by new Chinese immigrants, the descendants of the original settlers still exert considerable influence on the development of policy at the local level and lead in inter-communal relationships because of their strong identity, their experience in working together as a community group and their character forged when they were an isolated minority in a racist world.

However in the 21st century they face new challenges in maintaining their identity, culture and influence when, communally, they are regarded as a minority-within-a-minority and politically, they are still regarded as outsiders in the on-going public debate on the "bi-cultural" model[1] of the State.

The objective of this paper is to show how the original Chinese community in New Zealand has built on its history and strengths to survive, adapt and prosper in the 21st century.

To understand the current situation it is necessary to have at least an appreciation of the history of the Chinese in New Zealand. This can be broadly divided into three eras:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------|
| - Early History | 1842 |
| - 1945 | |
| - The Period of Assimilation | 1945 |
| - 1987 | |
| - The 21st Century. | 1987 |
| - present | |

2. EARLY HISTORY 1843-1945

The period from 1842 - 1945 starts with the arrival of Appo Hocton[2] and ends with the Second World War. .

Appo Hocton's story is told in the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography xxx. It appears that he was a man of extraordinary daring and drive and he might well have gone on to adventures in other lands if he had not arrived on these shores.

The stories of the Chinese who arrived after him were recorded principally by Alexander Don, [3] and have been exhaustively researched by James Ng.[4]

xxx This was the period of the gold miners and traders. A full length feature film, Illustrious Energy was made in xxx telling the no doubt slightly embellished and fictionalised story of a young woman in those times.

The main line of the real story however, is that when the original, mainly European, gold miners left for fresh digs elsewhere, the Otago Chamber of Commerce invited a group of Chinese, already in Australia, to come to Otago work and rework the goldfields. They arrived in small groups and lived lives of extraordinary hardship and deprivation, hoping to make their fortune in a few years and set themselves up for life in their home villages in Guangdong Province in southern China. In most cases, these hopes and dreams were never realised and in some cases even their bones were lost.[5]

As the gold ran out, the Chinese moved into other areas of New Zealand seeking a living. They became market gardeners, fruit and vegetable shopkeepers and laundrymen, and inevitably encountered racial prejudice. Within a short time personal prejudice became institutionalised and the Government sought to limit the arrival of more Chinese into New Zealand.

The most infamous of these measures was the imposition of the Poll Tax, imposed only on the Chinese, which required new arrivals to pay 10 pounds on arrival. When this failed to deter the Chinese, the amount was increased to 100 pounds - an amount equivalent to about 3 years gross earnings in those days. In addition the regulations limited ships to carrying one Chinese person per 10 tons of cargo, later increased to 100 tons of cargo.

While the Chinese who arrived in the gold mining era were predominantly men who only wanted to be sojourners anyway, the Poll Tax was a serious deterrent to bringing in any Chinese women in the post-mining era after 1890. While Chinese men might go back to China to marry and sire children and return to New Zealand, few brought their wives with them. Thus, in New Zealand, they endured a bachelor existence, their harsh lives not softened by a home life, womenfolk and young children.

In the period from 1920-1940 the Chinese established a number of mutual-help societies and political associations, some of which survive to this day. The organisations surviving today include the New Zealand Chinese Association, the Poon Fah Association, the Tung Jung Association and the Seyip Association which in recent years have all experienced a resurgence of support, at least in Wellington where their headquarters are all to be found.

The New Zealand Chinese Association was established partly in response to the Japanese invasion of China and raised money to support the war effort in China.

The other associations were mutual-help associations for the people from three distinct areas in Guangdong Province: The Panyu area, the Zengcheng area and the Taishan area (called respectively Poonyu, Jungsheng and Toishan in their local dialects.)

Following its invasion of China in 1937 the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour in December 1941. New Zealand became a staging post for Americans preparing to fight in the Pacific and Asia. The Chinese in New Zealand were assigned the task of supplying vegetables for the troops.

The Chinese in New Zealand gained some respect for their resistance to the Japanese and their support of the war effort against a common foe. Some local Chinese enlisted in the arm forces to fight.

Between 1925 and 1947 women were officially barred from immigrating to New Zealand as part of official government policy[6] but just before the outbreak of the Second World War, when the Japanese had reached Guangdong[7] some wives and children had been allowed to enter as refugees - with the condition they go back after the war (a condition later rescinded)[8].

(Although the Labour Government's policy was to remove restrictions as early 1935 the change in the public's attitude did not change to a majority until much later. The Poll Tax was not collected from 1935 although the legislation was not repealed until 1944. It was not until 1951 that the Government restored the right of Chinese to become naturalised citizens.)

The period ends with the end of the Second World War. Chinese men travelled back to China to re-connect with their families and to sire children and bring their families back to New Zealand - under official Government policy for the reunification of Chinese families. Most of those with roots in New Zealand give up hope of returning to China to live permanently, not least because of the Communists' victory on the Chinese mainland.

3. THE PERIOD OF ASSIMILATION 1945-1987

Following the Second World War the period of overt and institutionalised racial discrimination passed. The Chinese were accepted as part of New Zealand society, albeit at the lower level - as market gardeners and as shopkeepers selling fruit and vegetables and similar occupations.

In the 1950s and early 60s some young Chinese started to seek a university-level education. Of these, several trained as doctors with a smaller number training as lawyers and engineers and later, accountants. Most young Chinese in this period were still confined (by financial circumstances, social norms, parental pressure and general lack of opportunity) to working in the family business - generally a shop or market garden. It is not until the late 1960s that young Chinese entered the universities in large numbers - in common with their baby-boomer counterparts in the rest of the world. Once the trend became established however, it became de rigueur for nearly all Chinese families to send their children to university if they showed any aptitude at all, resulting in a very high participation rate in the 1970s and 80s.

However, from 1945 to 1987 immigration of Chinese was still restricted, and essentially limited to family re-unification. Thus the only migrants were the (new) wives or husbands of Chinese New Zealanders and children under 16 years old.

These new migrants were still drawn mainly from the three "home county" areas of Panyu, Zengcheng and Taishan of the original migrants, and from Hong Kong.

The numbers of such migrants were very small. The population of the Chinese in that period grew from an estimated 9000 in 1945 to only 30,000 in 1985 including natural growth. The immigration rules and the selection process ensured that the Chinese population in New Zealand was effectively isolated from mainstream of Chinese culture.

In this period, Chinese language classes, conducted after normal school hours, were not well supported in the cities because of the pressure to succeed in normal classes and the need to work after school. In the country area such schools were not available because of the small numbers.

With nearly all means of communication - radio, television and newspapers - and the medium of school instruction being in English, young people never gain the ability to speak and much less read Chinese fluently.

For most of this period, China was in economic and political turmoil. Following a long civil war, the Communists gained control of the mainland in 1949. The Korean War followed in 1952, the Great Leap Forward in 1958-60 and the Cultural Revolution in 1956-66 China was not accessible to most outsiders and certainly not convenient as a place to visit for cultural purposes.

The psychological effect on the Chinese in New Zealand (and Overseas Chinese generally) of having ones homeland almost an

international pariah state should not be under-estimated. This in a period when Japan was in resurgence, and the United States and the west were forging ahead socially, economically and technologically. This was a time to become westernised: to adapt to western ways and adopt western modes of behaviour and thought and to forget that ones forebears came from that benighted place called China. In that period, young people adopted western names, moved into the professions, and tried hard to mask their racial characteristics.

In that period they became the "model minority" working hard, observing the law, staying out of trouble, saving for and buying nice houses and cars and keeping their children neat, tidy and obedient.

Sport and particularly basketball becomes an important outlet for the youthful energies of both boys and girls. Initially organised as a part of the Double-Tenth Chinese National Day celebrations, the basketball tournament, rotated between the main centres, became the premier social event in the lives of the young Chinese, leading in many cases to serious courtship and marriage. When the Government of mainland China was recognised in 1972, the Tournament was moved to Easter weekend.

The history of the Chinese in this era has not been well-researched, but is easily accessible as it is within the living memory of many.

4. THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY 1987-Present

For the Chinese in New Zealand, the 21st century started in 1987. In that year the Government decided to change the immigration rules so that race was much less of an issue. From 1991 entry was granted to anyone who could accumulate a certain number of points based on a range of criteria. This effectively opened up the flood gates, and the Chinese population in New Zealand more than tripled. Whereas it took 140 years for the Chinese population to grow to about 30,000, it took a mere 15 years to grow to about 110,000.

Whereas before migrants were drawn largely from south China, mostly around the city of Guangzhou in Guangdong Province and Hong Kong, the new migrants now also came from throughout mainland China, Taiwan with some also from Malaysia and Indonesia.

Most these new migrants spoke Mandarin or its simplified form, Putonghua, and a little English whereas the original migrants spoke Cantonese and their descendants mostly English. For this reason alone communication between the two communities was limited.

The members of the original migrant community, who had a high level of homogeneity through inter-marriage and enforced cultural isolation, felt somewhat threatened by the new comers. The new-comers were sometimes considerably wealthier or more "cultured" and, through holding different social norms introduced a degree of unpredictability for all

Chinese in their social interchanges with the kiwi populations.

Thus the "old migrants" were somewhat discomfited by new migrants building very large homes, driving fleets of expensive cars, talking loudly in Chinese in the street, adopting a different dress code, not holding down regular jobs but instead playing golf, and so on.

The new migrants, having grown up in a society in which they themselves were the majority, did not feel inclined to adopt the posture of a racial minority.

However, the large number of new migrants was only one factor in the changes which were beginning to occur with the Chinese community towards the end of the 20th century. We discuss some below.

5. THE RESURGENCE OF CHINA

LEADERS' TOURS OF CHINA

YOUTH WINTER CAMPS

China opened up to the outside world in 1976, and by 1986 had achieved considerable economic progress. In that year it became state policy, implemented through the Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs, to sponsor Overseas Chinese community leaders to come to China.

Trips typically included travel to three or four major cities including Beijing with visits to the Palace Museum (Forbidden City), Tiananmen Square, the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong, the Great Hall of the People, the Summer Palace and the Great Wall along with visits to various ministries for briefings. The visitors were also given the opportunity to travel back to their ancestral village and re-establish links with their relatives who had been left behind in the 1940 and 50s. In almost every case, the community leaders were overwhelmingly impressed by the scale and grandeur of China, the economic progress to date and by the cultural heritage to which they were heirs.

The visit by community leaders paved the way for youth camps organised for the 18-26 age group, often graduates. On these camps, the young people were exposed to Chinese language and culture classes and played some social sport as well as given variations of the Chinese grand tour. Again, almost invariably, the young overseas Chinese underwent a cultural epiphany, suddenly waking up to their Chineseness when they saw a large, functioning society in which the entire hierarchy of culture and power was non-European. They experienced not being members of a racial minority for the first time and for most, it felt good.

These winter camps continue to be operate, with some variations in the funding and format, and for a number of young people they continue to be a cultural rite-of-passage marking their "graduation" as Chinese people.

A number of young people have written about their cultural coming-of-age after their trip.

[Http://www.hold.co.nz](http://www.hold.co.nz)

6. GENERATIONAL CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

In the late 1980 to date, there has been a generational change in the leadership of the Chinese community. Prior to 1987, control of community organisations was vested in a group of leaders who, typically, had lived for many years in New Zealand but received most of their education in China. That is, they had been inculcated with predominantly Chinese values. Meetings were conducted mostly in Chinese and correspondence and records were kept in the Chinese language.

As the generation born in the 1940s and 1950s grew to maturity, members joined the committees of the Chinese community organisations. These people typically had received all their education in English and were thoroughly westernised in their approach to the conduct of meetings.

Among the leaders in this movement for change, David Fung joined the Wellington Branch of the New Zealand Chinese Association and initiated a number

of changes which would soon overturn the established order. Lacking a database he went through the telephone book and created a mailing list. He then produced a newsletter in which he introduced a number of ideas that were rather revolutionary in their day - like making the Association an incorporated society and actually following the written constitution or formally amending it.

The implementation of the changes is a story in itself, Sufficient to say, after many years, reforms were completed and today all Chinese Association branches are incorporated societies and the members of the NZ Chinese Association are the branches.

7. POLL TAX

While researching the history of the Chinese in New Zealand, David Fung also came across information about the Poll Tax. While its existence was always known in the community, details of the number of Poll Tax payers and the period it was imposed was hardly known at all.

(See <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/polltax/davidfung2.htm>).

He heard that the Chinese in Canada were working towards some form of redress for the Head Tax, a similar measure imposed by the Canadian government. Fung and others persuaded firstly the Wellington Branch and later the New Zealand Chinese Association to commission Nigel Murphy to research the Poll Tax in 1992. The research was completed in 1994 and published in 1996.

(See <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/polltax/nigelpolltax.htm>)

The research paper was widely circulated among NZ Chinese Association branches but it took time for its importance to be realised. From 1997 there were a number of discussions with the Government for some form of recognition and redress for what was essentially a racist tax. The matter drifted for a number of years, but with a change to a Labour government, finally a formal submission was prepared and submitted in 2001.

(See <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/polltax/submission.htm>)

Shortly thereafter, to the surprise of nearly everyone in the Chinese community, the Government announced that it would apologise for the Poll Tax, and have a consultation on a form of reconciliation, if that was what the community wanted.

(See <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/polltax/Helenclarkpolltax.htm>
)

There was a flurry of reaction from both
within the Chinese community and in the general community.

(See <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/misc/polltax2.htm>
)

There was some sentiment within the
established Chinese community that no compensation was necessary, that the Poll
Tax had been paid willingly and that the descendants of the Poll Tax payers
were better off for their having paid it.
Another common view was that no individual compensation was necessary
but funds should be made available for historical research and to help maintain
and regain some of the culture (including Cantonese language) lost as a result
of the Poll Tax and its effect on family life.

In an unprecedented move the Government,
through the Office of Ethnic Affairs, initiated a wide-ranging consultation
process among the established Chinese community, with officers (including
Murphy on secondment from the National Library) travelling to all the main
centres and many secondary centres meet with local Chinese.

(See http://www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz/oeawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/What-We-Do-Consultations-Follow-Up-to-Formal-Apology-to-Chinese-Community?OpenDocument
)

After the initial consultation meetings, a group of 36 representatives held several day-long meetings to thrash out the details of the reconciliation package. In its final form the package included various initiatives to be undertaken by Government departments together with a \$5,000,000 grant to a community trust. It is anticipated that the capital sum will be lodged in a suitable investment and the income used for cultural maintenance, historical research, special projects and the like.

8. ON-GOING EFFECT OF THE POLL TAX RESEARCH

The consultation process required individuals with leadership positions in the Chinese community to think through their attitudes to being Chinese in New Zealand and to express that view publicly. It also forced formal groups in the community to formulate and express their views in a public forum with the audience being not only their peers in the community but also powerful government officials (or at least government officials with powerful masters, ultimately the Prime Minister.)[1]

For some people and some groups this meant holding a meeting and appointing a representative to speak. For other people and groups this meant writing long submissions to Ministers and to the Prime Minister. It then dawned on them that they knew very little about the history of the Chinese in New Zealand and also very little about the attitudes of the members of their own groups.

(See <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/polltax/countiesproposal.htm>)

Thus the identity of the original Chinese in New Zealand was re-forged.

9. THE COMMUNITY, THE POLL TAX AND THE TREATY

As a group, the Chinese in New Zealand has no generally accepted view on the Treaty of Waitangi and their relationship to the Maori in New Zealand. Their primary official relationship was with the Government of New Zealand. The relation of the Government with the Maori people beyond that, particularly on the question of righting Treaty injustices, was something they hitherto did not have to address. But suddenly they found themselves in the same position as the Maori seeking redress for a historic wrong. Would they seek the repayment of the total of the Poll Tax collected, adjusted for inflation and interest (equivalent to the return of all Maori lands lost) or would they seek only symbolic compensation (equivalent to the having parklands returned to a tribe who would then gift it to the nation).?

10. CONFERENCES

While few Chinese in New Zealand had the time, ability and inclination to address these questions related to their identity in detail, the process created a climate which generated interest in, and support for a number of academic or semi-academic conferences held in 2003 and 2004.

The Stout Centre for New Zealand Studies at Victoria University of Wellington organised the Chinese New Zealand research seminar series in May 2003. It was ground-breaking in that it was a conference designed for an academic audience which was also strongly supported by members of the Chinese community including members of the leadership group.

(See <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/stout-centre/events/chinesenz.aspx> and

<http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/politics/politicsandculture.htm>
)

As part of the Poll Tax reconciliation package, Murphy gained funding for a Poll Tax Exhibition at the National Library which he called "A Barbarous Measure". In preparing the exhibition Murphy gained access to photographs and documents from families who before the Poll Tax apology barely knew they held such. The assembly of these documents to tell a coherent story of perseverance in the face of hardship, injustice and racial discrimination greatly impressed the community. The exhibition created a sense of history of the Chinese in New Zealand never before articulated in a "European" forum. Until then, family stories had been just that, hearsay without context, documentation, context or authentication.

In addition to the exhibition itself, Murphy arranged a supporting lecture series over several weeks which covered a number of related topics which gave an opportunity for some Chinese to tell their personal stories or demonstrate highly developed skills.

(See <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/family/marketgardening.htm>
)

While these stories were already known by some people, they had never been told in a "proper" venue such as the Theatre of the National Library. The venue required the presenters to be very well prepared while members of the Chinese community could come to listen to these stories with some pride - whereas the same people might well avoid attending an "unofficial" lecture series on the same subjects because it lacked "respectability".

The exhibition was such a success locally that there was demand for it to be recreated in Auckland. This was duly done and attracted a considerable audience there also.

Manying Ip (Auckland University) had been researching Chinese family stories for some years and had previously published *Home Away from Home and Dragons on the Long White Cloud*. In 2003 she edited and published *Unfolding History Emerging Identity*, which included 12 chapters by local Chinese.

In 2004 the Stout Centre and the Alexander Turnbull Library cooperated to organise another conference called *Unfolding Chinese New Zealand: Emerging Voices* - echoing the title of that book. The conference gave a chance for various community groups to share their history and historical records and for individuals to relate their stories about growing up and developing as individuals in New Zealand.

That conference was attended by many leaders of the Chinese community who had been sensitized by the Poll Tax exhibition. The Auckland branch of the New Zealand Chinese Association decided they would mount a Chinese "identity conference" on a similar theme to be called "Going Bananas" to be held over Queen's Birthday weekend 2005. The name is both a play on a whimsical epithet for over-westernized Chinese who are regarded as yellow on the outside, but white on the inside, and also a reference to the fruit shop heritage of the current generation of community leaders.

11. COMMUNITY RESEARCH

A group within the Chinese community, originally anti the Poll Tax reconciliation (fearing the consequences of participation in the grievance industry) has sublimated its drive to research early Chinese family history in New Zealand using oral history techniques. It has joined with Henry Chan to work on a history of the Zengcheng people in New Zealand. (Zengcheng along either the Panyu and Taishan are the three main areas in Guangdong from which the Chinese (chain) migrated to New Zealand.

This work meshes nicely with the long-term oral history research being carried out by Lynette Shum on her Haining Street Project, and in her work on Kim Lee, the "leper" of Somes Island. Several people are undertaking research on their family history, with varying degrees of success; among the better outcomes would be Kirsten Wong story of Chun Yee Hop published in *Unfolding History Emerging Identity*.

(See <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/historicalresearch.htm>
)

12. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

Apart from Ip's work which is well-known in the Chinese community, Elsie Ho at the University of Waikato has been undertaking research on the progress of new migrants, Pepe Choong has submitted a thesis which reported research on the lives of contemporary Chinese women in New Zealand.

(See <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/women/pepedec03.htm>
)

13. TE PAPA EXHIBITION - THE STORY OF CHINESE MIGRATION

The generational change in the leadership of the Chinese community leading to the Poll Tax research and subsequent apology, followed by on-going effects is a story best told in one sweep.

However two other events not directly connected with this also contributed to the flow:

In 1996, as the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa was being planned it was decided to tell the story of the peopling of New Zealand in a series of non-permanent exhibitions. Partly because of their numbers, it was decided that the Chinese would have the honour of having their story told first. In 1995 a group of mostly Wellington-based Chinese advised the Te Papa staff on the flow of Chinese history in New Zealand as they understood and lived it as a community. The discussions around the design of the exhibition, and the exhibition itself gave impetus to spreading knowledge about the Poll Tax and the research which had been undertaken.

(See <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/misc/tepapa.htm>
)

14. THE CHINESE AND THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

In 1998 the Association for the Study of Chinese and their Descendants in Australasia and the Pacific Islands (ASCDAPI) and Otago University organised a Conference for the study of Overseas Chinese entitled 'Chinese in Australasia and the Pacific: Old and New Migrations and Cultural Change'.

The proceedings are available at :

<http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/ChinConf/Title.html>

It was at this conference that Murphy published the result of his research into the laws and regulations specifically aimed at the Chinese in New Zealand.

<http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/ChinConf/S5.html#5.4%20Legal%20Restrictions%20on%20Chinese%20New%20Zealanders%201871-1997>

It was at this conference that I presented a paper entitled Chinese in a Bi-cultural New Zealand. In it I argued that the Chinese in New Zealand should embrace the bi-cultural model and work to adapt it by community activism.

(<http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/ChinConf/S2.html#2.4%20The%20Chinese%20in%20a%20Bicultural%20New%20Zealand:%20The%20way%20forward>)

That paper built on an article in the book Maori Sovereignty - the Pakeha Perspective edited by Carol Archie and published by Hodder Moa Beckett (who also published the companion book Maori Sovereignty - the Maori Perspective edited by Hineami Melbourne both in 1995.) In the article I argue that Maori sovereignty is really a device for sharing resources which ultimately is decided by population ratios through the democratic process.

As I could not come to an arrangement with the publisher to put that chapter on the web I summarized it here:
<http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/misc/sover.htm>

15. MORE CONFERENCES

To revert to the chronology, in October 2004 Victoria University and the Asia 2000 Foundation organised a symposium entitled Engaging Asian Communities in Policy Decision-making Processes - What we can learn from the UK experience to take advantage of the presence of Shun Au and Kamaldeep Bhui in New Zealand. I was invited to participate and presented a paper Engaging Asian Communities in Policy Decision-making in New Zealand - background and issues. In the paper I argued the importance of Asian communities actively seeking a role in policy decision-making through various available mechanisms in order shape New Zealand as an Asian Pacific nation.

(See <http://www.hold.htm>)

Also in October 2004, the Human Rights Commission invited participation in its panel discussion of Human Rights and the Treaty of Waitangi. The discussion centred on whether International Law on Human Rights impinged on the application of the Treaty of Waitangi under New Zealand law. My submission Human Rights and the Treaty of Waitangi - a view from the Asian Community expressed a view that:

If the Treaty has de facto become a constitutional document, then the citizens of ethnic (non-white, Asian and other) communities should have access to it to the same extent that the Maori and the general (white, Euro-centric) communities have access to it as a constitutional document.

<http://www.hrc.co.nz/hrc/worddocs/Steven%20Young%20-%20A%20view%20from%20the%20Asian%20Community%2026%20Oct%2004.doc>

Although it would be rather unfair to name them at this point, there are several young Chinese in their twenties who have fully embraced the Treaty and strongly advocate the "partnership model" of governance. Interestingly, although they are thoroughly kiwi they are not from the long-time settler community but rather from more recent settler families. It may be some time before their views gain currency in both the long-term settler community and in the new migrant community; however they represent the raw edge of a new relationship between the Chinese and the Maori which may yet need to be forged.

17. INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTING CHINESE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL LIBRARY

Murphy's work in the National Library on behalf of the Chinese in New Zealand is now well-known. His expertise has already been recognized by the Government when he was seconded to the Office Ethnic Affairs for a year to assist with the Poll Tax reconciliation process. The management of the National Library obviously recognizes the importance of the Chinese community in the history of New Zealand, and as noted, has provided considerable support for Murphy's work. The Library

offers to archive historical material from the Chinese community.

ARCHIVES NEW ZEALAND

The resources of the Archives New Zealand are just beginning to be recognised in the community by those doing research. Its resources are vast and include for example the manifests of ships arriving in New Zealand including the passenger lists.

OFFICE OF ETHNIC AFFAIRS

The Office of Ethnic Affairs within the Department of Internal Affairs has devoted considerable resources to the Chinese community particularly during the Poll Tax community consultation process. Its strong advocacy on behalf of the Chinese community was an important factor in the successful conclusion of the consultation and reconciliation process. The Office is one of the main routes by which the Chinese community communicates with the highest levels of Government - a task made easier in the future by the moderation and quality of the submissions in relation to the Poll Tax.

THE POLL TAX TRUST

The Poll Tax

Trust has now been established and Trustees appointed. In the near future it will be responsible for the disbursement of funds (probably the income derived from the \$5,000,000 grant) to support various projects to enhance the culture, language and historical research related to the early Chinese settlers in New Zealand.

It is hope that the Trust will also support the arts. If so established and emerging artists worthy of consideration might include:

.
Helene Wong film-maker

.
Lynda
Changwai Earle poet and playwright

.
Eric
Ngan artist

.
Sonia Yee actor
and playwright

Alison Wong
and poet

novelist

18. CYBERSPACE

A discussion of the Chinese in New Zealand in the early 21st century could hardly be complete without a mention of its presence in cyberspace. Our own site at <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/> seems to have found favour with Google. It is top of the list when "Chinese New Zealand" is searched. This probably because there is little competition, other sites on the same subject (apart the Chinese Embassy site which is often ranked second) are not as substantial and certainly not as large.

The site started as an experiment in 1996 to use the then-new-fangled "web-technology" to re-publish articles from Chinese Voice, (an occasional specialist newspaper within Wellington's now defunct City Voice free newspaper), which I edited for a time after founding editor Kirsten Wong moved on. When publication on the internet was found to fun, I also re-published some other articles which had been written for other publications. To give the site some "body" I got permission from James Ng to re-publish his summary of the history of the Chinese in New Zealand. Following favourable comments, I was encouraged to publish various other articles on the Chinese in New Zealand. As researchers from school level to post-graduate level contact me about the site, often asking permission to quote the site in their research, I would in turn ask them to send me a copy of their paper for publication. In the meantime I was always on the look-out for conference papers on the subject matter of the

site. My policy has been to only publish papers which had been "published" elsewhere either in the newspaper, at a conference or as a written submission to the government. The purpose of this was to ensure that the site was not used as a "rant site".

Today the site is cited as a reference by a number of government departments in New Zealand, including the Office of Ethnic Affairs, the Asia New Zealand Trust, Te Puna Kokiri, by schools and universities and by overseas Chinese sites. It is also quoted as a reference site for at least two secondary school Unit Standards.

Unfortunately the site has become a little overgrown and may need more than private funding to maintain.

19. THE CURRENT SCENE

IMMIGRATION

Chinese immigration has slowed in recent years due to a number of factors. These include further changes to the rules including a higher level of English proficiency required of all applicants including dependent family members. The new rules, implemented suddenly, looked like a response to political pressure. Immigration is a popular football for politicians who need to maintain a balance between population loss through emigration, economic growth, capital investment, employment, the views of the Maori population and New Zealand's position in the Asia Pacific region among other factors. Immigration is also a popular topic among the Chinese and Asians generally because they are concerned with family reunification, job opportunities and a general desire for more links with their country of origin.

STUDENTS

In the 2001-2002 there was a huge influx of Chinese students into New Zealand creating almost overnight New Zealand's fourth largest export earner. In 2003 and 2004 the numbers fell dramatically but Chinese students remain a highly visible part of the community.

Their problems are discussed here.

<http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/participation/youngdec03.htm>

Students from China, as a group, look like being a permanent part of the Chinese community, although individually their period of stay is relatively short. Their importance arises from their impact on the economy, their effect on schools and universities, the perception of New Zealand they create by their reports to influential parents in their home countries, and the impression they create of "the Chinese" in the large number of homestay families which host them.

CHINESE LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS

There are a large number of Chinese language newspapers available. Most of these are "free" at Chinese food stores, popular restaurants and other places frequented by the Chinese. They survive by selling advertising. The number employing professional designers and writers is not known, but many have limited local news and seem to be filled with news and pictures culled from the world wide web. Some of these newspapers are operated as a division of a multi-faceted "Chinese" company also operating a supermarket, or immigration service or school so their journalistic standards are probably somewhat akin to that of a business promotional "flyer". A large part of the target readership appear to be Chinese students, many newly arrived, who may be duped into using some very expensive and unethical services.

The existence of a number of free Chinese language newspapers targetted at the immigrant community, containing possible low-quality or possibly erroneous news items about New Zealand life, inaccessible to, and therefore unmoderated by the general public is a concern and a possible barrier to better integration of the communities. There is a need for a bi-lingual newspaper in which the main stories and editorials are presented in Chinese and English.

LANGUAGE - RE-LEARNING CHINESE

In the 21st century, the ability to communicate in Chinese, has become very important, but largely lacking among the descendants of the original immigrants. Its is a loss keenly felt among many of the community, some of whom have taken steps to re-learn the language - with varying degrees of success. Classes in Standard Chinese or putonghua are available at community, school, polytechnic and university level. Many of the students are the children of recent migrants who wish to preserve access to their mother tongue. Among all students, gaining any degree of proficiency is hampered by the lack of opportunity in everyday life to use the language in a realistic setting.

FAMILY - MIXED MARRIAGES

Among the original immigrant families, mixed marriages are increasingly common and widely accepted. When not always accepted, there is often little choice anyway, as the younger generation are increasingly colour-blind in their choice of life partners. As well, the western phenomenon of late marriages preceded by a period of trial co-habitation is also well established. While hardly greeted with wild enthusiasm by the generation who, if they themselves indulged, did so discretely, it is nevertheless accepted as a common practice.

Among the children of mixed marriage (Chinese/European, Chinese/Maori) there is some interest in the Chinese heritage - as evidenced by inquiries and even formal research into family histories.

With children of mixed marriages, there is the possibility that they will learn to appreciate the cultural heritage of both parents, but equally they may become confused and behave as if "history started yesterday" and is largely irrelevant to their current situation.

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

At the time of writing, there are two Chinese members of Parliament, Pansy Wong a list MP in the National Party for eight years, five of them in Opposition, and Kenneth Wang a list MP for the Act Party who took up his seat upon the dismissal of another Act list MP for misconduct. While Wong's list position is apparently safe, her effectiveness and contribution is somewhat limited by being in Opposition. It remains to be seen whether Wang's seat (and indeed the Act Party) will survive the next election.

Meng Foon has won a second term as Mayor of the Gisborne District Council. Relatively young, Foon is said to be a fluent speaker of Maori which no doubt has an impact on his electoral chances in Gisborne.

Peter Chin, a solicitor and long-time city Councillor has recently (2004) won the mayoralty of Dunedin.

HONOURS AND FORMAL RECOGNITION

Ethnic Chinese now feature regularly among the those receiving New Year's and Queen's Birthday Honours. To the Chinese (and possible to everyone!) the selection process is something of a mystery and there is rather obviously some allocation by community sectors.

LIVING WITH THE TREATY

Although the Treaty relationship as defined by the Government of the day and the courts is increasingly accepted, it is by no means well understood. Its acceptance by the Chinese in New Zealand, both among the descendants of the original immigrants and the new immigrants is probably part of their overall acceptance of the law. Among the first group, the range of view is as wide as in the general community, ranging from racial prejudice against the Maoris to general grumbles about Treaty settlements process, to embracing the Maori view of the Treaty (as mentioned by a few, younger activist members of the Chinese community - who have benefitted from recent education).

The views of the Chinese to the Treaty, and the views of Maori and Europeans towards the Chinese in New Zealand in relation to their place under the Treaty is a much-needed and potentially fruitful area of research.

GOING TO OZ AND BEYOND

GOING HOME

There is a long-established tradition for young kiwis to travel to Australia and Britain for overseas experience. Among the young Chinese Zealanders, there is now a trend to also travel to Hong Kong, Taiwan and China to work as an alternative to London. For those without the ability to speak Chinese, Hong Kong's British heritage is an obvious attraction. For migrant children with roots in Taiwan and China, going home is a very natural step "back to the future".

The reasons for going, and the possibly long delay in coming back, include the capacity to earn far more overseas than in New Zealand, and other opportunities in larger markets and communities - a not-unique realization shared by many young kiwis. However as China increases in economic strength, and more young Chinese take up the opportunity to learn the language, it is likely that reverse migration may become significant in the next 10 to 20 years.

20. SUMMARY

The composition of the Chinese community in New Zealand has been transformed by recent large scale migration.

For the descendants of the original migrants:

.
In the last 10 years or so, there has been a much greater understanding of their early history arising from research and community activity; however research into their more recent history 1945-1985 as an assimilated community is lacking.

.
Their community organisations are strong. Their leaders are now well-educated and active in community activities.

.
The Chinese have representation at all levels of government; however some of this is somewhat lacking in experience and effectiveness.

.
The Poll Tax issue has been successfully resolved. The consultation process, and the sensitization of the Government departments to the Chinese will have long-term benefits. The Trust fund will provide a long-term source of funds to support historical research, cultural maintenance and community development.

.
The Chinese in New Zealand have become a subject of academic and semi-academic interest as reflected the number of recent conferences and papers published. The community is conducting its own research. Resources for this are increasingly available.

.
The resurgence of China is a source of pride and opportunity. The young have many opportunity to find their roots. Re-learning the language remains a problem.

.
Migration policy is still important.

.
Mixed marriages are increasingly common.

.
Their children are leaving New Zealand
in increasing numbers - some not to return for years.

.
Their understanding and
acceptance of Treaty issues needs research.

21. LOOKING AHEAD

Looking to the future we can anticipate:

More cooperation and collaboration

Various Chinese communities groups will come together more by working on issues of common concern which transcend their own interests but are felt to be important to the Chinese in New Zealand as a whole. In Wellington for example, most of the Chinese community groups joined together to raises funds for the tsunami relief.

Other topics closer to home which could generate a high level of interest might be in:

Education: Zoning, the confusion in the standards achieved in NCEA, the cost of tertiary education.

Racial discrimination: Both official and personal. What is likely to provoke a community wide reaction in the future is an egregious personal act of discrimination which is implicitly validated by insufficient official response.

Immigration: Sudden policy changes apparently driven by political expediency and electoral politics, the demonisation and scapegoating of immigrants; migrants as a necessary ingredient for national growth in the face of dwindling

human resources through skilled emigration, low natural replacement rates and an aging population.

Greater participation in the political process.

Eventually most parties will have one or more Chinese candidates on their List, especially if the Chinese population increases further. The presence of Chinese on city councils will become more common - following a trend already established. At the policy level, there is likely to be far more willingness to provide input to Government departments- building on the experience of the Poll Tax consultation process. The Chinese will learn that they do have real opportunities to influence policy but that this requires sustained and coordinated effort by their community. As the Asian perspective becomes increasingly important to New Zealand as a whole, it is to be hoped that the views of the local Chinese community will increasingly (and routinely) be sought and incorporated into community and official responses and outcomes.

For communities "separated at birth" but now living alongside one another, the passage of time will give them further opportunities to share their different experiences and to learn from them. For example the old immigrants have learned a great deal about surviving in a western culture, whereas the new immigrants bring with them the experience of seeing the world not as a member of a minority. (Which raises an interesting question: Why are the two present Chinese MPs drawn from the new immigrant community while the two sitting mayors are from the old immigrant community?)

The synergies arising out of bringing together a wider range of different skills, experiences and contacts will become obvious, both for groups working on community projects and for individuals on smaller projects.

Even if the adults from their respective communities stay somewhat apart, it is inevitable that their children will grow up together. In a generation the children will be almost oblivious to the details of their parents' arrives but simply define themselves as Chinese New Zealanders - or New Zealanders.

Learning about the Treaty, contributing to the public debate

As New Zealand as a nation gives greater recognition to the rights of the Maori people in its laws and institutions, the Chinese will need to learn more about the Treaty and its implied obligations. It is to be hope that the Chinese do not necessarily accept everything as stated by the Crown and the Maori, but actively participate in the interpretation of the Treaty as a "living document" while forging a positive relationship with the Maori people.

STEVEN YOUNG

APPENDICES

Footnotes

[1] Later they would see first hand how a government department analysed submissions, hammered out contradictions and checked out acceptable procedures to prepare a Cabinet paper in consultation with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

[1] Variously defined, but in practice giving the Maori people special status within the Constitution of New Zealand through recognition of Treaty of Waitangi. Does not mean State support of only European and Maori cultures.

[2] Appo Hocten http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb/default.asp?Find_Quick.asp?PersonEssay=1H31

[3] Alexander Don http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb/default.asp?Find_Quick.asp?PersonEssay=2D13

[4] Ng, James (1993). Windows on A Chinese Past Vol 1. Dunedin North, New Zealand: Otago Heritage Books.

[5] SS Ventnor carrying 474 coffins containing the disinterred bones of goldminers was shipwrecked off the Hokianga Heads off Northland 1902.

<http://www.wildflowerwalks.co.nz/wildflowerwalks/chinese.html>

[6] Murphy

[7] Esther Fung personal communication.

[8] H Wu personal communication. An interesting question is what would have been the status of children of refugee mothers born in New Zealand but sent back to China.

Acknowledgements

A paper about a large ethnic community in New Zealand cannot be prepared without drawing on the contributions of many people who have worked in community development over a long period.

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This paper has been peer-reviewed and commented on by Nigel Murphy, Kirsten Wong, Esther Fung and Harvey Wu; however all the errors are mine.

Biographical Note

Steven Young is a writer and commentator on the Chinese in New Zealand, the publisher of the website Chinese in New Zealand at <http://www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice/>. He has been a member of several Chinese community organisations and is currently President of the Wellington Branch of the New Zealand Chinese Association and in 2005 is enrolled in the Master of New Zealand Studies program at the Stout Centre for New Zealand Studies, Victoria University of Wellington. In real life he is a consulting engineer.