

Abstract

The Chinese are currently the largest Asian national minority in Canada. They make up about thirty percent of the total population of Vancouver. The Chinese have played an important role in the history of British Columbia. The first Chinese arrived on the shores of British Columbia in the first half of the 19th century. A significant increase of new Chinese immigrants comes with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which was built primarily thanks to hard work of Chinese workers. After completion of the railroad, a large proportion of immigrants settled in Vancouver, which in the early 20th century became the city with the largest Chinatown in Canada. However, the Chinese encountered resentment from Canadian society, which considered them to be representatives of the inferior race, and part of the white public even demanded their deportation and a total ban on the entry of new Chinese immigrants. However, the Chinese community came together and concentrated in Chinatowns. But, they constantly faced stereotypes from Canadian society. Various organizations and associations also began to emerge and they tried in any way to help the Chinese community. The Chinese Benevolent Association has become one of the most important organizations. This bachelor's thesis will therefore focus primarily on the activities of this Chinese organization and will analyze its activities in Chinatown in Vancouver, as well as interactions with the Canadian authorities and the public. The period which will be studied is defined from 1896, when the organization was founded, and by a milestone in 1923, when a new immigration law was passed and Chinese immigration was almost stopped.