

claims from business owners. While in Vancouver he expressed his alarm and surprise at the fact that there were opium factories in the city—the two Vancouver factories in had submitted claims for damage—though the manufacture of opium was legal and widely known. Even the wife of the Governor General, Lady Aberdeen, had visited a Victoria factory in 1895 to see the production herself.

King's subsequent 1908 report, *The Need for the Suppression of the Opium Traffic in Canada*, observed that "In the coast cities of Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster there are at least seven factories carrying on an extensive business in opium manufacture. It is estimated that the annual gross receipts of these combined concerns amounted for the year 1907, to

between \$600,000 and \$650,000." Concern was raised about women and children smoking opium (echoing a familiar theme about how Caucasian women were always at peril whenever near the Chinese), and while the government acted on King's report and outlawed the production and sale of opium by the Chinese, they did not ban the inclusion of opium in popular patent medicines.

King's report added to the calls to limit immigration and convinced Vancouver officials to step up their harassment of Chinatown. Ultimately this led to the Exclusion Act of 1923, when King was Prime Minister, which cut off further Chinese immigration to Canada. The Act wasn't repealed until 1947.

Haley Twaites, great-great-granddaughter of Yip Sang, poses in traditional Chinese silk in Chinatown's Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Park adjacent to the Dr. Sun Yat-sen Classical Chinese Garden, the first full-size Chinese garden built outside of China.



Father of Modern China

by John Atkin

DR. SUN YAT-SEN was a revolutionary leader, founder of the Nationalist government of China, and considered by many to be the father of modern China.

At an early age Sun had gone to live with his brother in Honolulu, where he attended school until his return to China in 1883 (his brother was concerned Sun would convert to Christianity if he stayed much longer there—he did later convert while in Hong Kong). Further study in Hong Kong and Guangzhou earned him his medical licence, though he gave up his medical practice to concentrate on reforming what he saw as a backward country with a corrupt and conservative government that refused to engage the modern world. In 1894 he founded the Revive China Society in Hawaii with the support of the local expatriate population as a platform for his revolutionary activities.

In 1895 Dr. Sun Yat-Sen led an unsuccessful coup against the ruling Qing Dynasty that saw many of his supporters executed, and Sun was exiled from China for the next sixteen years. He spent the time travelling around the world, spending time in Japan, the United States, Canada and Europe, to raise awareness of his cause.

It was during a visit to London in 1896 that he was kidnapped from the streets of the city and detained by the Chinese Legation for twelve days. It was big news, and local papers reported that an effort was made to send him as captive by steamer from London, but he was released by the British authorities. He afterwards came to Canada and endeavoured to enlist the Chinese in Victoria as sympathizers in the rebel movement. Victoria's Chinatown was one of the oldest and largest on the Pacific Coast, but Sun found on this visit that they were "relatively uninterested in revolutionary discussion."

On his second visit in 1910 he arrived in Vancouver by train from San Francisco at the new Great Northern station on Pender between Columbia and Carrall Streets. After a short stay in town he travelled east across the country, returning to the city in 1911. This time the crowds were large and thronged to greet him. He was welcomed by the executives of the Chee Kung Tong, a mutual aid society organized in Vancouver in 1892 (better known as the Chinese Freemasons, a name they adopted in 1920).



The Sun Yat-Sen statue outside the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden in Chinatown.

On the way to the Chee Kung Tong building at Pender and Carrall, the procession passed prominent merchant Yip Sang's newly expanded building and a number of recently erected clan and village association buildings. The population of the city's Chinatown was about to surpass Victoria's, and the new construction reflected this growth. The Chee Kung Tong hosted a dinner for their guest at the Peking Restaurant located on the second floor of their building, and after dinner Dr. Sun spent the night at the Woods Hotel (now the renewed Pennsylvania Hotel) across the street.

The next day he was back at the Chee Kung Tong building to have his photograph taken by Yucho Chow, whose portrait studio was on the second floor. After the photographs were taken, he may have paused to look at the Chinese Empire Reform Association building at 531 Carrall Street, since this group was founded to try to reform the Chinese monarchy rather than depose it. In its day it was one of the most influential societies in Chinatown with people such as Yip Sang as members. On his walk east Sun passed by the Chinese hospital on the second floor of the newly opened Chinese Benevolent Society building at 104–108 East Pender Street and noted the impressive Lee building at 127–131 Pender Street. His walk concluded at the Gou Sing Theatre at 124 East Pender, where an enthusiastic crowd of supporters greeted his arrival.

During his time in Vancouver at his numerous appearances he received overwhelming support and generous donations from his audience. It is estimated he raised over 35,000 dollars on his Vancouver trips. His hosts, the Chee Kung Tong society, even mortgaged their building to assist the revolution.

After a two-week stay in Vancouver, Sun headed to Victoria, where again he found the Victoria Chinese less than enthusiastic. He spent time in Nanaimo and Cumberland before travelling to Kamloops in the interior.

On 10 October 1911 the revolution Sun had started managed to succeed in toppling the Qing Dynasty, and when he learned of the successful rebellion from press reports, Sun immediately made arrangements to return to China from the United States. On 29 December 1911 a meeting of representatives from provinces in Nanking elected Sun as the provisional President of the Republic of China and set 1 January 1912 as the first day of the First Year of the Republic. This republic calendar system is still used in Taiwan today.

Opposite

Referred to as the "Father of Modern China," Dr. Sun Yat-sen visited Vancouver in February 1911, looking for support for the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty.

While in Chinatown, he visited the portrait studio of Yucho Chow on the second floor of the Chinese Freemason building for a sitting.





Chinatown

- 1 Hastings Mill Office (now the Mission to Seafarers Flying Angel Club)
- 2 St. James' Anglican Church
- 3 Chinese Freemason Building
- 4 West Hotel
- 5 Chinese Times Building
- 6 Wing Sang Co. Building
- 7 The Mah Society of North America
- 8 Carnegie Library
- 9 Empire Reform Association
- 10 Chinese Cultural Centre
- 11 Chinese Cultural Centre Museum
- 12 Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden
- 13 Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Public Park
- 14 Chinese Memorial Square