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# **Whose Paradise Is New Zealand, Female or Male?**

**An Investigation into the Different Perspectives  
of the Immigration Experience  
between Professional Chinese Females and Males**

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in Social Policy  
at Massey University, Albany, Auckland, New Zealand

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## Perhaps

### —To an author in isolation

Perhaps what we can think to say

Will never have readers.

Perhaps our journey was already wrong in the beginning,

and therefore ends wrong, too.

Perhaps the lamps we light one by one

are blown out by the winds one by one.

Perhaps we shall have exerted ourselves to the utmost to

light the darkness

and have no fire extra to keep ourselves warm.

Perhaps the tears we wept till we couldn't

did make the land more fertile.

Perhaps the sun we sang into being

also sings us to life.

Perhaps the more weight on our shoulders,

the grander the faith we had.

Perhaps we cried out vigorously on the sufferings of others

but had to be still on our own misfortunes.

Perhaps

Ours was a call that wouldn't be resisted;

we had (and have) no other choice.

— Shu Ting (1994) *Shu Ting: Selected Poems*.  
Hong Kong: Renditions Paperbacks

## Abstract

This thesis presents a different investigation for the study of professional Chinese immigrants in New Zealand. The significant difference is that it focuses on the impact of gender differences on immigration experiences since the new wave of immigrants from Mainland China in the early 1990s. In terms of the research objective, this thesis provides a critical review of the theoretical perspective of relationships between gender and immigration, and highlights the major studies of Chinese immigrants in New Zealand.

This research employs phenomenological methodology and biographical life story to narrate the participants' immigration experiences. Based on in-depth interviews with six professional Chinese immigrants, this thesis critically discusses their immigration experiences in depth, focusing on key themes: the participants' background, transition, settlement, and identity.

Utilising a thematic analysis, this thesis illustrates that, apart from social and cultural factors, gendered perspectives have affected the diverse immigration experiences of Chinese females and males. The study also explores the fact that both societies, China and New Zealand, have shaped immigrants' cultural and gender identities. Implications for policy and directions in future research arising from this study for improving Chinese immigrants' settlement and integration are briefly suggested.

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This thesis provides a precious opportunity to review my cultural and personal identity. For me, this thesis seems to end the past time and open a new life as a Chinese immigrant transitioning in New Zealand.

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## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Perhaps	I
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Chapter One	
Introduction: Being and Thinking	1
Background: My Life Experience	2
The Purpose of the Study	4
The Thesis Structure	5
Chapter Two	
Theoretical Perspective and Literature Review	7
Introduction	7
Gender Theoretical Perspective	7
Gender Status In Contemporary China	8
Immigration and Gender	11
The History of the Chinese in New Zealand	12
Literature on Chinese Immigrants in New Zealand	13
Conclusion	17
Chapter Three	
Methodology and Method	19
Introduction	19
Methodology	19
Method	21
Biography: Life Story	21
Research Design	23
Questionnaires	23
Research Pilot	25
Participants	26
Ethnics Issue	27
Interview Process	27
Transcription and Analysis	31
Chapter Four	
Anne's Story: The Moon in the East, the Sun in the West	32
A Rebel Choice	32
A Stronger Seed	35
Light in the Dark	38
Tides of Life	39
Chapter Five	
Jim's Story: Emigration is One Way to Life	44
Clouds and the Moon over Boundless Road	44
Wandering and Friendship	48
Outside of the Wall	50

<b>Chapter Six</b>	<b>Mary's Story: Flying Depends on Your Wings</b>	<b>54</b>
	Echo	54
	Rainbow on the Strange Sky	58
	New Horizon	61
<b>Chapter Seven</b>	<b>Dean's Story: High Heaven and Deep Sea</b>	<b>64</b>
	Moving the East to Reach the West	64
	The Endless Sailing	67
	A Dialogue in Paradise	70
<b>Chapter Eight</b>	<b>Susan's Story: The Soul's Home</b>	<b>74</b>
	Shadows in the Past	74
	A Heart War	78
	The Song of Life	81
<b>Chapter Nine</b>	<b>Leo's Story: A Stray Star</b>	<b>84</b>
	Transnationalism in Time and Space	84
	The Identity of Diaspora	87
	Moving between Outside and Inside	91
<b>Chapter Ten</b>	<b>Discussion: Different Voices</b>	<b>95</b>
	Introduction	95
	There: Background of Participants	96
	Qualification	96
	The Reasons for Immigration	97
	Approach to New Zealand	99
	Here: Transition	100
	Economic Status	100
	Accommodation	101
	English Barrier	101
	Employment	102
	Settlement and Identity	106
	Integration	106
	Cultural Identity	108
	Gender Issue: China and New Zealand	109
	Fate and Future	112
	Conclusion	115
<b>Chapter Eleven</b>	<b>Conclusion: Transition and Integration</b>	<b>117</b>
	Introduction	117
	Summary of Findings	117
	Future Directions in Research	120
	Implications for Policy	121

<b>References</b>		<b>126</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>Human Ethics Application</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>Information Sheet</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>Appendix 3</b>	<b>Consent Form</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>Appendix 4</b>	<b>Research Questionnaire</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Appendix 5</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>Appendix 6</b>	<b>The Approved Letter of Human Ethics Committee</b>	<b>160</b>

## Chapter One

### Introduction: Being and Thinking

This is the self as it is inscribed in the gaze of the other. And this notion which breaks down the boundaries, between outside and inside, between those who belong and those who do not, between those whose histories they depended on but whose histories cannot be spoken.

—Hall (1991:48) *Old and New Identities*.

### Background: My Life Experience

I need to begin with my own life story, because my personal experience was the first and foremost motivation that stimulated me to undertake this study. Frequently, I have been asked why I immigrated to New Zealand. This is not a simple question to answer in a single sentence, and I must recall my childhood during the 1970s. At that time of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, my father, who was a judicial officer, was sent to a remote village to endure heavy labour retraining and re-education. Afterwards, my mother and I were forced to leave our hometown, a big city, in which I was born, to be reunited with my father. Before long, the local government selected my father to take up a legal position. So, the rest of my childhood was spent in a middle mountain city located in Northern China.

In that disturbing time, in that acutely cold place, people lived in basic and very tough circumstances. There was no heat in our classrooms during my prime school years, despite the fact that the climate averaged a freezing 20 below temperature in winter. Often, I had to suffer unbelievable cold and cry silently during my school days. Consequently, I was distressed about my life except one day, when I suddenly felt a unique, warm sunshine on my way home after the class. That sense of pleasure and peace I had not ever experienced before. Unfortunately it disappeared quickly and

never occurred for me again. Nevertheless, because of my childhood experience, I am still extraordinarily scared of cold weather.

In the 1980s, our family followed my father to return to our hometown again. In that ancient city, I completed my schooling including university. To be honest, partly due to my family background, but also my own endeavours, I obtained a professional job with a good economic and social status. However, I still lived in a tension-filled social environment, and I did not have a strong sense of security or self-esteem. I usually lost myself in the crowded streets. In terms of the ups and downs of my father's official career, our family was affected for more than twenty years. I experienced the disappointment, the complications and the vulnerable inconstancy of human relationships.

I yearned for the special sunshine of my childhood memory, and wished I could enjoy that marvellous sense of nature once more. I desired more than anything to see the world, and study overseas to broaden my horizon. I heard a voice in my soul, "It is time to say goodbye to this stereotyped life and to go overseas to begin a new life." I chose to immigrate to New Zealand, because of its simple, free and calm lifestyle, and clean environment. Furthermore, I needed to escape to a bright sunshine from a cold atmosphere. It was a decision of destiny for me: a true life seemed to exist elsewhere far away from my hometown.

The departure day eventually came. At the airport, I did not want my family and friends to see my sorrow, so I had to force myself to go straight ahead without looking back. Certainly, departing from familiar surroundings was full of painful feelings. I had to abandon all my happiness and sadness in China. I knew in my heart that I would not like to return. However, once on the airplane, I could not help my eyes filling with silent tears. Suddenly, I was aware of my great emotional connection to Mainland China, which, forever, is my soul root. Doubtlessly, I am authentically tied to the Chinese culture.

Moreover, I didn't sleep in the plane all that night. I was anxious about the huge risk and cultural shock I would have to face, and what would happen to my life in the new circumstances as a stranger, in the strange land of New Zealand. After an eleven-hour flight crossing the Pacific, the following morning, I arrived at the airport in Auckland. Surprisingly, it looked like one of the familiar cities I had been to in China or Asia. Then, my friends and I had a typical Chinese lunch at a Chinese restaurant. I did not feel myself abroad, but rather in my homeland.

As soon as I arrived in New Zealand in February 2002, I enrolled for a Master's degree in social policy, which was an unusual choice among Chinese immigrants. As a new immigrant, moving from east to west, at the very beginning I was truly confused and annoyed by this *western academic* subject, and as a result, I often suspected my ability and intellect. In particular, I had an English language obstacle to overcome, and this has affected my ability to communicate with confidence.

There is a saying among the Chinese community: New Zealand is paradise, a suitable and appreciative place for females to survive, but not for males. However, in spite of my gender, like other Chinese immigrants, I encountered a tough settlement process. In the first year I shifted residence four times. I compelled myself to adapt to different accommodation, as a homestay, and a flatmate living with Kiwis. Apart from culture shock, I also experienced racial discrimination that I could sense sometimes in someone's eyes, or from the tone in which they spoke to me.

In terms of settlement, transition and integration, for me, the most difficult barrier is to fight against myself all the time. I have to overcome weakness of physical strength and frailty of psychology. I have to endure the discrepancy of my social status and economic poverty, having gone from a "white-collar professional woman" to a full-time ethnic student without income. I have to defeat my hesitation and vanity, which means I must clearly identify who I am, but ignore who I ever was and who I should be. I never ceased struggling with various challenges from the day I arrived in

this paradise, New Zealand.

So far, I have no regrets about my immigration decision at all. Despite facing a variety of pressures, I still enjoy my new life in New Zealand as a Chinese female immigrant. In everyday life I frequently gain plenty of assistance from kind, friendly people from different ethnic groups. I am not the kind of person who wonders why things happen. I also dislike watching things happen. Personally, I prefer to make an effort to promote things to happen. Like Oakley (1984:204), my approach is positive:

Life is worth living. Not because there is nothing else, but because of what we each may give one another; pain, joy, anguish, peace. It's not an easy journey. You may even call it an adventure. It doesn't matter about the problems, the contradictions. In our hearts we understand everything. We understand it's the struggle that counts.

Over time I have become part of this multicultural society and gradually embraced all aspects of cultural activities, voluntary social work and academic study. The social system in New Zealand provides opportunities for women in education, employment and living conditions on a more equal basis. As a newcomer, an ethnic female, in terms of a realistic expectation of immigration life, I have even put down new roots here with a sense of security and freedom. I live in a less restrictive environment and I enjoy a free and peaceful lifestyle. In New Zealand, it is easy for me to relive that warm sunshine afternoon, which I had spent many years pursuing.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

Since the adoption of the policy of reform and openness in Mainland China in the 1980s, a significant number of professionals and intellectuals have emigrated overseas. Some immigrated to New Zealand in the early 1990s. As one of those immigrants, I am deeply interested in the different environments encountered by Chinese immigrants in New Zealand, because of the different perspectives of gender, as well as for social and

cultural reasons. Hence, I am eager to narrate their stories, struggles and desires as a Chinese immigrant in New Zealand, because “I write in order to live, to have a world in which one can live” (Oakley, 1984:191). By telling their life stories, this study aims to compare the different immigration experiences of professional Chinese females with Chinese males by collecting information on significant topics, including:

1. Investigating and analysing the reasons (for example, cultural and social positioning) that have given these immigrants’ diverse experiences, such as employment patterns and their roles in the host society.
2. The gender difference in varying expectations between male and female immigrants in this category: do Chinese males tend to have unrealistically higher expectations; are females more realistic and open-minded about integrating into the host society?
3. To study what social and cultural factors impact on the different immigration experiences for Chinese professional males and females in both societies, China and New Zealand.

Along with the evolving process, I often spontaneously compared my immigration experiences with others. Those Chinese immigrants’ life stories have inspired me to review my own experiences once more. Truly, this thesis is not only an interpretation of the lives of others but also an expression of myself, somewhat, a reflection of my life. This research has enabled me to rethink my cultural and gender identity as a Chinese, a female, and a new immigrant in New Zealand. However, I am proud of my Chinese ethnic heritage deep in my bones, which has created me to become *myself*, and shaped my past and current life. Meanwhile, I treasure the right to be an immigrant in New Zealand, which provides a great opportunity for me to rethink and identify a *new self*, as this will have a dramatic impact on my life in the future.

## **The Thesis Structure**

In the next chapter I outline some gender theoretical perspectives, briefly evaluate

gender status in contemporary China, and expand on the issues between gender and immigration. In particular, the literature review focuses on studies of current professional Chinese immigrants in New Zealand. The third chapter describes the overall process of the research, and discusses the key methodology and method, phenomenology and biographical life story. The following six chapters describe the six Chinese life stories of my participants one by one. Through the immigration experiences of these men and women, they investigate the gendered division of these perspectives in their transitions as professional immigrants, as they are “mirrored in the world of the women and men” (Logan and Huntley, 2001: 631).

The discussion chapter explores my findings through the collected data and the description of life stories under the major themes such as: What were the different reasons men and women undertook immigration? What challenges did they undertake in terms of employment? How did the different gender immigrants integrate into the host society? And also how do different gender immigrants evaluate “the impact of immigration on their own personality, personal growth and so on” (Bonisch-Brednich, 2002: 168)? The final chapter provides conclusions of the thesis, and proposes recommendations for and policy implications of my research. I also suggest possibilities for future research arising from the study.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Theoretical Perspective and Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

Over the past two decades there has been a diverse literature on gender perspectives in immigration. The following discussion of theoretical perspectives and the review of literature address and examine the theme of gender and immigration. The first section begins with an outline of gender perspectives and critically presents the trends in gender status in contemporary China. The next section discusses a selection of literature on the strands of gender and international immigration. The final section evaluates the outstanding studies on Chinese immigration, in particular issues of professional Chinese immigrants who came to live in New Zealand in the 1990s.

#### **Gender Theoretical Perspective**

American feminists Susan Kessler and Wendy Mckenna (1985) initially argued that gender behaviour was a social construction. Gender phenomena were shaped “sets of behaviors, appearances, mannerisms, and other cues that we have learned to associate with members of a particular gender” (Lucal 1999:784). The attributes and behaviours of females and males were constructed by social and cultural biases, which differ “between biological sex and more culturally variable forms of femininity and masculinity” (Oakley, 2000:295).

Gender as construct consistently promoted social and cultural differences between men and women rather than similarities. Gender studies investigated social differences based on gendered experiences. Apart from the various forms of gender inequality, gender studies focused on representation and reproduction of masculinity and femininity (Kappeler, 1986; Humm, 1995). As “an ideological representation”, Oakley

(2000) pointed out, social science should explore the particular essence of “gendering”. Furthermore, in terms of gender significances, Lorber (1994:1) highlighted the following:

[It] establishes patterns of expectations for individuals, orders the social process of everyday life, is built into the major social organizations of society, such as the economy, ideology, the family, and the politics, and is also an entity in and of itself.

Generally, feminist theorists have stressed social and political gender inequality. Firestone (1970) stated that gender differences depended on how a specific society identifies the roles of women and men, and gender diversities were molded by a patriarchal system. “The theoretical task of feminism is to understand that system. The political task of feminism is to end it” (Humm, 1995:106). Therefore, gender inequality is caused by gendered social status, which also significantly represents “a relationship of power” (Scott, 1988).

### **Gender Status in Contemporary China**

Rooted in different social constructions, gender identity is one essential component subject of social identity (Yu, 2000). Certainly, the gender relationship is an elementary relationship of humanity. “The status of women and men is as much an issue of power and privilege as is the status of people of different races and social classes” (Lorber, 1994:284). In China, a gender perspective is a combination and transformation of philosophy, sociology and economics, which is underpinned by gender justice in the family, marriage and employment.

Historically, the gender perspective has developed based on Confucius’ patriarchal philosophy: an ideology of male superiority (Yu, 2000). The Chinese pictographs typically reveal Chinese women have been burdened with the “Three Obediences” (fathers, husbands, and sons) in a traditional patriarchal society for three thousand years

(Lu, 1984). The fundamental cultural symbols illustrate a description of gender discrimination in a traditional patriarchal society (Best, 2003; Xinran, 2002). Beginning with the symbol for female, it is easy to see how the characters reflect women's subordination:

女 female

女帚 ; female + housekeeper = woman: her duty is to deal with all housework

女良 ; female + kindness = mother: she must obey and please her husband and sons

女息 女帚 self-effacing female + woman = wife: she should be always responsible and apologetic for everything that's wrong in family

女古 女良 female tradition + female kindness = girl

The situation of Chinese women improved with the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Throughout this era, Mao Zedong's words: "Women can hold up half the sky" imposed a desexed cultural ideology on women's identity and gender relationships. On the one hand, women embraced the more equal opportunities in education and employment. On the other hand, "Iron Girls" became the models of females, which denied differences between women and men in sexual and physical aspects (Lu, 1984; Croll, 1995). Consequently, in the case of the development of the national economy, women were overloaded with heavy work. "If women and men are

alike, unlike treatment is inequality, but if they are not alike, dissimilar treatment is appropriate” (Lorber, 1994:282). However, women’s liberation and equality were limited and misrepresented in Mao's time.

In the beginning of the 1980s, social debates about gender relationships prompted women using a Marxist feminist framework to protect their own interests and rights in China. Since the early 1990s, under the pressure of the market economy, Chinese women researchers utilised gender perspectives with feminist theories and methodologies to analyse women’s issues: consciousness raising, gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the job market, domestic violence, and the relationship between women’s liberation and state policy (Zheng, 1997).

However, the variety of patriarchal ideologies has continued to influence the public and to restrict women’s efforts to improve their rights and opportunities in contemporary China (Weeks, 1989). First, with rising unemployment after the economic reforms, women encountered gender and age discrimination in employment. The vast majority of job advertisements obviously required only male applicants. This sort of exclusion in the employment market was an increasingly debatable topic, which caused women to feel indignant at the injustice suffered due to gender discrimination (Bulbeck, 1994).

In addition, the image of a “virtuous wife and good mother” underpinned women’s domestic role in the family, as well as an expectation of dedicating their lives to their work (Weeks, 1989). Of course, nobody can undo three thousand years of patriarchal cultural influences in a few decades to achieve equality of gender completely in China (Lu, 1984). Nowadays, Chinese women are still struggling for their basic civil rights, political rights and economic rights all over the country (Lu, 1984; Zheng, 1997).

In a positive aspect, the new understandings and thinking about women have started challenging the traditional male-dominated culture through gender theoretical perspectives and practices (Dow, 1996). Furthermore, paid employment was an

indispensable part of liberation and equality, and a fundamental gender ideology strengthened Chinese women's identity (Yu, 2000). Along with an emphasis on holding dual responsibilities of the household and in employment, contemporary Chinese social construction encouraged women to develop a more independent personality and hard-work inspiration in their everyday life. These characteristics have affected their immigration experiences overseas.

### **Immigration and Gender**

Until the early 1970s, international research on immigration focused only on males. It presumed women were the passive companions of the males. Therefore, women were absent in research on transmigration and settlement patterns. Also, the orthodox research ignored women's contribution to economic and social development (Ryan, 2002). Since the 1980s, the new literature has started to utilise a gender perspective to fill the gaps of the exclusion of women's voices, which were historically dominated by a male bias (Foner, 1979; Kossoudji & Ranney, 1984; Pessar, 1986; Simon and Brettell, 1986).

Then, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994:3) explored "how the social relations of gender contour (ed) women's and men's immigration and settlement experiences." In the last ten years, social research on the differences in gender immigration has been undertaken in both methodological and theoretical aspects (Bonisch-Brednich, 2002). For research in immigration experiences, it has been common to use qualitative methodology in case studies or cross-cultural research.

Recently, Mahler and Pessar (2001) pointed out a new paradigm, which was called *gendered geographies of power*. This concept is concerned with gender from a transnational perspective on immigration. Walsh and Horenczyk (2002:505) argued "the different effects of changing culture, norms, and gender role expectations seem to lead inevitably to different immigration experiences for men and women". The exploration of how gender perspectives and immigration experiences have interacted in the special transitions has been a growing topic (Kelson and DeLaet, 1999; Pyke and Johnson, 2003).

In particular, numerous studies have focused on female international immigrants from Third World countries because in the main immigration countries such as America, Canada, and Australia, “women outnumber male immigrants, the increased flows are related to the increased contribution from Asian sources of immigration” (Ryan, 2002:95). Ye Le Espirtu (2002) found that the reasons for immigration to the USA differed between Filipino females and males: for women, their desires were to see the world and pursue a new lifestyle; in contrast, males had ambitions to improve their lives financially. Pyke and Johnson (2003) argued that Asian America women established their gender identity through moving through a complex immigration cultural frame because “gender expectations might engage different gender performances depending on the local context in which they are interacting” (Pyke and Johnson 2003:34). In general, male immigrants emphasised their self-development in professional occupations whereas women placed high value on building social networks and connections within the host society (Walsh and Horenczyk, 2002). After immigrating to the west, Asian communities encountered an alteration of gender relations due to men’s loss of economic power, which they had held in their homeland. In terms of their employment, Asian women obtained more equality, decision-making power, independence and autonomy (Min and Foner, 1998; Kibria, 1993).

As Yu (2000) noted, the previous studies of female immigration stressed that unskilled Chinese women had suffered from more disadvantages in the transition process than men. In reality, Chinese women have played a significant and independent role in professional and management positions in Australia (Ryan, 2002). Similarly, Pal Nyiri (2002) argued that the young and middle-aged women from urban Chinese cities immigrated on their own to Europe in the 1990s with a fairly good economic status and professional background. Most of them became engaged in self-employment as entrepreneurs, importers, and independent operators. Ryan (2002:100) analysed this was a result of their “education, English language skills, work experience, gender, culture, individual contexts, and the opportunities defined by the host society.” Their distinguished immigration experiences have profound implications for the further study of gender relations and international immigration.

### **The History of the Chinese in New Zealand**

On 12 Feb 2002, the Chinese New Year, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark

made an official apology to the Chinese community for the anti-Chinese prejudice and discriminatory legislation of the past. The history of the Chinese in New Zealand is a history of survival, which started with the pioneering Chinese immigrants who came to New Zealand as itinerant labourers to work the dwindling Otago gold-mines in 1866 (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). Soon after, they were subjected to a poll tax. "Historically, the Chinese were the only ethnic group to suffer the poll tax as well as the denial of citizenship" (Ip, 2003:340). From 1881 to 1920, the anti-Chinese act imposed a poll tax of ten pounds, then increasing to one hundred pounds and limited the number of Chinese (Ip, 2003).

Nearly 120 years later, the next significant migration of Chinese began arriving in New Zealand. In 1986, the government introduced the new Immigration Act and selected immigrants based on criteria of personal skills and economic merit, without discrimination on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin (Burke 1986; Henderson, Trilin & Watts, 2001). The distinguishing character of the 1991 Immigration Amendment Act was that the 'Points System' was recommended to control the number and quality of immigrants with professional skills and capital. Most of them were from East Asia, particularly China (Henderson, 2003).

The significance of immigration is tied to the process of social construction. In addition, economic factors have played a fundamental role in shaping trends of immigration in the global age. Since the adoption of the new policies of reform and openness, the dramatic development of the economy and society has provided a broad view for Chinese professionals and intellectuals, and has caused a wave of emigration overseas. New Zealand has been an appreciated choice for some of these people. According to the survey, under the General Skills Category (professional immigrants) the number of Mainland Chinese totalled 36371 from 1992 to 2001 (Henderson, 2003).

### **Literature on Chinese Immigration in New Zealand**

Although Chinese immigrants arrived in New Zealand over a period of 130 years,

“history writing on Chinese in New Zealand is still in its infancy” (Murphy, 2003:280). Bickleen Fong was the first Chinese woman in New Zealand to obtain a Master of Arts and the first Chinese person to publish her own book *The Chinese in New Zealand*, based on her Master’s thesis in 1959. This book was a pioneering study of Chinese immigrants, expressing an insider’s perspective about the Chinese community in New Zealand. In 1974, Stuart William Greif published his doctoral thesis, *The Overseas Chinese in New Zealand*, which described and discussed the Chinese New Zealanders from a historical point. In 1993, James Ng successfully contributed the profound four-volume *Window on a Chinese Past*, which presented a detailed history of the New Zealand Chinese from the goldmining and pre-Second World War era.

The new Chinese immigrants who came from a ‘prosperous and sophisticated metropolitan’ background, have faced new challenges in New Zealand (Ip, 1990). Therefore, “the study of the New Zealand Chinese community takes on a new relevance. The Chinese will become an increasingly significant factor in New Zealand society” (Ip, 1990: preface 7). Recently, New Zealand research has focused concern on issues of settlement of professional Chinese immigrants (Friesen and Ip, 1997; Henderson and Trlin, 1999; Henderson, Trlin and Watts, 2001).

In their survey, Friesen and Ip (1997:15) emphasised, “as their settlement pattern and employment profiles have revealed them to be quite distinctive,” the studies on Chinese immigrants should observe an increased majority group from Mainland China. The differences studied early Chinese arrivals, “not only in their educational and employment backgrounds but also in their points of origin in China and therefore dialects spoken” (Henderson and Trlin, 1999:52). To avoid squandering human capital, the researchers suggested policy to solve the problems by provision of communication, employment training, and translation and interpreting services for professional immigrants of Non-English speakers (Fletcher, 1999; Watts and Trlin, 2000; Henderson, Trlin and Watts, 2001).

As an outstanding researcher concentrated on 'new skilled Chinese immigrants', Henderson has specifically explored the ongoing employment problems existing among this group, and further examined the key reasons for under-employment and unemployment, such as English language proficiency, non-recognition of overseas qualifications, and local work experiences (Henderson, 2002). Moreover, Henderson suggested how to overcome barriers to unemployment and promote immigrants' settlement (Henderson, 2003:161):

More effort and provisions are needed to settle the new 'quality migrants' granted residence under the points system so that New Zealand can benefit from their skills and the productive and cultural diversity they represent.

Orthodox studies of Chinese immigrants in New Zealand focused on general immigration trends, discrimination and settlement in the host society, but the relationship between gender and immigration has largely been ignored in academic research. There were three notable books that studied women and immigration in New Zealand: *I Have in My Arms both Way* (Jansen, 1990), *Home Away From Home* (Ip, 1990), and *Shifting Centres* (Fraser & Pickles, 2002). Generally, those studies investigated the experiences of female immigrants, by concentrating on their employment, gender relationships and political rights in New Zealand. Through their immigration life stories, the studies described "individual women's hopes, fears, achievements and struggles" (Fraser & Pickles, 2002:9).

The first statistics of Chinese female immigrants were gathered in the New Zealand Official Census in 1867 (Ip, 2002). At that time there were six Chinese females to 1217 Chinese males, because Chinese females could not immigrate independently but only "as a result of male migration" (Ip, 2002:150). As a notable academic researcher focusing on Chinese immigrants in New Zealand, Ip in her book *Home Away From Home*, chose eight different Chinese women to narrate their life stories in oral history form, because traditionally Chinese women "are largely unheard and their status and

roles are unassessed” (Ip, 1990: preface 9).

Actually, each woman has a “remarkable” and “valuable” story to study. “Each woman had her own private struggle in reconciling herself to leaving China permanently. Each has her own way of maintaining a Chinese identity in a foreign environment” (Ip, 1990: preface 25). Every story was a distinctive life history track in both societies, China and New Zealand. Ip explored the experiences of female immigrants, for instance their employment, gender relationship and political rights in New Zealand through descriptions of “their aspirations, difficulties, and achievements” (Ip, 1990: preface 10).

From the early 1990s, immigration for contemporary Chinese women was a lifestyle choice in “a less constrained society” (Ip, 2002:150). The Chinese immigration gender ratio in 1991 was 99 males to 100 females; further in 2001, “the number of Chinese females has exceeded that of Chinese males”: 55,000 female, 50000 males in the figure of 2001 census of New Zealand (Ip, 2002:160; Statistics New Zealand, 2001). In contrast with “mail-order brides” and “paper daughters”, immigrants in the 19th and the 20th centuries, Chinese female immigrants came to New Zealand mainly following their families or as the principal applicant herself under general skills and business categories.

The recent generation of Chinese women from Mainland China had higher education and professional work experience prior to migration; among Chinese female immigrants the percentage with tertiary education was “twice the New Zealand proportion of similarly qualified females” (Ip, 2002:162). In reality, this unique immigrant group has challenged the traditional assumption of gender study. In spite of the male-dominated cultural ideology still influencing the Chinese community, along with their relatively high earnings and position, the professional female immigrants’ status in their family and society has risen consistently due to their persistence and endeavour in New Zealand.

Many professional female immigrants from Mainland China started their work in lower positions such as being a clerk, waitress, cleaner or even a labourer but were willing to do this because they believed it would give them opportunities for further development. When an immigrant encounters difficulties and barriers in the host society, "it's easy to start to complain and blame the system, or people, or the culture" (Jansen, 1990:164). Fortunately, female immigrants from Mainland China are regarded as "the group most determined to strive for a better future in New Zealand by further studies or sheer hard work" (Ip, 2002:161).

Chinese female immigrants are embedded into multi-cultural societies and are optimistic about accepting the challenge in the transnational movement globally. However, on arrival in New Zealand, they became aware of immigration being "a spiritual and a physical event" (Bonisch-Brednich, 2002:171). In a word, for them, immigration was an important process of individual growth. With their high qualifications, and realistic and adaptable perspectives, Ip (2002) argued that Chinese female immigrants have the ability and opportunity to establish better futures if they can successfully adjust and overcome the barriers in the immigration process.

## **Conclusion**

Immigration is a social and economic phenomenon, a geographical movement throughout the world. "Gender is a set of social relations that organise immigration patterns" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994:3). A gender perspective, as a social research topic, explores how gender relations particularly affect immigration in social and cultural aspects and examines how the different immigration experiences such as settlement, transmigration and integration have been shaped by gender ideologies.

Because of their own cultural, social and political conditions, Chinese women historically lived in a patriarchal society. However, the social and economic situation of Chinese women had been promoted since 1949. Because of "growing up believing that

working outside the home is the only way of life” (Yu, 2000:450), the female employment rate in China is the highest in the world. The employment experiences, which have shaped their independent identity, have impacted on their immigration life and gender relationships.

Since the 1990s, the professional Chinese immigrants became a mainstream source arriving in New Zealand. Their immigration experiences have challenged traditional studies on Chinese in New Zealand, because they differed in the gender perspective, their occupations, their personalities, and settlement and adaptation. In particular, social democracy and welfare systems provided women with more equal opportunities to stand on their own feet in their transition to New Zealand life. Finally, Cheng (1999:40) underlined the relationship between gender and immigration:

Gender ideology shapes the differential experiences of male and female migrants in terms of what kind of work they are channelled to take on and within what contexts they are employed. Gender relationships shape the particular roles of male and female members for productive and reproductive work within the same household throughout the whole process. Gender dynamics within the household also dictate that negotiations occur constantly among members of different sexes and generations. In short, this important organizing principle of power shapes the particular contours of the migration process as well as the diverse experiences particular to people situated in different locations along social hierarchies. Besides, it also interacts with other systems and stratification, such as race and class, and with the larger socioeconomic and political contexts.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology and Method

Our experience of the world is relative to our perspective.

The world of our experience is constantly transforming.

— Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu (as cited in Mcgreal, 1995)

#### Introduction

As a researcher with a similar background and experience to the participants, I chose a phenomenological approach to explore the life experiences of six professional Chinese immigrants. I wanted to investigate the significant differences between the experiences of these males and females from a gender perspective. I utilised a method of biographical life story to explore the “reality” that each immigrant experienced. There were a number of steps in this project. This chapter begins with an overview of the methodology and method used. Moreover, I will explain how I designed my research questionnaire and dealt with the research pilot and clarify how I recruited the participants. This will be followed by an ethics discussion. Finally I will present the whole process of the in-depth interviews, and transcribing and analysing the data.

#### Methodology

As a branch of philosophy, phenomenology originated about 1905 with the outstanding writings of Edmund Husserl, articulated in *Ideas* (1969) and *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1970). As a founder of phenomenology, Husserl (1999:31) brilliantly clarified its essential conception: phenomenology makes “distinctions between the phenomena of physical expression and the sense-giving and sense-fulfilling act.” Phenomenology relies on reflection and understanding. In other words, phenomenology focuses on how people describe and interpret their objective

reality as they experience it. Patton (1990:69) further explained its essence as a relationship between reality and experience: "There is only what they know their experience is and means. The subjective experience incorporated the objective thing and a person's reality." As a basis, phenomenology generates a utility of approach to combine the objective and subjective in social science, and "the between point of world and consciousness" (Linda, 2000:48).

As a new methodological theory, phenomenology highlights that social research should discover the human being's inside feelings. Doubtless, "each individual has his or her own social history and an individual perspective on the world" (Fontana and Frey, 2000: 668). The main aim of phenomenological theory is to study a variety of existing appearances in genuine human experience, and deal with consciousness and thought such as "emotion", "relationship" and "culture" (Patton, 1990).

In view of the different experiences between people, phenomenology underlines that the essential aim of the method is to explicate and interpret their senses and perspectives of their life experiences. However, phenomenology starts from the significance of the human life. "The human being, the object and subject of their inquiry, exists in multiple strata of reality, which are organized in different ways" (Tedlock, 2000:471). Through the participant's own descriptions, the researcher can gain an accurate insight into how participants see the world from their standpoint, what they feel and why they experience their life in their own way and how personal experiences shape an individual's ideology, sensation and behaviour.

In addition to being an intensive and profound study approach, phenomenology utilises a particular paradigm for a particular phenomenon (Spiegelberg, 1969). Immigration is "a human phenomenon-live and experienced" (Braziel and Mannur, 2003:8), a transnational and multicultural movement. For each Chinese immigrant, the subjective response is an ongoing transnational process from his or her departure from China to arrival in New Zealand. This subjectivity is also impacted by their personality, gender,

their sense of belonging, and social and economic conditions. All these practices have constructed the interaction between immigrants and the objective world (De Lauretis, 1984; Levesque-Lopman, 2000).

My thesis' purpose is to "find out what is happening, to seek new insights, to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light" (Robson, 1993:42). It is a qualitative methodology, which is concerned with the lives of professional Chinese immigrants in New Zealand. A phenomenological approach also assisted the investigation of the differences between male and female immigrants by describing and interpreting their immigration life experiences. I sought clarification as to how they had experienced their employment and their social and cultural cohesion using their own descriptions.

## **Method**

### **Biography: Life Story**

The stories we remember and tell about our lives reflect who we are, how we see ourselves, and, perhaps how we wish to be seen.

—Cole and Knowles (2001:119)

Social science researchers are advised to look at what goes "on in front of our eyes in our everyday lives" (Fontana and Frey, 2000:665). The world does not display phenomena to us in a simple way, which can be perceived automatically; so how can we as researchers approach phenomenology positively to describe and interpret everyday life? What methods are more appropriate in this approach? The nature of method "is a way or path toward understanding that is as sensitive to its phenomenon as to its own orderly and self-correcting aspects" (Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997:28). It is necessary for social researchers to grasp the appropriate methods to access special insights into how people account for their lives, and apprehend the stories they recount (Fontana and Frey, 2000).

Considering both my cultural background and the point of my thesis, I approached my research by using a biographical method to unfold the real Chinese immigrant's life. As an increasingly widespread method in social science, life story is appreciated as a tool to reveal a genuine picture of a personal life. It is a non-fiction style, but a true-life story that is narrated by the person and written by another. Cole and Knowles (2001:17) summarised its key features as: "real persons with real lives; turning-point experiences; and truthful statements distinguished from fiction." Furthermore, life story is a literal account of an individual's life, which is a detailed sub-sample governed by the biographical method (Cole and Knowles, 2001).

Life stories are described and interpreted by the narrator, and also inevitably shaped by the narrator's perspective. Life stories provide brilliant pictures of an individual's experiences in special times and places. Compared with other research paradigms, life story offers a kind of practical description. Life story is qualitative research, which intersects individuals and society, and also links to culture, geographies and history. Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992:8) identified its unique essence as:

A life story is more than a recital of events. It is an organization of experience. In relating the elements of experience to each other and to the present telling, the teller asserts their meanings.

The respondent group of professional Chinese immigrants in this study are similar in terms of their cultural background, ethnic group and overseas status. Nonetheless, each individual differs in gender, emotion and personality. Those differences have formed the different experience each has had. Because of its unique understanding of diverse human experiences, life stories "are good for more than making sociological sense out of numbers," Laslett (1999: 393) stressed. "They are also good for making sociological sense out of life." I selected a vivid, effective life story to represent how immigration life had been impacted by gender ideology, and social and cultural actors.

### ***Research Design***

Cole and Knowles (2001) regarded case study more as a design than a method, because it involved persons, events, and cultural and ethnic groups. I chose individual case studies as my research design to explore what factors cause the different life experiences of Chinese immigrants of different genders in New Zealand. My set of individual case studies focused on a small number of individuals: six immigrants aged between 30 and 50, who had some features in common, being well-educated and higher qualifications, whose individual identities were impacted by the adoption of the policy of reform and openness in mainland China.

My research was embedded in a conceptual framework of exploration and confirmation. On the one hand, for the purpose of investigation, I attempted to find out what circumstances Chinese immigrants had been confronting in New Zealand. At the same time, it explored a theory emerging from my own experience, which has suggested that the social and cultural experiences of gender in both China and New Zealand have impacted on Chinese immigrants' different environments. I planned to investigate the specific sample of professional Chinese immigrants, face to face through both a self-administered questionnaire and semi-structured interviewing, to collect specific, detailed and adequate information about their life stories.

### ***Questionnaires***

Questionnaires and interviews are commonly employed as the key method of data collection, because they offer numerous advantages: less expensive, convenient and quick results, objective, stable and uniform measures. In general, there are three fundamental elements involved in a questionnaire: the cover letter (explaining the research topic), the introduction (illustrating the completion of questions) and the main body (format of questions).

For my research method, the questions were arranged to start with simplest moving to the complex, from impersonal to personal, from neutral to sensitive, from general

issues to specific topics. This ordered logic of the structure ensured that the respondents could smoothly and easily fill in the questionnaire, and would come with a positive attitude to participate.

In both a survey, and in a semi-structured interview, there are three types of questions: primary, secondary, and tertiary (Sarantakos, 1993). Primary questions directly provide the information about a specific aspect of the topic of study. Secondary questions have the assistant function of confirming the reliability and consistency of answers, although they may not be directly linked to the topic. Tertiary questions offer a convenient, friendly environment for data collection, especially employed “before or after sensitive questions” (Sarantakos, 1993:163).

The response formats of questionnaires are quite varied depending on the nature of the questions and study, as well as on the type of respondents. In my questionnaires list, I applied a set of questions using the following format (Sarantakos, 1993):

-Numerical responses involved two opposite adjectives at each end and a range of numbers in between.

Q.9 Are you satisfied with your current accommodation? (Please circle the appropriate number where 1= not satisfied and 5= highly satisfied)?

Least satisfaction 1 2 3 4 5 most satisfaction

-Verbal scales were formulated in words in the space provided for that purpose.

Q.19 What level is your English? (1) Excellent (2) Good (3) Ok

-Fixed alternative questions offered a set of responses from which one had to be chosen. Open-ended questions provided options, where the format of the answer was left to the respondent:

Q.17 Since arriving in New Zealand, have you joined any club(s) or social organization(s)?

(1)Yes (2) No If yes, please name \_\_\_\_\_

The full survey appears as Appendix 4. The main principles and alternatives of questionnaire construction were employed in the survey. Content of the questions was highlighted. Every question had to be relevant to the topic. Personal, sensitive questions were avoided. Simple, clear language was applied to avoid jargon or confusing expressions and words. The survey, as the first research tool used with the participants, kept the appropriate distance between interviewer and respondent to avoid too close or too distant a relationship.

### ***Research Pilot***

The whole research procedure was divided into two parts: the pilot and the final survey. A pilot survey was undertaken to check the suitability of the questionnaire and interview model as a part of the whole research procedure (Sarantakos, 1993). One male and one female, who had arrived in New Zealand at the same time as professional immigrants from Mainland China with similar high qualification backgrounds, were my pilot respondents. Both were good friends, and they emphasised that I should write notes rather than employ a tape recorder during the interviews, despite being a pilot for my research. I deeply understood their anxiety due to our ethnic background. I will discuss this point further in my commentary on ethical issues.

Subsequently, I designed my pilot questionnaire and interview guide and tested the survey on myself to confirm that it would be limited to a reasonable time: 10 minutes. Then two pilot interviews were undertaken in the participants' home. Before I started the interview, I introduced the project proposal. Each pilot lasted over three hours, while we had a Chinese dinner. In reality, the two interviews were friendly and informal, because we were all very good friends, and understood that this was a pilot.

Of course, we communicated with each other very well. That meant they felt free to offer good feedback and advice. For example, they suggested revising the survey

design. In survey question 30, they advised me to reduce a few of the unimportant elements, which easily caused confusion. The original numbers of elements were 16, which was revised to 12 elements. I welcomed their suggestions. Compared to the pilot questionnaire, the formulation of the final survey resulted in some improvements that clarified the instructions and questions.

### *Participants*

Phenomenological research does not seek a large population as a sample, but places emphasis on a set of significant samples in order to describe significant social events. At the beginning of my fieldwork, the first and foremost question was how to recruit people to interview. My research study required that at least six participants should be professional Chinese immigrants, currently residing in New Zealand who had arrived in the 1990s. They were to be selected on preconceived criteria in terms of gender, age and occupation. Through my friendships and social network, I identified potential interviewees. For my study, the recruitment of participants had four determining criteria.

First, the selection of interviewees maintained the balance of gender: three males and three females. Second, they were all aged between 30 and 50 years old. Third, every participant had a high qualification and work experience as a professional before their immigration; but their occupations were varied: librarian, manager, IT expert, engineer and self-employed in China. Finally, they arrived in New Zealand at different times, divided into three periods: the early 1990s, 1997 or 1998, and 2002.

As the Massey University Human Ethics Committee approved my application for ethical approval for this study (Appendix 6), I arranged the interviews one by one by telephone. In the phone call I explained the details of my research and invited them to take part. I confirmed an exact time and the place for interview if they agreed to be a participant in my research.

### ***Ethics Issue***

The fundamental goal of social research is “to improve the situation of human beings” (Snook, 1999:73). Obviously, codes of ethics are essential requirements for moral principles. My thesis application to the Human Ethics Committee of Massy University appears as Appendix 1. In order to establish an honest relationship of trust and respect with the participants, I had previously explained to them in a telephone conversation the details of the project on the Information Sheet, and their rights as a participant in the procedure. I also emphasised that all of their private information would be anonymous and confidential and no parts could identify the participants. Every interview started with the participant signing the Consent Form.

In interviews, I took extensive notes of their life stories instead of using a tape recorder. Due to cultural, historical and political influences, Mainland Chinese normally feel nervous and scared of tape recorders as a tool of interview. I offered every participant the options of my writing notes or using a recording machine. Unsurprisingly, all participants especially asked me to take notes of the interview.

After I finished the interviews, I sent the transcripts to four of the participants, and then received their feedback. Happily, nobody made comments of any disagreement or asked for any revision. Two interviewees were not given transcripts because they chose not to look at or comment on the transcripts of their life story, because of the trusting relationship between them and me. I mentioned to them that in this research, “both means and ends must be subjected to ethical appraisal” (Snook, 1999:73). I verbally asked their permission again if anything they had narrated to me was to be excluded from the final thesis.

### ***Interview Process***

Life story is formed by the outcomes of the in-depth interview. Obviously, the in-depth interviews generate a self-exploration and self-images of life experiences. “Interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to

understand our fellow human beings” (Fontana and Frey, 2000:645). However, interviews can provide high amounts of data standardisation, and assist in studying the individuals’ attitude, values, and beliefs. Interviewing has become a mainstream method of data collection and source of information in contemporary society.

In my research, I needed to interview each immigrant at length and in depth in an open structured way. Face-to-face interviews can provide an adaptable way to obtain the potential of “rich and highly illuminating material” (Robson, 1993:229). Therefore, the length of interviewing depends on research schedules and systematic methods. To make every effort to obtain the essential information from the participants, I prepared my interview guide focusing on key points.

I had previously planned that the whole process with each individual would take a maximum of three hours: 10 minutes to fill in a short questionnaire with a sequence of closed questions to record their personal data; then 120 minutes for interviews focusing on lifestyles and perspectives of immigration from China to New Zealand, including a break for dinner or lunch. A 30-minute session to update information and to clarify any issue would close the interview.

Three participants, Anne, Mary and Leo invited me to come their home to undertake the interview. Three interviews were held in a café or a restaurant, which was near each interviewee’s residence. Each interview began with carefully reading the *Information Sheet* (Appendix 2). Afterward, the participant signed a *Consent Form* (Appendix 3) as evidence of their agreement to accept their participation in the survey and interview.

In order to “warm up” for the formal interview and to introduce the subjects of the interview, usually we chatted for a few minutes about some common immigration experiences and shared both happiness and sadness as an ethnic immigrant far away from our homeland. Then, I offered the self-administered surveys for participants to fill out. All documents provided in the interviews were in English, but our communications were in Chinese, our native language, due to its convenience in cultural and ethnic

aspects. Similarly, I took notes in Chinese.

Although I was aware of the central theme of my thesis, I attempted to gain a variety of information from the individuals' responses, achieved through a flexible approach. I preferred the role of listener to questioner. This encouraged each respondent to describe his or her story and perspective of culture and gender under friendly, frank, relaxed and stimulating circumstances, to achieve the goals of the study.

For an academic interviewer, his or her personality should be genuine, pleasant, positive and sociable. Along with my Chinese ethnic background, my immigration experience specially contributed to the process of my research, because the participants felt that I shared a similar experience while interviewing. Besides listening, I was conveying my empathy and understanding of their experiences with a genuine tone. This kind of spontaneous exchange transcended boundaries between researcher and participants. Oakley (1981:41) precisely explained the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee:

The goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship.

Furthermore, Corbin (1970) noticed that it could be really tough in reality to sustain several hours in an interview with a participant. Unpredictably, for my research, all six interviews lasted over four hours, which was longer than I had expected originally. It is a hard task for a researcher to take notes over that length of time without a tape recorder. On the one hand, I concentrated on listening to their narration; at the same time, I endeavoured as soon as possible to write down every word they told me quickly and accurately. Even while we had lunch or dinner, I still kept on writing notes because the participant continued his or her story. Often, at those moments, I gained the most

profound perspectives on their life. The longest two interviews with Susan were more than 10 hours, and I generated sixty pages of notes.

The interview is a social interaction between interviewer and interviewee, between participants and others are who involved in a particular surrounding. Three interviews were held in participants' home. Some of their family members occasionally joined in our conversation during the interview. Anne is a very enthusiastic and social woman. When this interview ended, I wanted to know how her husband, her daughter, her grand-daughter, as well as her friends, saw her in their own way. I asked them to give me one or two sentences to describe their impressions of Anne. Their reflections helped me to understand Ann's personality and her life.

When I interviewed Leo, his wife was looking after their one-year-old son. She sometimes participated in our communication. I was concerned what her response to some questions related to gender issues would be. Over the time of the interview, I ask for her perspectives for the below questions (The outline for the semi-structured interview appears as Appendix 5):

- How do you feel about your current life (working experience, studying) in New Zealand?
- Has your life experience in New Zealand met with your expectation?
- What about the comparison between the male and female environment in China?

Her answers dramatically demonstrated the different gender perspectives on immigration between Chinese females and males.

At the end of an interview, I checked my interview guide once more, and clarified whether I had obtained the fundamental material from the participant. Whenever each in-depth and lengthy interview finished, I perceived I had obtained plenty of

information and knowledge about every participant's life story. I was moved and inspired by the immigration journeys the participants told me about. The interviews deeply stimulated our understanding of each other. I treasure this remarkable experience in my life.

### *Transcription and Analysis*

One main activity of phenomenological research is to describe the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting (Van Manen, 1990). The transcription of notes for each interview was basically undertaken in two weeks, which, once again, was longer than I had supposed. In reality, that was not a simple transcription, but a complete biography about an immigrant's personal life. The researcher should represent and describe the context and meaning through a wide "interpretive lens". The roles of a researcher are not just to collect and interpret information, but also to identify and discover the internal themes and a particular meaning through a unique perspective and position (Cole & Knowles, 2001).

The research analysis is a product to present findings and create the purpose of the study. My analysis is generated from the beginning of the inquiry process, based on information I collected from the questionnaires and the description of the six participants' life stories. Therefore, the analysis is formed through identifying significant issues including the reasons for immigration, social and economic status, employment, integration and cultural identity, and gender relationship. Through the analysis, this study finally revealed its thesis with a variety of life stories and in-depth gender perspectives.

## Chapter Four

### Anne's Story: The Moon in the East, the Sun in the West

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

—Maya Angelou (1978) *Still I Rise*

It was in Anne's sitting room that I interviewed her. One large bookshelf stood against one of the sitting room's walls, on which were tidy books row by row, and most works were on Chinese historical cultural literature. Although thin and of weak appearance, Anne spoke quickly with a vivid countenance. She was bright and cheerful, talkative, and full of humour, a woman with a strong personality. The whole interview lasted over 4 hours; I was deeply impressed by her colourful descriptions. Along with her, sometimes I was caught in a sad mood, some times happy and joyful with a loud laugh.

#### A Rebel Choice

Anne had a legendary life experience, which is a miniature of one era of Chinese society. As one of the honest and upright Chinese intellectuals in the Cultural Revolution, she could not escape political persecution in the manner some other intellectuals in China did at that time. In 1969, she was forced to repatriate to the "May Seventh"<sup>1</sup> Cadre labouring school. For 8 years, she fed pigs, planted on the farm. She did every kind of labouring work, which made her very fit. It was the "harsh life" (Yuan,

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<sup>1</sup> The instruction about remoulding the cadres was published by Chairman Mao Zedong on May Seventh, 1960s, which was a kind of state farm especially for the intellectuals and various cadres, who are re-educated and remoulded by physically heavy labour.

2001) that later helped her spend her hardest time in New Zealand. In 1979 when China first adopted the policy of reforming and opening to the world, eventually she came back to the city again, and worked as a librarian there, and then got married, and had a daughter.

In the traditional Chinese cultural ideology, women are regarded as the moon; they should rotate around men who are respected as the sun, day by day, year after year. In other words, the position and role of women in the family and society is one of dependence: "what husband does, wife follows". Anne rebelled against the traditional ideology; she was determined to be a woman standing in front of her husband in place of being a stay-behind wife (Yuan, 2001). She created a system of reform in her own family: as "what wife does, husband follows". In 1990, Anne in her 40s had made a big decision that completely shocked her whole family and her friends: going to New Zealand, a country far away from China, and a place she had never been. She explained why she decided to go abroad:

I had always had a strong wish to go overseas and see the world and acknowledge a different culture. I knew I was not at the right age to go abroad, I was too old for a life change from stereotypes; but I also knew, if I hesitated slightly, I would forever lose that sole chance.

Both Anne's family and her friends were against her decision to go to New Zealand: she couldn't speak English, she was too old, an unknown future lay in front of her, all of which meant it was too big a risk for her. However, Anne was a determined, courageous and resolute person. Once she made up her mind, she insisted on it until she succeeded. Anne was very conscious of her husband's attitude. So she told him in way without tolerating any doubts that she had already decided to go to New Zealand, because that country had accepted her first. She did not propose to discuss it with her husband, and she just told him she was going.

"I have no money to help you," her husband said.

“I will find my own way out,” Anne replied clearly.

“All the family knew me, they also certainly knew they couldn’t stop me,” Anne told me smiling with great pride. Anne came back to her parent’s home for financial assistance. She borrowed two thousand US dollars from her parents, her younger sister, and some other relatives of hers who themselves were living in straitened circumstances. It reflected what the Chinese cultural ideology advocates: relatives with ties of blood are closer and cohere together powerfully.

Her younger sister’s response had deeply touched her: “Why didn’t you let me know earlier? Otherwise, I would have given up buying the colour TV set and the gold necklace.” Then, she immediately sold the gold necklace. Anne had promised her sister that she would definitely buy back a gold necklace for her in the future. Meanwhile, the younger sister and her husband consoled Anne that if she could not return the money, they would never require it. Anne recalled this emotion, while her eyes filled with tears acting on a momentary impulse, which was the only exposure of her sorrow during the entire interview.

At that time, the total savings in Anne’s home was just several hundred dollars. Consequently, 80% of Anne’s expenditure for going abroad was borrowed. Even \$US100 needed to attend the English training class was borrowed from her friends. Anne touched her heart:

One of my friends was checking her saving accounts when I went to her to borrow some money. What she did was to give all the saving accounts to me, and let me take, as I needed. My relatives and friends were not rich people, but none of them had refused me when I borrowed money from them. Actually, I don’t know how to express my gratitude.

In reality, Anne was conscious of “the decision to go overseas as a process of personalization” (Yuan, 2001: 61). This woman’s individual ideology was a means of

showing decisive courage and intelligence when faced with a choice of dropping downward or flying upward. Anne had made the choice for her own life, and decided to bear her own existence, and take the responsibility for her choice, no matter what hardship and risk was in front of her.

Lao Tzu said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. When she left her hometown at the age of 42, Anne took only \$US 600 (one month's living cost) and a heavy heart to the plane to New Zealand. At that time she held only a short-term visa for language study, but she had heavy debts. Could she continue to stay in New Zealand after her 3-month visa had expired? Where was the money to survive going to come from after one month's stay? All these were uncertain factors. Anne described her terrible situation at that moment:

I utterly knew I came to New Zealand like walking along a steel rope with my eyes closed. I dared not to look down, neither could I return. I had to go forward. In a word, I had no chance to catch my breath.

### **A Stronger Seed**

Just like a seed with great vitality, the overseas Chinese can plunge a root into the ground, sprout and grow up wherever there is soil. From July 1990 when she arrived in New Zealand for the first time until 1997 when she bought her own house, Anne had shifted home 18 times. Among these homes were a hotel, a flatmate's apartment, a bed-sitting room, a work-garage, living at people's house as a housekeeper, a rented room and so on. The longest she resided in one place had been two years; the shortest one was one day. Living places shifted with job changes. It seemed she was moving forever, with no place to settle.

To Anne, the biggest challenge she faced in New Zealand at that time was her financial crisis. On one hand, she had to go to the language school; meanwhile, she had to work. Her money was getting less and less day-by-day; she couldn't help feeling nervous,

with no idea about where food money was for the next day. She struggled to cut her expenses to as little as possible. She spent just \$20 for food costs every week, and slept in a room with a few beds inside, and only for a few hours each night for every bed, for a cost of \$13 each week.

When Anne first looked for work, she had unimagined difficulty. In August 1990, she finally found a job as a housekeeper in the house of a family from Hong Kong so that she could live and eat there. Even though the host and hostess treated her quite reasonably, she frankly admitted that she was dispirited as a maidservant in a strange environment. In her homeland, she had been a respected librarian, and as well as the dominant person, a hostess in her own family. The psychological adjustment had to be made from being a hostess to being a housekeeper. When she afterwards undertook a job as a housekeeper again, however, she became comfortable and adapted to her role. Anne argued that in general Chinese women settle down to new circumstances quite well, because they are more adaptable and realistic.

Two months later, Anne was engaged as a dish cleaner in a café. The boss, an immigrant from Lebanon, was very kind, and always praised her excellent work, and often asked her to take a rest, and have some coffee and cakes. She worked for 5 hours earning \$20 each day. For the sake of saving \$3 on bus fares, she had to walk 3 hours to work every day. The first day when she got \$20 she was unbelievably happy. Every night, before going to bed she counted the money she got that day. Touching the money in her pocket, she felt a special kind of security. When the first 3-months' visa had expired, Anne had \$9000 (some borrowed from friends) deposited into the bank for insurance to get her visa extended for another 9-months' residency permit.

Afterwards, Anne found another job picking strawberries on a farm. Every morning at 5 o'clock, as soon as the clock rang, she had to get up immediately. Otherwise, she would never wake up again. Picking strawberries was a hard job; every day when she got back home; she was too tired to straighten her back. After three months of this rough life, a

friend from China met her. She was astonished and could not recognise her because Anne looked black and extremely thin, in contrast to her appearance in her homeland. Moreover, when Anne's mother at home knew about her condition, she cried sadly, "Did my daughter not suffer enough in the 'May Seventh' labouring school that she preferred go to New Zealand for a second suffering and remoulding, working on a farm?"

However, Anne was delighted to be working on a farm, "that was a period of happy time, picking strawberries for me as if I were picking up money." Anne said jokingly, so was I impressed and laughed at once. Picking strawberries on the farm, she returned most of the money she had borrowed, and she also bought a new gold necklace for her younger sister to fulfil her promise. Since picking strawberries only took 4 hours in the morning, soon she found another takeaway job, working from 10 am to 10 pm. As a result, Anne had to work for 16 hours a day. She could hardly deal with the physical suffering, and sometimes it felt like more than a human being could bear. "I virtually felt myself going down to hell then," Anne recalled in a calm tone.

One year later, Anne moved to work in a cap-making factory, where she worked for 2 years. Similarly, once extra work was needed, she was glad to work overtime. Often, she left home at dawn and got back home when stars were in the sky. Finally, Anne paid off all her debts. She then improved her living conditions, renting one single room by herself for \$50 each week. Furthermore, for the first time, Anne did shopping in the supermarket, spending \$10 without worrying because she had nearly extricated herself from her economic predicament.

Without strong perseverance, nobody could endure this hard life style. Was she aware of any depression in her overwhelming surroundings with her tears and sweat? I guess, as well as believing tears were useless for a stranger overseas, she had no time or energy to think about that. Sometimes, she narrated quietly those tough situations and times she had undertaken. "I never escape from tough reality; on the contrary, I have done my

best to accept, adjust, improve and finally overcome it,” she smiled again.

Anne summarised her working experiences as follows: a housekeeper for four families, hard labour on the farm, dishwasher and waitress in eight restaurants and cafes, and an operator in three factories. Among them, the foreign bosses always praised Anne’s work and encouraged her endeavours. But Chinese bosses always criticized her. Anne argued, in reality, those Chinese bosses were not bad; they were impacted by Chinese traditional culture. In general, Chinese are not accustomed to appreciating others.

### **Light in the Dark**

In 1993, Anne encountered the darkest period of her life. At that time Anne had some endocrinopathy trouble, and it was even thought she might have a brain disease. Often, she suddenly woke up at midnight and could not go to sleep again later on. Unfortunately, even the hospital could not find out the real reason. She was at the edge of collapse. Some of the companions who originally went abroad together with her had already gone back to China; some of them had transferred to other countries. Anne still stayed in New Zealand with a working visa but without permanent resident status. A lot of friends persuaded her to go home, “You had repaid your debts, and your original wish to look at the world has come true. Now being in bad health, what will be the significant point of you staying in New Zealand?”

But Anne refused to go back China, because she had an intense wish that one day her daughter would be able to go overseas to study. Anne explained her thoughts:

If I went back then, I would never have had another opportunity to go abroad again. My daughter would never have had a possibility of studying in New Zealand. That was my responsibility as a parent, and this was another important reason for me to go abroad. My mother’s love was so great so as to support my never giving up!

Anne pointed out there were many Chinese women aged in their 40s or 50s in New Zealand who persisted in staying in New Zealand because of their children's education and hope for a better future. The mother's nature makes them overcome any distressing environment and develop strong willpower. In contrast, Chinese men care primarily about their self-development. If Chinese men found it was difficult for them to achieve their own goal and value in New Zealand, they usually determined to leave. "Mother's emotion is the essential aspect of life for a woman as a human being." Anne stated that this was the different perspective of male and female.

Before going abroad, Anne had the desire to learn about Christianity, which was one of the fundamental beliefs of western culture. Since arriving in New Zealand, Anne had gone to church, but did not undertake the baptism. When she was at the most lonely time of her life, and when she was so ill, she begged God to help her:

At that time I had no way to go; I could not find out any other aid, but only catching God's hand. And many Christian friends were praying for me. One female Christian was praying in front of my bed every night until I went to sleep for over one month.

On Easter of 1993, Anne asked the church to baptise her formally, and became a Christian. "This was a turning point of my outlook on life," Anne underlined it as a truth demonstrated by time and history. "I believe that the soul of the western culture, such as the ideologies of equality, freedom, democracy and philanthropy, is from Christianity." Half a year later, Anne was amazed at her cure. The most difficult, the darkest time had ended and the light came in. In 1994, the New Zealand government gave a general pardon to overstayers, and 600 Chinese got permanent resident status. Anne was one of them.

### **Tides of Life**

In 1995, Anne's husband and her daughter came to New Zealand to reunite with her

after 5 years' separation. The whole family worked diligently; as a result, they bought their own house in 1997. Her daughter has become an excellent graduate student in the university. Anne could have refused to take responsibility for the situation she found herself in. Instead, Anne has taken responsibility for herself and her family and created a life of which she can be pleased in New Zealand. However, Anne had not been satisfied with that situation. She stressed that one individual must possess their own business and be the boss. She would not like to be an employee forever.

In 1997, just before Christmas Day, Anne decided to buy a handicraft shop. At that time, most Chinese immigrants in New Zealand were engaged in takeaway and restaurant businesses. When the kiwi owner of the business noticed that Anne was a Chinese woman, he was shocked. However, he agreed for her to take over the business, but the landlord objected, because he was anxious Anne would not to be able to deal with this sort of western artistic business and therefore she would not to able to afford the rent. Anne began a tough negotiation with them by herself. Anne described the whole process of negotiation proudly.

My English was poor, but they could understand me surprisingly. I presented them my business purpose, and illustrated my business superiority was that my husband could make beautiful frames for the handicrafts and drawings. Well and truly, it did work.”

In 2002, Anne bought the shop property from the shop landlord. Reviewing her own life experiences in New Zealand, she analysed her personality:

Going abroad, persisting in staying, buying a house, taking over the artistic business, in front of each step, there was an uncertain risk. However, any good arrow can't become a good arrow if it is not shot out. One must dare to stride the first step of her life, she should not only hold on to an idea. I forever force myself to a one-way without reverse line so that I can only go forward. I don't like to

access a reverse way being ready for myself. I have done this at my own risk.

Nevertheless, Anne concluded that a human being should also know how to be thankful; otherwise, one would never be happy. Certainly, Anne genuinely is proud of her own Chinese roots. It is still her “spiritual home” (Ip, 1990). And also she thanks New Zealand for giving her the opportunity to seek a different and better life style. Nevertheless, “immigrants’ hearts are divided between the homeland and the new home forever” (Jansen, 1990:119). For Anne, it is completely difficult to distinguish the cultural features from East and West. On the one hand, she became a devout Christian in New Zealand. Meanwhile, she is still keen on studying the traditional Chinese culture—Geomantic Omen. Due to its national geographical location, New Zealand is a place more suitable for female living according to an estimation of the merit from the Eight Diagrams, a Chinese ancient Geomantic Omen. Anne revealed her research in detail:

The geographic location and the natural environment of one country have important effects on its people’s personality and its social cultural status. The Chinese philosophy argues that the universe is shaped of two fundamental substances: the *yang* (masculine) and the *yin* (feminine). The world is mainly composed of five factors or substances: soil, wood, water, fire, and gold; the universe is determined by eight different directions: Xun (the southeast), Li (the south), Kun (the southwest), Dui (the west), Qian (the northwest), Kan (the north), Gen (the northeast), Zhen (the east). New Zealand is geographically located in the South Pacific Ocean, which belongs to the southeast, the Xun. According to the essences of Xun, its climate is warm and wet; its key substances are wood and forest. Those significances lead in a heavy feminine but a weak masculine environment. Consequently, female immigrants commonly feel it is easier to live in

New Zealand; in particular, the mature, middle-aged women seem to succeed here. Besides the Prime Minister, Helen Clark, there are some female ministers, mayors and members of Parliament and so on, which fully demonstrates that women have very good chances to develop themselves in New Zealand.

As an immigrant, crossing culture and shifting the boundaries from China to New Zealand, Anne possesses the talent to have “in her arms both ways” (Jansen, 1990). Anne feels lucky to have chosen New Zealand to live, in which women have a higher position and more equality with men than in China. As a middle-aged woman, Anne hasn't felt herself experiencing gender and age discrimination in New Zealand yet. She is actually too busy in her endeavours in the new country to suffer it, or maybe, she has failed to recognise this sort of discrimination in the New Zealand culture. Furthermore, Anne declared with great confidence:

One's life force and value are proven in the course of efforts and struggling, which is full of excitement and fascination. I sometimes still yearn for the past years I had undergone and struggled. If there was one more chance, I'd like to face that challenge again.

In her husband's eyes, she is a decisive, but bossy wife with definite views. In her daughter's opinion, she is a mother who disregards her own safety and struggles to protect her children. In her granddaughter's mind, she is an interesting, kind grandmother. Her friends' impressions are of a straightforward, warm-hearted, righteous person who likes to help others. Anne appraised her life with a cheerful smile:

I do not regret my choice in coming to New Zealand, and I enjoy my present life, and I am optimistic for the future. However, it is my life I am holding in my hands.

Moreover, from my perspective, Anne is herself the sun shining on her life's road, and also she warms the people surrounding her.

## Chapter Five

### Emigration Is One Way to Life

The sun goes to cross the Western sea, leaving its last salutation to the East.

—Tagore, R. (1967:292) *Collected Poems  
and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore.*

A friend of mine recommended Jim to me when I was looking for a male professional immigrant who came to New Zealand in the early 1990s. Through communication by phone, Jim readily accepted my interview. I drove to Takapuna to meet Jim in his magnificent home. The four-hour interview took place in a cafe. Jim spoke carefully but quickly in a low voice. Considerate of my writing speed, he stopped occasionally to compensate for my note-taking. During the interview, his mobile continuously received information about his financial business. Jim politely expressed his regret, and turned off the phone, which made me rather grateful. In fact, as one of the pioneers of the technical immigrants from Mainland China, Jim looks much younger than his actual age. It was difficult for me to connect this bookish person to that immigration figure who had lived in a work shed, and had worked in restaurants and on farms while struggling for his survival.

#### **Clouds and the Moon over Boundless Road**

Jim's intelligence has been rewarded. At the age of 19, he graduated from university, and was assigned to the industry ministry. At the time, China was still under the state control of the market and economy, and he was in charge of distribution of materials in short supply, for a few provinces, which were worth a million dollars or more. As a result, almost everyone, from the general managers to the chief executives, from big factories and large companies, treated him quite respectfully. However, as Jim was studying English without being in charge of the business department, influential people

suddenly altered their attitudes towards Jim. He told me emotionally:

I was immediately conscious of the vulnerable inconstancy of human relationships. While still green, I had learnt the lesson of life; I was sensitive to tremendous changes in the world. Fortunately, I had only limited experience in the top position, and I was able to absorb these changes. This feeling of bitter disappointment was essentially the reason I went abroad. In New Zealand, human relationships are really simple. Here, what the boss regards as important is only your capability. After work, everyone is busy with personal affairs. I definitely appreciate this individualism and freedom here; so far, I do not regret my decision although I had had some hardships in New Zealand.

His English training provided effective help to him. During this period, he was listening to a few hundred tapes of English programmes from early in the morning until midnight. Jim argued that good English is the first fundamental skill for survival, and his good English was an important tool supporting his settlement and development in New Zealand. At that time, Jim always asked his foreign language teachers about the reality of western society. He told the foreign teachers that he would be satisfied if he could reach the status of a white-collar worker overseas similar to what he had achieved in China. "My foreign teachers criticised me for being a daydreamer, and they did not think it was a possibility," Jim said with a slight smile.

In early 1991, Jim arrived in New Zealand with only \$1000, holding a one-year student visa. On his departure from China, he promised his new wife: "I will bring you over to New Zealand in one year." His wife was not confident of his words because he had an uncertain future.

"I am fairly different from other immigrants, I admit I am lucky enough in New Zealand," Jim told me joyfully at the very beginning of the interview. However, this was no exception. Like most Chinese professional immigrants in the early 1990s,

difficulties plagued him. Jim had to overcome the language barrier (despite his good English), economic misery, racial discrimination and unemployment distress, as well as the tough personal adjustment. When he arrived, he was a home stay student with a friendly Kiwi family, for \$100 per week. Jim began studying at the language school on the following day. Hence, Jim derided himself slightly:

I met a Chinese student, who rebuked my accommodation as too expensive. He thus took me to have a look at an extraordinarily cheap rustic house: a horrible room without any bed, a few people sleeping on the floor, half the quilt being used as the mattress. I then thought that it was not a place for human beings to live at all. So, I refused his kindness.

Soon after, Jim found his money did not stretch very far; he therefore quickened his steps to look for that classmate and asked to shift into that cheap place, which was regarded as an "inhuman residence" for \$20 per week. Often, for the sake of saving one dollar, he preferred to walk half an hour to choose a cheaper place to shop.

The Chinese flatmates helped each other look for jobs; Jim obtained a job doing gardening. Jim walked for more than 40 minutes from school and reached his workplace, the employer was absent, and Jim patiently waited for more than one hour. When the employer came back, he was so impressed with Jim's patience that he recommended him to a Taiwanese family to do housework for them. Jim related with a grateful feeling:

Each weekend, the Taiwanese housewife asked me to do half a day's work, more than \$40. This income was absolutely important for me, which paid for my food and rent each week. Soon, I realised that she was too generous attempting to find various ways for me to keep working even though there was little to do. I have good fortune in New Zealand as I always received aid from nice people.

From May 1991, the New Zealand economy change radically slowed down. Owing to his student visa, it was hard for Jim to obtain a job. Jim thus walked along every street and knocked at the shops or restaurants one by one to ask whether a hand was needed. As fruit season opened, Jim and three other students had gathered more than \$1000, and bought a second-hand car. They drove three hours away from Auckland to look for farm jobs. They gained four farm job offers. In particular, a generous farmer (a retired painter) allowed them to live in his work shed, a cellar, for free. In spite of only working seven days at the painter's farm, they still stayed there more than 20 days until they eventually finished the work in that farm district.

On those farms, he earned \$600, which was an especially high sum at that tough time. Jim was thrilled, so he took a photo of his working days in dirty work clothes and dust all over his body, a big bag dragging down on his chest, filled with kiwifruit. Jim cheerfully sent that photo to his family in China. Upon seeing it, everyone in his family cried. In contrast to his proud figure in China, it was too hard for them to regard him as a miserable labourer. However, Jim was not concerned about the tough circumstances, or working in jobs that were beneath his status. Jim told me in a firm voice:

Many Chinese professional immigrants often compare their status in New Zealand with what they had in China, and also bragged about the past, and how much better it was. I had fully prepared myself in my mind before I went abroad. Going abroad was my desire, and my own choice. Personally, I had not particularly noticed how tough and horrible life was when I was overseas.

When returning to Auckland from the farms, Jim considered his chances in Auckland city. He thus rented an apartment to sub-let to make money. Then, Jim worked as a baker cooking bread 6 days a week. The boss was also an immigrant himself, he kindly taught Jim how to cook bread. Because of the business's failure, Jim had to resign, but had saved \$1000. One day, Jim's wife had called him from China and told him that her mother died without enough money for the funeral. Jim at once posted all his money to

China, and remained penniless in Auckland. Jim experienced two destitute periods without any money in his pocket in New Zealand.

“Were you scared of that sort of environment then?” I questioned.

“To be honest, I didn’t worry too much. I had a fixed capital, an old car, I also operated with public money—rent and bond that the tenants paid me—for temporary capital running.” We both grinned at the same time.

### **Wandering and Friendship**

In December 1999, along with a group of friends, Jim again went to the farms to pick strawberries. His narrative was quite proud yet sorrowful:

Usually, people supposed I was not a good labourer but a bookworm; on the contrary, I would like to explore how to increase work efficiency, whatever I did; I always went faster than others. I constantly helped those who were left behind with their work. One day, it was raining, everyone was extremely worn out, and I heard somebody crying after being reprimanded by the boss. You know, we were all intellectuals in China with a respectable social status, where we never experienced such resentful laborious life. I then led all of us to sing the song ‘the Internationale’ to encourage each other.

“Yes, that was our holy song during our childhood,” I responded laughingly.

Again coming back to Auckland, Jim found a job in a Kiwi restaurant. The boss asked him whether he had done this kind of work before and if he had any qualification. Jim wrapped his sleeves up and let the boss look at the scar on his arm from a burn he acquired while baking bread. Knowing that some friends had traffic accidents when they were tired from over-working, Jim decided not to work more than 60 hours a week: 10 hours a day, 6 days a week, to avoid becoming overtired.

Unfortunately, a friend was fired after getting into a fierce fight with the boss, who had treated him unfairly. Jim felt angry. He valued justice above material gain. He resigned to display his dissatisfaction and protest, despite his remarkable income. Afterward, that restaurant head chef shifted to another famous restaurant, and asked him to be foreman and offered him a higher salary (\$10 per hour, which was significantly high then). Jim therefore brought his good friend, Roy to work with him in the restaurant.

Jim recognised Roy was a person whom he had respected highly from the northeast of China, who rode everywhere on a bicycle to look for work. He even went to a farm to look for a job, and for the first night, he slept under a big tree. Once, Roy accidentally cut his hand, he just put some salt on the wound and continued to work again. Although his immigrant life was hardly ever smooth in New Zealand, he was not discouraged, but persistent and dauntless. Jim has been deeply affected by this man's endurance and ability to bear hardships. Furthermore, Jim asserted, in New Zealand, there were two crucial things, which you could not borrow from friends: money and a car.

When Roy needed \$10,000 deposited into the bank to guarantee his application to have his student visa extended, Jim lent him all his savings of \$6000. Long before, Roy then wanted to borrow his car, Jim allowed him to drive away without any suspicion. A short while later, Roy went back and felt obviously puzzled: "You have lent me all your properties, if I had just gone off, you would be of nothing, then what would you do?" Jim replied seriously, "I firmly trust you. For my philosophy of life, friendship is more essential than wealth." Afterward, Roy paid off his debt with Jim. After completing his MBA degree, Roy emigrated abroad, and lives in the U.S.A. In addition, Jim commented that his behaviour, manner and cognitive philosophy were similar to a Kiwi pattern:

Believing in others maybe the cause of your being cheated, however, I will never give up the trust I have in others. In New Zealand, basically, people are trustworthy and faithful. In the point of view of the kiwi, they usually assume you

are a good man at first, and then you prove yourself to be a good person in New Zealand; by contrast, our Chinese cultural principle is to premise you as an evil human being foremost, then you should prove yourself are a nice individual. This is a distinct difference between both social cultural ideologies.

The shadow of the long social upheaval, and the political persecution of 'the Chinese Cultural Revolution' had imprinted on the Chinese cultural identity. So Chinese people live with cruel memories that impact on their everyday life. In her novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, Tan (1989:217) narrated one Chinese mother's caution to her daughter on how to avoid self-exposure:

Not to show your own thoughts, to put your feelings behind your face so you can take advantage of hidden opportunities. Why easy things are not worth pursuing. How to know your own worth and polish it, never flashing it around like a cheap ring...

Therefore, the ethnic character can vividly portray its cultural and social environment. Living in a complicated and crowded environment, people are by nature more vigilant and cautious, and are highly suspicious in a social situation.

## **Outside of the Wall**

By 1992, Jim's student visa had expired. Because of being busy with work, he had a low rate of class attendance so that the school refused to provide him with documents to extend his visa. But, things became more hopeful. He got one more year's extension of his visa. Fortunately, three months later, the government implemented the points system to select professional immigrants following the 1991 Immigration Amendment Act. On account of this, as a pioneering professional immigrant from Mainland China, Jim had his Permanent Resident Visa approved. Then, his wife came to New Zealand to unite with him; Jim realised his promise to her. Jim began to study for a Masters of Business at Auckland University. After graduation, Jim was engaged in customer

service in a trade company. By late the 1990s, with an influx of Asian immigrants to New Zealand, each Bank promptly launched Asian immigrant financial services. Jim was then recruited to work as a customer manager in a Bank.

Working in the Bank, as an eyewitness, he frequently discerned a lot of people whose fate had been unexpectedly altered by financial issues. A kiwi customer in his 60s who was a father of three children, a manager of a small firm had bought a house with a big mortgage. However, when the boss of his firm changed, he was dismissed, almost over night; he was then bogged down in a financial crisis and could hardly afford to buy the textbooks for his kids. Under his mortgage contract, his house would be sold at auction. That would prevent him attaining another mortgage from any bank due to his credit rating. Jim arranged to postpone his house auction for six months till he had another job. Jim affirmed this case affected him drastically. Indeed, he realised a ruthless reality that he may never have a secure life as an employee, despite his age and experience.

Jim subscribed to the idea that human beings could be classified as three kinds: first, people who make things happen; second, people who watch things happen, and finally, people who wonder how things happen. While working in the bank, Jim conceived of himself as the second kind. Instead, he wished to be one of the first kind of people who make things happen to make certain decisions and control his own fate. "Man does not reveal himself in his history, he struggles up through it" (Tagore, 1967:293). The real excitement of life exists in the process of struggle. Jim declared, for human beings, surmounting fear is more important than possessing knowledge. Jim ultimately resigned from the bank after one-year consideration, deserting that stable income and valuable conditions, and became a self-employed consultant in foreign exchange investment. Jim claimed with a confident humour:

I clearly perceived the risks of quitting. However, it was only a matter of time, I prefer suffering the tough life of today to being safe tomorrow. To work for others seems to me to climb the stairs in a crowd. You would always see the back shadow

of others. As soon as you become your own boss, you catch sight of a blue sky that belongs to only you. I chose to be my own boss. I am courageous enough in getting ahead. My ambition is to be a person never worried about financial factors again.

Jim immigrated to New Zealand 12 years ago; he has returned to China only once. Jim stated frankly that he didn't like the Chinese social environment, even though occasionally he experienced racial discrimination in New Zealand:

Actually, I even sensed the sort of discrimination not only from their words, but also from their tone within an interactive conversation. I exactly despise those who are racists. Once, I had quarrelled with a kiwi over a parking issue, he rudely shouted, 'Chinese, go back to your China!' Angrily I replied: 'English, go back to your England!' I am a New Zealander. This is my country. We all were immigrants; they just came earlier than us.

"No, not all of us came later," I consoled him. "Actually, along with other ethnic groups, hardworking group of Chinese immigrated to New Zealand for gold mining and contributed their labour and energy to this country since 1860s, despite having suffered the lawful discrimination."

Sometimes cultural shock and misunderstanding cause discrimination; sometimes racial pride and prejudice result in discrimination; and sometimes selfishness causes discrimination. In general, transnational immigration can provoke cultural friction between immigrants and the host society, Ng (1996:28) indicated:

It is not just immigrants who need time to adapt to us, but we, the New Zealand public, who need time to fully accept them.

Ultimately, Jim truly embraced his ongoing life in New Zealand. Compared with other western countries, in general, kiwis were friendlier to immigrants: "I am lucky enough

in New Zealand because I frequently received help from kind people.” Moreover, he joked with me: “As a female, it is really easy to survive in this society, for quality of gender relation in New Zealand better those in China. If one could be independent and never cease his or her endeavouring, he or she would enjoy living in New Zealand.” Finally, Jim happily summarised his immigration life:

I used to be a coward, as well as poor at communication and language, both Chinese and English. For the sake of studying at university, I took place the National High Education Entrance Test, but did not participate in the English subject. Unbelievably, my life now is dependent upon on my previous weak aspects—language and communication in New Zealand. If one cannot adjust and be adaptable, how can he enhance his life? Of course, it was absolutely tough for me to alter my character. However, living as an immigrant has had a significant impact on me, gradually throwing up some of my inherent quality.

A leopard never changes his spots; however, Jim has changed, and is enjoying his new coat.

## Chapter Six

### Mary's Story: Flying Depends on Your Wings

When a chick is hatching from the egg, it makes many exploratory attempts to break through the shell until a point is reached beyond which there is no going back.

—Beasley (Personal Communication, 2000)

Mary is one of the friends I have made in New Zealand. An optimistic, independent and open-minded female, she is good at communication, as well as singing and dancing. Mary happily lives in both the Chinese and Western cultural environments. She is her own person, a multicultural combination. In fact, her immigration experience was one of the inspirations for my thesis on this topic. I had supposed, compared with other professional immigrants from Mainland China who were still struggling with language, culture and employment barriers, Mary was rather a lucky person, because she has a satisfactory job. On a sunny afternoon, I interviewed her in her new house. During the five hours of the interview, Mary described the hardness and the struggle of her immigrant life as a professional woman. Then, for the first time I became aware that the road to success in New Zealand has been a long and tough one for her.

#### **Echo**

After her graduation from a good university in China, Mary obtained a valuable job as a team-leader in the marketing department in a prominent software company in the south of China. In 1998, Mary immigrated to New Zealand following her husband, which was not Mary's own choice. In fact, Mary then did not want to emigrate. As a talented information and computer engineer, she had believed that Chinese economic development and a huge market would provide her with more opportunities. However,

for the sake of her marriage, and because her husband wanted to go abroad and improve his prospects, Mary gave up her career and immigrated to New Zealand, despite the fact that her boss had tried to persuade her to stay.

To improve her English, on the third day after arriving in New Zealand, Mary joined an English language school. When she first arrived in New Zealand, Mary could not understand even basic English words, so she felt deeply frustrated. However, after three months' studying, Mary dared to speak in English, and was able to deal with normal conversations. Mary remarked that the language school had provided essential assistance with her life in New Zealand:

I was a student of science, engineering. Language was not my favourite, but I worked very hard and with enthusiasm to practise my English despite my loss of face. At the same time, I have always been energetic in my approach to different cultures, all which have been of great benefit to me.

After graduation from the language school in 1999, along with studying computer and human relations courses in a tertiary institute, Mary began a daunting process: looking for a job. She designed a database to record the whole process she followed for finding a job. Mary related that she had frequently sent her curriculum vitae to numerous employers and agencies as if she were sending leaflets out to everyone:

You might not believe it, but I had sent a total of 240 application letters over 6 months without any acceptances. At that time, IT was a quickly developing industry. Owing to my background, I assumed I would gain a job. But, in 1999, New Zealand society did not recognise Chinese engineers' qualifications and capabilities. By contrast, in the Silicon Valley of the USA, on fundamental science research and development projects, Chinese play especially important roles. Again, almost all New Zealand employers emphasised the need for local work experience, which I did not have, and no one offered me a chance to get it.

Meanwhile, her husband returned to China, which caused a family separation. Although intensely lonely, Mary remained persistent. Mary calmly recalled that tough time:

Women are born with a stronger conviction, and are more steadfast and persevering. I kept on attempting again and again. I was not going to be thrown by those failures.

In June 1999, Mary received her first job interview in New Zealand. That company was located in the south of Auckland, but Mary lived in the North Shore; she had only just gained her driver's licence and had never driven across the Harbour Bridge to central Auckland by herself. Mary asked a friend to sit beside her and guide as she drove to the interview spot the day before the interview. Then, she nervously drove to the interview spot by herself the next day.

Mary frankly told the employer that she had no local working experience. Surprisingly, the boss responded: "What I regard as important is your IT working background and experiences, far more than a New Zealand working experience." The open-minded boss, Mark, was a kiwi, had worked overseas so he really understood and accepted different cultures. Mary relived the first success with a joyful smile: "I shed a tide of tears for a successful outcome. I deserved it, a professional technical position, my first job in New Zealand."

Nevertheless, Mary admitted that the process of fitting into the first job was overwhelming. Because of the language and the cultural barriers, she could not communicate with her colleagues very well. She was conscious that this isolated her from work contacts. In addition, Mary was not fully familiar with the updated technical project in which she was engaged. Luckily, her kind-hearted boss Mark instructed her patiently. Even now, Mary and Mark are still good friends. She was greatly glad that

Mark had provided her with an opportunity at her most difficult period in New Zealand and also supported her to establish crucial confidence in herself. Mary expressed her heartfelt gratitude:

At that time, women staff in the New Zealand's IT field were in a minority. Moreover, I was an ethnic female. At the beginning some local colleagues did not appreciate me. I realised that the boss put his neck on the line by hiring me. Obviously, we both suffered from some heavy pressure.

Mary highly cherished this job. She was extremely diligent and dedicated in her work, and also mastered her tasks quickly. Then, her company amalgamated with other companies. But, before long, the amalgamation failed and the new company closed. Mary did not know this. She went to work on the day following the collapse and was shocked when Mark told her that the company did not exist any more, and that he became jobless too.

The biggest difficulty for humans is to control their own fate and accept having to yield to harsh reality. "Having just worked for six months, having just fitted into the working environment, I lost my job suddenly only just before Christmas," Mary told me in a grey mood. She did not cry but accepted this new challenge from life. Mary fairly believed that, "If you cry, your life will always be sad... Your tears do not wash away your sorrows" (Tan, 1989:217).

With her previous IT experiences, and the demand for Internet professionals, Mary obtained her second job as a designer of websites in a family company. Unfortunately, the manager of the IT department was so unprofessional as to cause serious mismanagement. So the key project colleagues left. Being worried about losing her work again, Mary remained in the job until she had no choice but to quit. Her resignation caused a massive shock in the overall company:

The boss tried to persuade me to stay and promised to provide me better pay and conditions. I decided to quit because I could find the company had serious problem. Suddenly, the boss became exceedingly churlish. He threatened me about applying for any other jobs in New Zealand. I thought about consulting a lawyer to sue him, but, without evidence, I had to let it to go. However, this experience broke my spirit.

### **Rainbow on the Strange Sky**

It is said that there is a kind of bird, albatross, without a foot in the world; they achieve their brightest time in the sky; and forever flying without ceasing in pursuit of their fate. In 2000, Mary obtained her third job again in a computer company. During this time, she received many anonymous e-mails of a sexually harassing nature from a male colleague. Mary remembered:

It was quite a troublesome time for me. It deeply hurt me. However, immigrant life had impacted on my outlook. In my perspective, a female immigrant must dare to keep her head up and protect her vital rights and benefits no matter where she lives.

In the terms of traditional culture, many Chinese women would probably prefer to remain silent when encountering this sort of harassment. Mary bravely stood up to fight against it. Thus, her colleague was convicted and dismissed by the company. However, fate turned against her again. Before the Christmas holiday, the company closed and Mary again lost her job. At that time, she was studying at Chinese Dance School in her spare time, Mary recalled in low spirits:

Everybody was enjoying preparing for the dance performance at the Christmas party. I could not help feeling disappointment at losing my job again. It seemed that the happy Christmas would always be away from me.

No matter where one lives, in East or West, we may be involved in pessimistic circumstances at times. Mary analysed the differences between female oppressions living in the different environments:

The pressure Chinese women bear is different from that of western women. We mostly struggle against material or the detailed problems in every day, such as employment, financial crises and living difficulties; while the difficulties western women encounter mostly come from psychological or spiritual disappointment. Maybe it is different cultural ideologies and social conditions that decide the different needs for each human development.

In 2001, the IT industry began to decline; employment in this field became very difficult to find. Being jobless without a hopeful future, Mary was still conscious of being excluded from the host society. Meanwhile, with her husband in China and far away from New Zealand, Mary decided to go back to China. While she was hesitating between staying and leaving, a former English teacher, Dr. Murray, encouraged her not to give up hope too quickly. Mary found his encouragement particularly uplifting and affected her at that special time. She still remembers his words exactly:

When a chick is hatching from the egg, it makes many exploratory attempts to break through the shell until a point is reached beyond which there is no going back.

Mary realised, as an immigrant, it would not be possible to completely return to her previous life. So as well as looking for a job, she vigorously engaged in the variety of social activities that were a normal part of her transition: chorus, dancing school, yoga and the tramping club. Mary highlighted that acculturation and transnationalism motivated her to look on the bright side as an immigrant. She clarified her reflection with emotion:

Life is a kind of process of accumulation. I know that many successful female immigrants had reached their success step by step. In fact, with their tough beginning, they would never have expected or predicted their final successes.

In June 2001, Mary obtained a contract job, which meant that only when the employer had IT projects could she work and receive income. Her boss was outstandingly benevolent:

He did not want to see me with no work and no income, so he always attempted to search for more projects for me to design. And you can imagine how I was moved and ashamed simultaneously by his support and consideration.

Fortunately, as soon as Mary completed one software project with another international company, its boss, who appreciated her talent, invited her to work for him. Now she is the software-design project manager there. Nowadays, Mary really enjoys the multicultural, harmonious and equal atmosphere in the present company. The boss is also an immigrant from East-Europe; her colleagues come from different areas: Europe, South America, North America, and Asia. There are only two kiwi staff, who joke about the fact that one of them is from the South Island and another one from the North Island. Mary cheerfully expressed her happiness:

Here, I finally had no feelings of isolation as a stranger, which is very important to an immigrant. In a word, eventually, I found out a colourful rainbow on the strange sky after a long, distressing wait. Today I clearly believe myself to be becoming a New Zealander. Here is already my own home.

## New Horizon

Let us never cease from thinking-

What is this 'civilization' in which we find ourselves?

What are these ceremonies and why should we take part in them?

What are these professions and why should we make money out of them?

— Virginia Woolf (1952:114) *Three Guineas*.

As human beings, we are constantly moving in space and in time (Irigaray, 2002). Nevertheless, the variety of challenges Mary had undergone in New Zealand made her rethink her role and the image of women: "Who are the 'we' doing the thinking and who are the 'ourselves' for whom we claim to be thinking?" (Jackson and Jones, 1998:1). Living in the West, her gender identity and personal freedom gradually influenced her perspective of her marriage.

In fact, for her five years in New Zealand, Mary had been struggling with her marriage. Due to her husband's high expectations, he had been disappointed about not finding much chance for self-improvement upon his immigration to New Zealand, so he went back to China. However, he had hoped that Mary could find a stable job in New Zealand to aid his business. Different perspectives on life inevitably led to their marriage breakdown. Mary was also critical of the Chinese patriarchal philosophy:

The traditional Chinese male-privileged position has impacted on his expectations. They regard their status in society more highly than their family responsibilities. As a new immigrant, when the reality deviated from expectations, men seldom adapted to reality, and also rejected adjusting themselves. In contrast, women have insisted on seeking opportunities, because of their open-mindedness and being realistic.

Although the slogan of women's liberation has been echoed for several decades in China, a female's position still remains inside the house, and the concept "respectable

male and lowly female” has never been eliminated completely (Oakley, 1981; Best, 2003). However, in such a western cultural environment, as an eastern immigrant, Mary’s self-consciousness rose, gradually completing the “psychological revolution” from dependence to independence, from powerlessness to empowerment. No deep experience, no deep understanding. Colic-Peisker argues (2002:29):

Migration into a different social and cultural environment disrupts people’s community life as well as their sense of identity and belonging- the things that are tightly connected in everyone’s life.

Eventually, Mary renounced her marriage that existed in name, but no longer in fact. She was confident enough to take responsibility for the choice and its consequences. This decision was also the most important change in her life after she immigrated to New Zealand. For this decision, Mary explained: “The immigration life opened my eyes to a new horizon where I wanted to get out and do something for my future by myself.”

Well, the little chick flying out of the oriental eggshell transmuted into an independent phoenix beating its strong wings in the western sky. Indeed, the social position of women is an important way of judging the condition of a society’s civilization. Mary pointed out that women in New Zealand obtain respect and equal treatment more easily than in China. Further, she appreciates the “ladies first” public morality in the West, which is not hypocritical affectation, but a sign of a developed civilization.

Mary appreciated that New Zealand has changed a lot in its attitude to immigrants within the past few years, progressively beginning to accept immigrants with different backgrounds, which is a result of the long-term common endeavours of overall immigrants. Today, “New Zealand society is culturally diverse and becoming more so through changing immigration patterns” (Ministry of Social Policy, 2001:62).

Finally, Mary confirmed her personal identity with a merry and vivid expression on her face:

I was born Chinese, and the long history of Chinese culture settled inside me that gives a solid base to my soul, meanwhile. But, I am not a traditional female Chinese any more. I am a New Zealand citizen; it is a young country with a short history where women hold higher social positions and enjoy better welfare, and in which people live a relaxed life. I have benefited personal development from this society, which provided more options and freedom to me to rethink my life. But, however, I am not a pure Kiwi either, I live in a global age, I am a multicultural combination, an international person.

Mary argued that one's personality decides one's destiny, and in general, the development of one country depends on the quality of all citizens. The process of immigration is to reach one's new stage of life. Of course, Mary's own life experiences partly determined her personality; furthermore, her open, optimistic and persistent personality led her to success.

## Chapter Seven

### Dean's Story: High Heaven and Deep Sea

The world of reality is composed of interpenetrating events linked in causal relations; everything is the cause and effect of everything else.

“Things” in the world are empty of self-being or self-definition, being produced out of the very Suchness of reality itself.

This emptiness is not negative, though, since the reality of empty things is, in fact, the only reality of which it is meaningful to speak.

—Chinese philosopher Fa-tsang (as cited in Mcgreal, 1995)

I interviewed Dean in a seaside café. In terms of my interview, amiable Dean put off his busy business especially to spend an afternoon to talk with me, which made me feel guilty and grateful. Dean arrived in New Zealand 5 years ago. His immigration experience represented a common model of Chinese professional immigrants. He was well-educated and a great success in China. After immigration to New Zealand, he had to struggle and adjust to fit into a new environment. It is easier for people to shift from a tough life to luxurious conditions, but it is bitter for people to accept a hard life from a comfortable one. Overall, most transnational immigrants have to confront the struggles for personal identity, cultural shock, psychosocial stress and frustration in the Diaspora.

#### **Moving the East to Reach the West**

Dean had benefited from the adoption of the new policies of reform and openness in China. He graduated from a top university with a Master's degree of Engineering in the 1980s. At that time, he was assigned to a State Import and Export company and was in charge of international trade. In 1991, Dean resigned and began to deal with foreign trade as a private businessman. His personal income and living level were far higher

than most Chinese because of his prosperous business.

“Why did you immigrate to New Zealand?” I asked.

“Actually, I myself was not quite clear why I came. Perhaps, at that time, I had trouble putting my finger on my meaning in life, being sick of the hole-in-the-soul syndrome.”

When he was still at his 30s, Dean had already reached the top of his career and life. In 1995, his business was declining. Then, two of his university classmates immigrated to New Zealand. After over one year of indecision, Dean made up his mind to apply for immigration. In 1997, Dean received his Permanent Resident Visa, and he arrived in New Zealand one year later with his wife and a little daughter. Dean explained that his decision was made while he was at a low point of life:

In terms of convalescence of downcast emotion, I chose to escape to New Zealand for a sort of spiritual relief, waiting for another opportunity to relive the success a second time around.

Initially, Dean did not intend to live in New Zealand, but to have a look and then would go back home after he became a citizen. When he gained New Zealand nationality, his daughter is growing up, and he had a son too. Dean emphasised with a bitter smile:

Some Chinese immigrants insisted that they came to New Zealand for their children's sake; it was just an excuse. Actually, the first and foremost reason to immigrate was self-development, which would then benefit the future of their children. If I had come to New Zealand by myself, I would definitely have gone home. But now my daughter is growing up, and my son was born here. I could not do everything according to only my wishes now. I have to think about my family.

Three months after his arrival in New Zealand, Dean began his first job, selling textbooks to the Asian community. He appreciated his work. In the following year, he sold textbooks again for another kiwi company and his achievements were great.

Unfortunately, the boss tore up the agreement and refused to share the promised bonus with him. “This case significantly astonished and shocked me, gave me a vivid lesson in recognising some kiwis’ bad personalities and immoral business principles,” Dean desperately recalled. “I felt my situation had been reversed. Indeed, I had a higher position in China than them.”

In 1998, because of his previous working experience in China, Dean took part in training courses on trade and ship transportation. When he finished the course, he gained a place in a company as a stock keeper. Owing to his good English, Dean had no problem in conversation, but confronted culture shock. He stated so acutely the problems that Chinese professional immigrants have experienced in employment and the consequent emotional tension:

That was a sort of distressed experience, contrary to my expectation. With a terribly low beginning, compared to the occupational position I had in my homeland, it was difficult for me to completely face this situation. Still, Kiwis were always critical that new immigrants weren’t qualified to cope with their occupation. It was a foolish prejudice; actually, most of us were over-qualified. This sort of cultural shock disappointment inevitably caused Chinese professional immigrants to dislike working in low positions, especially labouring jobs in New Zealand. Unemployment, for Chinese immigrants, is an overwhelming problem. As a result, some of them finally left New Zealand, and others became self-employed.

When Dean was working in a training role, a classmate introduced him to work in a Takeaway firm to deliver food. The boss there was a nice kiwi, who provided dinner for his employees. For Dean, this job was really a big challenge, in which he had to deal with a variety of people and situations. He was obliged to take different unknown routes to avoid traffic jams in order to deliver food to each customer’s home on time. Moreover, if it was raining, it became a miserable task to drive at night.

“I was actually an idealist. I was born and grew up in an era that encouraged the pursuit of ideals and ambitions, but I had to live in another realistic environment, it was painful,” Dean described his psychological experiences of that time. “However, it was through delivering takeaways that I was forced to adapt, and gradually eliminated frustration from my mind.”

Leaving one’s homeland to emigrate overseas itself is the behaviour of idealism, a search for a new life. Undoubtedly, on the one hand, the current world is not a world entirely belonging to those idealists; on the other hand, it would be an impossible world if it were without any idealists at all. The most important thing is that in the gap between reality and idealism people need to progress with willpower, enthusiasm endurance and a long-term struggle. For the Chinese professional immigrants, one significant challenge is that “their modern professional identity rather than a territorially defined one is the central point from which they address the exigencies of migration” (Colic-Peisker, 2002:39).

### **The Endless Sailing**

After two years of a difficult time, in 2000, Dean began to study for a postgraduate diploma in business at Auckland University. He endured extreme pressure, alongside his full-time studying; he had to be responsible for supporting his whole family, as his wife was pregnant. Along with his studying, Dean was recruited to work for Foodtown Supermarket. Dean recalled gratefully that the team leader was also an immigrant, who had no discrimination towards immigrants. They had a good relationship and supported each other.

Furthermore, to help Dean’s studying, the team leader arranged for Dean to work night shifts on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. In October, around exam time, Dean could not keep up this heavy work schedule any more because he became unwell. “I was sick, and I truly couldn’t be competitive with Kiwis in respect of my energy. Finally I had to

resign.” Dean looked defeated when he told this story.

However, he passed all of the academic exams in spite of his ill health. Then Dean joined a short-term employment training class held by the Department of Work and Income. Finishing the training, he applied for numerous jobs, but with no success. Dean remarked in a disappointed mood:

New Zealand is a small country with a small market. There are many Chinese professional immigrants with a similar background to mine with high degrees and qualifications, but the local employers do not appreciate us at all. Can you believe I used to kneel on the floor for more than one hour to cure a patient with a Chinese medical machine, and I totally earned \$26 in total. I deeply sensed how tough it was to earn money. It is a miserable reality that I hardly accept in my heart. When I was dealing with my business in China, I used to spend money wastefully, because money came easily to me, and I had no idea how to value it. However, immigration completely enlightened and altered my financial sense.

While Dean was studying in the university, a female classmate asked him to teach her driving. She told Dean the payment was, on average, \$40 per hour. Dean immediately requested the relevant information from the Transportation Department for the coaching qualification. He spent more than a year studying to pass the test, and officially become a driving tutor. Dean claimed to be the kind of person who would like to plan well in advance, and also put his plan into action. Not surprisingly, being a driving coach was a job with risks. If students had any accidents, the tutor has to bear the responsibility for all the serious consequences arising from that.

Some of his friends complained that Dean should not do this sort of low-status job as a driving tutor: he was over-qualified. For this, Dean argued:

In a sense, it was only one step apart from delivering takeaways to teaching driving. Both experiences, delivering Takeaways and selling medical machines to

patients, made me able to teach others to drive in a very patient manner. Compared with the beginning, my skill has greatly progressed. I played jokes on myself that I was a PHD driver coach, with practical experiences of more than 300, 000 kilometres. I was satisfied with my outcomes as a coach. In terms of the economic aspect, it is good work to overcome financial hardship. Actually, being a driving coach was not as satisfying an occupation as I would like to engage in. So far, I have no other options available. At least, this is an essential thing for new immigrants. Driving is a fundamental skill for living in New Zealand.

“What kind of occupation do you really want to do?” I asked.

“I hope I could trade between China and New Zealand, increasing my knowledge of intellectual capital and material capital,” Dean responded. “How can this job as a driver coach truly represent my personal worth? Of course, it doesn’t. If I had known earlier that I would do such a job, I should not have gone to university to study for a Master’s degree.” Chinese people are often defined and judged according to their qualifications, education and wealth. Ip (1996:9) commented, “Our self-image is inevitably influenced by how others treat us.” Dean reflected on his friends’ career success in China:

I know some of them are rapidly developing their businesses. Actually, I had the same conditions as them when I was in China. I could have had great success as a result of my academic background and work experience. I wish I could earn \$5,000,000, which is an ideal sum for me. In my hometown, there was once a good chance of reaching this, but I did not put in the effort. There is seldom an opportunity to gain this in New Zealand. So, I possibly will return to China again to seek a new opportunity to improve my situation in the future. However, if you want to live a simple life, New Zealand is a good place for a life of ease and freedom.

## **A Dialogue in Paradise**

During the interview, in particular, I had a further discussion with Dean about gender equality and social issues between China and New Zealand. His analysis of this problem impressed me:

Women have a higher social position and better life in New Zealand than in China. Although it is advocated that men and women should be treated equally in China, it isn't the case. Living in a historical male-dominated society, Chinese women are always pushed into an inferior position, and women themselves also psychologically depend on men. Chinese women must look after their families; at the same time they must do a full-time job to support their families financially—a doubly heavy burden. New Zealand is certainly a paradise for women, children and animals.

“Then you mean I am living now in a paradise?” immediately I asked with a bright smile.

“Yes, you are. New Zealand is an ideal place for women to live in,” Dean confirmed.

“Here, women have little pressures from cultural and social factors. Furthermore, they are able to be independent economically.”

Moreover, Dean deeply admired the social welfare system that provides women the essential assistance to guarantee their basic daily living:

It is unimaginable how a sole mother, in particular an unmarried mother, would live in contemporary China, carrying the burden tension and distress without any welfare protection and help. On the contrary, in New Zealand, women have enough freedom to be themselves in any way they want to be. In addition, there is no obvious gender discrimination in employment; I discern that women are rarely

refused employment due to their gender. The cultural environment of a country forms its women's social position. There once was the "iron lady", Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister in U.K. There is also a female Prime Minister, Helen Clark, in New Zealand. But, it is impossible for women to take powerful roles in Chinese politics. In a peaceful society, the state's main function is how to maintain the social security and safety, and how to reasonably distribute the social resources and so on, it is more suitable for women to manage. In a war period, a time of turmoil, it is men who are needed to deal with social crisis. Reviewing our Chinese history, a long patriarchal philosophy with a plenty of wars and natural calamities, which has influenced Chinese society? Certainly, in the matriarchal period of Chinese primitive society, women had control over all society, and at that time, men and women were really equal.

"This is just like an ancient Chinese saying: If it is not bright in the east, it will be bright in the west yet," I said as a joke. "For the sake of fairness, the power in the world should be balanced."

Having lived in New Zealand for 5 years, Dean has gone back to China only once, because he needed enough time to recover from frustration and oppression. Comparing the differences between Chinese and New Zealand culture, Dean reflected:

China is a big society with a simple culture, only the Chinese culture. On the other hand, New Zealand is a small country with a big culture—there are English and America cultures, Maori culture and Asian culture mixed together, a multicultural society. Obviously, there are divisions between the dominant Pakeha culture and other ethnic minority cultures.

Shifting between the different societies, Chinese immigrants always suffer challenges to their cultural and national identity (Ip, 1996). Thus, Lowe (2003:136) highlighted, "it is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture,"

but “belongs to the future as much as to the past.” Dean was anxious about his daughter’s position and identity in a complex cultural society:

She cannot write Chinese now. As a Chinese, I feel disturbed that she has no knowledge of her own culture. I don’t think there is any possibility of her complete integration into New Zealand. As the second generation of immigrants, they had their own confusion and regrets. If my daughter cannot understand Chinese language and culture when she grows up, it would really be a great grief for her as a Chinese.

However, being a Chinese, no matter how far away from China, a cultural tie is forever deep in one’s bones. The younger generation of Chinese New Zealanders have their own specific way of looking after their identity in future. However, Ip (1996:162) stresses:

It is a new identity based on ethnic awareness and a true understanding of the principal two different mental and physical landscapes in which one moves. No longer needing to be constantly defiant and vigilant to combat racism, and no longer weighed down by feelings of inadequacy and the necessity to compromise, Chinese New Zealanders will ultimately thrive in the appreciation that it is a true privilege to have access to more than one culture.

When Dean first immigrated to New Zealand, there were three people in his family, now he and his wife have a son too. Dean has delighted in his children growing up day by day. He admitted his personality changed a lot during the hard period struggling to adapt to life in New Zealand. Dean enjoyed excitement and activities in China. Chen (1993:15) analysed this sort of transnational contradictory:

People always have feelings for the place where they grew up, and once they leave, they begin to miss it. These feelings can be heavy or light,

sometimes hidden and sometimes expressed, but they are always revealed sooner or later.

Now he has become more subdued, and he spends more time together with his family, values more the family relationship, and often helps his wife looking after their children. Furthermore, Dean is thinking about whether to continue his driver teaching. "People sometimes need to stop at a crossroad, and have a think about where to go next?" he emphasised the relevance of this to his life plan. "One needs to consider if the way is clear." To close the interview, Dean related his immigration feeling as a New Zealand citizen:

New Zealand is a society of slow rhythm; you must get used to being patient. New Zealanders, in general, enjoy their peaceful, free and simple lifestyle. If someone is too hasty, impatient and unrealistic, eventually he will get nowhere. This is not a place with great opportunities for ambitious economic goals. On the contrary, if you are willing to live a plain and calm life, New Zealand is a pretty place to settle down.

## Chapter Eight

### Susan's Story: The Soul's Home

As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs;  
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.

—*Holy Bible*, Psalm 84:6

It was in the library of Massey University that we first met. While I was photocopying some documents, she came and showed me a more efficient and cheap method to make copies. So my first impression of Susan was of her financial talent, and indeed she was a postgraduate student studying a financial subject. Born and raised in China, Susan was a product of the traditional Chinese culture. But when China opened its door to the world in the 1980s, she had the chance to emigrate to the western world. The whole interview was completed after two meetings, which lasted for 10 hours. Along with listening to music, we paused sometimes with traditional Chinese tea, and western style coffee during our interview. In a relaxing, and comfortable atmosphere, Susan narrated her dramatic life experiences.

#### Shadows in the Past

Susan was born in the early 1960s. That was a very tough time of poverty in China, a period with continuous natural disasters lasting for three years, in which the whole of China was struggling against a terrible famine. Susan's grandfather died when Susan's grandmother was still very young. So, her grandmother had brought up Susan's father and aunt by herself. Because of poverty, Susan's maternal grandmother sold her daughter, Susan's mother, to the landlord as a slave girl. This miserable life forever left a deep shadow in the heart of Susan's mother: She thought of herself as an unimportant and unvalued person in this world, whom her family did not want. In view of this hard background, along with financial crises, Susan considered that her parents' marriage

had been unhappy. Susan's mother had told her never to marry unless she had no other choice of survival. Susan argued critically: "The female tragedies that happened to my grandmother as a widow and my mother's character—all these were caused by the bleak era."

With two elder brothers, Susan was the youngest child of her family; Susan had been living with her grandmother and her stern aunt over a long period of time. Susan sadly told me:

I had an unhappy childhood, which was full of my aunt's rebukes and my mother's taunts. My mother had blamed me that my birth had increased poverty in my family. You may not believe it, but I never got enough love from my mother. I have cried many tears due to the relationship between my mother and me.

Compared with her father who had always been proud of her, Susan's mother had never praised her personally. Although Susan always got the best result in exams, her mother always responded coldly: "What is the use of your good score?" Her mother's negative opinions had affected Susan's sense of self. Since starting her professional career, she had always been worried about how other female colleagues might judge her behaviour and endeavour. Susan added:

No matter what I was doing, I always felt my mother's hypercritical eyes watching me. I had once been an extreme perfectionist: striving to be the best in everything. I studied very hard. For a female at that time, going to university was the only way to master my own fate.

Thus, Susan had attempted to work extremely hard on everything to achieve. When she graduated from high school with an excellent academic record, Susan was admitted to the top university in China studying a popular subject: international trading. While Susan had valued her father with a score of 99 (based out of 100, the 1 point of loss is

due to his smoking), as a comparison, she would give her mother a score of 10. Susan said gloomily, "But later when I knew my mother just gave me a zero score evaluation, can you imagine how disappointed I was?" I asked Susan in astonishment, "How did you know that?"

Susan described an unbearable episode that happened: in 1995, a chief executive of a foreign financial company received an invitation from a foreign consul to a banquet together with her mother and friends. During the banquet, the consul asked Susan's mother whether she was proud of having such a fabulous, intelligent daughter. Her mother's answer completely shocked everyone as she endlessly pointed out Susan's shortcomings: laziness, disabilities and foolishness. Her criticism of Susan's performances went on for more than 20 minutes.

Susan reflected: "Well, didn't she value me at a zero score? Indeed, I felt astonished and ashamed. At least momentarily, I was battered and bruised." Traditionally, Chinese parents seldom praise their children or "demonstrate affection" (Ip, 1990) face to face. Overall, parents frequently point out children's shortcomings so as to encourage modesty all times. It is a truly typical Chinese trait, which can often be misunderstood in Western society.

Early in the 1980s, Susan's family began to engage in business, and became one of the first enriched groups in China. Unfortunately, while Susan was studying in university, her eldest brother died. Because of her excellent academic work, she was sent to a financial institute in Hong Kong as the senior manager in two departments after graduation from university. Then, her father's death once again traumatised her. "Father, who intensely loved me, was my life and spirit support. His death was the biggest trauma of my life," Susan said in deep sorrow. Her father's death affected Susan's remaining brother so seriously that he committed suicide.

Thus, Susan dared not go back to her home. To rid herself of her workload, as well as

the misfortune that had happened to her family, Susan decided to resign from her job and go abroad. One of her friends told her New Zealand was a beautiful country with a nice environment, so Susan handed in her application to immigrate to New Zealand. While waiting for her immigration approval, one of her former colleagues recommended her as the chief executive of a foreign financial company in China.

In 1995 Susan again returned to the city where she undertook her university education previously—an internationalised metropolis located in Eastern China. However, in 1997, on Susan's birthday, her mother suddenly got ill and was diagnosed with cancer by the hospital. While she was looking after her mother in hospital, Susan also had to accept infusions everyday because of her own ill health. The doctor in charge of her case warned her:

You are going to die too, only we don't know whom we should send the medical bulletin to for patients being terminally ill (a document the hospital would give to the relatives of a patient beyond cure). If you don't take enough rest, you would die even earlier than your mother does.

Eventually, Susan's mother passed away. Susan collapsed with exhaustion, and she sealed herself off and isolated herself from the outside world for more than two months. Susan felt life was just like the imagery in a popular Chinese song: the seawater crashes on the sandy beach of her life, that her youth was soon gone. She became utterly vulnerable. Every miserable lonely night, Susan was struggling against an urge to commit suicide; however, because she was aware of the heavy grief caused by her elder brother's suicide to the surrounding people, Susan told me:

I should not enhance the shadow. Right then, the famous poet Gu Cheng killed himself in Waiheke island in New Zealand, I told myself, then, I would follow him when arriving there.

In 1997, she resigned the job in the foreign financial company. In 1998, Susan left for New Zealand from Hong Kong. Some of her friends had seen her off at the airport. As Susan often flew to and from other cities and countries, everybody was used to her arriving and departure; Susan had no feeling of leaving either. With a heart full of pain and sorrow, like a lonely small boat, Susan came to New Zealand, where her misery would heal.

### **A Heart War**

Susan had a hard time in New Zealand, because of her poor English, as well as her inability to drive. Susan described her own view of a gloomy world through words from the Bible (Holy Bible, 1984, Psalm 88:3,4): "For my soul is full of trouble and my life draws near the grave. I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am like a man without strength." Susan lived in a place close to the Chinese Christian church; therefore, she often went to the church to play ping-pong with her friends. Susan discovered the people in church were very friendly and kind. She was happy in their company.

Among them, there was an eleven-year-old boy from Hong Kong who called Susan each week and consoled her. One day, he suddenly asked Susan whether she wanted to go to the church. If she would like to, he could ask his father to pick her up. Susan told me:

At that time, I was hostile to other people. If it had been an adult, I would certainly have refused him; but he was a pure and nice kid, I accepted his invitation to listen to the bible on Sundays. But I was very angry with God. I suspected that if God was so great, why had he pushed me into such a tragic life?

Late, she enrolled to study at Massey University and moved to another place. Using her shift as an excuse, she stopped going to the church. In her first two years in New Zealand, Susan shifted a total of eight times. Susan analysed why she moved

frequently:

I had no experience such as sharing a house with other people than my family. I was not easy-going, and did not accept others. Furthermore, I couldn't express my own sense of dissatisfaction even if I was hurt badly.

Although Susan had kept far away from the church, she still participated in the activities of the Christian fellowship at Massey University, and listened to the Bible lectures. One day when she burst into tears because of her worry about her accommodation, one friend from the Christian group helped her find a new house near Massey University. Susan admitted clearly, "I promised God if I could get stably settled down this time, I would believe in God." Fortunately, Susan began living in harmony with a friendly and kind landlord in a new house. For the sake of her promise to God, each Sunday morning, at 7 o'clock, she has gone to the church by bus.

In 1999, Susan studied linguistics at Massey University. There once was an oral exam with the title of "The present to mother". After finishing the exam, tears streamed down from her eye all the way home. Susan could not find her way home. Soon, there was a lecture in which every student was required to give a presentation for 10 minutes with the title "My family". However, Susan refused to speak. Susan recalled sadly:

Even after escaping from China to New Zealand, I still could not shake off the shadow of the loss of my family. I had nowhere to go, I re-entered that depressed situation I was in when my mother passed away in 1997. I did not return to the lectures for a week.

Susan felt deeply depressed and frustrated; she had to seek psychological therapy. One female counsellor at Massey University was a Christian. She counselled Susan step by step. This was an unbelievably tough treatment. However, gradually, she eliminated the oppression and gloom that had accumulated in her mind for many years. After that,

Susan cheerfully began to go to church more regularly, and then she received her baptism in 2001.

Since then, Susan has been formally studying theology. At the first lecture, listening to the people singing the hymn, Susan could not help but cry all the time,

I suddenly felt God was touching my heart at that moment. I certainly heard God's voice: my poor kid, looking at you have been overwhelmed with grief more than ten years, I have undergone more pain than you have. My god, his merciful words made me feel sorrow and joy intermingled, and completely lifted my frustration.

Eventually the weight lifted from her soul. For the second lecture, facing more than 100 people, she shared her painful life experiences from 1985 until 2001, a total of 16 years with others for the first time. And then, Susan walked out of the dark hole of her past life, and her soul has been getting enriched and brighter:

Since I was a little girl, I always followed my parents in doing things, and I never expressed myself satisfactorily. After I became a Christian, I learnt to look at myself more clearly and change my person and gender identity. According to the Bible's values, everyone is precious, and everyone's basic human rights should be respected. In contrast, we Chinese always regarded the right of others as more important than ours, and we are also concerned about hurting others if we express our dissatisfaction.

Undoubtedly, this Chinese patience sometimes leads to misunderstanding by some western people, who suppose that Chinese are introverted and weak; Chinese prefer to be silent even if they are being attacked. Lin (1939:44) in his profound book, *My Country and My People*, explained:

The quality of patience is the result of racial adjustment to a condition where

over-population and economic pressure leave very little elbow-room for people to move about, and is, in particular, a result of the family system, which is a miniature of Chinese society.

## **The Song of Life**

Susan studied for four years at Massey University in different subjects such as language and culture, computing as well as finance. She appreciated a female teacher who had taught a language and culture paper. Susan appraised her with the following:

During each class, I was a silent student. After the class, I often had some questions to ask her. Because of her open-minded, patient and lenient personality, she was really concerned about other cultures, and especially understood our Chinese demure character. With her valuable support and encouragement, I could keep on studying. In one word, this interaction with a woman whom I admired greatly has had a deep impact on my life. Now we are good friends.

Afterwards, Susan completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Finance. Susan planned to go back to China and work in a foreign bank agency after graduation. Susan studied extremely hard:

I always had more than 50 books out of the library over a year. I once said to myself, I would never study again.

However, Susan felt lucky that all lecturers were professional, considerate and responsible; otherwise, she wondered if she could finish her studying. She treasured her student life:

It was a tough but happy time that I spent at Massey University. My good academic results demonstrated that I could do very well in a different field, which had truly increased my personal confidence. Even now, I often have a look at my

Student Identity Card with pleasure, I am really proud of having once been a student of Massey University.

Susan was supposed to continue studying for a Master's degree in Finance. However, in March 2002, she participated in a theology course in which the lecturer was the principal of the General Institute in America, and he said he was sent by the God to recruit some priests. "Unexpectedly I was moved to tears while everyone was singing. I realised God was calling me." That night, Susan could not sleep. She made an important choice: go to America to study for a Master of Theology, and become a Christian priest. Susan desired to help others who were still struggling in the gloom. Although this job has a low income, she believed it was more valuable to work as a priest than work just for a high salary.

In preparation for her future occupation as a priest working in a hospital, Susan took a cleaning job in a hospital. She accepted the psychological and physical pressure from this labouring job, which was really more difficult than she thought. Susan had never done any labouring work before. Moreover, the biggest challenge to her was that she was in contact with seriously ill patients every day, seeing them in desperation and that caused her desperate feelings to rise up. Nevertheless, Susan adapted to her work environment. Because she was a responsible and diligent person, she won the common respect of the patients and doctors. Patients always approved of her work and thanked her for it. Susan stressed her achievement from her work as a cleaner:

I had been in tense relationships with females over the years. I was anxious at first because most of the staff in the hospital were females. However, I eventually had good and harmonious relationships with the female nurses. All my prejudice and misunderstanding towards women were from the hatred I had for my mother. Now I began to learn to correctly deal with other women. To get the respect of the female nurses whom I had admired since my childhood was very important for me to eliminate the shadow in my life.

Susan was pleased that she had a chance to learn from the working class in New Zealand. At a very young age Susan had been a professional white-collar worker with high position in China for ten years. Susan did not feel any true sense of security or self-esteem; conversely, the present job made her more aware of herself. She argued, in general, the people in New Zealand have a remarkable sense of equality; indeed, this helps it to be a prosperous country:

Overall, women are respected in this country. By contrast with China, women hold high positions in the government in New Zealand, including the Prime Minister, the Attorney-General and some ministers. In five years, I have never been looked down on because I am a female. I am no longer perfectionist; I only want to be a normal human being and true to myself. I think it was a wise choice to immigrate to New Zealand. I am proud of being a New Zealand citizen.

The second half of the interview was in my home. I was playing the CD of the singer Andrea Bocelli, whose singing deeply touches the hearts of people all over the world. Susan said: "God is fair. You see, in spite of his blind eyes, God gave him an miraculous voice." I recognised that this maybe was her overview for her own life. After having experienced all that hardness and frustration, her restless soul finally found a peaceful home in New Zealand. She is confident of her current new life, as well as the future challenges.

## Chapter Nine

### Leo's Story: A Stray Star

If you shed tears when you miss the sun, you also miss the stars.

—Tagore, R. (1967:287) *Collected Poems  
and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore.*

Leo was the flatmate of my good friends, so I contacted him via a friend. He accepted my interview immediately, “I would feel delighted if I could provide any help for your research.” Thus, I met Leo at his new home, in which he lives with his wife and their son, a one-year-old who was born in New Zealand. Actually, both of us had backgrounds in common as new immigrants from Mainland China: we arrived in New Zealand last year under the category of general skills immigration. Occasionally, his wife, Lucy joined in our conversation alongside looking after their son. The interview was a frank, friendly sincere communication that took nearly four hours. Sometimes we ignored the boundary between the researcher and the participant.

#### Transnationalism in Time and Space

Leo had been hesitating almost one year after he received the approval letter for his immigration application. “Why did you hesitate in your decision to come to New Zealand at that time?” I asked with a smile, although I understood his concern. Leo mentioned his sense of confusion:

As a senior chemical engineer, I had a prestigious position in China. Before my arrival in New Zealand, I still accepted my normal salary although I did not work while I was taking care of my mother who was sick with cancer for one year. My boss treated me very well; he kept my position open for two years. That made me reluctant to leave. Meanwhile, my wife also was engaged in an administration job

at a university. We had a good life in China. In terms of emigration overseas, we had to abandon the position we had already reached in China. After much procrastination, I postponed leaving for New Zealand until the last ten days before my permanent residence visa expired.

“What was the real reason for you immigrating to New Zealand?” I was curious. “Frankly speaking, until today I do not know why I am here,” Leo answered:

I gradually felt a little annoyed about my job that I had undertaken for ten years and I certainly knew exactly how my future would unfold in China until my 60s, and maybe I needed a new sort of stimulation in life; maybe we considered a better future for our child; however, I am not sure if I can pinpoint my true immigration motivation.

In reality, Leo had been in Germany on business for a few months, but he had never settled down overseas. In addition, one reason was that one couple of his friend's relatives were visiting China after a few years in New Zealand, and they described a wonderful picture of that country. Joe smiled in a funny manner:

They especially highlighted that, despite being very rich in China, you still suffer many pressure from your surroundings. By contrast, in New Zealand, no matter whether you are poor or not, you can live comfortably. For them, New Zealand is virtually a paradise. They stirred us up, both of my friend's families and mine immigrated here together. Sometimes, we joked with each other, all of us were persuaded by his relatives to come to New Zealand.

I had been in their hometown in China, a beautiful international seaside city, which is famous for its clean, nice environment. That city has some similar aspects to Auckland, except it is much more modern, bustling and bigger. “I never forget our first day in New Zealand,” Leo stressed. “My wife cried with disappointment on the whole way to our

accommodation, as she saw the desolate countryside on both sides of the road for 10 minutes after we went in a friend's car from Auckland airport. Similarly, I passed a sleepless night in a small, dark room on my first day in New Zealand.

When they arrived in New Zealand, his wife, Lucy was five months pregnant. At the very beginning, they did not buy a car. Each time, they had to walk an hour to the hospital for the routine maternity examination. And also, they lived in a poky room sharing a kitchen and bathroom with a few people in the house. Leo recalled that tough period of financial crisis:

The money we brought from China was getting less day by day, but we had no income in New Zealand. Mentally, we habitually exchanged New Zealand dollars into Chinese money: 1 Dollar is worth 4 times a Chinese Yuan when we were shopping, which made everything here seem expensive. Therefore, we had to reduce our expenditure on food. I had never been in such impoverished circumstance before. In China, I often went to well-know restaurants eating delicious food and stayed at fine hotels.

Furthermore, Leo came across another unexpected adversity when he realised his English was not good enough to communicate effectively:

When I went to the bank to open my account, I hardly understood the banker's words. I became dejected about my poor English. It's hard for you to imagine, but my English was appraised as very competent in China, because I often worked with foreign experts as their technical interpreter.

The language obstruction is an overwhelming challenge, which usually shakes immigrants' confidence in settling down in a new environment, and also provokes their sense of isolation and loneliness. Indeed, I agreed with him:

For an adult immigrant, it is so uncomfortable being in transition between two

absolutely different linguistic worlds. Commonly, the essential reason why we encountered this acute disappointment is that we studied but didn't practise English in China, but we now are living in a real English-speaking world.

## **The Identity of Diaspora**

To begin with, Leo expected to continue his previous occupation as a chemical engineer in New Zealand. Apart from sending e-mails, he called almost every relevant company in the telephone book. Leo disappointed:

All of them refused me, although I claimed I could be treated as a practice or a voluntary worker without any payment. It was an absurd requirement, they all asked me the exactly same questions: firstly, 'Do you have any local working experiences?' and secondly, 'Did you participate in any professional training in New Zealand?' As a newcomer, how could I obtain those qualifications if nobody offers them to me?

Afterwards, Leo began to search for a job through an agency. Passing the normal test, the agent introduced him to a commercial foundry as a machine operator. "The overall assembly line was managed by myself solely, running backwards and forwards all the time without stopping," Leo narrated his working experiences. "I couldn't sustain this extremely heavy labour. Roughly a week later, I called the agency and decided to resign." Soon, on account of his endeavour, Leo again found a job, working in a lock production factory as a fitter. The team leader particularly admired Joe's work, and provided a permanent position for him. But Joe rejected his offer:

How could I work in such a low position as a labourer forever? When would there be an end to this grim life? You know, I was really exhausted while standing up to fitting locks everyday. I never suffered this in my former career in China where I was a respected senior engineer. Frequently, I met some immigrants with a higher qualification, such as PHD or Masters, who were working in the same situation as

mine, and my heart was pierced with grief for us. I wonder sometimes why we came here.

One month later, with the excuse of his wife's due date being close, Leo finally resigned from that job. After their son was born, Leo stayed home looking after his wife and son. "A full-time house husband," he teased smiling. "Owing to my son's arrival, we spent a lot of money buying some baby goods. I became concerned about our economic condition again." Meanwhile, the agency contacted Leo again, providing another job for him, picking up on an assembly line at a chemical factory.

"This job was another frustrating challenge, I was worn out totally," Leo sighed in despair. "For that, I am conscious that I am too old to stand those sorts of labour. Age is a huge challenge for me currently."

"But you are just in your 30s," I laughed at him. "Many people over 50, even 60, undertake a great variety of labour jobs in New Zealand." He replied:

As a group of new professional immigrants, we are profoundly different from the first mainstream immigrants in the early 1990s. Ten years ago, China had just opened its door to the world, and a period of social and economic development. At that moment, compared with developed countries, the overall living status of China was really low, and people's only opportunity was to go overseas to improve their situation. Nevertheless, for most Chinese, it was extremely difficult to travel abroad. But once they emigrated overseas, they rarely regretted their decision, and also almost everyone strove successfully and worked hard. We could go overseas freely to study, visit or work; on the other hand, as a professional employee, if you were lucky, it would be a possibility for you to earn the same salary as overseas. Maybe, the above elements enable us to be more likely to back away from the host society. It is a famous Chinese saying: the bitter sea has no bounds, repent and the shore is at hand. Unlike our pioneers, we lack their endurance for suffering and frustration in spiritual and physical aspects.

Soon after, to improve his English, Leo enrolled in an English course in a college. He attempted to look for a job while he was waiting for the beginning of class. Via a friend, he gained an interview for a cleaner in a hospital. He slightly taunted:

You would hardly believe this sort of job still demanded curriculum vitae. The interviewer was also an immigrant who came from England, where he was a teacher. He told me that a new immigrant at least should find any job that you could do and have some income. He was a good example, both of us communicated very well due to the same immigration status.

This cleaning work for Leo was lighter labour than he had done in the factory. Nevertheless, it was a huge challenge, because he was in the psychosurgery ward:

Throughout the first week, owing to my fear of the mental patients, I did not dare to go into the ward. I was shaking. But by the second week, I was obliged to go into the ward to clean. Unbelievably, those mental patients are so friendly and nice. They always commended my work with phrases, "work hard" and "well done". In New Zealand, people constantly affirm and praise an individual's strong points.

Because of his full-time studying, Leo has worked each weekend. "A few times, I went to sleep while I was looking after my son. But I woke abruptly as my son fell off the bed." They have rented a house with three bedrooms since their son was born. Leo described how he modified his emotionally upset gradually:

Contrary to the first year, now I feel my state of mind is a little better. Probably I am getting more insensitive, and numbing my soul. Naturally I initially compared New Zealand with China, especially remembering the positive aspects of China. The more I contrasted both, the more disappointed I was. Apparently, I had had an unrealistic view of my new life as an immigrant. You know, the official handbook

of Immigration Service declared, 'New Zealand is a right choice'.

"Do you mean that they played a trick of the imagination on us for coming?" I asked. We all laughed loudly again. "However, if I had the opportunity to choose again, I do not think I would come here again," Leo confirmed this point. Usually, Chinese immigrants do not communicate with each other but are busy with their own businesses. In New Zealand, so far, he has only a few friends, embedded in a narrow social network:

In China, I frequently communicated with a large group of friends. A man needs social interaction and companionship. Most importantly, social intercourse reminds us of our existence, and how much this is determined by others' demands. Here, men normally move in a very small circle, showing that nobody needs you; and of course, that you do not need others. How dull and senseless a life it is!

Nevertheless, Leo accepted that he had a natural, calm life in New Zealand, in which people generally live in a steady sure style that was dissimilar from China, where everyone is in a rush, but nobody is conscious of why he is so keen to be busy and what he is pursuing. He distinguished the differences between the two cultures:

There is a stronger sense of "the common people" in New Zealand. Contrary to China, this society doesn't completely judge a person on his or her occupation, but on who he or she is as an individual. Moreover, Chinese rarely reveal our true thoughts. At work, occasionally the task was overloaded; even then I attempted to fulfil my duty, hiding my dissatisfaction. In comparison, my Kiwi fellows, they would immediately complain so as to protect their rights. Culturally, we are not accustomed to speaking our true thoughts but often keep silent. Sometimes, Kiwis feel confused by this.

## **Moving between Outside and Inside**

Leo noted that he was not confident of his future; “Whether I would settle down in New Zealand or not, the most important and urgent thing for me is to find a satisfying job to engage in within two or three years.” Otherwise, he intends to become self-employed. Again, he was unsure which road he should choose: “I am still involved in a controversy with myself on my future. Would I strive without ceasing to persist in success here, or return to China as a failure and deserter?”

Leo’s previous boss invited him to return to China at the end of this year to participate in an exhibition in Shanghai, with the company paying all of his expenditure. “So far, how could I go back to China without success, but as a cleaner?” Leo asked himself. “Traditionally, Chinese overvalue a person’s social status. Moreover, I suppose, maybe two or three years later, it will be impossible for me to return to China.”

“Why?” I asked.

“It is said that immigration is only a one-way journey, no return ticket,” Leo pointed out in a gloomy voice. “An extra dimension of the Chinese psychology is the concept of face, which virtually means self-esteem or vanity, and we live by it.” He explained:

If I went back to my homeland, how could I deal with loss of face? People would sneer at my return as a symbol of failure, because I couldn’t achieve any success in New Zealand. On the one hand, after three years, my life is empty in China; I assume I would feel outdated there too. On the other hand, it is not my own home here in New Zealand. I presume, ultimately, as a diaspora I would lose myself, and I am not convinced where I should go. Who am I?

The issue of “who am I?” is attached to the cultural identity and belonging. It is a strong part of Chinese culture. To gain a “big face”, an ambitious man should succeed and rise to fame and fortune. Lin (1939:191) profoundly described in this unique cultural identity:

It is amenable, not to reason but to social convention. It protracts lawsuits, breaks up family fortunes, causes murders and suicides, and yet it often makes a man out of a renegade who has been insulted by his fellow-townsmen, and it is prized above all earthly possessions. It is more powerful than fate and favour, and more respected than the constitution.

“The difficulties are only temporary. You should make efforts for our future,” his wife encouraged him. “There will be some improvements if you continue with your efforts.” Leo paid tribute to his wife: “My wife is the most important person. She gives me support in New Zealand”.

Unlike the early period, Lucy is beginning to appreciate the new environment:

I am aware that I am getting over the initial frustration of a drop in status. My son was born here; all health treatments were a free, including the maternity routine examination as well as the baby's birth. The hospital facilities and staff services were very good, and I was content with everything. Moreover, the life style is loose simple and relaxed in New Zealand. In particular, there is not the sort of complicated human relationships. A female immigrant, if she has her own family and children, she would probably enjoy New Zealand. A mother attaches importance to her children's future. I perceive this is a difference of viewpoint between men and women. Women are likely to adapt and fit in with the reality.

In Leo's English class, most students are new immigrants from China. Generally, the Chinese men regret their choice to immigrate. They plan to return to China in two years as soon as they are granted permanent return visas. Surprisingly, his female classmates relish their new experiences. Leo compared the gender differences:

I am truly confused. Chinese woman in my class all are pleased with their new life in New Zealand. Under transnational immigration, the sense of frustration,

dissatisfaction and letdown commonly occurs in men. However, women seem to be pragmatists. For a female immigrant, as a poem from Yen Chi Tao (Sun Dynasty poet, China) put it: "When my heart is peaceful I feel at home wherever I dwell." But men are easily upset. When things get tough, I cannot help miss my mother who passed away. When I studied in my twenties at the university, which was far way from my hometown, I never had any sense of homesickness. As I am older, I feel it deeply.

Leo was silent for a moment, his eyes full of sentiment as he was looking at his son. For immigrants, homeland is their own root of culture, despite their new home in their resident country. As a famous Chinese overseas writer Chen Ruoxi (1993:11) argued, "Chinese people are eternally entangled, heart and soul, in their place of origin. Homesickness is as old as the sky and as enduring as the earth."

Leo is energetically preparing for his test in International Trade. "Last year I did not get permission to study this subject that is in demand. Do you know why I failed?" He related the detail as the following:

There is an unspoken rule in the institute that prefers male students under 36 years old, but under 40 years for female. Do not you consider this is a gender discrimination issue for men? However, I would like to attempt again this year to reach this goal, because the graduates from this subject are easily employed. By contrast with China, this is an especially curious country, in which women's social status is higher than men's, and women are more likely to find jobs than men, in spite of their age. Outstandingly, in New Zealand, the current prime minister is a female, Helen Clark, and the former prime minister was also a woman, Jenny Shipley. Its social policy also protects women's rights. In China, women still suffer gender discrimination in employment and other social and economic fields, but regardless, the government always maintains there is equality between men and women. Everyone knows that it is a useless claim in China.

Finally, Leo joked with his son, "My baby, you would have no opportunity to become the prime minister in future here, because you are a male." Our laugh ended the discussion of gender issue.

On immigration life, we both have similar opinions. In essence, the new immigrants have to overcome a tough period: the first is the hardest year, the second, bitter, year and the third, delightful. Leo further pointed out that his personal immigration experience was an appropriate case to illustrate that if a new immigrant has expectations of achieving quickly in New Zealand he or she probably won't realise them. It may take an immigrant much more time than he or she expects for his goals in the host society to come true.

## Chapter Ten

### Discussion: Different Voices

As to effect of cultural change on social roles, immigration can be seen to affect men and women differently, both because of different social and familial roles and because a change from one culture to another involves different forms of adaptation for different genders.

—Walsh and Horenczyk (2002:504)

#### Introduction

Finishing six interviews of Chinese professional immigrants, as well as transcribing their life histories, I have shared in their undergoing “a physical separation and geographic absence” (Kao, 1993: Preface), and their successes. Except for one Permanent Resident, Joe, who has been in New Zealand only 15 months, five of the immigrants have become New Zealand citizens; Anne and Jim already have been resident in New Zealand for the last 10 years, and Susan, Dean and Mary have also lived in New Zealand for 5 years.

I reviewed their life stories and the answers to the questionnaire in order to compare and contrast similarities and differences in their perspectives of living, feelings and emotions, and employment and studying between males and females. I attempted to explore how immigration experiences have significantly impacted on their lives. Through “reliability” and “typicality” of data derived from the six interviews (Harvey and McDonald, 1993), I will analyse the following main questions:

1. What were the reasons that motivated them to go abroad and choose New Zealand as their immigration destination?

2. What sorts of challenges and difficulties had they encountered through immigration at the time of their initial arrival in New Zealand?
3. What have they altered or improved about their lives as immigrants so far?
4. How did they think their immigration experiences had influenced and shaped their personality from a gender perspective?
5. What aspects of their cultural identity and sense of belongings did they rethink in a national transition?
6. What differences and similarities did they observe or experience in relation to gender equality between China and New Zealand?

## **There: Background of Participants**

### ***Qualification***

One participant was 33 years old, two participants were between 36 and 40 years old, and the age of the others is between 40-50 years. All participants were well-educated in China: one held a tertiary diploma, four people had a bachelor's degree, and another was a post-graduate. Before immigrating, everyone was employed in full-time, well-paid occupations that were relevant to his or her professional qualification: Anne was a librarian, Susan had been appointed chief executive of a branch of a foreign financial company, Joe was a senior engineer, Mary was engaged in computer science, Dean owned an international trade company, and Jim was manager of the distribution of materials in a government department.

In China, Anne and Jim had worked for over 13 years. Dean, Susan and Leo had engaged in their own fields between 9 and 12 years after graduation. Mary had been a computer engineer over 5 years. In their last jobs in China, three females and one male felt highly satisfied in their work. Susan and Mary had held higher positions, both economically and socially, before migrating. In contrast, Dean was disappointed with his job, because of declining business. Jim also indicated a low satisfaction rate for his

job due to the frustrating human relationships in his work place.

### *The Reasons for Immigration*

They all came from large modern Chinese cities, which provided an abundance of opportunities to assist them in the immigration process, through social networks such as family relatives and friends. Why did they leave stable lives and higher occupations to transition abroad? Why did they choose New Zealand as their destination? The immigration motivations were divided into two main types: the desire for a different lifestyle (four participants picking this reason, one adding a clean environment) and chose a better future for their personal development (Anne chose the option of a better education for her daughter, another nominating a clean environment).

Some participants felt it seemed to be a pre-determined fate that determined their arrival in New Zealand. In face-to-face interviews, however, everyone had explained frankly that there were further personal reasons for migrating. As a young talented IT expert, having great opportunity for personal promotion in China, Mary did not intend to go abroad, but she finally arrived in New Zealand involuntarily, because her ex-husband longed to immigrate to improve his situation and seek his occupational success. The reason Susan woefully left China was caused by tragic misfortune in her family:

Right then, the famous poet Gu Cheng killed himself on Waiheke Island in New Zealand, I told myself, then, I would follow him when arriving there.

Susan

In her 40s, Anne was determined to come to New Zealand. She clearly recognised that other people would think that she was too old to take on a new challenge. However, in pursuit of her own goals and concerned about a better education for her daughter, she valiantly chose the huge risk ahead:

I had always had a strong wish to go overseas and see the world and acknowledge a different culture...if I hesitated slightly, I would forever lose that sole chance.

Anne

Jim's story was unique. To attain an individualistic and free life, he came to New Zealand, because he was annoyed by the social and environmental conditions in China and the complexity of human relationships there:

I was immediately conscious of the vulnerable inconstancy of human relationships... This feeling of bitter disappointment was essentially the reason I went abroad.

Jim

As a person who had great success in international trade, Dean escaped to New Zealand to restore his happiness following emotional depression after his business faltered, and sought a new second opportunity for success through immigration:

Actually, I myself was not quite clear why I came, perhaps, at that time I had trouble putting my finger on my meaning of life, being sick of the hole-in-the-soul syndrome.

Dean

Leo, a recent arrival, somehow was still confused about his decision to immigrate in our interview:

Maybe I needed a new sort of stimulation in life; maybe we considered a better future for our child; however, I am not sure if I can pinpoint my true immigration motivation.

Leo

In general, the phrase “different lifestyle” means a transition between two or three national boundaries in terms of geography and ethnic community: an unfamiliar linguistic system, sense of culture, social and political ideology, and so on. Furthermore, an immigrant experiences the process of abandoning his or her homeland, striving for an uncertain new future, and ultimately adapting from the initial difficulties to a successful adjustment. For these Chinese professional immigrants, New Zealand is desired as ‘the last utopia’, whose lifestyle, democratic society and clean, green environment have absorbed them and induced them to leave the most densely populated nation in the world. However, there was no significant gender difference in the reasons given for immigration.

### *Approach to New Zealand*

Before coming to New Zealand, only two participants, Susan and Joe, had been overseas, for the sake of business. In addition, Dean had had international trade contact with foreigners. Obviously, apart from a little of knowledge about New Zealand, none of them had a realistic conception about the full consequences of immigration. Furthermore, three participants had no family or close friends to contact when they arrived in New Zealand, which made the initial transition tough and chaotic, because they had no basic social resources to rely on.

In terms of their marital status, five were married, and one female was single on arrival. As the first group of professionals from Mainland China, Anne and Jim came to New Zealand holding an international student visa; as a result, they had to suffer separation from their families. Anne left her husband and daughter in her homeland for 5 years. Of the second mainstream immigrants, five participants directly immigrated to New Zealand after 1996 holding Permanent Resident Visas under the category of general skills. Dean, Joe and Mary arrived in New Zealand with their family, and Susan, a principal applicant, arrived alone.

Nevertheless, for the benefit of a social life in a secure, free and distinct living

environment, dissimilar from their lives in China, they would take on the risks of economic distress and unemployment. Some immigrants, inevitably, have been swayed by their enthusiasm to emigrate, and ignored the challenges that a Chinese professional immigrant would confront in New Zealand—the limited labour and economic market, the language barrier, culture shock and the complication of adapting to an unfamiliar western world. In general, six participants suffered unbelievable hardship and social and economic challenges during their early period in New Zealand.

## **Here: Transition**

### *Economic Status*

Anne and Jim, as pioneers of the first wave of professional Chinese immigrants, had been mired in a poverty trap. “They were rich in human capital, but not in money” (Henderson, 2003:160). The real reason was, alongside holding a student visa, both of them brought only a little money to New Zealand, because the whole national economic standards and salaries in China were very low at that time. Anne had only US\$ 600, almost all of which was borrowed from her family and friends. Similarly, Jim took NZ\$ 1000 for living costs. These small sums maintained their living needs for little more than a month. Unsurprisingly, in order to survive, Anne and Jim had to find any job they could gain, utterly irrespective of their qualifications, soon after their arrival in New Zealand.

By contrast, the other four participants had benefited from the economic boom in China in the 1990s, so their careers enabled them to receive considerable salaries. Apart from their human capital, they also brought an amount of cash for arrival in New Zealand, which ensured basic sustenance at the beginning of their transition. Susan took sufficient money with her to cover her living expenses for five years. Dean had paid \$20,000 to New Zealand Immigration Service for language training tuition of his wife, whose English didn't reach the required standard. Mary found herself in this situation also.

### *Accommodation*

Initially, all participants had rented a room or shared a house with others in their early days in New Zealand. For the sake of financial stability, Anne and Jim endeavoured to reduce their accommodation expenditures to a minimal level. In particular, Anne even rented a substandard bed to sleep in at night only, at a cost of \$13 per week. Jim forced himself to reside in one overcrowded room without a bed for \$20 per week. He did not recommend this as a place for human beings to live! Dean rented a house to live in with his wife and their daughter for two years. Like Mary, Leo and his wife shared a house with a few people as flatmates. Susan had grim memories about of repeatedly moving her residence in her first year, and she admitted to serious cultural shock.

Traditionally, Chinese people prefer to live in their own house. From a Chinese cultural perspective, where there is a house, there is a home. As an immigrant, having your own house overseas means you plant a new root in a strange land. In the same way, for a Chinese, a house is not just a fixed spot on the earth, but also a spiritual symbol to anchor a wandering life. Anne, Jim and Dean bought their properties quickly as their economic condition improved in New Zealand. Mary and Leo each moved into a rental house with their own family. At present, five participants are living with members of their family, and Susan's accommodation style is boarding. Despite the variety of forms, all participants estimated their overall satisfaction with their current accommodation at a medium or higher level.

### *English Barrier*

Four participants had studied English on the threshold of immigration. Apart from Dean and Jim, everyone highlighted that English was a serious barrier they had to deal with in their life as immigrants. Although he had been an interpreter in China, Leo encountered disappointment with his English in communication in New Zealand:

When I went to the bank to open my account, I hardly understood the banker's words. I became dejected about my poor English.

In contrast to the male participants, the three females had a struggle with their English on arrival in New Zealand, because their English was so poor. Personally, I perceived through the interviews that their present English was really good. It illustrated how much hard work they had done to resolve their language problem. Along with obtaining a postgraduate diploma with good academic marks, Susan can communicate with her Kiwi flatmates in fluent English. Moreover, Anne negotiated with Kiwis in business:

My English was poor, but they could understand me surprisingly...it did work.

Anne

Even though at the beginning Mary seldom understood daily English, finally, her English thoroughly improved:

Language was not my favourite, but I worked very hard and with enthusiasm to practise my English despite my loss of face.

Mary

The female immigrants expressed at length much more passion and persistence to learn English and cultural subjects than the male participants. Mary and Susan were keening on studying linguistics, arts and social sciences, despite their engineering and financial qualifications. Along with studying the bible in Chinese and English, Anne has set up her artist's shop, whose primary customers are Kiwis because of its Western pictures, craft gifts and so on.

### ***Employment***

For all participants, the employment obstacle was an overwhelming challenge beyond any expectations. The immigrants' employment situations and their intentions for permanent settlement crucially impacted upon each other. Khoo and Mak argued

(2003:186):

Specifically, it was hypothesized that those who were able to find employment soon after arrival, were satisfied with their job, and/or were able to use their qualifications, would be more likely to indicate an intention for permanent settlement.

Anne began with fairly poor pay, but took heavy labouring jobs such as dishwashing, restaurant service, housework, factory operator and picking fruit on a farm for maintaining her basic living requirements in New Zealand. "The employment situation improved with length of residence" (Henderson, 2003:153). Encountering drastic poverty and stress, neither Anne nor Jim ceased their dedicated efforts because of their positive, optimistic view of life and their future. Even then, neither of them considered any intention of reversing their immigration journey:

I never escape from tough reality; on the contrary, I have done my best to accept, adjust, improve and finally overcome it.

Anne

Personally, I had not particularly noticed how tough and horrible life was when I was overseas.

Jim

Like Jim, Anne separated from her family in China. Khoo and Mak (2003) argued that those who indicated a better opportunity for children's education and the future of family in terms of immigration, and those who adapted proficiently and integrated quickly into the host society were more likely to settle down permanently. For her daughter to have a possibility of studying overseas, Anne persisted in New Zealand even though her situation was unbelievably tough:

My mother's love was so great so as to support my never giving up!

Anne

Similarly, both Jim and Dean had engaged in service in restaurants. Furthermore, along with horrific accommodation, Jim had undertaken a variety of heavy physical labour, but he had always maintained energy and passion for his job irrespective of the kind of work, as farmhand, dishwasher, and baker and so on. The fundamental reason Jim overcame the challenge of harsh labour was his realistic outlook in a new environment:

Many Chinese professional immigrants often compare their status in New Zealand with that they had in China, and also bragged about the past, and how much better it was. I had fully prepared myself in my mind before I went abroad. Going abroad was my desire, and my own choice.

Jim

Obviously, Dean was quite frustrated because of having taken labouring jobs, for instance, stock keeping, supermarket and takeaway work:

That was a sort of distressed experience, contrary to my expectation. With a terribly low beginning, compared to the occupational position I had in my homeland, it was difficult for me to completely face this situation.

Dean

Again, although choosing a high rate of job satisfaction, Dean did not ultimately enjoy his current career as a self-employed driving tutor because this job did not reflect his true worth. On the contrary, as an IT expert with boundless prospects in China, the search for employment as a new immigrant for Mary was a painful journey. She had been unemployed repeatedly. Although her current work as a computer engineer did not equal her previous work in position and economic status, Mary rarely compared and complained about the gaps between the two employment pictures: China and New

Zealand. "Women have a surer instinct of life than men," Lin (1939:76) stated that women had much more stable powers of intelligence than men, because men would like to "take their feet off the ground and soar to impossible heights" (1939:77). So far as it goes, Mary has been enjoying her occupation and the multicultural environment of her work place.

Gender differences can account for differences in an immigrant's perceptions of employment: what did they expect in the outcomes of their employment, and how did they evaluate the importance of work as not only dependent on its economic benefits, but also with consideration and social meaning for personal growth and integration opportunities? Experiences of working as a domestic, cleaner, farm labourer, and machine operator generally caused immigrants' frustrations, especially among for males. Mary commented on different gender expectations:

The traditional Chinese male-privileged position has impacted on his expectations...as a new immigrant, when the reality deviated from expectations, men seldom adapted to reality, and also rejected adjusting themselves. In contrast, women insisted on seeking opportunities, because of their open-mindedness and being realistic.

Mary

Culturally, Chinese men significantly considered how much self-esteem and personal value they could secure from their jobs. Li Qingzhao, a Song Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.) poet, argued: "When alive, try to stand out as a hero among human being; when dead, try to be a hero even among ghosts" (Cited in Jia, 2001:114). It is a tough experience for the professional Chinese male to readjust their huge expectations of their employment, which involves success directly relating to their value as an individual, attributing to their affections, emotions and passions (Jia, 2001).

Leo, working as a cleaner in the hospital, responded as unsatisfied on the question of

*“are you satisfied with your job in New Zealand”*. For Leo, the low status, poor pay, and unpleasing working conditions were somewhat unacceptable, which thoroughly destroyed his self-worth and confidence:

How could I work in as such a low position as a labourer forever? When would there be an end to this grim life?

Leo

Susan, also being a cleaner, stressed that cleaning work broadened her view of life in the western world, providing an access to recognise the various cultures and ethnic groups, as well as stimulating her integration into New Zealand. Lin (1939:327) advocated that the prominent qualities of Chinese women should be “endurance, industry, thrift, moderation and pacifism” (p.327). The reason why Chinese professional females experienced different perspectives of immigration life contrary to men’s were their realistic ideals that enabled them “to see life steadily and see life whole, with no great distortions of values” (Lin, 1939:327). Hence, Susan treasured this work emotionally:

To get the respect of the female nurses whom I had admired since my childhood was very important for me to eliminate the shadow in my life.

Susan

Moreover, among them, Susan and Anne are studying Bible courses, and Leo is studying a Shipping and Freight subject. In the future, Susan intends to study for a Master of Theology as a career pursuit; Mary would like to join in some management or psychology training to improve her personal potential ability and development.

## **Settlement and Identity**

### ***Integration***

Different attitudes in integration into the host society seem to be a result of different

expectations of immigration life and personal identity between gender groups. Unusually, Jim denied encountering any problem in getting accustomed to the host society. Leo confirmed that he was isolated from this new circumstance, and Dean did not answer this question, but pointed out feeling bored in a simple life because of an absence of social activities.

Whether it was Dean, being a New Zealand citizen for 3 years, or Leo, holding a Permanent Resident visa for a year and an half, they still emotionally classified themselves as a temporary resident or wanderer isolated from the host society, having suffered the grim conflict between departure and resistance. Although both of them significantly appreciated that New Zealand was a nice, wonderful country to live in, it was not their home, and also lacked appropriate opportunities for career development.

The three females had been aware of exclusion from their new environment for some time; however, all of them had joined various clubs or social organisations in New Zealand. Susan and Anne eagerly engaged in the activities of the church in which they were involved. Mary has ardently attended clubs for dancing, choir and Yoga. Because of their open-minded attitudes around transition and settlement, the females had aspirations of extending their social contacts and the range of daily life. "A desire to embrace the country of one's cultural rather than natal origins as a means of gaining a sense of belongings is understandable in such contexts" (Matthews, 2002:80).

Doubtless, confronting diverse cultures and unfamiliar lifestyles, those female immigrants greatly desired to fit into the gaps and find their feet in the host society speedily. These female immigrants were able to be adaptable, realistic and social while crossing national and cultural boundaries. Unfortunately, the three males had not taken part in any social clubs or organisations since immigrating. Overall the Chinese women's approach reflected Lin's observations of more than sixty years ago:

Like a dreamer awakened, we see life, not with the romantic colouring of yester

night's dream but with a saner vision. We are more ready to give up the dubious, the glamorous and unattainable, but at the same time to hold on to the few things that we know will give us happiness.

Lin (1939: 327)

### ***Cultural Identity***

Before immigration, the participants felt the impact of Chinese social and economic development. Moreover, the globalisation shift obviously changed the cultural identity of these Chinese. However, what immigrants chose as their cultural identity was due to "different life experiences and backgrounds" (Chin, 2003:78). The Chinese immigrant, often, has to face the significant question, "*Who am I?*", which sometimes generates insecurity and instability in the host society. "Experiencing two worlds, but fully belonging in neither, can bring the pain of displacement and alienation" (Clancy, 1997: 52). Still, Dean confused his cultural identity. Similarly, in terms of the isolation of wandering overseas, Leo has suffered an ongoing crisis of cultural identity:

On the one hand, after three years, my life is empty in China; I assume I would feel outdated there. On the other hand, it is not my own home here in New Zealand. I presume, ultimately, as a diaspora I would lose myself, and I am not convinced where I should go. Who am I?

Leo

Contrarily, Jim became determined to emigrate from China to New Zealand because he perceived corruption in Chinese social and cultural customs. He clarified his national identity clearly:

I am a New Zealander. This is my country.

Jim

Generally, female immigrants proclaimed their satisfaction with their life as

immigrants, and were pleased at being New Zealand citizens. Susan certainly enjoyed her new country:

I think it was a wise choice to immigrate to New Zealand. I am proud of being a New Zealand citizen.

Susan

In a complex cultural environment such as New Zealand, some Chinese immigrants recommend multiple identities because “it is very difficult for them to decide on any single identity” (Chin, 2003:81). While experiencing social and cultural transition, Mary insisted her own identity was uniquely multicultural:

I was born Chinese, and the long history of Chinese culture settled inside me that gives a solid base to my soul...But I am not a traditional female Chinese any more. I am a New Zealand citizen... however, I am not a pure Kiwi either, I live in a global age, and I am a multicultural combination, an international person.

Mary

### ***Gender Issues: China and New Zealand***

On the one hand, Chinese immigrants had accepted their own ethnic social and cultural influences; on the other hand, living in New Zealand, inevitably they sometimes adopted aspects of the host society in terms of cultural ideology and gender equality. “Diverse cultures have diverse forms of socialising the people who live with those cultures” (Best, 2003:145). Therefore, there are some significant social and cultural factors impacting on the different immigration experiences for Chinese professional males and females in both societies, China and New Zealand.

First, China is a traditional patriarchal and age-discrimination society, in which the employment rate of Chinese women is amongst the highest for women in the world. A national survey demonstrated that 90% of women are working in urban China (Bauer,

Wang, Riley and Zhao, 1990). However, this does not mean that Chinese women have total social and economic equality with men. Patriarchal domination has imposed gender identity as female or male (Oakley, 1981; Best, 2003). The Chinese social structure trains women to work hard in their occupation, having double responsibility in their family life and in employment. Dean critically analysed this issue:

Living in a historical male-dominated society, Chinese women are always pushed into an inferior position, and women themselves also psychologically depend on men. Chinese women must look after their families; at the same time they must do a full-time job to support their families financially—a doubly heavy burden.

Dean

Second, the social democracy of New Zealand acknowledges greater freedom of lifestyles, and also reflects a feminist influence on society. The social system provides more opportunities for women in education, employment and living conditions than those found in China. In reality, the government focuses on eliminating gender discrimination through progressing gender policies and laws. The Ministry of Women's Affairs (2002:5) reported:

New Zealand's success, prosperity and wellbeing will be assured only when women are able to participate fully, freely and actively in social, political, economic and cultural life. For this to occur, women need to be economically autonomous, secure, safe, healthy and treated justly.

Actually, the gender membership of decision-making bodies at a national level directly indicates and impacts upon its women's social and economic status. Women's representations on decision-making bodies in the New Zealand community are outstanding: females make up 32 percent of directors on Crown company boards (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2002).

In New Zealand, the government social welfare system provides essential financial assistance for women. The proportion of women receiving income support is higher than that of men (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2002). However, all male participants emphasised that women in New Zealand had a higher social and political position, and a better life than in China. Again, Dean pointed out, "It is certain that New Zealand is a paradise for women, children and animals" (Interview 5). So, as a Chinese female immigrant, I joyfully quote their opinions with deep agreement:

As a female, it is really easy to survive in this society, for the quality of gender relations in New Zealand is better than those in China.

Jim

Outstandingly, in New Zealand, the current Prime Minister is a female, Helen Clark... Its social policy also protects women's rights. In China, women still suffer gender discrimination in employment and other social and economic fields...  
Leo

Here, women have little pressures from cultural and social factors. Furthermore, they are able to be independent economically. The cultural environment of a country forms its women's social position.

Dean

Likewise, three female participants appreciated that New Zealand, a social democratic country, has provided less restrictive conditions, a better welfare system and a greater freedom of lifestyle for women to discover their values and develop individual talents with minimum social intervention. Furthermore, Mary stressed that women's position is an essential indication of the real condition of a society's civilisation, and the 'ladies first' public practice in New Zealand is the behaviour of a civilised nation. "Women are respected in this country," Susan expressed her feeling. "In five years, I have never been looked down on because I am as a female." Anne investigated New Zealand's

national geographical location from a Chinese ancient Geomantic Omen, “New Zealand is a place more suitable for female living according to an estimation of the merit from the Eight Diagrams.”

### *Fate and Future*

Dean and Leo experienced disappointment due to their higher expectations of both social inclusion and economic well-being. This was particularly clear in their trouble in finding appropriate employment in New Zealand. They usually had taken longer than Chinese females to completely settle in the host society. The men also usually were uncertain of their future. As a result, “ties of family, friendship and business cannot be cut instantly, so it is natural to look back for years to the former homeland” (Ng, 1999:27).

In his personal future plan, Leo wondered whether he should go back China or not, if he could not find a professional job in line with his qualifications in two or three years’ time. He rarely found the opportunity in his work for self-development, and feared he would lose face with his low status as a labourer:

I am still involved in a debate with myself on my future. Will I strive for success here, or return to China as a failure and deserter?

Leo

Similarly, Dean also revealed his lack of satisfaction with his current occupation. He thought he might return to China to work for a success:

I was actually an idealist...but I had to live in another realistic environment, it was painful...I possibly will return to China again to seek a new opportunity to improve my situation in the future.

Dean

The fundamental reason why Jim differed greatly from the other two Chinese male immigrants in respect of confidence in his future in New Zealand was his personality, which was quite distinctive among Chinese men of his generation. Obviously, his realistic and persevering character considerably strengthened his conviction for the immigration journey:

I definitely appreciate this individualism and freedom here; so far, I do not regret my decision although I had had some hardships in New Zealand...living as an immigrant has had a significant impact on me, gradually throwing up some of my inherent quality.

Jim

In contrast, the females really enjoyed their new lifestyle here, and also regarded New Zealand as their new permanent residence. The female participants recorded higher satisfaction than the males with their current jobs, irrespective of the low position and poor pay. It illustrated that these Chinese female immigrants had more reasonable expectations about living in a new environment.

However, the immigration experiences have dramatically changed the three female lives. Even though she was involved in horrible poverty and serious sickness, and living apart from her family for a long time, Anne has never questioned her choice in coming to New Zealand.

If there was one more chance, I'd like to face that challenge again... I enjoy my present life, and I am optimistic for the future. However, it is my life I am holding in my hands.

Anne

Susan remembered with deep gratitude the five years spent in New Zealand, which helped her end her grim depression. So far, she appreciated her new life and personal

identity, and she also planned to dedicate herself to Christianity:

I am no longer a perfectionist; I only want to be a normal human being and true to myself.

Susan

As a Chinese female, Mary had been provoked by tough challenges including a marriage breakdown, sexual harassment, intimidation at her workplace, and repeated joblessness. Nevertheless, immigration experiences stimulated her to become an independent sanguine woman.

The immigration life opened my eyes to a new horizon where I wanted to get out and do something for my future by myself.

Mary

Furthermore, both male and female immigrants appreciated the New Zealand welfare system that provided financial assistance in aspects of child care and accommodation support. In reality, along with their wages and the Chinese savings custom, all participants were seldom anxious about living costs. In particular, the three females rated the term "*Living cost*" as least important for them. In other words, there was no serious problem for them to survive on a basic living standard, which further illustrated women's economic status in New Zealand.

In respect of the importance of the relevant measures of life in New Zealand, the answers to the survey displayed different gender perspectives. The female participants focused on the measures that impacted on their lifestyle such as environment, climate, childcare, and equality between men and women; consequently, they rated a high degree of importance to those elements. Conversely, the males stressed the aspects of employment, and ethnic relationships, which they valued as more important to their living in New Zealand. These survey findings reinforced the gender differences found

in the life stories.

## **Conclusion**

In terms of immigration helping to attain their goals, all the Chinese immigrants left their own familiar environment including their family, friends, and social and cultural roots to go to a strange place, in which they had expected to have a better life in the future. The six professional immigrants from Mainland China were similar in Chinese culture and ethnicity, as well as higher qualifications. Moreover, despite gender and age differences, they had to overcome varied challenges such as the English language, cultural shock and employment stresses in a new society.

Nevertheless, they differed “in the ways they have adapted to the very diverse socio-economic and political conditions” (Mackie, 2003:4). They also differed in the length of time of settlement in New Zealand. In addition, they differed in their personalities and identity. Specially, they differed in gender perspectives. Significant gender differences could be explored in the different adaptation and integration between males and females; for instance, their employment, settlement pattern and cultural identity in New Zealand.

China is a traditional patriarchal society. Men are entitled to higher expectations and responsibilities by society and their family. Because of having unrealistically higher expectations of immigration life, the professional Chinese males participants experienced greater dissatisfaction and disappointment when they confronted unemployment and cultural challenges in New Zealand.

Lin (1939) argued that Chinese women naturally had common sense and practical instinct. Therefore, those features have enabled females to approach a realistic viewpoint on their immigration life. Almost every female participant began her work experience from a lower position—even as a labourer—in New Zealand. For them, the beginning of work is the beginning of integration into the host society. Meanwhile, they

were willing to participate in cultural and arts activities. In terms of the open minded, apart from a sound social system and an equal gender environment in New Zealand, professional Chinese females adjusted to their new environment quickly.

## **Chapter Eleven**

### **Conclusion: Transition and Integration**

#### **Introduction**

Since the adoption of the policy of reform and openness in Mainland China, a new flow of immigration from Mainland China to New Zealand grew significantly in the early 1990s. This thesis investigated the different immigration experiences of professional Chinese females and males. I chose a phenomenological approach to explore the life experiences of professional Chinese immigrants through a biographical method. Drawing on in-depth interviews, this thesis examined how both societies, China and New Zealand, have affected Chinese immigrants' cultural and gender identities, resulting in diverse experiences. This study has implications for how to reconceptualise the different gender experiences and outcomes for professional Chinese immigrants. In this concluding chapter, I will underline the crucial themes to summarise the findings of this thesis. The penultimate section recommends future research. Finally, I discuss the policy implications arising from this thesis.

#### **Summary of Findings**

In this research, the six participants were all professional immigrants from Mainland China. Through the description of their true-life stories, the findings of this research provided insights into varying gender perspectives in immigration, under definite themes, including background, transition, settlement and identity. On the one hand, the respondents have similar backgrounds of culture and ethnicity, are well-educated with higher qualifications. In spite of gender and age differences, the reasons for immigration mainly fell into two areas: a pursuit of a different lifestyle, or a choice for a better future for personal development. However, all of them had encountered tough challenges and hardships such as the English language barrier, cultural shock and

unemployment after they immigrated to New Zealand.

On the other hand, they differed in their personalities and gender perspectives. Obviously, the distinguishing experiences between professional female and male were demonstrated in aspects of employment ideology, settlement pattern and cultural identity in New Zealand. Especially, gender differences in expectations of employment were obvious among the Chinese community. In terms of their open-mindedness and realistic expectations, the female immigrants appreciated the social value of employment more than its economic rewards, especially in their early immigration period, irrespective of having a lower position and income. In general, they regarded work as an important access to integration into the host society, and for individual development.

In contrast, male immigrants had higher social and economic expectations for their jobs, which traditionally were perceived as a symbol of men's prevailing value and self-esteem in Chinese cultural ideology. Apparently, along with the English language obstacle and lack of New Zealand work experience, the system's barriers and employers' prejudices have impacted on Chinese professionals in accessing relevant jobs, which ultimately eventuated in their disappointment and frustration, more so for the male immigrants than females.

In addition, significant gender differences were clearly found in perspectives of acculturation and integration between females and males. Likewise, the dissimilar patterns of adaptation clarified gendered experiences of immigration. "For personal growth and development" (Ministry of Social Development, 2003:84), Chinese female immigrants enthused over a variety of cultural activities in New Zealand, in order "to learn new skills and to meet new people; and to pass on cultural traditions" (Ministry of Social Development, 2003:84). Compared with the male immigrants' cautious and inactive standpoint, Chinese females endeavoured to broaden their social networks and to enrich their lives through participating in cultural events and social organisations.

Moreover, cultural identity is a sense of individual identity, and a belonging to ethnic groups or a social community (Ministry of Social Development, 2003). Cultural identity revealed the different perspectives of gender between professional Chinese female and male immigrants. "Cultural identity is a cutting edge debate, inviting a personal decision which varies with experience and information" (Waring, 2001:6). In general, females Chinese felt much more satisfied with their immigration lives than males in New Zealand. While all identified with their Chinese ethnicity, males were more doubtful about their future residence and personal identity, but all the female participants expressed a pride in being citizens of New Zealand, which was appreciated as a new home.

However, gendered experiences of the professional Chinese immigrants have been constantly shaped by special social and cultural elements in both societies: China and New Zealand. As Lorber (1994:6) argued in her discussion of the relationship between social structure and gender expectations:

[The] social reproduction of gender in individuals reproduces the gendered societal structure; as individuals act out gender norms and expectations in face-to-face interaction, they are constructing gendered systems of dominance and power. Gender has changed in the past and will change in the future, but without deliberate restructuring it will not necessarily change in the direction of greater equality between women and men.

Traditionally, the patriarchal ideology has deeply impacted on the public in contemporary China, which has created a contradictory gender relationship in society. The male-dominated culture has bestowed on men higher expectations of social and economic status. However, Chinese women are still struggling with gender discrimination and inequality, although the current rate of women's employment is the highest in the world. Ironically, most women have to undertake dual socio-economic

and domestic responsibilities: full-time work to earn income to maintain their living standards, and in charge of most housework for their family. The significant gender roles have ensured Chinese women are adaptable and realistic, and have the endurance to adapt them to a new environment after immigration. On the other hand, social democracy and gender equality in New Zealand provides a freedom of lifestyle and welfare security for women, which also assists and improves professional Chinese females' settlement and integration in New Zealand more rapidly than male immigrants.

### **Future Directions in Research**

As I concentrated on the purpose and objectives of this thesis, I yearned to start with a literature research. The outcome was not satisfactory because I could seldom locate relevant literature about the relationship between a gender perspective and Chinese immigrants, especially professional groups, either in the international literature or in New Zealand. The intensive interviews for this thesis have opened up views for future research in the area of immigration and a new gender perspective on this subject. These issues include:

1. Extending the study on the relationship between gender and immigration under various immigration categories, such as Business Investor immigrants, and the Family and Humanitarian categories.
2. Exploring what the new gender status among the Chinese immigrants has meant in terms of their marriages and family relations, after immigrating to New Zealand.
3. Investigating the social and economic outcome of the Chinese 'astronaut family', where the husband returns to China or emigrates overseas to seek self-development, and examining how this separation has impacted on their marriages and their children's growth in New Zealand.
4. Examining how Chinese female immigrants contribute to the family business and the economy of the host society, and estimating their new roles and status in family and social aspects in New Zealand.

5. Extending gender studies on immigration in terms of race, ethnicity and social class; in particular, considering bicultural and multicultural issues in New Zealand, and also combining this with questions of global social and capital movement.

## **Implications for Policy**

Historically, New Zealand is a country with high rates of immigration. Burke (1986: 9) argued, "Immigration has been and remains an essential element of this nation's development." A successful immigration policy should improve economic development and social cohesion and multiculturalism to the benefit of all in New Zealanders (New Zealand Immigration Service, 1995). In reality, "there may be no set of policies that meets all the objectives or embodies all the values we would like to achieve" (Anderson, 1988:398). As a result of this research, along with a discussion of immigration issues, I would recommend the consideration of a number of policy implications to support and improve professional immigrants' employment and settlement.

First, immigration policy strategies have no long-term and overall plan in regard to the development of the economy and social reality. Also, policies have changed frequently and temporarily. Immigration policy even reduced the qualification standard of immigration in order to fulfil the goals of demographic guidelines. The numbers of immigrants increased from 26,000 in 1992 to 57,600 in 2001 (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). Again, confronted by large numbers of applicants for immigration since early 2002, the New Zealand government increased the "general skills" immigration points for entry three times within four months. New rules for immigration policy were then announced by the government on 19th November 2002, which required tougher English language tests for immigrants under the "general skills" and "investor categories" (Gower, 2002).

Second, the immigration policies and the structure of the labour market are significant barriers for Chinese immigrants looking for paid employment. Bureaucratic and

inappropriate systems have resulted in a difficult, complicated procedure in the registration of an immigrant's professional occupation. Higher skills and educational qualifications cannot translate into the equivalent occupation for the Chinese professional immigrants. In general, the education and qualification points awarded by immigration officials do not automatically mean that the individual will be accepted by the professional authorities within New Zealand. However, this is assumed mistakenly to be the case by professional immigrants themselves (Beal & Sos, 1999).

Ultimately, a significant barrier for professional Chinese immigrants, including others from non-English speaking countries, is the prejudice held by some employers. Some stereotyped employers are unwilling to accept someone who differs in culture, ethnicity and background. They "still do not appreciate the social and economic skills that these immigrants could provide, and are typically reluctant to employ them" (Spoonley, 2003:4). As a result, because of this cultural discrimination and communication barrier, and especially the lack of work experience in New Zealand, the professional Chinese immigrants have suffered from serious unemployment problems. Thus, some frustrated professional immigrants have to depend on social welfare to support themselves and their families.

In 2001, Statistics New Zealand revealed that over the past five years, 55 percent of immigrants were not in the workforce or did not engage in a valid occupation classification, and nine percent of each group declared an occupation that was not detailed enough to be coded to a specific occupation classification (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). So far, New Zealand has no actual plan to "provide the support services that would ensure that immigrants adjust rapidly" (Spoonley, 2003:4). Many Asian professional immigrants had to return to their homeland countries or work outside New Zealand. The issue was not only a lack of money, but also a lack of opportunity for employment and development. Therefore, the New Zealand government should perceive a possible problematic outcome: "it is not capable of holding its own people, and it cannot attract others" (Bedford, Ho and Lidgard, 2000:29).

Third, the new immigrants from different cultural backgrounds have encountered the problem of how to integrate into the host society. New Zealand has been marked by large-scale immigration of all kinds of nationalities. Labour migration, highly skilled specialists and business immigrants have become more heterogeneous and culturally diverse (Castles and Miller, 1998). Since 1994, in terms of the arrival of large numbers of Asian immigrants, some racist and discriminatory political arguments have impacted on the general public's opinion of immigration, and some anti-Asian prejudice has been expressed: "We want their money, we want their experience, but we don't want them" (Heeringa, 1996:60). Inevitably, New Zealand immigration policy has undertaken a new challenge to improve social cohesion and cultural integration.

Nowadays, "New Zealanders share a strong national identity, have a sense of belonging, and value cultural diversity" (The Ministry of Social Development, 2003:82). A multicultural society means that all different ethnic groups should be acknowledged and valued with a new, official respect (Donald & Rattansi, 1992). The goal of Canada's Multiculturalism Act 1988 was to seek and enhance multiculturalism by an improvement in social ethnic diversity (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). In Australia, multiculturalism is regarded as the ideology to encourage immigrants to have the right to maintain their own cultural heritage and ethnic identity, which has shaped the state immigration policy since the late 1940s (Borowski, 2000). Although the goal of immigration policy was to "enrich the multicultural fabric of New Zealand society through the selection of new settlers principally on the strength of their personal contribution to the future well-being of New Zealand" (Burke, 1986:10), the government has not adopted multiculturalism as explicit, official policy (Fletcher, 1999; Bedford, Ho and Lidgard, 2000).

International immigration plays a profound role in the demographic, social and economic aspects of New Zealand. The immigration policy should develop a coherent rationale and a steady, practical standard for a consistently high calibre of immigrants. In addition, the essence of immigration policy should focus on a long-term policy in

accordance with social needs and economic considerations. A “tap on, tap off” approach to immigration has caused damage to the social stability, racial harmony and economic development of New Zealand (Gamble & Cumming, 2002). Moreover, immigration policy must be concerned with immigrants’ work experience, educational and cultural background. Especially, in terms of gender differences, the government should provide counselling services for new immigrants to overcome their isolation and pressures. However, Fleras and Spoonley (1999: 173) concluded:

If a relatively open and generous immigration policy is pursued by accepting the brightest and the best, we had better be prepared for increased competition for scarce resources.

The Canadian immigration policy has insisted that an overall points system should be awarded according to the applicant’s education, age, occupation, English fluency, and other demographic characteristics, and entry visas will be given to those persons who receive a high enough score (Borjas, 1990). Like Canada and Australia, New Zealand should establish an entirely integrated programme, a cooperative framework based on a variety of departments of the government such as the Ministry of Labour, Work and Income New Zealand, the Immigration Service and the Ministry of Education to assist new immigrants to settle (Oliver, 2000). The outcome of immigration policy should promote economic development, social harmony, as well as global competition. Therefore, in term of attracting highly skilled and talented people from overseas, it is essential to implement throughout a strategy to access, monitor and evaluate the process and the outcomes of immigration policy.

When this thesis was nearly completed, I read one updated article on October 20, 2003, in *The New Zealand Herald*, “Racial attacks stun old Chinese”, which generated disappointment and anxiety for me. It reported that recently there were 14 cases of attack and abuse of elderly Chinese people by some teenagers in Northcote, North Shore City. Although they were young offenders, as one victim commented (Spratt,

2003:A1), “what will they be like in the future?” Further, I wondered how their children or even their grandchildren would treat Chinese people or other Asian immigrants in the future.

New Zealand is considered one of the most desirable countries for immigration. “In a globalising world, we will continue to be selective in our national interests but there is no room nor reason to be discriminatory” (Spoonley, 2003:4). As an immigration policy researcher, and a Chinese immigrant, I, of course, wish that immigration policy could constantly implement this essential principle. “At the dawn of the twenty-first century, ethnic diversity is a fact which New Zealand has yet to address” (Ip, 2003:357). However, in moving from rejection to an embrace, and from discrimination to integration, there are still some gaps that need to be closed by an appropriate immigration policy.

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# Appendix 1

Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

## Human Ethics Committee

To	Secretary, Human Ethics Committee				
A	Principal's Office	O	Equity & Ethics	O	Principal's Office
T		R		R	
X	Albany		Old Main Building		Wellington
			Turitea, Palmerston North		
Please send this <u>original (1) application plus twelve (12) copies</u> Application should be double-sided and stapled					
Application due two (2) weeks prior to the meeting					

**APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF PROPOSED  
RESEARCH/TEACHING/EVALUATION  
PROCEDURES INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**

<b><u>SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION</u></b>					
<b>1</b>	<b>Full Name of Staff Applicant</b>				
<i>(for staff research, teaching and evaluations) Please sign the relevant Staff Applicant's Declaration.</i>					
	<b>School/Department/ Institute/Section</b>				
	<b>Region (mark one only)</b>	<b>Albany</b>		<b>Palmerston North</b>	
		<b>Wellington</b>			
	<b>Telephone</b>				
	<b>Email Address</b>				
<b>2</b>	<b>Full Name of Student Applicant</b>	Miss Vivien Hong Wei			
<i>(for supervised student research) Please sign the relevant Student Applicant's Declaration.</i>					
	<b>Telephone</b>	(09 ) 473-7315			
	<b>Email Address</b>	hongwei6@hotmail.com			
	<b>Postal Address</b>	5a Manuwai Road Torbay Auckland			
	<b>Employer</b>				

<b>3</b>	<b>Full Name of Supervisor</b>	Dr. Marilyn Waring					
<i>(for supervised student research) Please sign the relevant Supervisor's Declaration.</i>							
	<b>School/Department/ Institute/Section</b>	School of Social and Cultural Studies					
	<b>Region (mark one only)</b>	<b>Albany</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Palmerston North</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<b>Wellington</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	<b>Telephone</b>	(09) 443-9700 extn 9056					
	<b>Email Address</b>	M.J.Waring@massey.ac.nz					
<b>4</b>	<b>Full Name of Supervisor</b>	Dr. Mike O'Brien					
<i>(for supervised student research) Please sign the relevant Supervisor's Declaration.</i>							
	<b>School/Department/ Institute /Section</b>	School of Social and Cultural Studies					
	<b>Region (mark one only)</b>	<b>Albany</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Palmerston North</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<b>Wellington</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	<b>Telephone</b>	(09) 443-9700 extn 9161					
	<b>Email Address</b>	M.A.Obrien@massey.ac.nz					
<b>5</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	Whose Paradise Is New Zealand, Female or Male? -An investigation into the different perspectives of the immigration experience between professional Chinese females and males.					
<b>6</b>	<b>Projected start date of Project</b>	March 2003					
	<b>Projected end date of Project</b>	December 2003					
<b>7</b>	<b>Type of Project:</b>	<i>(mark one only)</i>					
		<b>Staff Research</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Honours Project</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<b>PhD Thesis</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Evaluation Programme</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<b>Master's Thesis</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Teaching Programme</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<b>MBA Project</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<b>If Other, specify</b>					
<b>8</b>	<b>Summary of Project</b>	<i>(no more than 200 words in lay language)</i>					
		<i>(Note All the information provided in the application is potentially available if a request is made under the Official Information Act. In the event that a request is made, the University, in the first instance,</i>					

	<i>would endeavour to satisfy that request by providing this summary. Please ensure that the language used is comprehensible to all.)</i>
	The purpose of this study is to investigate the different perspectives of the immigration experience of professional Chinese females and males aged between 25-50 in New Zealand. This study will analyse the reasons, such as gender, social and culture positioning that have given these immigrants diverse experiences. The consequence of the study will explore how both societies (China and New Zealand) have impacted on Chinese immigrants' cultural and gender identity. These findings may have a significant implication on how to reconceptualise the different environment of gender for recent professional Chinese immigrants. This research will utilise phenomenological methodology and biographical life story to narrate the participants' immigration experiences through in-depth interviews.

## Declarations

<b><u>DECLARATIONS FOR PERSONS PROCEEDING WITHOUT A FULL APPLICATION</u></b>		
<b><u>DECLARATION FOR THE STAFF APPLICANT</u></b>		
I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants.		
I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants, particularly in so far as obtaining informed consent is concerned. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research,		
Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants.		
Staff Applicant's Signature	Date:	
<b><u>DECLARATION FOR LINE MANAGER (for research/evaluations undertaken in the Divisions)</u></b>		
I declare that to the best of my knowledge, this application complies with the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research,		
Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and that I have approved its content and agreed that it can		
be submitted.		
Line Manager's Signature	Date:	
<b><u>DECLARATION FOR THE STUDENT APPLICANT (for supervised student research)</u></b>		
I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and discussed the ethical analysis with my Supervisor. I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants, particularly in so far as obtaining informed consent is concerned. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants.		
Student Applicant's Signature	Date:	March 2003

**DECLARATION FOR THE SUPERVISOR (for supervised student research)**

I have assisted the student in the ethical analysis of this project. I understand my obligations and the rights

of the participants, particularly in so far as obtaining informed consent is concerned. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants.

Supervisor's Signature		Date:	March 2003
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**SECTION B: PROJECT INFORMATION** (Note the Committee treats all applications independently)

9	I/We wish the protocol to be heard in a closed meeting (Part II)	Ye s		N o	x	
	(If yes, state reason in a covering letter)					
10	<b>State concisely the aims of the project.</b>					
	1. To compare the different immigration experiences of professional Chinese females and Chinese males aged from 25 to 50 in New Zealand since 1990s.					
	2. To conduct exploratory research into these immigrants' life experiences and cultural, gender perspectives from East to West.					
	3. To investigate and analyse the reasons (e.g. cultural and social positioning) that have given these immigrants diverse experiences, such as employment patterns and their roles in the host society. This will include:					
	3.1. The gender difference distinguishing the different expectations' between male and female immigrants in this category: do Chinese males tend to have unrealistically higher expectations, are females more realistic and open-minded to integrating in the host society?					
	3.2. To study what social and cultural factors impact on the different immigration experiences for Chinese professional males and females in both societies, China and New Zealand.					
11	<b>Give a brief background to the project so that the significance of the project can be assessed.</b> (no more than 200 words in lay language)					
	Since the adoption of the policy of reform and openness in mainland China in the 1980s, a significant number of professionals and intellectuals have emigrated overseas. Some immigrated to New Zealand in the early 1990s. The fundamental reason for choosing this topic is personal experience: in February 2002, I was one of those immigrants, moving from east to west, crossing cultural and gender barriers. It was a tough and painful process. Moreover, as a female immigrant, I am deeply inspired by the different environments encountered by Chinese immigrants in New Zealand, because of the different perspectives of gender, as well as for social and cultural reasons. China is traditionally a patriarchal and age discrimination society in which the employment rate of Chinese women is amongst the highest employment rate for women in the world. However, this does not mean that Chinese women have total social and economic equality with men. The social democracy of New Zealand acknowledges greater freedom of lifestyles, and also reflects a feminist influence on society. The social system provides opportunities for women in education, employment and living condition on a more equal basis than that found in China.					



22	Does the project include the use of participant interview(s)?	Ye s	x	N o		
<i>(If yes, a copy of the Interview Questions/Schedule is to be attached to the application form)</i>						
23	Does the project involve audio taping?	Ye s		N o	x	
	Does the project involve video taping?	Ye s		N o	x	
<i>(If agreement for taping is optional for participation, ensure there is explicit consent on the Consent Form)</i>						
<b>If yes, state what will happen to the tapes at the completion of the project.</b>						
	<b>If audio taping is used, will the tape be transcribed?</b>	Ye s		N o	x	
<b>If yes, state who will do the transcribing.</b>						
<i>(If not the researcher, a Transcriber's Agreement is required and a copy is to be attached to the application form)</i>						
24	Does the project involve recruitment through advertising?	Ye s		N o	x	
<i>(If yes, a copy of the Advertisement is to be attached to the application form)</i>						
25	Will consent be given in writing?	Ye s	x	N o		
<b>If no, state reason.</b>						
26	Does this project have any links to other approved Massey University Human Ethics Committee application(s)?					
		Ye s		N o	x	
<b>If yes, list HEC protocol number(s) and relationship(s).</b>						
27	Is approval from other ethics committees being sought for the project?	Ye s		N o	x	
<b>If yes, list other ethics committees.</b>						
<b><u>SECTION C: FINANCIAL SUPPORT</u></b>						
28	Is the project to be funded in anyway from sources external to Massey University?	Ye s		N o	x	
<b>If yes, state source.</b>						

29	Is the project covered by a Massey University Research Services contract?	Ye s		N o	x
	If yes, state contract reference number.				
30	Is funding already available or is it awaiting decision?				
31	Does the researcher(s) have a financial interest in the outcome of the project?	Ye s		N o	x
	If yes, explain how the conflict of interest situation will be dealt with.				

**SECTION D: PARTICIPANTS**

32	Type of person participating:				
	<i>(mark one or more)</i>	Massey University Staff		Hospital Patients	
		Massey University Student		Prisoners	
		Children under 7		Minors 8-15	
			Persons whose capacity is compromised		
			Ethnic/cultural group members		x
			Other		
	If Other, specify who.				
33	What is the age range of participants?				
	25-50 years old				
34	Is there any professional or other relationship (e.g. employer/employee, lecturer/student, practitioner/patient ,researcher/family member) to the researcher?	Ye s		N o	x
	If yes, describe how this conflict of interest situation will be dealt with.				
35	What selection criteria will be used?				
	The Chinese community in New Zealand. The professional immigrants from mainland China who are willing to be participants, will be the criteria used.				
36	Will any potential participants be excluded?	Ye s		N o	x
	If yes, state the exclusion criteria.				

<b>37</b>	<b>How many participants will be involved?</b>				
	Approximately 8 people.				
	<b>What is the reason for selecting this number?</b>				
	<i>(Where relevant, a copy of the Statistical Justification is to be attached to the application form)</i>				
	Because the researcher will use a qualitative exploratory research methodology for narrative of life stories, so select six to eight Chinese professional immigrants (half females / males) will be approached to participate in study.				
	<b>How many participants will be in the control group?</b>				
	<i>(Where relevant)</i> None				
<b>38</b>	<b>How will participants be recruited?</b>				
	The process of recruiting will be conducted through the Chinese immigration network. By surveying and investigating the Chinese communities, the researcher will select individuals through personal interviews.				
	<i>(If by public advertising, a copy of the Advertisement to be attached to the application form)</i>				
<b>39</b>	<b>What discomfort (physical, psychological, social), incapacity or other harm are participants likely to experience as a result of participation?</b>				
	No harm can arise as a direct result of this research.				
<b>40</b>	<b>What support processes does the researcher have in place to deal with adverse consequences or physical or</b>				
	See Question 17				
<b>41</b>	<b>How much time will participants have to give to the project?</b>				
	Maximum 3 hours each person: 10 minutes for questionnaire, 2x60 minutes for interview, all participants have a dinner to communicate, and then 30 minutes for updating information or clarifications				
<b>42</b>	<b>What information on the participants will be obtained from third parties?</b>				
	No identifiable information will be obtained about participants: secondary data sources from other researchers, or from the government sources will provide briefing and historical material.				
<b>43</b>	<b>Will any identifiable information on the participants be given to third parties?</b>	<b>Ye</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>x</b>
	<b>If yes, describe how.</b>	<b>s</b>		<b>o</b>	
<b>44</b>	<b>Will any compensation/payments be given to participants?</b>	<b>Ye</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>x</b>
	<b>If yes, describe what and how.</b>	<b>s</b>		<b>o</b>	
<b><u>SECTION E: DATA</u></b>					

45	<b>What approach/procedures will be used for collecting data?</b>				
		<i>(e.g. questionnaire, interview, focus group, physiological tests, analysis of blood etc)</i>			
		Focus on the individual interviews, life story narrative and questionnaire. Interview may be conducted in Chinese or English.			
46	<b>How will the data be analysed?</b>				
		Data will be verified as analysis proceeds, supplemented by using data displays and descriptive analysis.			
47	<b>How and where will the data be stored?</b>				
		All personal data will be kept confidential, secure and intended for the purpose of this research report only. It will be stored and locked at the researcher 's office. Computer access will require a password known only to the researcher.			
48	<b>Who will have access to the data?</b>				
		The researcher will have access to the data.			
49	<b>How will data be protected from unauthorised access?</b>				
		All data will be stored and locked at the researcher 's office. Computer access will require a password known only to the researcher. (See also 47)			
50	<b>How will information resulting from the project be shared with participants?</b>				
		The summary of information resulting from the project will be returned to each participant to verify and improve his or her own situation.			
51	<b>How long will the data be retained?</b>				
		<i>(Note the Massey University Policy on Research Practice recommends that data be retained for at least five (5) years)</i>			
		5 years by the researcher			
52	<b>What will happen to the data at the end of the retention period?</b>				
		<i>(e.g. returned to participants, disposed or archived)</i>			
		Written information collected such as notes of observations, interview notes will be destroyed at the end of the retention period.			
53	<b>Who will be responsible for its disposal?</b>				
		<i>(An appropriate member of the Massey University staff should normally be responsible for the eventual disposal of data - <u>not</u> a student researcher)</i>			
		A responsible staff member at Massey university.			
54	<b>Will participants be given the option of having the data archived?</b>	Ye s		N o	x
<b>SECTION F: CONSENT FORMS</b>					
55	<b>How and where will the Consent Forms be stored?</b>				

	The researcher will connect to the communities and define the research project and invite the members of the communities to become participants of this research. The researcher will not proceed with the study without agreement and participation of individual. The interview will be undertaken face to face. The researcher will explain the details on the information sheet. Permission will be asked for their consent.				
	The Consent Form will be stored in secure cabinet.				
<b>56</b>	<b>Who will have access to the Consent Forms?</b>				
	The researcher will have access to the Consent Form				
<b>57</b>	<b>How will Consent Forms be protected from unauthorised access?</b>				
	All consent Form will be stored and locked at the researcher 's office. (See also 47)				
<b>58</b>	<b>How long will the Consent Forms be retained?</b>				
	<i>(Note the Committee recommends that Consent Forms be stored separately from the data and retained for</i>				
	<i>at least five (5) years</i>				
	<i>-5 years</i>				
<b><u>SECTION G: HUMAN REMAINS, TISSUES AND BODY FLUIDS</u></b>					
<b>59</b>	<b>Does the project involve human remains, tissue or body fluids?</b>	<b>Ye</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>
		<b>s</b>		<b>o</b>	
	<i>(If yes, complete Section G, otherwise proceed to Section H)</i>				
<b>60</b>	<b>How is the material being taken?</b>				
	<i>(e.g. operation)</i>				
	-				
<b>61</b>	<b>How and where will the material be stored?</b>				
	-				
<b>62</b>	<b>How long will the material be stored?</b>				
	-				
<b>63</b>	<b>Will the material be destroyed?</b>	<b>Ye</b>		<b>N</b>	
		<b>s</b>		<b>o</b>	
	<b>If yes, describe how.</b>				
	-				
	<b>If no, state why.</b>				
	-				
<b>64</b>	<b>Will the material be disposed of in accordance with the wishes of the relevant cultural group?</b>	<b>Ye</b>		<b>N</b>	
		<b>s</b>		<b>o</b>	

65	Will blood be collected?	Ye s	<input type="checkbox"/>	N o	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, state what volume and frequency at each collection.				
66	Will any samples go out of New Zealand?	Ye s	<input type="checkbox"/>	N o	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, state where.				
<b><u>SECTION H: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRIVACY ACT 1993 AND HEALTH INFORMATION PRIVACY CODE 1994</u></b>					
The Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994 impose strict requirements concerning the					
collection, use and disclosure of personal information. These questions allow the Committee to assess compliance.					
<i>(Note that personal information is information concerning an identifiable individual)</i>					
67	Will personal information be collected <u>directly</u> from the individual concerned?	Ye s	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N o	<input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, specify the steps that will be taken to ensure that participants are aware of:				
	- The fact that information is being collected, - the purpose for which information is being collected and its				
	use, - who will receive the information, - the consequences, if any, of not supplying the				
	information,				
	- the individual's rights of access to and correction of personal information. These points should be				
	covered in the Information Sheet.				
	If any of the above steps are not taken explain why.				
68	Will personal information be collected <u>indirectly</u> from the individual concerned?	Ye s	<input type="checkbox"/>	N o	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, explain why.				
69	What storage and security procedures to guard against unauthorised access, use or disclosure of the personal information will be used?				
	All personal data will be kept confidential, secure and intended for the purpose of this research report only. Computer access will require a password known only to the researcher.				
70	How long will the personal information be kept?				

	<i>(Note that Information Privacy Principle 9 requires that personal information be kept for no longer than is required for the purposes for which the information may lawfully be used.) As a general rule, data relating to projects should be kept in appropriate secure storage within Massey University (rather than at the home of the researcher) unless a case based on special circumstances is submitted and approval by the Committee.</i>				
	5 years in the secure storage of Massey.				
<b>71</b>	<b>How will it be ensured that the personal information collected is accurate, up to date, complete, relevant and not misleading?</b>				
	The only source for the information is the people themselves. The Information sheet offers participants the right to correct or update personal information.				
<b>72</b>	<b>How will the personal information be used?</b>				
	To help to narrate the life story of these immigrants, and analyse gender, culture and social factors impacting on Chinese professional immigrants in New Zealand				
<b>73</b>	<b>Who will have access to the personal information?</b>				
	The participants, the researcher and supervisors.				
<b>74</b>	<b>In what form will the personal information be published?</b>				
	<i>(Massey University requires original data of published material to be archived for five (5) years after publication for possible future scrutiny)</i>				
	Aggregated as information for the thesis				
<b>75</b>	<b>Will a unique identifier be assigned to an individual?</b>	<b>Ye</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>N</b>	
		<b>s</b>		<b>o</b>	
	<b>If yes, is the unique identifier one that any other agency uses for that individual?</b>	<b>Ye</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>x</b>
		<b>s</b>		<b>o</b>	
<b><u>SECTION I: TREATY OF WAITANGI</u></b>					
<b>76</b>	<b>Does the proposed project impact on Maori people in any way?</b>	<b>Ye</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>x</b>
		<b>s</b>		<b>o</b>	
	<b>If yes, describe how.</b>				
<b>77</b>	<b>Are Maori the primary focus of the project?</b>	<b>Ye</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>x</b>
		<b>s</b>		<b>o</b>	
	<b>If no, proceed to Question 80.</b>				
	<b>If yes, is the researcher competent in te reo Maori and tikanga Maori?</b>	<b>Ye</b>		<b>N</b>	
		<b>s</b>		<b>o</b>	
	<b>If no, outline the processes in place for the provision of cultural advice.</b>				
<b>78</b>	<b>Identify the group(s) with whom consultation has taken place.</b>				
	<i>(Where relevant, a copy of the supporting documentation is to be attached to the application form)</i>				

79	What consultation process has been undertaken prior to this application?					
	-					
80	Describe any ongoing involvement the group consulted has in the project.					
81	How will information resulting from the project be shared with the group consulted?					
82	If Maori are not the focus of the project, outline what Maori involvement there may be and how this will be managed.					
	N/A					
<b><u>SECTION J: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY</u></b>						
83	Are there any aspects of the project which might raise specific cultural issues?	Ye s	x	N o		
	If yes, describe how.					
	This is possible, but because I am also from China, I expect to be able to resolve this					
84	Is ethnicity data being collected as part of the project?	Ye s		N o	x	
	If yes, explain why.					
85	What ethnic or social group(s) other than Maori does the project involve?					
	Immigrants from mainland China in New Zealand					
86	Do the participants have English as a first-language?	Ye s		N o	x	
	If no, will Information Sheets and Consent Forms be translated into the participants' first-language?					
	If necessary, including questionnaire and interviews information will be translated into the Chinese.	Ye s	x	N o		
	<i>(If yes, copies of the Information Sheet and Consent Form are to be attached to the application form)</i>					
87	What consultation process has been undertaken with the group(s) prior to this application?					
	Informal networking					
88	Identify the group(s) with whom consultation has taken place.					
	<i>(Where relevant, a copy of the supporting documentation is to be attached to the application form)</i>					
	Friendship network					

89	Describe any ongoing involvement the group consulted has in the project.	N/A			
90	How will information resulting from the project be shared with the group consulted?	N/A			
<b><u>SECTION K: RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN OVERSEAS</u></b>					
91	Do the participants have English as a first-language?	Ye s		N o	
	If no, will Information Sheets and Consent Forms be translated into the participants' first-language?				
		Ye s		N o	
<i>(If yes, copies of the Information Sheet and Consent Form are to be attached to the application form)</i>					
92	Describe local committees, groups or persons from whom the researcher has or will obtain permission to undertake the project.				
<i>(Where relevant, copies of Approval Letters are to be attached to the application form)</i>					
93	Does the project comply with the laws and regulations of the country where the project will take place?				
		Ye s		N o	
94	Describe the cultural competence of the researcher for carrying out the project.				
95	Does the researcher speak the language of the target population?	Ye s		N o	

## Declarations

<b><u>DECLARATION FOR THE STAFF APPLICANT</u></b>	
I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants Ethics	
and understand my obligations and the rights of the participants, particularly in so far as obtaining informed consent is concerned. I agree to undertake the research/teaching/evaluation <i>(cross out those which do not apply)</i>	
as set out in this application together with any amendments required by the Massey University Human	

<b>Committee.</b>			
<b>Staff Applicant's Signature</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<p><b><u>DECLARATION FOR LINE MANAGER (for research/evaluations undertaken in the Divisions)</u></b>  I declare that to the best of my knowledge, this application complies with the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and that I have approved its content and agreed that it can be submitted.</p>			
<b>Line Manager's Signature</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<p><b><u>DECLARATION FOR THE STUDENT APPLICANT (for supervised student research)</u></b>  I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants and in this application together with any amendments required by the Massey University</p>			
<b>Human Ethics Committee.</b>			
<b>Student Applicant's Signature</b>		<b>Date:</b>	March 2003
<p><b><u>DECLARATION FOR THE SUPERVISOR (for supervised student research)</u></b>  I declare that I have assisted with the development of this protocol, that to the best of my knowledge it complies with the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants, and that I have approved its content and agreed that it can be submitted.</p>			
<b>Supervisor's Signature</b>		<b>Date:</b>	March 2003

## Appendix 2

### *Whose Paradise Is New Zealand, Female or Male?*

*-An investigation into the different perspectives of the immigration experience between professional Chinese females and males*

### **The Information Sheet**

Dear Respondent

This study investigates the different perspectives of the immigration experience of professional Chinese females and Chinese males in New Zealand since 1990s. This research is part of my Master of Art in Social Policy. My supervisors are Professor Marilyn Waring and Associate Professor Mike O'Brien of Massey University. Your support of the study will contribute to the successful completion of my degree.

If you wish to take part in this study, you need to complete an interview with me. The interview will be in the form of a conversation and will last maximum of 3 hours. 10 minutes will be for a questionnaire. Then, there will be a 60 minutes interview before a dinner break. A second interviewing 60 minutes will follow. A 30 minutes session to update information and clarify any issues will close the interview.

During the interview, I need to write down our interview so I can analyse and review the material we will be discussed. Nobody can access to the information except my supervisors and me. All information will be securely stored.

I am in anticipation of your help, I wish to thank you. You have the right to:

- decline to participate;
- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
- correct or update any personal information collected in the questionnaire or interview
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence and no parts, which can identify you, will be released. If you decide to withdraw from the study, all of your data will be removed from the study, and will also be returned to you.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Regional Human Ethics Committee, Albany Campus, Protocol MUAHEC 03/017. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Associate-Professor Kerry Chamberlain, Chair, Massey University Regional Human Ethics Committee, Albany, telephone 09-4439799, e-mail K.Chamberlain@massey.ac.nz.

Your sincerely

Vivien Wei

Postgraduate student, Massey University

## Appendix 3

*Whose Paradise Is New Zealand, Female or Male?*

*-An investigation into the different perspectives of the immigration  
experience between professional Chinese females and males*

### CONSENT FORM

**THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF FIVE (5) YEARS**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4

### Research Questionnaire

Instruction: in each question, please circle one appropriate number that represents your answer.

Q.1 What is your age?

- (1) 25-30 (2) 31-35 (3) 36-40 (4) 41-45 (5) 46-50

Q.2 What is your gender

- (1) Male (2) Female

Q.3 What is your marital status?

- (1) Single (2) Separated/Divorce (3) Married (4) Partner relationship

Q.4 How long have you been in New Zealand?

- (1) 1-2 years (2) 3-5 years (3) 6-8 years (4) 9 years Over

Q.5 What is your current personal status?

- (1) New Zealand Citizen (2) New Zealand Permanent Resident

Q.6 Are you living with members of your family in New Zealand?

- (1) Yes (2) No

Q.7 If yes to Q6, whom are you living with?

- (1) Spouse / partner (2) Children (3) Parents (4) Grandparents (5) Relatives

Q.8 What type of accommodation do you live in?

- (1) Owner (2) Rent privately (3) Rent from government / local authority  
(4) Homestay/Boarding

Q.9 Are you satisfied with your current accommodation? (please circle one appropriate number where 1=not satisfied and 5=highly satisfied)

- Least satisfaction 1 2 3 4 5 most satisfaction

Q.10 What was your highest qualification in China?

- (1) PhD. (2) Masters (3) Bachelor (4) Diploma / Certificate

Q.11 What was your occupation in China?

---

Q.12 How many years had you been in China?

- (1) 2-4 (2) 5-8 (3) 9-12 (4) 13 or Over

Q.13 Were you satisfied with your last job in China? (Please circle one appropriate number where 1=not satisfied and 5=highly satisfied)

Least satisfaction    1    2    3    4    5    most satisfaction

Q.14 How much did you know about New Zealand before immigrating? (Please circle one appropriate number where 1=very little and 5=much)

Little    1    2    3    4    5    Much

Q.15 What were the two most important reasons for you immigrating to New Zealand

(1) Better living standard    (2) Better future for person development    (3) Better welfare system    (4) Better education for children    (5) Clean environment    (6) Different lifestyle    (7) Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Q.16 Did you have family or close friends or other contacts already in New Zealand when you arrived?

(1) Yes    (2) No

Q.17 Since your arrival in New Zealand, have you joined any club (s) or social organization(s)?

(1) Yes    (2) No

If yes, please name \_\_\_\_\_

Q.18 Have you experienced any difficulties in integrating into the host society?

(1) Yes    (2) No

Q.19 What level is your English?

(1) Excellent    (2) Good    (3) Ok

Q.20 Are you currently employed in New Zealand?

(1) Yes    (2) No

Q.21 If yes to Q20, what is your occupation in New Zealand? (Please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

(1) Part time (02) Full time

Q.22 Is this job related to your previous qualification?

(1) Yes    (2) No

Q.23 Are you satisfied with your job in New Zealand? (Please circle one appropriate number where 1=not satisfied and 5=highly satisfied)

Not satisfaction    1    2    3    4    5    satisfaction

Q.24 Are you currently studying in New Zealand?

(1) Yes (2) No

Q.25 If yes to Q24, what is your studying situation?

(1) Tertiary student (2) Private training establishment student (3) Other

\_\_\_\_\_

Q.26 Is this study in a field related to your previous qualifications?

(1) Yes (2) No

Q.27 If no to 20 and 24, what is your current main activity?

(1) Non-employed (2) Beneficiary (3) Parent (4) House-person

(5) Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q.28 Do you intend to do any further study or training in New Zealand?

(1) Yes (2) No (3) Don't know

Q.29 How do you evaluate your life in New Zealand? (Please circle one appropriate number where 1=not satisfied and 5=highly satisfied)

Disappointment 1 2 3 4 5 Satisfaction

Q.30 Please circle the appropriate number in order of the importance for each of the following to your living in New Zealand (where 1=least degree and 5=most degree).

	Least		Most		
(1) Accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
(2) Transportation	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Environment	1	2	3	4	5
(4) Employment	1	2	3	4	5
(5) Language and communication	1	2	3	4	5
(6) Child Care	1	2	3	4	5
(7) Living cost	1	2	3	4	5
(8) Welfare system	1	2	3	4	5
(9) Health service	1	2	3	4	5
(10) Education access	1	2	3	4	5
(11) Equality between men and women	1	2	3	4	5
(12) Ethnic relationship	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5

Q.31 Has your experience in New Zealand lived up to your expectation?

No 1 2 3 4 5 Yes

Q.32 If your expectation has not been satisfactory, what has caused the dissatisfaction?

- (1) Employment (2) Culture shock (3) Language barrier (4) Personal reasons  
(5) Gender adjustment (6) Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q.33 Are you planning to stay in New Zealand permanently?

- (1) Yes (2) No (3) Don't know

Q.34 If no to Q33, where would you consider going?

- (1) China (2) Australia (3) USA (4) Other \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 5**                      **Interview Questions**

- Q.1 Can you describe briefly your life style in China?
- Q.2 Did you enjoy your career in China? Why?
- Q.3 What was the most important thing in your life when you lived in homeland?
- Q.4 In your memory, what were the happiest time or events in your life in China?
- Q.5 What were the main reasons that impacted on your decision for immigration to New Zealand?
- Q.6 Do you remember the detail of the first day when you arrived in New Zealand?
- Q.7 Who were the most important people who gave you help and support in New Zealand?
- Q.8 What is the most satisfying aspect in your life in New Zealand?
- Q.9 How do you feel about your current life (working experience, studying) in New Zealand?
- Q.10 What is or has been the biggest challenge facing you in New Zealand?
- Q.11 What is the most important change in your life after you immigrated in New Zealand?
- Q.12 How do you think about Chinese culture and KIWI culture?
- Q.13 Has your life experience in New Zealand met with your expectation?
- Q.14 Is there gender and age discrimination in New Zealand?
- Q.15 Did you have some experience and perspectives in the case of differences of gender in New Zealand?
- Q.16 What about the comparison between the male and female environment in China?
- Q.17 Would you change your decision to immigrate to New Zealand if you once more had the opportunity to choose?
- Q.18 What is your biggest dream for your life in New Zealand? Is it different from the past wish you had before you immigrated?



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15 May 2003

Vivien Hong Wei  
 C/o Associate-Professors M Waring & M O'Brien  
 College of Humanities & Social Sciences  
 Massey University  
 Albany

Dear Vivien

**HUMAN ETHICS APPROVAL APPLICATION – MUAHEC 03/017**  
**“Whose Paradise is New Zealand, Male or Female?”**

Thank you for your application. It has been fully considered, and approved by the Massey University, Albany Campus, Human Ethics Committee.

If you make any significant departure from the Application as approved then you should return this project to the Human Ethics Committee, Albany Campus, for further consideration and approval.

Yours sincerely

Associate-Professor Kerry Chamberlain  
**Chairperson,**  
**Human Ethics Committee**  
**Albany Campus**

CC Associate-Professors M Waring & M O'Brien  
 College of Humanities & Social Sciences

