Volume 32  Building and Rebuilding Harmony:  
The Gateway to Victoria's Chinatown

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Victoria's Chinatown, established in 1858, had been declining since the 1940s until City Council carried out a million dollar rehabilitation program in 1979. One of its projects was the construction, in 1981, of the Gate of Harmonious Interest, the largest permanent Chinese arch in Canada. Fifteen years later, a growing concern for its deterioration prompted the city to launch a refurbishment project. This book is a record of the construction and restoration of the gate. It also demonstrates how City Council encouraged the Chinese and non-Chinese communities to participate in the project. Of all the Chinatowns in Canada, Victoria's has the longest history, dating from the first Chinese arrival in Canada to the present - 138 years. In 1996 it was designated as a national historic site because it is the only Chinatown in North America that still retains the townscape of the late nineteenth century. Two appendices make the hook particularly interesting. One traces the history of Chinatown from its beginnings to its revival. Another suggests a route to see the heritage buildings of Chinatown and its intricate networks of narrow passageways and courtyards, which once constituted the 'Forbidden City' of Chinatown and which concealed warrens of small cafes, stores, tenements, brothels, gambling dens, and opium joints. The book is richly illustrated with old and current photographs.

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