

Dear Friends,

Attached please find the announcement regarding plans for the Joss House museum in Lytton.

Koten

ANNOUNCEMENT NEXT PAGE

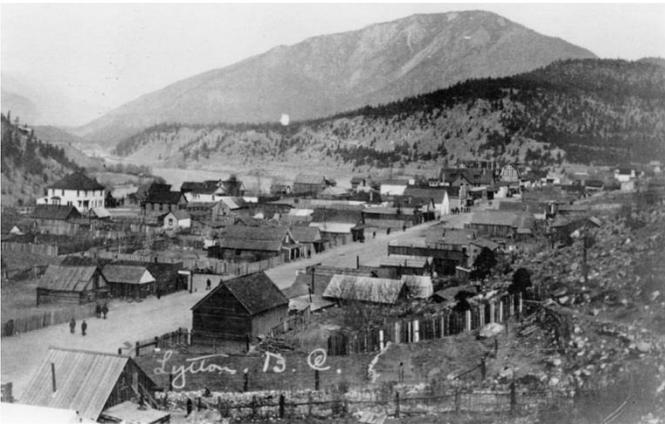
# LYTTON CHINESE HISTORY MUSEUM

## The History

The Chinese community played a major role in the development of British Columbia in general, and of the Lytton area in particular. In the Fraser & Thompson Canyons, Chinese were involved in railway construction (several railway camps were located within a few kilometres of town) and gold mining (many tailing sites still exist in the area), were merchants in Lytton and surrounding communities, and were innovative vegetable farmers.

Prior to 1881, a Joss House was built as a focal point for all the Chinese in the area. It served as a guest house, community meeting space, and temple. Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy, and Shen Nong, the God of Agriculture, were among the deities honoured there.

The building was typical of its time; it was of wood frame construction with wood siding. The entrance to the building was from Lytton's Main Street and was more elaborate than the other three sides of the 18x27-ft structure.



The 1881 Joss House (directly above the word *Lytton*) as it appeared circa 1912.

The interior was divided into three useful spaces: the main area where the altar and statues resided, a smaller room that served as a guest room, and a small caretakers quarters. When the two entrance doors were opened, the altar that housed the deities was clearly visible from the street.

The official opening of the Joss House, attended by local Chinese as well as dignitaries from Victoria and New Westminster, took place in April 1883.

## The Proposal

Since purchasing the land where the Joss House once stood (at 145 Main Street, Lytton) and finding an article called "Gods in a Lytton Woodshed," Lorna Fandrich and her husband Bernie have had a keen interest in the Joss House of 1881 and the Chinese influence in the area. The couple will be providing the lot and funds for the development of the museum.



Proposed façade for the Lytton Chinese History Museum, based on the original Joss House.

The Lytton Chinese History Museum will be a reconstruction of the 1881 Joss House. Although not a temple, it will be respectful of the religious significance of the Joss House and will include an altar area, based on the original design. Historical displays will bring recognition to the early Chinese influence in Lytton and the Fraser and Thompson Canyons. There will be an addition, including a kitchen for tea service and commercial restrooms.

The Museum will create a greater awareness of the historic links between the Chinese community, the First Nations community and other local residents.

Construction will begin in autumn 2015 and be completed by June 2016, when Rev. Kōten Benson of the Lions Gate Buddhist Priory will hold the annual Kwan Yin Festival at the Joss House site.

Charitable assistance is requested in the form of finding/funding furnishings; photograph and display production; development of grounds/landscaping; and procurement of relevant artifacts. Ideas and input are welcome.

For more information, please contact Lorna Fandrich at 1-250-455-2610 or [lorna@kumsheen.com](mailto:lorna@kumsheen.com).