



“I cannot sleep...”

I cannot sleep because my heart is filled with hate.
Whenever I think of the foreign barbarians,
My rage will soar sky high.
They cast me into jail and subjected me to anguish.
But who will console me here even if I moan until dawn.

26 March, Xin Wei Year, (1919)
Gregorian calendar: April 26, 1919

From 1909-1923, some of the newly arrived Chinese immigrants were detained in cells in the Federal Immigration Detention Hospital in Victoria, BC while government officers sorted out their paperwork.

When the building was being demolished in 1977, Dr. David Chuenyan Lai recovered wall fragments with poems dated 1911 and 1919 written on them. Early Chinese immigrants expressed their first experience in Canada—their aspirations for the new land, thoughts of family and homeland, and sorrows and anger over their treatment.

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