

Three Hard Years on the Golden Hill 金山三年苦: New Sources for the Study of Huang Zunxian in San Francisco

List of Abbreviations

CB-- *Chaoben* 钞本

QJ-- Chen Zheng 陈铮 ed., *Huang Zunxian quanji* 黄遵宪全集.

RJL--Huang Zunxian, *Renjinglu shicao jianzhu* 人境庐诗草笺注.

SFC--*San Francisco Chronicle*

ZHHG-- *Jianada Yuduoli Zhonghua huiguan chengli qishiwu zhounian jinian tekan* 加拿大域多利中华会馆成立七十五周年纪念特刊.

Introduction

This paper is intended as a brief introduction to a new book I am in the process of writing, a work which is primarily a historical and literary study of the three years that the poet-diplomat Huang Zunxian 黄遵宪 (1848-1905) served as Chinese Consul-General (Zonglingshi 总领事) of San Francisco (1882-1885).¹ The secondary literature on Huang

¹ The only comprehensive biography of Huang Zunxian in English so far is J. Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm: The Poetry of Huang Zunxian, 1848-1905*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. There is a Chinese translation of this book in Sun Luodan 孙洛丹 tr., *Renjinglu nei, Huang Zunxian qiren qishi kao* 人境庐内, 黄遵宪其人其诗考, Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2010. Numerous biographies of Huang have been published in Chinese, among which are Mai Ruopeng 麦若鹏, *Huang Zunxian zhuan* 黄遵宪传, Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957; Niu Yangshan 牛仰山, *Huang Zunxian*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961; Zheng Ziyu 郑子瑜, *Renjinglu congkao* 人境庐从考, Singapore: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1959; Huang Shengren 黄升任, *Huang Zunxian pingzhuan* 黄遵宪评传, Nanjing: Nanjing daxue, 1971; ; Wu Tianren 吴天任, *Huang Gongdu xiansheng zhuangao* 黄公度先生传稿, Hong Kong: Xianggang zhongwen daxue, 1972; and Yang Tianshi 杨天石, *Huang Zunxian*, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1979. Although all of these are worth reading, the most comprehensive biography so far is Zheng Hailin 郑海麟, *Huang Zunxian zhuan* 黄遵宪传, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006. An earlier monograph on Huang by Prof. Zheng is *Huang Zunxian yu jindai Zhongguo* 黄遵宪与近代中国, Beijing: Shenghuo, dushu, xinzhì sanlian shudian, 1988. Prof. Zheng recently told me that he is considering writing an even more detailed *nianpu* 年谱 for Huang. Another very useful book containing much biographical content, particularly about Huang's stay in Japan, is Noriko Kamachi, *Reform in China: Huang Tsun-hsien and the Japanese Model*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981. More recent studies of Huang's Japan experience are Douglas Reynolds, *East Meets West: Chinese Discover the Modern World—in Japan*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: Association for Asian Studies, 2012, much of which is about Huang, and Wang Xiaoqiu 王晓秋, *Huang Zunxian yu jindai Zhong Ri wenhua jiaoliu* 黄遵宪与近代中日文化交流, Shenyang: Liaoning shifan daxue chubanshe, 2007. The only detailed monograph on Huang's poetry in English so far is Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*. The most comprehensive study of Huang's verse in Chinese is Zhang Tangqi 张堂琦, *Huang Zunxian ji qishi yanjiu* 黄遵宪及其诗研究, Taipei: Wenshizhe, 1991, which has been revised and updated in Zhang Tangqi, *Huang Zunxian de shige shijie* 黄遵宪的诗歌世界, Taipei: Wenshizhe, 2010. I am deeply indebted to Prof. Zhang for assistance he gave me during earlier research trips to Taiwan. An important collection of articles on Huang together with essays on Guangdong literature of his period is found in Zuo

Zunxian is already immense, particularly in Chinese, but strangely no one has taken up the challenge of studying his stay in the United States in detail so far, which is unfortunate, because, according to the Chinese scholar Zheng Hailin 郑海麟 his stay in America was of the greatest importance for the formation of his mature thought, particularly as it is expressed in his *Monographs on Japan (Ribei guozhi 日本国志)*, a work that he started in Tokyo but did not actually complete until after his return from California to China.² According to Zheng, among the most important influences of his stay in the United States was a growing appreciation of the American legal and judicial system as well as the strength of that country's economic and political institutions, knowledge of which inspired him to seek for reform in China. At the same time, exposure to the anti-Chinese racism so common in California and other parts of western North America made him worry about the future of the Chinese people in a world dominated by the West and caused him to adopt many features of the Social Darwinism then popular in Western countries.³

Although Huang's stay in North America has been little studied so far, this neglect has a fortunate side, too, because until recently an important archive of original manuscript material by and relevant to Huang Zunxian during this period has not been available to scholars. This archive consists of letters and other documents previously belonging to the Consolidated Chinese Benevolent Society (Zhonghua huiguan 中华会馆) of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, but now in the Rare Books Division of the University of Victoria Library.⁴ Without this material it would be difficult, indeed, to get as clear a picture of Huang Zunxian's activities in North America as we can now.

Sources Used by Earlier Scholars

Pengjun 左鹏军, *Huang Zunxian yu Lingnan jindai wenxue conglun* 黄遵宪与岭南近代文学丛论, Guangzhou: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe, 2007. There is an anthology of Huang's poems with modern Japanese translations in Shimada Kumiko ed., *Kō Junken*, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1958. The periodical literature in Chinese about Huang Zunxian is huge. The most comprehensive history of the Chinese in San Francisco during this period is Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco 1850-1943, a Trans-Pacific Community*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000. A classic study of Chinese Americans is Him Mark Lai 麦礼谦, *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions*, New York: Altamira Press, 2004. Another useful book which has much information about California Chinese is Madeline Yuan-yin Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration between the United States and South China 1882-1934*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. A useful source of information about the principal Chinese diplomats of the era is Gugong bowuyuan Ming Qing dang'anbu 故宫博物院明清档案部, *Qingji Zhongwai shiling nianbiao* 清季中外使领年表, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985.

² See Zheng Hailin, *Huang Zunxian zhuan*, pp. 144-149.

³ Although a good deal has been written about the persecution of Chinese during this period, the most fully documented account of the anti-Chinese movement, particularly the many expulsions of Chinese residents in California, is Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out, the Forgotten War against Chinese Americans*, New York: Random Press, 2007. This rich book is almost entirely based on extensive reading of newspapers and other primary sources. An older collection of articles is Roger Daniels ed., *Anti-Chinese Violence in North America*, New York: Arno Press, 1978. A useful anthology of primary documents related to the anti-Chinese movement is Tsu-wu Cheng ed., *Chink! A Documentary History of Anti-Chinese Prejudice in America*, New York: World Pub., 1972.

⁴ Unfortunately, not all of the materials relevant to the age of Huang Zunxian are in the possession of the University of Victoria, the minutes of the meetings of the Benevolent Society being one example.

Still, a good deal of material relevant to Huang Zunxian's period of service in San Francisco has been available for quite a long time, and it is surprising that it has been utilized rarely, so let us first review what has been used and what additional material is now available and say a bit about why it has been only infrequently consulted up to now. Obviously, the most valuable material about Huang's term of office in San Francisco is found in his own published works, the most widely read being his poems about the period in addition to a body of prose writings from or about his three-year stay. Although not many poems about his term in the United States survive, these are frequently cited in the major studies of Huang in Chinese, Japanese, and English, and a number of them are among some of his most attractive creations. Yet a closer examination of the manuscript material available to us as well as a stylistic analysis of the poems about this period strongly suggest that none of the surviving poems *about* the United States were actually written in that country, and there is, in fact, a total gap in literary production by Huang from the time he set out from Japan after leaving his first diplomatic post in the Tokyo embassy until he boarded the ship he left San Francisco on and sailed five days to the west of that city (see the discussion of this chronology below). To be specific, the *Manuscript Edition* (*Chaoben* 钞本, hereafter abbreviated CB), now in the possession of the Beijing University Library, leaves out all poems written after Huang's departure from Japan, even omitting a series of quatrains he is supposed to have composed on board the ship he was traveling on.⁵ After his departure from San Francisco, the first poem that Huang wrote was his well-known "I Compose this Poem after Gazing at the Moon from a Ship in the Pacific Ocean on the Night of the Fifteenth of the Eighth Month" 八月十五夜太平洋舟中望月作歌.⁶

In fact, the only poem that we can prove incontrovertibly was written by Huang Zunxian during his stay in San Francisco is the piece that he presented to the Japanese prince Arisugawa Taruhito 有栖川炽仁 (1835-1895) on January 10, 1883 (second day of the twelfth month, Guangxu 8), during his stay in that city.⁷ Unfortunately, this work

⁵See Huang Zunxian, Qian Esun (Zhonglian) comm., *Renjinglu shicao jianzhu* 人境庐诗草笺注, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981 (hereafter abbreviated RJL), vol. 1, juan 4, p. 344, "Haixing zagan" 海行杂感.

⁶ RJL, vol. 2, 5.395.

⁷ See *San Francisco Chronicle* (hereafter abbreviated SFC), "A Japanese Dignitary", "Arrival of Prince Irisugawa [sic] in San Francisco", January 4, 1883, p. 1. According to the newspaper account, the prince had left Japan in June of 1882, originally intending to participate in the coronation of emperor Alexander of Russia, but failing to do that, traveled throughout Europe, after which he visited Washington, D.C. He arrived in San Francisco by overland train from the eastern United States and stayed in the most magnificent hotel in the city then, the Palace Hotel, before sailing back to Japan on the *City of Peking*. Huang writes about visiting the prince's hotel two times and presenting the poem on the second visit. See Dispatch no. 29, Addendum 2, January 8-11, 1883 (thirtieth of eleventh month, Guangxu 8), in Chen Zheng 陈铮 ed., *Huang Zunxian quanji* 黄遵宪全集, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005, (hereafter abbreviated QJ), p. 483. The prince's diary does not mention the poem, only stating briefly that he was "visited" 面谒 by "the Qing Consul-General Huang Zunxian" 清国总领事黄遵宪. See Arisugawa Taruhito, *Taruhito Shinnō hikki* 炽仁亲王日记, Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku shuppankai, 1976, vol. 4, p. 125, January 10, 1883 (Meiji 16). The course of the prince's voyage in the United States can be followed in *Ibid.*, pp. 115-125. He met Huang's boss Zheng Zaoru in Washington, D.C. on Christmas Day in 1882. See *Ibid.*, p. 120. There is a

was not printed in Huang's collected verse, although some poems written earlier in Japan that Huang addressed to him were included.⁸ So far, I have not been able to locate it, and it is very possibly lost. From this brief discussion it should be clear that Huang Zunxian's poems about his stay in the United States, most of which were composed many years later, must be used with the utmost of caution, a caveat that does not, however, diminish their value as works of literature and as autobiographical recollections.

Huang's collected prose, the most complete edition of which so far was published in 2005 is equally problematical as a source of information, but for different reasons.⁹ The most important of these is that Huang never seems to have gathered and published his shorter prose works during his lifetime, and so, for example, what must have been an extensive correspondence with some of the major figures of the age has largely been lost to us; many of his official papers also seem to have disappeared. Most regrettable is the loss of his diary. I cannot prove beyond a doubt that it ever existed, but many years ago, when I first began visiting the great scholar Qian Esun 钱萼孙 (better known by his style Zhonglian 仲联, 1908-2003) at the University of Suzhou, I asked Qian, at that time the world's authority on Huang Zunxian, about the possible existence of a diary, and he informed me that although he had never seen the diary himself, he had heard that one existed and might still be in the possession of one of Huang's relatives. I never had the great fortune to verify this story, but the recent rediscovery and publication of the diary of the late Qing poet and scholar Mo Youzhi 莫友芝 (1811-1871) by Zhang Jian 张剑 warns us that many treasures of the nineteenth century remain to be uncovered.¹⁰ Of course, there is one other treasure found in the 2005 edition of Huang Zunxian's prose, but we

photograph of the prince in the frontispiece to *Ibid.*, vol. 1. It is interesting to note that the prince's diary is written in Classical Chinese (Kanbun 汉文) with the occasional use of Japanese kana.

⁸ The earlier poems are found in RJJ, vol. 1, juan 3, p. 241-248, "Lujunguan xuexiao licheng fucheng Youxichuan Chiren qinwang" 陆军官学校礼成赋呈有栖川炽仁亲王. Our present edition of Huang's poetry only allows us to give a rough date for the composition of these works (Guangxu 3-7 or 1877-1881, see RJJ, vol. 1, p. 3), but by referring to the prince's diary entry about his opening of the military academy celebrated in Huang's poems, we can date them precisely to June 10, 1878 (Meiji 11), assuming, of course, that Huang presented them to the prince at or shortly after the opening. See Arisugawa Taruhito, *Taruhito Shinnō hikki*, vol. 3, p. 51. Prince Taruhito's brief account of the opening ceremony does not mention Huang Zunxian's presentation of the poems, and it is possible that when he met Huang in San Francisco he had already forgotten the works, because he does not mention them in the San Francisco entry in his diary. Huang seems to give a summary of Prince Taruhito's speech in the last poem in the series addressed to him. See RJJ, vol. 1, p. 246.

⁹ The prose writings are found in QJ, which also contains Huang's poetry. An earlier collection of Huang Zunxian's prose is Zheng Hailin and Zhang Weixiong 张伟雄 ed., *Huang Zunxian wenji* 黄遵宪文集, Kyoto: Zhongwen chubanshe, 1991.

¹⁰ The most comprehensive study of Mo before the discovery of the diary was Huang Wanji 黄万机, *Mo Youzhi pingzhuan* 莫友芝评传, Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1992, a book which is still of the highest value. For the diary and a detailed biography of Mo and his family members, see Zhang Jian 张剑, *Mo Youzhi nianpu changbian* 莫友芝年谱长编, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008. There is quite a bit about Mo in my new book, Schmidt, *The Poet Zheng Zhen (1806-1864) and the Rise of Chinese Modernity*, Leiden: Brill Press, 2013. A sequel to this book, which is now in preparation, will have even more about the Mos and other members of Zheng Zhen's Shatan 沙滩 Group, named after the center of their activities in Guizhou Province.

will reserve a discussion of this until we finish introducing the material consulted by earlier scholars to reconstruct Huang's activities in the United States.

Except for the poems and the fragments of Huang's prose already mentioned, the only other significant material that has been utilized is a number of anecdotes handed down by Huang Zunxian's relatives and especially by Liang Qichao 梁启超(1873-1929), the late Qing reformer and literary critic, who knew Huang well during the last period of his life, worked together with him just before the unsuccessful Hundred Days of Reform, and promoted his poetry as an example of Liang's so-called Poetic Revolution (Shijie geming 诗界革命), the manifesto of which is found in his widely read critical work *Poetry Talks from the Ice Drinker's Studio* (*Yinbingshi shihua* 饮冰室诗话).¹¹ Unfortunately, Liang did not visit San Francisco until 1903, and the anecdotes that he tells us about Huang Zunxian are for the most part unreliable. A good example of such a story is one he recounts about Huang's attempts to protect Chinese citizens from discriminatory legislation and arbitrary arrest. One of the more draconian pieces of such legislation was the so-called "Cubic Air" Ordinance of 1870, which in its original and later forms was frequently used by San Francisco police as an excuse to harass Chinese immigrants. This law made it a criminal offense to reside in a room or house that did not have at least 500 cubic feet of air for each adult person, and although the aims of the ordinance seem laudable enough, it was specifically designed to enable police to arrest large numbers of indigent Chinese laborers forced to live in overcrowded housing. All the major San Francisco newspapers contain weekly and even daily accounts of the many Chinese "criminals" apprehended this way and the large fines that they were forced to pay to the city.¹²

According to Liang Qichao's story, Huang Zunxian was summoned to a local jail where a number of Chinese had been detained for residing in unhygienic housing that lacked the requisite cubic feet of air per inhabitant. When an American police officer escorted Huang to the prisoners' cell and explained the charges to him, Huang is said to have indignantly asked the officer if the prison was less crowded and dirty than the prisoners' home, and the embarrassed officer is supposed to have released all the Chinese prisoners immediately.¹³ Liang Qichao informs us that Huang "exhausted himself to protect [the American-Chinese]" 尽其力所能及以为捍卫, and although what he said about this is correct, the nature of Liang's anecdote suggests that he knew practically nothing about the real story behind Huang's heroic efforts to protect Chinese citizens.¹⁴

This anecdote in particular is obviously based on rumors manufactured long after the fact. The policeman involved was perfectly within his rights to detain the Chinese as he did, and he would never have released his prisoners after hearing a few words from a Chinese official to whom he owed no allegiance. Anyone familiar with the press in San Francisco during Huang Zunxian's tenure there would realize that if the events recounted

¹¹ This is found in Liang Qichao, *Yinbingshi shihua*, Shanghai, Zhonghua tushuguan, 1910.

¹² See, for example, SFC, "Jottings about Town" August 7, 1885, p. 3, which records the arrest of ten Chinese for staying in crowded housing. Although poor white workers had to live in substandard housing, too, I have not found any references to their arrest for breaking this law.

¹³ See the accounts of this "incident" in Zhao Erxun 赵尔巽, *Qingshigao* 清史稿, "Huang Zunxian", in RJJ, vol. 3, p. 1161; Liang Qichao, "Jiayingzhou Huang xiansheng muzhiming" 嘉应州黄先生墓志铭, in RJJ, vol. 3, pp. 1162-1165; and Liang Qichao, *Yinbingshi shihua*, p. 85.

¹⁴ See Liang Qichao, "Jiayingzhou Huang xiansheng muzhiming", p. 1163.

by Liang Qichao really did happen, they would have aroused immediate and highly unfavorable comment from the predominantly racist English-language newspapers, but nothing of this sort is recorded, only story after story of arrests and fines of Chinese workers.

Old Sources Rarely Used by Earlier Scholars, the Dispatches

So far it would seem that we have little material to work with, only a small body of poems, none of which were actually written in San Francisco, an incomplete collection of prose, and unreliable anecdotes recorded decades after the fact. So what else is available on site in San Francisco? At first view, it would seem that practically nothing remains, for in studying San Francisco's history we should never forget the terrible events of April, 1908, when the metropolis was shattered by one of the most destructive earthquakes in human history, followed by a conflagration too terrible to contemplate. One need only view some of the old black and white photographs in the entrance lobby of the San Francisco Public Library to gain an impression of the total devastation of the city at that time. Most of my queries about Huang Zunxian's activities during this period to Bay Area scholars and librarians elicit the response that "nothing survives from before the earthquake". It is true that nothing much does survive in San Francisco itself; for example, we are deprived of the pieces of calligraphy that Huang Zunxian almost assuredly presented to prominent Chinese community leaders in San Francisco, some of which may very well have contained poems now lost to us.¹⁵ However, I am confident that if we cast our nets a bit more widely, we will discover other documents or cultural artefacts connected with Huang Zunxian, for as Consul-General of San Francisco, he was in charge of the whole western half of the United States and Canada, western South America, as well as the then independent kingdom of Hawaii. From his own diplomatic correspondence we can ascertain that he was very well informed and involved with activities relevant to Chinese in all of these areas, and I think that sooner or later more documents relevant to him will surface. Furthermore, the San Francisco Earthquake did not destroy Sacramento or Los Angeles or even Oakland, all cities that had significant Chinese populations. Scholars interested in Huang (and Chinese American history during this period) just have to start looking.

So far the picture may seem rather bleak, but actually the amount of material that has been available for a long time is quite large, so let us first review it item by item and reflect on why it has not been used so far and what we can do to utilize it more effectively in the future. One of the most valuable primary sources that has been available for quite a long time is the large number of dispatches (*bingwen* 禀文) that Huang presented on an approximately weekly basis to his boss in Washington, D.C., Zheng Zaoru 郑藻如 (*zi Zhixiang* 志翔, *hao Yuxuan* 豫轩 or 玉轩, *juren*, 1851, d. 1894), the Chinese minister (now called ambassador) to the United States from 1881-1885.¹⁶

¹⁵ I say "almost assuredly", because one magnificent specimen has survived in Victoria, B.C., and this is the subject of an article that I am currently writing.

¹⁶ Unfortunately, none of Zheng's writings seem to have survived. As an early diplomat, Zheng was well known to the British diplomat, sinologist, and Cambridge professor Herbert A. Giles (1845-1935), who featured him in his handy biographical dictionary. See Giles, *A Chinese Biographical Dictionary*, Taipei: Ch'eng Wen, 1975, 114. Huang's dispatches were first published in Huang Zunxian, "Shang Zheng Yuxuan

The first of these that has come down to us (no. 18 of the series) dates from September 5, 1882 (twenty-third of the seventh month) and the last (no. 37) is from April 1, 1883 (twenty-fourth of the second month).¹⁷ These were all discovered quite by chance in the local archives at Huang's hometown of what was then called Meixian 梅县, is now called Meizhou 梅州, and was named Jiayingzhou 嘉应州 during his lifetime, now a very pleasant, slow-paced city with many overseas Chinese residents of Hakka linguistic background in northeastern Guangdong Province. We have no idea of how the dispatches got there, nor do we know what happened to the ones before the first surviving one (no. 18) or the ones after no. 37. In total, they cover only about a fifth of Huang's tour of duty in San Francisco, but are, to the best of my knowledge, the most detailed account of the activities of a consul-level Chinese diplomat of the period.

Why have these dispatches been used so rarely by Chinese scholars? Qian Esun does not refer to them at all. They are absent from Mai Ruopeng's and Wu Tianren's biographies, nor are they mentioned anywhere in Zheng Ziyu's scholarly accounts of Huang.¹⁸ Zheng Hailin does refer to them in his wonderful biography of Huang Zunxian, but he makes only limited use of them.¹⁹ Many of the legal cases mentioned in these dispatches are treated in detail in Charles McClain's wonderful monograph on the Chinese legal struggle for equality, but Prof. McClain was not aware of the dispatches when he wrote this book, and our understanding of the cases is considerably enhanced by seeing what Huang says about them.²⁰

One of the principal reasons the dispatches have been used so rarely is that they were published in a journal that was not widely available to most scholars in the age before on-line databases, so many researchers on Huang (including me when I wrote my book about him) did not know of their existence. However, the principal reason they have not been studied extensively by most Chinese scholars is that they are almost impossible to understand if one does not possess a fairly detailed knowledge of United States, California, and San Francisco history, along with a nodding acquaintance with the histories of Peru, Hawaii, and British Columbia. Scholars who do research on Huang Zunxian in China do not normally have such a background, and hence they would invariably find many of the dispatches virtually incomprehensible.

Qinshi bingwen"上郑玉轩钦使禀文, *Jindai shiliao* 近代史料, zong 总 55, 1984, pp. 31-72. These were discovered in the local Meixian archives in 1980 and transcribed and punctuated the following year. See *ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁷ In the bodies of the surviving dispatches, we find references to the numbers and contents of ones that have not survived.

¹⁸ See note 1 for the books mentioned here. Him Mark Lai does translate part of one of the dispatches in *Chinese American Voices, From the Gold Rush to the Present*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006, p. 43, "Memorandum No. 29 to Envoy Zheng".

¹⁹ Zheng Hailin, *Huang Zunxian zhuan*, notes to pp. 129-144.

²⁰ See Charles J. McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle Against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. I will be discussing some of these cases in my new book, but I still consider McClain's monograph to be absolutely essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the history of American Chinese during this period. I am grateful to Prof. McClain for the very valuable advice he gave me during a trip to Berkeley, California. Another study with much useful material about the legal struggle of Chinese Americans is Hyung-chan Kam, *A Legal History of Asian Americans 1790-1990*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994.

One of the biggest problems for reading them is that large numbers of Western names have been rendered with Chinese transcriptions that were for the most part meant to be read with Cantonese (or perhaps even Hakka) pronunciations. Let us look at a few passages in the dispatches to understand the problems involved. On Sept. 14, 1882 (3d of the 8th month) near the end of his Dispatch no. 19, Huang wrote:

Further, regarding the case of Ma Dian, the details provided by the Governor of Jia province in his response to Foreign Affairs was just an attempt to whitewash the whole affair. It only states that the people who perpetrated it were Greeks, Portuguese, and Italians, and that after visiting there and asking questions it was [found to be] really so. Now the local officials are investigating and arresting the criminals quite energetically because of the document sent to them by Foreign Affairs. However, this case has not been tried yet, and I have heard that it will be moved to the office of the provincial judge of Jia Province, and when I hear about the judgment in the future, I will report it to you.²¹
马典一案，嘉省总督复外部文所述当时情节，自系粉饰之词。惟云滋事之人多系希腊、葡萄牙、意大利人，访问实然。现在该处地方官查拿凶犯颇属尽力，自因外部行文之故。惟此案尚未审结，闻将移嘉省臬署审讯，俟将来如何审断，再行禀陈。

Although a Chinese historian would have no trouble reading this passage, he or she would be troubled by the way that the political and legal system of nineteenth-century California and the United States are described with terminology drawn from the Qing Dynasty. Such a reader would probably recognize that the place name Jia Province is the same as Jiazhou 加州, the normal translation of ‘California’ used today, but he or she might not associate the Qing administrative term *Zongdu* (‘military governor’ usually of more than one province) with the currently used term for the Governor of California (*zhouzhang* 州长). Although my translation of *Waibu* as ‘Foreign Affairs’ is comprehensible, it has no resemblance to what Huang really meant, namely ‘State Department’, which is now rendered as Guowuyuan 国务院. Even more difficult to understand is the term *Nieshu* used here. This is defined by Hucker as an ‘unofficial generic reference to Circuit or Province-level agencies with judicial responsibilities’ and in a Qing context as a ‘reference to a Provincial Surveillance Commission’.²² But how should we translate this word and what does it really mean in the context of the American legal system?

Still, the most troublesome words in this brief account are the two characters Ma Dian 马典. Who was Ma Dian? What happened to him? Was he murdered by some wayward Greeks, Portuguese, and Italians, and why? At least these are the questions that my hypothetical Chinese reader is likely to ask over and over in increasing frustration, until, by means to be revealed below, he or she suddenly realizes that Ma Dian (more appropriately rendered Madian) is not a personal name at all but a place name, a Chinese transliteration of Martinez, which is now a pleasant small town northeast of Berkeley and on the waterway that links Suisun Bay to San Pablo Bay, which itself is north of the much more famous San Francisco Bay. At this period Martinez was a major center of California’s fishing industry, and it was because hard-working local Chinese fishermen

²¹ QJ, 466.

²² Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles of Imperial China*, reprinted Taipei: Southern Materials Center, 1986, 355.

were perceived as a threat to local fishermen, most of whom were recent southern European immigrants, that a nasty riot erupted there on April 26, 1882, during which one Chinese fisherman was killed and much Chinese property was destroyed.²³ After learning about the events Zheng Zaoru protested to the U.S. State Department, which then was obliged to look into the matter and ask local authorities what had happened.²⁴ Huang Zunxian had already assumed his post in San Francisco by then, so from the very beginning he was involved in trying to seek a resolution to the issues raised by the riot, but, unfortunately, his earlier dispatches about it are lost. Huang had a good deal more to say about the Martinez Riot in later dispatches, but the interested reader will have to either find this information in the original sources or read my book when it is published.²⁵

Deciphering Huang Zunxian's account of the Martinez Riot is only one example of the many pitfalls that await Chinese historians attempting to make sense of his dispatches, but practically all of these can be resolved by careful research. I have been able to identify practically all of the Westerners and Western place names mentioned in the dispatches with almost total certainty, although a few unidentified items remain, some of them possibly the result of a misreading of the original manuscripts from which our present printed edition is derived.²⁶ One of the hardest to identify was the place name Piaodisang 廳地桑, which Huang mentions over and over. From the context of documents in which it occurs, I was confident that it was located on the western coast of the United States, but although I have driven down that coast from British Columbia, my province of residence in Canada, all the way to the Mexican border numerous times, I could not remember a single place name that resembles the Chinese name. I was worried that the Chinese name might be totally different from the English original (e.g. Jiujinshan for San Francisco), but gave my atlas of the United States one more try, starting from the U.S.-Canada border and reading each place name slowly and with a good deal of imagination. The only one that came even close was Port Townsend, a small town of about 7000 souls, northwest of Seattle and on the northeastern coast of the Olympic Peninsula.²⁷ It fit all of the references to it in Huang Zunxian's dispatches, lying within what was then the Washington Territory but close to Victoria, British Columbia. In addition, I remembered having seen many beautiful Victorian-style mansions there during an earlier visit, a result of speculation that it would be the terminus of a northern transcontinental railway, before the final decision was made to end the Northern Pacific Railway in Seattle. During Huang's age, it was the fastest developing city of what is now the state of Washington with regular steamship connections to Victoria, soon becoming a major center for the smuggling of both contraband goods and human beings back and

²³ One of the earliest press references to the riot is found in *Sacramento Daily Union*, Volume 15, Number 56, "The Morning's News", April 27, 1882, p. 2. It became a major news item in the following days.

²⁴ Unfortunately, I have not been able to find his note of protest so far.

²⁵ A bill for \$20,000 damages was submitted. See SFC, "Coast Notes", May 26, 1882, p. 4.

²⁶ A good example of this is the miscopying of Jiannada 间拿打, a Cantonese transcription of the word 'Canada', as Wennada 问拿打, an incomprehensible word, in Dispatch no. 28 of December 9, 1882 (29th of the 10th month). See QJ, p. 479. The characters *jian* and *wen* are frequently confused in manuscripts.

²⁷ The syllable Piao in Piaodisang represents the word 'Port', and Disang is a rough transliteration of 'Townsend'.

forth between the United States and Canada. Not a few Chinese Americans of his generation landed in the United States at Port Townsend.²⁸

Old Materials Rarely Consulted, Newspapers

None of the scholars who have published books with accounts of Huang Zunxian's stay in the United States have utilized the rich resources available in nineteenth-century English-language newspapers. Both Noriko Kamachi's monograph and my own failed to do so in any meaningful way, and none of the many studies published in Chinese have done this. Recently, more and more American scholars who do research on Chinese Americans during this period have begun exploring this material in depth, two of the most outstanding examples being Pfaelzer and McClain, whose books have already been cited in the footnotes.²⁹ Since Huang Zunxian's dispatches only cover a small portion of his three years of service, newspaper accounts are particularly valuable, because there are frequent references to the activities of the Chinese Consulate in the California press, and even when the Consulate is not specifically mentioned, we can deduce what Huang must have been doing with a fair degree of certainty. As a result, the newspapers, although almost invariably biased against the Chinese, can be read in a way that allows us to eliminate much of their bias and to obtain a detailed account of Huang's activities during the greater part of his stay in San Francisco.

The amount of information available in San Francisco newspapers about Huang Zunxian, his American assistant, Consul Frederick Bee (1851-1912), his Vice-Consul, Huang Xiquan 黄锡铨 (1852-1925, *zi Junxuan 钧选*), the Chinese Consulate itself, and the lives of Chinese Americans in San Francisco during the period is overwhelming.³⁰ Of course, one has to be cautious on how one uses this material, since most of the journalists responsible for reporting the news were hostile to the Chinese, but when read together

²⁸ See, for example, SFC, "Coast Notes", June 16, 1883, p. 4, which writes about how U.S. Customs officials were unable to deal with the flow of illegal Chinese entering through Port Townsend.

²⁹ Unfortunately, neither of them has studied Huang Zunxian in detail.

³⁰ There is a wealth of information about Frederick Bee in Anthony Oertel's excellent website for the Frederick Bee History Project at <http://frederickbee.com/index.html>. Huang Xiquan does not seem to have been related to Huang Zunxian but was from Huang's native town of Meizhou and was taken by He Ruzhang 何如璋 (1838-1891), China's first ambassador to Japan, to Tokyo as an assistant and later to San Francisco by Huang Zunxian. Since Huang Xiquan was from Meizhou, it is likely that Huang Zunxian recommended him to He Ruzhang in the first place. An outline of Huang Xiquan's activities is found in an article written by his descendant in Huang Ganying 黄甘英, "Huang Xiquan shehui huodong sixiang shulue" 黄锡铨社会活动述略, *Jiaying xueyuan xuebao* 嘉应学院学报, juan 27, qi 1 (February 2009), pp. 5-8. Although this article contains much valuable material, part of it consists of family recollections which remain to be verified by careful consultation of primary documents. Unfortunately, Huang Xiquan's works seem to have disappeared, and even the very rich collection of books and manuscripts said to have been in his study in Meizhou seems to have been destroyed. The only printed work by him that I have discovered so far is *Xing shanli shuotie zhangcheng* 兴山利说帖章程 in the collection of the Jianying Library of Meizhou. This would seem to be of a technological nature and may have something to do with mining or forestry, but I have not seen this item yet. I thank the staff of the library for bringing this work to my attention. In spite of this paucity of materials about Huang Xiquan, my own research about his activities in San Francisco, Oregon, and British Columbia as well as further study about his period of service as Chinese Consul-General in New York will likely reveal that he is a major figure in American Chinese history and Chinese diplomacy.

with all of the other sources we have, the newspaper articles of the age do provide us a good deal of accurate information. Luckily, many of these newspapers are already available in electronic editions, the best of which is probably the one for *the San Francisco Chronicle*, accessible for free in the San Francisco Public Library or on-line to anyone with a library card. Equally important are the newspapers that can be consulted for free through the California Digital Newspaper Collection website, which includes such important but now defunct newspapers as the *Los Angeles Herald*, the *San Francisco Alta California*, and the *Sacramento Daily Union*, the last particularly useful for detailed news about the California state government. There are also a number of important San Francisco newspapers that are not available in electronic editions, one of the best being the *San Francisco Call*, microfilms of which however can be seen in the California State Library in Sacramento or borrowed via Interlibrary Loan. Regrettably, San Francisco Chinese-language newspapers from the era have largely disappeared, but the single issues that have survived are of great interest. Of course, newspapers did not exist only in San Francisco, and I have frequently found useful material in other U.S. and Canadian newspapers such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Ottawa Citizen*, as well as Victoria's primary newspaper of the era, the *Daily Colonist*, which contains a detailed record of the anti-Chinese campaign in western Canada and a record of Huang Xiquan's visit to that city. Finally, one must also consult the periodical literature in China, for although most of the important material concerning Huang Zunxian during this period is found in North American newspapers, there is undoubtedly something of value to be discovered in both English and Chinese newspapers published in China, including Shanghai's *Shenbao* 申報, now available in electronic editions, and the *North China Herald*, the best English paper in China during the period, also published in Shanghai, but regrettably only available on microfilm so far. Finally, valuable material about Huang Zunxian and other diplomats mentioned by him in his dispatches is probably also to be found in the Zongli yamen 总理衙门 archives, now largely located in the Academia Sinica in Taiwan.³¹

“New” Materials Never Used in the Study of Huang Zunxian

Yet even more exciting than the material to be found in contemporary newspapers is the collection of original manuscript letters by Huang and his assistant Huang Xiquan. This collection of documents was originally housed in the basement of the Chinese Benevolent Society of Victoria, B.C., but fortunately due to the unstinting efforts of Prof. David Chuenyan Lai, now retired from the University of Victoria's Department of Geography, practically all of the originals are available to scholars. No one in China with whom I discussed my research on Huang Zunxian during the last years seems to be aware of this fact, but Prof. Lai already used quite a few of these documents in his study of the history of Victoria's Benevolent Society.³² Actually, many of the original documents

³¹ I have actually had more difficulty identifying the more obscure Chinese diplomats and consulate workers mentioned by Huang in his dispatches than the many Westerners, whose names are usually found in English newspapers, government documents, or city directories.

³² David Chuenyan Lai, *Chinese Community Leadership: Case Study of Victoria in Canada*, Singapore: World Scientific, 2010.

now accessible in Victoria were available long ago in a printed version of 1959 issued privately by the Victoria Benevolent Association to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of its founding in 1884.³³ Although one finds occasional errors of transcription in the printed text, it is certainly more convenient to use than photocopies of the original documents, but unfortunately this rare book had such a limited circulation that, except for David Lai, no other scholar of nineteenth-century China seems to have made use of it.³⁴

Whether we consult the printed version or the original manuscripts, the documents preserved in Victoria are of major importance for the study of Huang Zunxian's activities in North America for three reasons, (1) the letters of Huang Zunxian and Huang Xiquan, then acting as his Vice-Consul, pick up where Huang Zunxian's dispatches break off, allowing us to reconstruct much of what happened in the last year or more of his term of service; (2) they give us a rare glimpse at the interaction between the San Francisco consulate and local Chinese, and (3) they provide much of the information we have about a critical period in the history of Canada's largest Chinese settlement of the era, the Victoria Chinatown. Hopefully, more correspondences of this sort will surface in other parts of western North America, western South America, and Hawaii, all of which were in frequent contact with the San Francisco Consulate while Huang Zunxian served in that city.

What the Unused Materials can Tell Us, Huang's Arrival in San Francisco

Now that we have discussed the three main categories of material as yet largely unused in the study of Huang Zunxian's period of service in San Francisco, let us see how this material can enable us to solve certain problems regarding first of all his biography and then the reading of his poetry. The biographies of Huang Zunxian normally give the date of his arrival in San Francisco as the twelfth day of the second month of Guangxu 光绪 8, or March 30, 1882 on the Western calendar, a date which is derived from a reading of Huang's poetry.³⁵ However, if we had been waiting at the dock to welcome Huang on that date, we would have missed him, because according to the contemporary newspaper records, he actually arrived on March 26! This is not a major discrepancy, but it shows how even Chinese scholars' memories can blur over the

³³ *Jianada Yuduoli Zhonghua huiguan chengli qishiwu zhounian jinian tekan* 加拿大域多利中华会馆成立七十五周年纪念特刊, Victoria: 1959 (hereafter abbreviated ZHHG). The cover of this book also has a parallel Chinese title *Jianada Yuduoli Huaqiao xuexiao chengli liushizhounian jinian tekan* 加拿大域多利华侨学校成立六十周年纪念特刊 and an English title *To Commemorate Victoria's Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association 1884-1959, Chinese Public School 1899-1959*.

³⁴ For example, see the letters reproduced and partially translated in David Chuenyan Lai, *Chinese Community Leadership*, pp. 65-68. Prof. Lai uses the Cantonese pronunciations for Huang Zunxian's and Huang Xiquan's names (Huang Tsim Hsim and Huang Sic Chen).

³⁵ See, for example, Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*, p. 25, and the standard chronological biography for Huang by Qian Esun (Zhonglian), *Huang Gongdu xiansheng nianpu* 黄公度先生年谱, p. 1191, in RJJ, vol. 3, pp. 1166-1255. This date is based on the prose preface to a series of poems by Huang, "Mixed Emotions about my Ocean Voyage" ("Haixing zagan" 海行杂感). See RJJ, vol. 1, juan 4, pp. 344-350. The preface, found on p. 344, states: "I arrived on the twelfth of the second month" 二月十二日到. Qian Esun notes that this series of poems is not included in CB and must have been written later.

decades, for the series of poems on which the date of March 30 is based was not actually written at the time of his voyage but many years later, a fact we can conclude from its failure to be included in CB. Although Huang's arrival was barely noticed by most of the San Francisco papers, we find a reasonably detailed account in the *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*:

The Chinese Consul-General

San Francisco, March 26 –Wong Jim Him the new Chinese Consul-General from China and Japan arrived to-day on the *City of Tokio*. He relieves Chum Shu Tang, who will return home by the *Tokio* on her next trip to China. Wong Jim Him is about 35 years of age with a countenance that bespeaks a high order of intelligence, pleasing address courteous and polished in his manners, and experienced in matters pertaining to his office. He has been for the past four years residing in Yokohama, where he has filled the position of Secretary of the Chinese Legation in Japan.³⁶ He came here directly from Yokohama, and has not visited his native land since he left it with his legation four years ago. He is able, however, to state authoritatively that the Chinese bill, which has passed both branches of Congress while he has been on the voyage hither, is not objectionable to the Chinese Government. He says it has their approval. He will enter upon his official duties, as soon as his exequatur arrives from the Minister at Washington, which will be in about a week.³⁷

One can find other records of Huang Zunxian's arrival in San Francisco, but this one is more complete and already reveals a good deal of information that we cannot glean from Huang's surviving works or the anecdotes of people like Liang Qichao. First of all, it is interesting to note that this article is most likely the result of an interview; i.e., a newspaper reporter thought the story was worth the trouble of meeting Huang either as he was disembarking from the *City of Tokio* or shortly afterward. Although the reporter obviously did not know Chinese, he made a valiant attempt to reproduce the Cantonese pronunciation of Huang's name and the name of his predecessor, Chen Shutang 陈树棠. He probably had no knowledge of the official American correspondence about Huang, because all of this uses the Wade-Giles spelling of his name, Huang Tsun-hsien. He did, however, attempt to discover the basic facts of Huang's previous career in Japan. Unfortunately, San Francisco newspapers of this era had not discovered photo-journalism yet, and there is no photograph of Huang attached to the article, but the reporter has given us a convincing, sympathetic, and appealing portrait of Huang at the height of his physical and mental powers, a portrait that is also free from the racism so typical of much San Francisco journalism of the age.³⁸

³⁶ There seems to be some confusion here, as the Chinese Embassy was located in Tokyo, not Yokohama. The reporter probably mixed up the two cities, because Huang's ship arrived from Yokohama. In addition, there was a Chinese consulate in Yokohama.

³⁷ *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, March 27, 1882, p. 2. This is also known as the *Daily Union*.

³⁸ So far I have not been able to find any photographs or portraits of Huang Zunxian dating from his stay in San Francisco. There is at least the possibility that an oil portrait may exist some place, for a number of San Francisco artists specialized in painting Chinese scenes, and a portrait of a Chinese Consul, almost surely Huang's predecessor Chen Shutang, is reported as having been shown by the American artist Frank M. Pebbles (1839-1928) at an art show in Sacramento. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find this

This having been said, we discover the true motives of the journalist for interviewing Huang at the very end of his report, where he tells us that the Chinese government does not object to the new Chinese bill. This is, of course, a reference to the Chinese Exclusion Act, the culmination of a long and sometimes violent campaign against Chinese immigration to California, which, as the reporter mentions, had passed both houses of Congress during Huang's sea voyage from Japan to the United States and now only needed the signature of President Chester A. Arthur (1829-1886, President 1881-1885). Many people in the eastern part of the states had found this bill highly objectionable, partially because it seemed contrary to American principles, but also partially because cheap Chinese labor had made a significant contribution to their bottom line. Although most people in California strongly supported the Chinese Exclusion Act, some did not, and although the racist elements in the anti-Chinese campaign are rarely even hidden beneath the surface, some Californians were nervous about eastern charges of California racism, and were particularly eager to show that *even* the Chinese government was not in favor of Chinese laborers leaving that country for a new future in the United States. That Huang Zunxian repeated the official Chinese government position on this issue shortly after his arrival must have strongly pleased this reporter. In addition, the Chinese Exclusion Act did not exclude all Chinese from entering the United States, but only Chinese laborers, and this article was not the only one admitting that upper-class Chinese like Huang Zunxian were acceptable, with the implicit conclusion that most Chinese were not.

The reality of the situation becomes apparent quickly if we merely glance at the same page on which this report was published. An article in the same column just above it bears the headline "Arrival from China and Japan", "Arrest of Alleged Opium Smugglers", and the title of the article below it in the same column reads "Chinese Plan to Evade the Law" and gives a report about an alleged flood of Chinese laborers who intended to sneak from Hong Kong into the United States under the legal pretext that they were British subjects and not Chinese. Just between this article and the report about Huang Zunxian, there is also a short article about a speech by Dennis Kearny (1847-1907), one of the most virulent anti-Chinese campaigners of the age, who is said to have claimed credit for getting the Chinese Exclusion Act passed. Rather ironically, the same page also has an article about the arrival of the poet and dramatist Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) in San Francisco and a much longer piece with the title "Longfellow as a Poet". In spite of the "high order" of Huang Zunxian's intelligence, it was inconceivable to most Americans of the age that a Chinese person could possibly be as great a poet as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) or Wilde, and no one in that city seems to have been aware of Huang's importance as a writer.

Finally, Huang's welcome in San Francisco was probably not as cordial as our newspaper reporter implies, for years later when he wrote one of his moving poems ("The Exiles", "Zhuke pian" 逐客篇) about the development of the anti-Chinese movement in the United States, he tells us about his own feelings at the time of his arrival:

I embarked on my mission with dignity and pride, 堂堂龙节来

painting so far; perhaps Chen bought it and took it back with him to China. See "At the Pavilion", "The Art Gallery", *Sacramento Daily Union*, February 25, 1880, p. 1.

But approached their Customs vexed by anxiety.	叩关亦足躩
Even if we could pour out all the four seas' water,	倒倾四海水
We will never wash clean this insult to our nation. ³⁹	此耻难洗濯

Huang Zunxian knew all too well how most Chinese were treated by San Francisco Customs in those days:

Anyone who does not carry the right papers ⁴⁰	不持入关缚
Is handcuffed immediately upon his arrival.	一来便受缚
You only need a face colored yellow	但是黄面人
To be beaten and attacked, even if innocent. ⁴¹	无罪亦榜掠

Although he would not have suffered such physical abuse, it is quite possible that he was subjected to a humiliating search for smuggled opium, because according to the newspaper reports there was a good deal of this on his ship.⁴² Huang only hints at his poor treatment in his poem, and we have no way to be sure about the details, but something unpleasant seems to have taken place.

As a diplomat Huang had no choice but to support the government line on the Chinese Exclusion Act when the reporter asked him about his opinions concerning it, but what he really thought about his government's policy is apparent from another passage in the same poem:

A nation that does not protect its people	有国不养民
Lets them be slaughtered like sparrows in a bush.	譬为丛殴爵
If the world's four corners refuse them refuge,	四裔投不受
They will wander in exile with nowhere to settle.	流散更安着 ⁴³

The newspaper reporter was not knowledgeable or sensitive enough to understand what Huang really thought about the situation but only heard what he wanted to hear, an educated Chinese supporting the Chinese Exclusion Act.

From our brief discussion of Huang Zunxian's arrival in San Francisco we can already see how a reading of the local press can enrich our understanding of both his biography and literary creations. Consultation of the local newspapers allows us to solve simple chronological issues such as the precise date when Huang arrived in the city, but

³⁹ RJL, juan 4, p. 362.

⁴⁰ At this time passports were not necessary for entry into the United States, but the new law required that Chinese provide documentation that they were businessmen rather than laborers in order to be admitted. This provision caused many difficulties that soon became apparent and will be discussed in more detail in my book.

⁴¹ RJL, juan 4, p. 359.

⁴² According to newspaper reports, the *City of Tokio* was frequently used to carry contraband opium. See, for example, SFC, "The Opium Conspiracy", June 23, 1882, p. 1. We should note that at this time it was perfectly legal to import opium into the United States. The U.S. Customs officials were only looking for individuals who smuggled in opium without paying duty. The only anti-opium legislation in San Francisco at the time was the Opium Den Ordinance of 1878, which banned opium dens, a law that seems to have been enforced principally against Chinese owners.

⁴³ RJL, vol. 1, p. 362.

this method also enables us to obtain a much more detailed picture of the circumstances under which his poem “The Exiles” was conceived, making it possible to use the San Francisco press to read Huang’s poems with a good deal more understanding than was possible previously and even to decipher the real meaning of what the San Francisco reporters were writing.

Huang Zunxian’s Departure from San Francisco

A detailed examination of what we can learn from such unused materials as newspaper reports and rarely consulted manuscripts read together with Huang’s dispatches to Zheng Zaoru will have to wait for my full monograph, but let us now turn to another important date in his term of office in San Francisco, namely, the date of his departure. None of our secondary sources, or even any of Huang Zunxian’s published works, gives us a precise date for this. Qian Esun only estimates the date based on the preface to Huang’s *Monographs on Japan*, which states that he left San Francisco in the autumn of 1885, and a poem that he probably wrote on the evening of the Mid-Autumn Festival of 1885 (see the discussion below), when he was already on another ship sailing back to China.⁴⁴ Since this festival falls on the fifteenth of the eighth month, and Huang states in the poem that he had seen the bright moon four times since his departure (登程见月四回明), Qian surmised that Huang must have left San Francisco on the twelfth day of the eighth month 推知先生离美为十二日也 or September 20, 1885. Unfortunately, Qian’s conclusion is based on a possibly corrupt text of Huang’s poem, since, as he states in his note, another version has the words *simian ming* 四面明 (‘bright on all four sides’) in place of the text he adopts, the characters *hui* 回 and *mian* 面 frequently being confused in classical works due to similarity in shape, particularly in the variant form of *hui* 回.

How do we resolve these chronological and textual problems? First of all, we have manuscript letters that Qian Esun could not have seen. In two of these by Huang Xiquan, we obtain more information about his boss’s travel plans. In the first one, addressed to the Victoria Benevolent Society on August 6, 1885 (26th of the 6th month, Guangxu 11), he tells us that Huang Zunxian planned to leave San Francisco in the eighth lunar month (about September or close to Qian Esun’s date), and in the second one, dated December 30, 1885 (25th of the 11th month of Guangxu 11) and sent from New York, where he had already assumed the position of Consul-General, he tells his friends in Victoria that Huang Zunxian had left San Francisco in the ninth month (October).⁴⁵ For this second date to be correct and for Huang to have witnessed the Mid-Autumn Festival in the Pacific Ocean, he would have had to have sailed in circles for about one month, so the first letter is clearly more reliable.

Huang Zunxian gives the most reliable date for his departure from San Francisco in a manuscript letter that he also sent to the Victoria Benevolent Society together with a

⁴⁴ See RJJ, 1193, and Huang Zunxian, *Riben guozhi*, Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1967 repr. of 1898 ed., “Xu”序, 2, pp. 5-6 (double pagination in this book). All that Huang states in the preface of this is that “in the autumn of the Yiyou year [1885], I returned to China from America”乙酉之秋，由美回华。

⁴⁵ ZHHG, “Wenxian yu zhuanzai”, pp. 13-14 and ZHHG, p. 10. Huang Xiquan also sent twenty-two fans that his former boss had mailed to him to forward to his friends in Victoria.

magnificent specimen of his calligraphy still in its possession. In this letter, dated the twenty-first day of the seventh month (August 30), Huang tells us that “it is now settled that I will depart from San Francisco on the twelfth of the eighth month” 兹定于八月十二日由金启程, which date, as we have just said, corresponds to September 20, 1885.⁴⁶ After reading this letter, it would seem that our chronology is set, and Qian Esun’s intelligent guess was correct. However, travel by steamship in the nineteenth century was not as reliable as air travel is today, and we are forced to move Huang’s departure date forward one day, because in the September 19, 1885 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, we learn that “The City of Peking...leaves for China to-day.”⁴⁷ The *City of Peking* was the only passenger ship sailing to China that Huang could have taken to be where he was on the Pacific Ocean in time for the Mid-Autumn Festival.⁴⁸

Our setting of Huang Zunxian’s precise departure date is once again a relatively minor improvement in our understanding of his life, but it does help us resolve two issues regarding the poem that Qian Esun used to determine the date. First of all, we can conclude that the variant text is most likely incorrect, because the text Qian adopts fits the chronology and makes better sense. However, we must understand the text in a slightly different than he read it. Qian assumes that the four appearances of the moon mentioned by Huang include its appearance on the Mid-Autumn Festival, but now we can determine that it refers to the four appearances of the moon *before* the Mid-Autumn Festival, because we have one more day to account for.

We do not know as much about Huang’s departure as we do about his arrival, as so far I have not been able to find any newspaper accounts describing it, and unfortunately all U.S. Customs Service passenger arrival and departure lists from 1850-1907 were destroyed by a 1940 fire at the Angel Island Immigration Station administration building.⁴⁹ Yet, before we get onto this ship with Huang, let us try to learn a little about the vessel we will sail on and, even more important, attempt to imagine his feelings upon leaving the United States. The *City of Peking* was a passenger freighter of 5,079 tons gross and 423 feet long, owned by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company and built by John Roach and Sons. It was launched in March of 1874 and was used throughout most of its life for the San Francisco to Yokohama to Hong Kong route traveled by Huang Zunxian and many thousands of Chinese, most of who were from his native province of Guangdong. At the time of its building, the *City of Peking* and its sister ship the *City of Tokio*, the one that Huang arrived in San Francisco on, were the largest vessels that had been manufactured in the United States, so they could be seen as emblems of the growing economic and technological power of that country as opposed to

⁴⁶ ZHHG, “Wenxian yu zhuanzai”, p. 18. However, there is a serious misprint in this letter, which has been ascribed to the year Guangxu 12 or 1886 by the editors. All of the contents of the letter prove that it was written in 1885 not long before Huang’s departure. Examination of the manuscript copy also confirms that the date of the printed version is wrong. When written cursively, the characters for ‘two’ (*er* 二) and ‘three’ (*san* 三) are frequently confused, hence the misreading of ‘twelve’ as ‘thirteen’.

⁴⁷ SFC, “Wharf and Wave”, September 19, 1885, p. 2. See also the announced departure date of September 29 in *Daily Alta California*, September 18, 1885, vol. 39, no. 12971, p. 8, “Steamer Movements”.

⁴⁸The next departure would have been on the *City of Rio de Janeiro* on October 31. See the Pacific Mail Steamship Co. advertisement in *Daily Alta California*, September 19, vol. 39, no. 12972, p. 6.

⁴⁹ Email of February 19, 2013, from Marisa Louie of the National Archives in San Bruno, California.

less developed nations like China.⁵⁰ Luckily, we still have photographs of the *City of Peking* (alas without Huang on board, see illustration), so we can easily imagine what it would have felt like to board such a giant ship with its two smokestacks belching black smoke, and its three masts towering into the sky, just in case the modern technology of the steam engines failed. Huang must have known that such steamships were not all that safe, and if anything went wrong on the long voyage to Japan and Hong Kong, there would be no fast way to contact other vessels for help. The newspapers of the era are full of stories about steamships lost in storms and exploding steam engines fatally scalding crew and passengers.

The goods that Huang saw being loaded onto the ship were worth a good deal of money, just the miscellaneous cargo being valued at \$169, 000 by San Francisco Customs and including such items as 14,389 barrels of flour, 478 pounds of hams and bacon, 26, 175 pounds of ginseng, 2550 pounds of cheese, 2500 pounds of sugar, shrimps, dried fruit, dried fish, abalones etc. In addition there was \$428,019.95 of silver bullion, \$337,231.00 of Mexican silver dollars, \$24, 107 of gold coin, and \$2,550.00 of gold dust, not to mention \$107, 666.45 of silver bars on route from the Bank of California to Hong Kong.⁵¹ Even more startling is that there were at least one thousand Chinese passengers on board, most of who were traveling steerage with the exception of Huang and perhaps a few wealthy merchants.⁵² The economic importance of the China trade to both China and California is easy to envision after reading these figures and converting them to modern values, but the contrast between the ship's treasures and the grinding poverty of most of its Chinese passengers could not help but arouse the concern and compassion of a man like Huang Zunxian. Huang could not also help remembering that although some of these Chinese passengers may have been going home to see families or attend funerals, quite a few of them had been sent back by U.S. courts, for after the enforcement of the Chinese Restriction Act had been tightened up, the return of California Chinese to China increased markedly, the newspapers being full of stories about how Chinese without proper documentation had been "remanded" by the courts.⁵³

As Huang Zunxian boarded the *City of Peking*, he would surely have thought about all these issues, but he would also have reminisced about his whole three years in San Francisco, a time of both victory and defeat, of both joy and sorrow. He had arrived in the United States just after Congress had passed the Chinese Exclusion Act and before President Arthur signed it into law. The pressure he was under must have been

⁵⁰ For more information about the *City of Peking*, see Leonard Alexander Swann Jr., *John Roach, Maritime Entrepreneur: The Years as Naval Contractor 1862-1886*, Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1965, 80-81, 207, 219; E. Mowbray Tate, *Transpacific Steam: The Story of Steam Navigation from the Pacific Coast of North America to the Far East and the Antipodes*, 1867-1941, New York: Cornwall Press, 1986, 34; and David B. Tyler, *The American Clyde: A History of Iron and Steel Ship-building on the Delaware from 1840 to World War I*, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1958, 35. There is an excellent article about the ship that was published recently, Mary C. Greenfield, "Benevolent Desires and Dark Dominations: The Pacific Mail Steamship Company's SS City of Peking and the United States in the Pacific 1874-1910", *Southern California Quarterly*, 2013, pp. 423-478.

⁵¹ "Financial and Commercial", "Departure of the China Steamer", *Daily Alta California*, vol. 39, no. 12973, September 20, 1885, p. 7.

⁵² SFC, "Wharf and Wave", September 19, 1885, p. 2.

⁵³ See, for example, SFC, "The 'Peking's' Chinese", "Eighteen Pagans Allowed to Land and One Remanded to China", November 23, 1883, p. 3.

unbearable. His predecessor, Chen Shutang, had been quite successful, establishing better than expected relations with San Francisco's white elite and beginning the process of protecting Chinese against legal discrimination, but now the anti-Chinese movement had come to a head. For more than a month Huang (and the anti-Chinese lobby) waited impatiently for President Arthur's decision, but then he did what he was expected to do, signing the Exclusion Act into law on May 8, 1882.⁵⁴

Although Huang was now in a very difficult situation, he did not remain idle. With assistance from Frederick Bee, he began a legal battle against anti-Chinese legislation on the city, state, and federal level, scoring a number of significant victories against it. He managed to get the quarreling Chinatown associations to unite into one Chinese Benevolent Society. He assisted mixed race families under pressure from anti-miscegenation laws and a hostile public. He forced the state of California to allow Chinese children to attend public schools and set up the first Chinese public school in Chinatown. He helped purchase the land for the first Chinese hospital in San Francisco in an age when desperately ill Chinese were not admitted into public hospitals but were forced to die on the streets.⁵⁵

These were just a few of his many victories to be studied in my new book, but, unfortunately, there were many defeats, too. More and more Chinese were being sent back unwillingly to China, as federal judges who were originally sympathetic to them changed their attitudes under pressure from new federal regulations. Attacks on Chinese by street thugs and even children did not diminish. Serious crime problems in Chinatown gave the Chinese bad publicity and reduced support from sympathetic whites. On a personal level, Huang learned that his mother had passed away in China, and although this would normally mean that he would begin a three-year mourning period during which he could not serve as an official or write poetry, his request for leave was denied by a Chinese government desperate to maintain continuity in San Francisco and western North America. Although his inability to fulfill the duties of a filial son must have caused him considerable anguish, Huang labored on and on, probably comforted by the great outpouring of sympathy for him from local San Francisco Chinese.⁵⁶

However, the final blow came only seventeen days before his departure on September 2, 1885, when at least twenty-eight Chinese laborers were murdered by white miners near Rock Springs, Wyoming, in the worst incident of anti-Chinese violence in the history of the United States.⁵⁷ Huang's successor had already been appointed and his own departure set, so the best he could do was send Frederick Bee and his trusted assistant, Huang Xiquan, to travel to Rock Springs and investigate the outrage in order to seek justice and compensation from the United States government. Practically every day the San Francisco newspapers were full of stories about the cruelty of the attacks, and even the normally racist editors were visibly shaken by the ferocity of the perpetrators.

⁵⁴ See SFC, "The President's Approval", May 8, 1882, p. 2. Some sources give May 6 as the date of signing.

⁵⁵ All of these topics (and many more) will be discussed in detail in my book.

⁵⁶ See *New York Times*, "Chinese Honors to a Dead Lady", May 24, 1883, p. 2, which was reprinted from the *San Francisco Bulletin*, May 14.

⁵⁷ Basic primary documents about this incident are found in Jules Davids ed., *American Diplomatic and Public Papers: The United States and China, Series II, The United States, China, and Imperial Rivalries, 1861-1893*, vol. 12, *The Coolie Trade and Outrages Against the Chinese*, pp. 183-242, including Zheng Zaoru's original note of protest on p. 183.

Yes, it had been three hard years on the Golden Hill, three years that would change Huang Zunxian's life forever.

As Huang left San Francisco and saw its golden hills recede into the distance, he may have heaved a momentary sigh of relief, but even on this ship the inequity and unfairness of life in the modern world could hardly be ignored, though he was at least comforted by the thought that he would soon be able to make offerings to his mother's departed soul and reunite with his family. It just so happened that somewhere out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, about five days from San Francisco Huang met up with the Mid-Autumn Festival, one of the most popular on the Chinese lunar calendar, a time for enjoying the beautiful full moon of autumn in the presence of family and friends. On this occasion, he wrote the following poem, one of the most moving of his early works and the only surviving one actually written during his three-year period of service as Consul-General:

I Wrote this Poem after Gazing at the Moon from a Ship in the Pacific Ocean on the Night of the Mid-Autumn Lunar Festival⁵⁸ 八月十五夜太平洋舟中望月作歌

The vast ocean's waves merge with the sky, Where the full moon's orb gleams on the horizon. Every night it lights the stern to send us on our way, But tonight its lovely rays glow with double purity. Outside our ship there is not an inch of dry land; The dark heavens stretch above us, the black waters below. Since we left, I've seen the moon shine the last four nights, And we have already sailed three thousand li back home.	茫茫东海波连天, 天边大月光团圆, 送人夜夜照船尾, 今夕倍放清光妍。 4 一舟而外无寸地, 上者青天下黑水。 登程见月四回明, 归舟已历三千里。 8
--	--

The whole universe shares the same moon with us, But not all people celebrate our Mid-Autumn Festival. The Western calendar approaches is two thousandth year; But Westerners don't reckon time by the phases of the moon. ⁵⁹ Officers on the bridge use compasses to navigate, As our ship glides westward with the Milky Way. Curly-bearded Westerners sing loudly, with drunken blue eyes, But their foreign music only increases my longing for home.	大千世界共此月, 世人不共中秋节。 泰西纪历二千年, 只作寻常数圆缺。 12 舟师捧盘登舵楼, 船与天汉同西流。 虬髯高歌碧眼醉, 异方乐只增人愁。 16
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The Chinese traveling steerage on the decks below Escape their bondage to others for a while in dreams. Like ants, they sink into a black, sugary night, Sprawled in disorder, arms locked, elbows akimbo. Fish and dragons lie silent at the approach of midnight; The ocean is level like a mirror, and the wind dies to a hush. The moon's orb hangs in the sky as the ship's wheels turn,	此外同舟下床客, 梦中暂免供人役。 沉沉千蚁趋黑甜, 交臂横肱睡狼藉。 20 鱼龙悄悄夜三更, 波平如镜风无声。 一轮悬空一轮转,
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⁵⁸ See also my earlier discussion of this poem in Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*, pp. 191-194.

⁵⁹ I.e., the Gregorian calendar is primarily solar in contrast to the Chinese, which is mainly lunar but also takes account of solar time.

And I alone pace anxiously along the railing.
I travel together with the ship, the moon travels with me;
We're so close to each other, it doesn't want to leave me.
On this vast ocean that stretches for thousands of miles,
The moon, my shadow, and I make a party of three.⁶⁰

徘徊独作巡檐行。24
我随船去月随身，
月不离我情倍亲。
汪洋东海不知几万里，
今夕之夕惟我与尔对影成三人。28

I raise my head and gaze westward toward thick-lying clouds,
Below which lie the homes of millions of men.
In how many homes do young couples mourn separation?
In how many mansions do the rich sing and dance?
Though their joys and sorrows differ from one another,
Four hundred million Chinese share this same autumn evening.
How could these men of our Middle Kingdom know
That somewhere west of America, some place east of Japan,
A lone traveler stands on the deck of a deserted ship?

举头西指云深处，
下有人家亿万户，
几家儿女怨别离？
几处楼台作歌舞？32
悲欢离合虽不同，
四亿万众同秋中。
岂知赤县神州地，
美洲以西日本东，36
独有一客欹孤篷。

I left my homeland one decade ago,⁶¹
And now moonbeams are shining on my slowly graying hair.
To see where the sun rises, I traveled to Japan's fairy islands,
And then I rode on the wind to cross endless oceans.
Raising my head, I see the moon of my homeland,
Though it appears at different times in different countries.
Tonight my family will watch it from the ocean's other side,
But when it rises in China it will have already set here.
I lead an existence as aimless as a rolling tumbleweed;
Wherever I roam, I go where none have gone before.
Our sages did not reach lands that don't use our calendar⁶²
But I still haven't ended the journeys before me
Home lies beneath my feet on the back side of the globe,
So why did Heaven set me down *here*?
Just what is the destination of my unending voyage?
I scratch my head and wish to ask Heaven this question.

此客出门今十载，
月光渐照鬓毛改。
观日曾到三神山，40
乘风竟渡大瀛海。
举头只见故乡月，
月不同时地各别，
即今吾家隔海遥相望44
彼乍东升此西没。
嗟我身世犹转蓬，
纵游所至如凿空，
禹迹不到夏时变，48
我游所历殊未穷。
九州脚底大球背，
天胡置我于此中？
异时汗漫安所抵？52
搔头我欲问苍穹。

I lean against the railing, sleepless, my heart full of vexation,
The moon's rays gradually turn to the rosy hues of dawn,

倚栏不寐心憧憧，
月影渐变朝霞红，

⁶⁰ Allusion to a line from one of Li Bai's 李白 (701-762) most popular poems, "The shadow opposite makes us three persons" 对影成三人. This poem describes a "drinking party" that Li had with himself, the moon, and his shadow. See the original in Li Bai, *Fenlei buzhu Li Taibai shi* 分類補註李太白詩, juan 23, p. 313, "Yuexia duzhuo" 月下独酌, in *Sibu congkan chubian suoben* 四部叢刊初編縮本. Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1967.

⁶¹ As Qian Esun points out in his note 7 to this line, Huang had actually been absent from his home for twelve years.

⁶² Literally, "Yu's footprints did not arrive at [places] where the Xia [Chinese] time was not changed." Yu is the third of the ancient sage kings.

As is typical of much Chinese poetry, this poem contains a number of allusions to earlier writing, an examination of which not only helps us to identify the work's links with the past, but, even more importantly, allows us to understand it as an expression of nineteenth-century Chinese modernity. We need not analyze all of Huang's references to Chinese history or his echoing of earlier lines identified in Qian Esun's detailed commentary to this work but should note that the range of these is wide, including such Zhou canonical works as the *Classic of Changes* (*Yijing* 易经, Qian's note B18) and the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing* 诗经, note A21), Han historical texts (note B13), a Buddhist scripture translated during the Period of Division (*Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, *Daban niepan jing* 大般涅槃經, note B11), and the largest category, allusions to Tang poetry, which include references to the verse of Li Bai, (notes A19, A21, and B10), Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770, notes A3 and A17), Wei Yingwu 韋應物 (737-ca. 792, note A8), and Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824, note B19).⁶³

To a certain extent these allusions verified that Huang possessed enough learning to write great verse and also served the purpose of enriching what the eighteenth-century poet and critic Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 (1733-1818) called the poem's "texture" (*jili* 肌理).⁶⁴ At the time that Huang wrote his work the most influential group of poets was the so-called Qing Dynasty Song School (Qingdai Songshipai 清代宋詩派), which had included such great authors as Zheng Zhen 鄭珍 (1806-1864), Mo Youzhi, Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811-1872), Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909), and He Shaoji 何紹基 (1799-1873), all of whom had made major contributions to the development of nineteenth-century modernity. For them, mere "poet's poetry" (*shiren zhi shi* 詩人之詩) was insufficient, and great verse was a perfect blend of this and the "poetry of learning" (*xueren zhi shi* 學人之詩), an approach to writing that continued well into the twentieth century with later Song School authors such as Chen Sanli 陳三立 (1852-1936) and Zheng Xiaoxu 鄭孝胥 (1860-1938).⁶⁵ Although Huang Zunxian is not usually included in the Song School at present, the scholar and novelist Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書 (1910-1998) has clearly demonstrated how closely his approach resembles that of its major authors.⁶⁶

⁶³ Qian Esun's explanation of the allusion to the Han historical text, *Hanshu* 漢書, in note B13 is actually provided in vol. 1, p. 75, note 4, for the series of ten poems, "Xianggang ganhuai" 香港感懷.

⁶⁴ See my discussion of the importance of Weng Fanggang's theory and practice to the Song School in Schmidt, *The Poet Zheng Zhen*, pp. 257-258.

⁶⁵ We should make the point that in spite of the Song School's emphasis on learning and its debt to earlier literature, the works of its most outstanding members were highly original and the authors abhorred imitation of ancient models. Refer, for example, to He Shaoji's statement that: "I only study [past poets'] writings to allow me to get my hands on the subject. Once I have taken control of my own hands and eyes, I ought to be able to gallop side by side with the ancients. If I had been born before Du Fu, Du Fu would have had to study me!" 學古人書，只是借為入手，到得獨出手眼時，須當與古人並驅。若生在老杜前，老杜還當學我！ See He Shaoji, *Dongzhou caotang wenji* 東洲草堂文集, Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1973, vol. 1, juan 5, pp. 27ab, pp. 205-206 (this book has double pagination), "Yu Jiang Jushi lunshi" 與江菊士論詩, in *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan* 近代中國史料叢刊, no. 885.

⁶⁶ Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書. *Tanyilu, Budingben* 談藝錄補訂本. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984, pp. 29-30.

Many of the allusions just mentioned help anchor the work in the earlier poetic tradition, particular the rich corpus of works about separation from family members and the moon, the two most important “old” ideas that dominate the poem. For example, Huang’s line “Raising my head, I see the moon of my homeland” 举头只见故乡月 is modeled on a couplet by Li Bai known even to Chinese school children 举头望明月/低头思故乡 (“I raise my head and gaze at the moon;/I lower my head and think of my native village”). Similarly, the expression *beihuan lihe* 悲欢离合 echoes a poem in the *ci* 词 form by the Song master Su Shi 苏轼 (1037-1101) (“Humans experience sorrow, joy, separation, and union” 人有悲欢离合).⁶⁷ The lunar imagery of Huang’s poem is also largely supplied by another famous poem by Li Bai in which he describes a drinking party he had with the moon and his own shadow (see my note 60).

One must remark that compared to a master like Zheng Zhen or Mo Youzhi Huang’s use of his sources is not all that clever or striking, a much more interesting feature of the work being how he employs allusions to past literature to express his nineteenth-century modernity. As soon as we read his poem’s title we know that it is not a product of antiquity or the middle ages, partially because poems about ocean voyages are rare in earlier literature, but especially because the place name Taipingyang 太平洋 (‘Pacific Ocean’ or more literally ‘Great Peaceful Ocean’) is a neologism. The description of the ocean voyage and the appearance of another neologism, Taixi 泰西, in line eleven confirm what we suspected from the title, but we really know we are surrounded by an alien culture when in line fifteen we read Huang’s reference to the famous Tang story “The Curly Bearded Hero” (“Qiuranke zhuan” 虬髯客传), which he uses to describe the American sailors’ raucous singing at night. This is an excellent example of what I have called “exotic allusions” in my study of Huang’s poetry, i. e. references to a small corpus of texts from earlier prose and poetry (primarily Tang) about Western-looking people living near China’s borders in ancient times and during the middle ages, which Huang employs over and over to explain the nineteenth-century West to his readers.⁶⁸

Such allusions contribute to the “modern” feel of the work, but the most original use of the literary tradition to create a sense of modernity is found in the work’s very last line, where Huang writes “The dull morning sun rises [literally, “is born”] in the east” 朦胧晓日生于东. Qian Esun cites three texts to explain this line, the most ancient of which is the canonical *Record of Ritual* (*Liji* 礼记), where in a passage that explains how the natural realm manifests the underlying order of the universe, including the distinction between Yin and Yang and between male and female, we read:

The lord stands by the stairs, and his lady is in the room [just as the sun’s] great brightness is born in the east and the moon is born in the west [i.e. the crescent moon first appears in the west].⁶⁹ This is the distinction between Yin and Yang and the positions of

⁶⁷ Su Shi, “Shuidiao getou” 水調歌頭, in Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 ed., *Quan Songci* 全宋詞, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965, vol. 1, p. 280, “Mingyue jishi you” 明月几时有.

⁶⁸ See Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*, pp. 96-98, 106, 116-120.

⁶⁹ According to traditional commentaries the term *daming* in this line means ‘sun’.

male and female.君在阼，夫人在房。大明生于东，月生于西，此阴阳之分，夫妇之位也。⁷⁰

The thought encapsulated in this brief passage is hardly modern, for it affirms the traditional view of the world as a place of harmony in which each object's and every human being's position is determined by an unalterable natural order.

The second allusion in point of time identified by Qian Esun is to a line from a prose-poem by the Jin 晋 author Pan Yue 潘岳 (247-300) entitled "Prose Poem Inspired by Autumn" ("Qiuxing fu" 秋兴赋), which was written in 278.⁷¹ The first part of this work is informed by the traditional Chinese view that autumn is a sad season, an idea that was strongly influenced (as Pan states in his preface) by a passage written by the Zhou author Song Yu 宋玉 (fl. third c. B.C.). Although the work concludes by transcending the sad associations of the season via Daoist philosophy, the line cited by Qian Esun comes from the pessimistic first section of Pan's work, where the author laments the brevity of human life and provides a mournful and even eerie background to his piece by describing the howling of the wind and the buzzing of insects, and finally the barely visible moon and the freezing dew:

The moon is dim and holds back its light,⁷²
The dew is frigid and solidifies the cold.⁷³

月朦胧以含光兮
露凄清以凝冷。

Now it is possible that Huang Zunxian did not have either the *Record of Ritual* or Pan Yue's prose-poem in mind when he was writing his own piece, but, as a highly educated reader, he had most certainly read (and probably memorized) both and would have been familiar with the thought that underlay the two works. However, what is more remarkable than any direct allusion to the *Record of Ritual* or Pan Yue in Huang's work is how Huang used the term *menglong* 朦胧 ('dull, dim') found in Pan's piece to describe the sun, rather than the moon, the heavenly body to which it almost invariably refers, which is apparent from the moon radicals found in both of its characters. Although Pan Yue's prose-poem is highly pessimistic in its first part and would seem to question the comfortable, orderly world of the *Record of Ritual*, where all humanity, male and female, is assigned its proper place, in the end it becomes traditional enough, only selecting an alternative traditional philosophy to deal with the unpleasant realities of life. If Huang Zunxian actually had Pan's work in mind, he was obviously emphasizing the negative first part of it, but, in this case his use of a term for the moon to describe the sun is jarring

⁷⁰ See the original text and modern Chinese translation in Wang Meng'ou 王梦鸥 ed., *Liji jinzhuyinyi* 礼记今注今译, Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1974, vol. 1, juan 10, "Liqi" 礼器, pp. 326-7.

⁷¹ There is a modern Chinese commentary and translation of this work in Zhang Qicheng 张启成 ed. and tr., *Wenxuan quanyi* 文选全译, Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1994, vol. 1, pp. 735-743. Another version with the Tang scholar Li Shan's 李善 (630-689) commentary is found in Xiao Tong 萧统 ed., *Zhaoming wenxuan* 昭明文选, Taipei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1963, juan 13, pp. 175-177.

⁷² There is a variant text of *tonglong* 瞳胧 for *menglong* 朦胧 in most editions of the *Wenxuan*, the usual source for this work, but I am following Qian Esun's version here. Zhang Qicheng glosses *tonglong* as *menglong*. See Zhang Qicheng ed., *Wenxuan quanyi*, vol. 1, p. 740.

⁷³ See Zhang Qicheng ed., *Wenxuan quanyi*, vol. 1, p. 740.

at least, and potentially subversive to the order of the *Record of Ritual* and, indeed, to the order of Chinese society before the nineteenth century.

One might object that I am making too much of two simple radicals, but when we examine the third allusion identified by Qian Esun, my case becomes much stronger. For Huang, this was certainly the most important of the three allusions, because the closing line of his poem is clearly modeled on the last line of the very famous poem by Han Yu cited by Qian. This work describes the Tang author's visit to one of the China's holy mountains, Mount Heng 衡山, located in what is now known as Hunan Province. Han had been exiled to a local post in Guangdong Province in 803 as a result of a memorial he had written criticizing the government after a great drought but was fortunate enough to meet with a general amnesty in 805, after which he was appointed to another local post in Hubei. When traveling from Guangdong to Hubei, he passed by the holy mountain and wrote his magnificent piece after spending the night in a nearby Buddhist temple. The poem, like so much of Han's work, is disturbingly pessimistic with a marked contrast between the majesty of the mountain and the vulgarity of the priests in charge of the temple, Han concluding that "even if the [mountain's] god wanted to give me good fortune, he would find it difficult to succeed" 神纵欲福难为功 and then finishing his poem with the stark couplet:

Apes howl, a bell tolls, but I don't know it is dawn;
The bright sun rises in the east--cold.

猿鸣钟动不知曙
杲杲寒日生于东⁷⁴

Here the sun, that symbol of the universe's order in the *Record of Ritual*, has lost all of its heat so that it is scarcely noticed among the early morning howling of apes and tolling of a temple bell. In my study of Zheng Zhen and his Song School friends and disciples from Shatan, Guizhou, I have discussed the great influence that Han Yu's deeply pessimistic verse had upon the formation of what I call their "negative modernities", and although Huang Zunxian does not seem to have read Zheng or his direct followers, he must have seen the obvious connections between what I have termed Han Yu's "proto-modernity" and the negative aspects of the modernity of his nineteenth century.⁷⁵ As a result, the concluding couplet of Huang Zunxian's poem can be read as being subversive to the orderly universe of the "traditional" *Record of Ritual* and even to the ancient Daoist philosophy that underlies the conclusion to Pan Yue's prose-poem, for in Huang Zunxian's age nothing is certain any longer; even the sun has lost its brightness and warmth.

One might argue with my interpretation of the allusions to earlier literature in Huang's Mid-Autumn poem, but my interpretation is verified by the more obviously "modern" content of the work. We have already discussed what must have been running through Huang Zunxian's mind as he boarded the *City of Peking*, so we do not need to say more about his life on the Golden Hill during the previous three years. As we already stated, the Mid-Autumn Festival is a special time for Chinese, a time when they celebrate

⁷⁴ Han Yu, *Zhu Wengong jiao Changli xiansheng ji* 朱文公校昌黎先生集, juan 3, p. 37, "Ye Hengyuemiao sui su Yuesi ti menlou" 谒衡岳庙遂宿岳寺题门楼, in *Sibu congkan chubian suoben*.

⁷⁵ For my discussion of Zheng Zhen's negative modernities, see Schmidt, *The Poet Zheng Zhen*, p. 34. For the influence of Han Yu on Zheng's nature poetry, see *Ibid.*, pp. 350-352, 360-365, 367-368, 373, 382.

together with their families and friends. And yet the “family” that Huang thinks of as he stands alone on the ship’s deck consists of more than his family back in China but also includes the Chinese passengers below deck as well as his four hundred million Chinese compatriots living somewhere to the west of him. Here “family” has taken on a new meaning that includes the entire nation, a view that also has a long history in China but was growing in power with the increase in what I have termed the “positive modernity” of Chinese nationalism among the nineteenth-century Song School poets ever since the First Opium War.⁷⁶

Unfortunately, Huang’s link with his “family” is quite tenuous, for he is riding on a foreign ship with “curly bearded” Americans and drunken, blue-eyed sailors, a ship that confines most Chinese to miserable quarters in steerage class, where they sleep apart from Huang in conditions that would have landed them in jail in San Francisco as violators of the Cubic Air Ordinance. These distressing political and economic realities play a major role in creating Huang’s unbearable sense of isolation on the *City of Peking*, but modern, technological society is an equally important factor. Modern technology has given Huang the “freedom” to travel farther from his loved ones than any Chinese poet before his century, but now he is lost in the boundless Pacific Ocean, where there is not “an inch of dry land”, only “the dark heavens above” and “the black waters below”. Perhaps even more disturbing is how the traditional link between poet and family in poetry of this sort, the moon, is no longer dependable. Westerners know nothing of the Chinese lunar calendar, which is used to determine the date of the Mid-Autumn Festival in China, and the immensely larger world that modern exploration has revealed is so much greater in size than even the Chinese empire that while Huang is celebrating the festival on his ship, his family is probably sleeping on what is for them the morning after, assuming, of course, that he has not crossed the International Date Line yet! Huang Zunxian already realizes the terrifying duality of the Modern World, which on one hand offers better health and freedom from hard, manual labor, but on the other hand allows the technologically superior to dominate everyone else and destroys the traditional values that give meaning to our lives.⁷⁷

Still neither Zheng Zhen nor Huang Zunxian would have said that the modern world is totally negative, for both believed that the world can be improved by brave people willing to perform brave actions. Zheng Zhen never had the opportunity to do this except by teaching some of the finest minds of nineteenth-century China, but Huang Zunxian had already accomplished a good deal during his three year period of service in San Francisco. The Golden Hill had tried him to his limits but had not found him wanting. And, indeed, it is by means of modern technology, which spurred the great growth of journalism in nineteenth-century America (and China), one of the main sources for our study, as well as the wonders of the Internet during our own age, a technology which makes so much of the information of the past accessible to scholars today, along with modern library archives of the sort established in the University of Victoria, that we

⁷⁶ See Schmidt, *The Poet Zheng Zhen*, pp. 28, 33, 97-104.

⁷⁷ Huang Zunxian was by no means the first Chinese poet to explore this duality, much of which had been mapped out by other authors, particularly Zheng Zhen, before Western influence had become pervasive in China. See Schmidt, *The Poet Zheng Zhen*, pp. 29-39 and especially pp. 492-500 on the perils of new technology.

can gain a much fuller picture of this heroic modern man, Huang Zunxian, who felt the loneliness of modern life on board the *City of Peking* but never wavered from his course.