

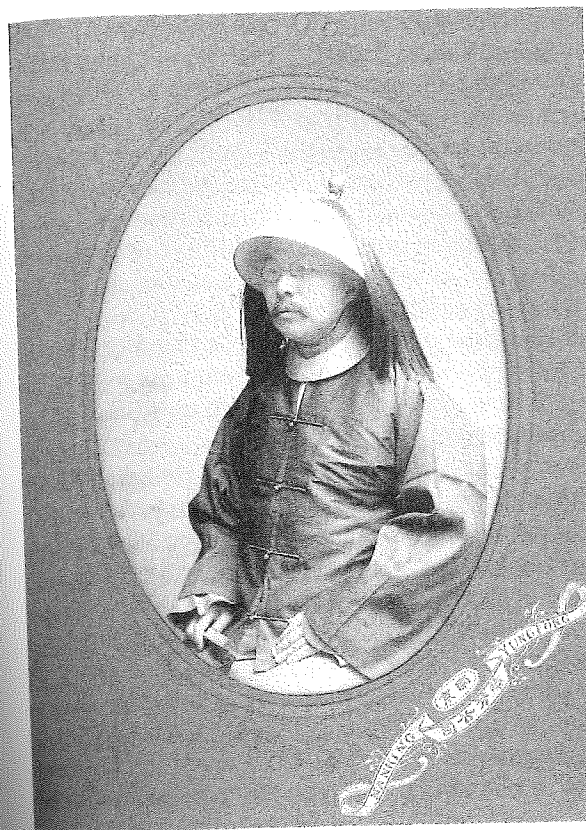
Reminiscences of a Pioneer Student (1923)

Wen Bing Chung

As a result of the early evangelical efforts of American missionaries in China, beginning in 1818 small groups of Chinese youths were brought to this country for an education. Although their numbers were small, they played an important and colorful role in history. Many of the students were associated with Yung Wing, who came to the United States in 1847 under American missionary sponsorship. He completed his middle school education at the Monson Academy in Massachusetts and became the first Chinese to graduate from an American college (Yale) in 1854. Upon his return to China, he successfully persuaded Chinese officials to sponsor the Chinese Educational Mission and send 120 young men to the United States for a Western education. The intention was that they would bring back technological skills to help China develop into a strong and prosperous nation. Among the students was Wen Bing Chung, who came with the second delegation in 1873.

The effort ended abruptly in 1881 because of fears that the students were becoming too Americanized and because of deteriorating relations between the two countries. About one hundred of the Educational Mission students returned to China; many assumed important positions in education, business, government, and the military. Wen Bing Chung became one of China's foremost engineers and superintendent of customs in Suzhou. The following excerpts are taken from a speech that he gave to a group of students at the Customs College in Beijing on December 23, 1923, in which he recalled the purpose and impact of the Chinese Educational Mission on China as well as his student days in the United States.

I am going to relate to you this evening: how the Chinese Government was persuaded to despatch the first government students to the United States of America to be educated. I will give you a succinct account only, because it will occupy too much of your valuable time, and is too long and tedious a narrative, covering as it does a period of more than fifty years.



Wen Bing Chung.
(La Fargue Collection,
Washington State
University Libraries)

It was in 1870 that some unfortunate missionaries were killed by the rough elements in Tientsin.¹ The Chinese officials had great difficulty in engaging the service of [an] efficient interpreter and translator to help them in the case, and were often obliged to fall upon the assistance of foreigners, thus experiencing great inconvenience during negotiations with the consular representatives.

About this time the officials were informed of the arrival at Shanghai of a young Cantonese student who had but recently returned from the United States after graduating with honors in the Yale University. The young man was Yung Wing, a village urchin in the district of Hsiang Shan, Kwangtung

1. In response to rumors of kidnapping and other abuses circulating against the missions in Tientsin, a riot broke out that resulted in the deaths of twenty-one Westerners and thirty Chinese Christians, and the destruction of buildings belonging to the French consul and the missionaries.

Province. He attracted the attention of a missionary by his bright and smart appearance, and was afterwards taken by the latter to America. With slender resources but with a determined mind, he worked his way first through the primary schools and then finished brilliantly at Yale. As he made his debut into the world, his first thought was to realize a dream that he had nourished during his college days. The dream was to induce the Chinese Government to despatch students to the United States for education so that in due time China would have [a] sufficient number of Western educated men to administer the affairs of the state so as to elevate the status of the country to an equal footing with foreign nations.

Having received an invitation from the great Viceroy Li Hung Chang to proceed north immediately, Yung Wing came to Tientsin in time to help in the negotiation and settlement of the case of the murdered missionaries, to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

Viceroy Li was highly pleased with Yung Wing's services. He asked Yung Wing what he could do for him. Yung Wing saw his opportunity; there and then he disclosed his cherished dream; he pointed out to the Viceroy the importance of sending government students to America, and with growing intercourse with the Western people, the great advantages that China would reap in diplomacy, commerce and industry through the knowledge and experience acquired by the students abroad.

The Viceroy was impressed by Yung Wing's earnestness and enthusiasm and he promised to give him his support. There was, however, a slight drawback. Although Li Hung Chang was then the senior Viceroy in the Empire, he was loath and even timid to be the first and only advocate of an educational commission to the United States. The idea was too advanced for conservative China. Therefore, he sought to interest Viceroy Tseng Kuo-fan of the Liang Kiang Provinces and Ting Yi-chang of the Min-Cheh Provinces in Yung Wing's scheme, and succeeded to influence them to present a joint memorial to the Throne emphasising the benefit of sending government students abroad to be educated. In due course the memorial was sanctioned by the Throne.

Yung Wing was at once appointed Commissioner of Education and Chen Lan Ping Co-Associate Commissioner; these two were to have full charge and control of the students during their education in the United States.

Yung Wing's plan was to despatch thirty students each year for four consecutive years, making a total number of one hundred and twenty boys. A school was established at Shanghai in 1870, in order that prospective students should undergo a course of Chinese studies and a preliminary one in English. Examinations were held semi-annually for the selection of bright and competent students.

It is unnecessary to dwell at any length over the school days of these students. Suffice it to say that as boys will always be boys, the students of those

days did not differ from those of today. They did not, however, have any tennis, football, basketball and other games, nor any holiday except during the Chinese New Year, Fifth Moon and Eighth Moon festivals. Much study and little play was the order of the school.

The inspector of the school was an autocrat. He believed in the use of the bamboo for the maintenance of discipline, and applied it with vigour on those who lagged in their studies. Still he was remembered by the students in after years with some affection, for although he put the fear of the Big Stick into them, he also made them learn the characters, the knowledge of which proved most useful on their return to China. . . .

The first batch of thirty students after passing the examination were despatched to the United States in 1871; the second batch in 1872; and the third and fourth in 1873 and 1874, respectively. Prior to their departure, the students were provided with a "pukai"² and a small trunk containing a few long gowns, "maqua"³ and other sundries. They were instructed how to behave before the officials and trained in the rules of etiquette. . . .

The voyage across the Pacific was made in twenty-eight days, a long and tiresome voyage. Luckily for the students, the sea was calm and the days were bright and cheerful. They had got over their *mal de mer* and spent their time on deck, gazing at the blue expanse or watching a school of flying fishes sporting themselves. Occasionally, a whale spouting a column of water skyward would cause a flutter of excitement on board. Games were organized on board for the boys, and the days soon flew by before the students realized the steamer was sailing through the Golden Gate and the voyage had come to an end.

The sights that greeted the students in the harbour of San Francisco remained vividly in their memories for years afterwards. The steam launches and ships moving or anchored at their berths—the neat looking cottages on the lower levels and the stately mansions peering through the foliage of well kept lawns,—the business houses clustering like bees in the centre of the city—all seemed very grand to the students.

Soon the steamer was along the wharf. The students were driven to the Palace Hotel, a nine-story building, which was then the largest building in San Francisco. They tarried three days in this beautiful city, spending their time in sight-seeing; and enjoying themselves hugely.

It was not without a tinge of regret when the students had to leave San Francisco and board the train which was to transport them across the American Continent, a distance of more than 3,000 miles, in six days and six nights. A special car was reserved for the students. The train stopped three times a day to allow the passengers to get down to eat, as there was no dining car at-

2. Bedding.

3. A Mandarin jacket worn over a man's traditional long gown.

tached to the train. There were restaurants near or at the station. Standing at the restaurant door were two men, one ringing a bell and another beating a gong in order to attract the patrons. Fifteen minutes were allotted for eating, and hence when the train stopped for meal time, the passengers would race for the nearest restaurant and the same undignified scramble for the train would take place on the first sound of the bell for the train to start. In this way, the meals during the six days on the train were gobbled down with much discomfort.

During the first part of the journey, the train passed many tunnels in getting through the Rocky Mountains, and after that for four days it ran over the vast prairie land, and at the stations along the route the students saw genuine red Indians, natives of the American Continent, dressed in their original costumes, with eagle feathers projecting from their black hair, their faces painted in different colours, similar to the painted actors on the Chinese stage, and armed with bows and arrows. . . .

When the students arrived at New York, they remained one night in a hotel and [the] following day took a train for Springfield in the State of Massachusetts. On their arrival they stayed in a hotel where they were presented to Dr. Yung Wing,⁴ who had left China several months before the students, in order to make the necessary preparations for their education. The next day Dr. Yung Wing assigned the students to their respective teachers who had come to take the students away to their own homes in the various parts of the States and who were to have the guardianship over them during their term in America. The students were distributed in twos and fours and placed under the care of their guardians. Those students who were advanced enough in English were sent to schools while the others were given private lessons at home.

At first the students wore the Chinese dress. Their long gown and "maqua," with their plaited queues, made them look like girls to the Americans. It was, to say the least, very embarrassing that each time the students ventured out of doors, they would draw a crowd that would follow and call them "Chinese girls." For the sake of convenience and less publicity, the students after they had been in America for some months prevailed upon the Chinese commissioners to allow them to adopt the costume of the country.

The students being all under fifteen years old were quick to receive impressions of the new life and to assimilate American ideas and ideals, retaining them permanently even to this day. They entered into the spirit of the schools, played baseball and football, and fought their way with the fists in true American style. After a few years the boys had become thoroughly Americanized breathing the air of freedom and independence, but they had

4. Although Wen Bing Chung addresses Yung Wing as Dr. Yung Wing throughout his speech, he did not have a doctorate degree.

their hard times, too. They were allowed one dollar a month for pocket money, a paltry pittance as they grew older and their amusements and pleasures increased in proportion.

The progress made by the students in their studies was steady and satisfactory, but one of the two Chinese Commissioners, a Hanlin,⁵ was alarmed at the rapid rate [at which] the students were becoming imbued with the spirit of their environments—they were developing into more like go-ahead Americans in their ways than the humble and sedate subjects of the Emperor. This official sent a memorial to the Throne, stating that the students would soon fast turn into foreign devils unless they were sent home at once. Unfortunately for the students, the memorial was sanctioned, and a decree was issued for their recall.

It was a sad day when the students received the news that they were to be sent home. The majority of them were one or two years from their graduation; it was heartbreaking to have their scholastic career brought to an untimely termination. The students called a mass meeting and delegated a party to interview Dr. Yung Wing with the hope of getting the latter to intercede with the Government on their behalf. Dr. Yung Wing calmed the students by telling them they were only going to China for a vacation and would soon be back to America to finish their studies. It was on this assurance that the students consented to return to China, but alas! Not half a dozen ever went back.

The students had formed strong ties of friendship with the people they stayed with, and with the American boys in schools and colleges. So when the date of their departure was set, it was with saddened hearts that they bade good-bye to their friends and scenes of boyhood. It should be mentioned that the students carried with them most grateful memories of the kind and almost parental treatment they received from their American guardians and teachers.

On the homeward journey in 1881 the students stopped over at San Francisco, and while they were waiting for their steamer they received a challenge from the Oakland baseball team, which they were glad to accept by way of diversion. Now the Chinese nine had a twirler that played for Yale, and could do some wonderful curves with the ball, although in those days it was underhand pitching. Before the game began, the Oakland men imagined that they were going to have a walk-over with the Chinese. Who had seen Celestials playing baseball forty years ago? But the Oakland nine got the shock of their life as soon as they attempted to connect with the deliveries of the Chinese pitcher; the fans were equally surprised at the strange phenomenon—Chinese playing their national ball game and showing the Yankees some of the thrills in the game. Unimaginable! All the same, the Chinese walloped

5. In reference to Woo Tze-teng, who was a Hanlin or a member of the Imperial Academy.

them, to the great rejoicing of their comrades and fellow countrymen. This was the last baseball game the Chinese team played, for they never got together again afterwards.

These students that went to study in America from the year 1871 to 1881 were pioneers, paving the way for future students and dispelling the superstitious fear that held the better classes of our people from sending their sons to America and Europe. But on their return home, they were not greeted with open arms by the Government. On the contrary, when they landed at Shanghai, they were at once taken to the native city and locked up in a large building. They were not allowed out; and this restriction on their liberty was very much resented by these boys, fresh from the land of the Free. One day, being unable to resist the temptation of seeing the sights, outside the wall, one of the students who happened to be the baseball pitcher and also a good boxer gave the guards a severe jolting for trying to bar his passage out. The matter was reported to the director in charge of the students, who saw the unreasonableness of detaining the students as prisoners and therefore permitted them on parole to go out and come back before dark.

Not long after their return, the students were despatched by the Government to different parts of the country. Then commenced their life battles in earnest. The students were poorly paid, most of them receiving four taels⁶ a month; they suffered great hardships in the struggle for existence. They encountered prejudice and strong opposition from the literary and official classes, who declared that the students had become "foreign devils" and were of "no use to the country." By dint of patience and perseverance and plodding along for years, these students gradually convinced the Government of their integrity, loyalty and patriotism. Finally the Government showed its appreciation of the students by appointing them to high offices of trust and responsibility.

It may interest you if I mention a few of these pioneer students whose achievements will always be remembered by their old school mates. During the college days, one of the students Mr. Chung Mun-yao was the coxswain that steered the Yale University boat to victory against Harvard University for two consecutive years. The famous pitcher of the Chinese team, after struggling for twenty years, rose on his own ability and merits to many high and important government positions, such as the Haikuan Taotai⁷ at Hankow, Tientsin, Foreign Minister in the Ching Dynasty, and Minister of Communications in the Republic. This baseball pitcher, Mr. Liang Tung-yen, is the uncle of the Peking Champion tennis player of the Customs College, of which he was one of the founders. The first premier of the Republic of China was Mr. Tong Shao-yi, one of [the] pioneer students, who was also the founder

6. Four taels of silver was little better than the wages of Chinese laborers at the time.

7. Chief of Customs.

and the first Associate Director-General of the Shui Wu Chu⁸ in 1906. In the military and naval service, many have been promoted to the ranks of admirals and generals. Among them is Admiral Tsai Ting-kang, the present Associate Director-General of the Shui Wu Chu. In the naval battle of Yalu, 1894, a pioneer student, Admiral Woo Ying-foo, won the much coveted Manchu title of Bahtuhlu⁹ for conspicuous bravery. The Kin-Chang Railroad was built by the late Chief Engineer Jim Tien Yu, a pioneer student. Many others have gained fame and honour in different fields of activities.

Such then were the pioneer students who had the courage in those days to face the perils of a long and uncertain voyage across the Pacific and an overland journey of more than 3,000 miles; who lived in an alien land, in order to learn its language, science and literature; who on their return demonstrated to their countrymen the wisdom as well as the benefit of commercial and friendly intercourse with occidental nations, thereby strengthening and enriching their own country and bringing about in time the brotherhood of nations. The pioneer students have served their days and generation; they have given the best of their life energy to the building up of a new China.

Of the 120 pioneer students, more than half have gone over to the Great Beyond. But those remaining, although they have passed three score years, show no sign of diminished activity; and many are still in the saddle, for few could afford to retire on their humble savings. This latter fact speaks for the honesty of the pioneer students as a whole. But the field of their usefulness is ever lessening as the years advance.

You, young gentlemen, after your graduation from this College, must carry on the noble and loving task to make this great Republic of ours strong and prosperous among the leading nations of the world. Now, as students of the Customs College, you have a special part to perform. Since China's commerce is gradually expanding and more ports will be thrown open to foreign trade, the establishment of customs houses will be on the increase, and more qualified assistants for the Service will be required. This Customs College will be able to supply the Service with competent men. Therefore, the future before you is full of bright prospects and your career will be of the most promising character. The hard work that you put into your studies will not be in vain, for in due season you will be amply rewarded.

SOURCE: Chinese Educational Mission, Thomas Edward La Fargue Papers, Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, Pullman, Washington.

8. Imperial Telegraph Administration.

9. A title conferred during the Qing dynasty for active service in the field that carries with it the right to wear the peacock feather.

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Reminiscences of an Old Chinese Railroad Worker (1926)

Wong Hau-hon

Although many of the early Chinese who came to North America in the nineteenth century were engaged in mining and railroad construction in the far West, very few records of their experiences remain. This recollection by Wong Hau-hon, who worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), may well be the only existing account. Although it tells of his experiences as a railroad worker in the mountainous terrain of British Columbia in western Canada, the harsh working conditions were similar to those faced by Chinese workers on the Central Pacific line in the United States.

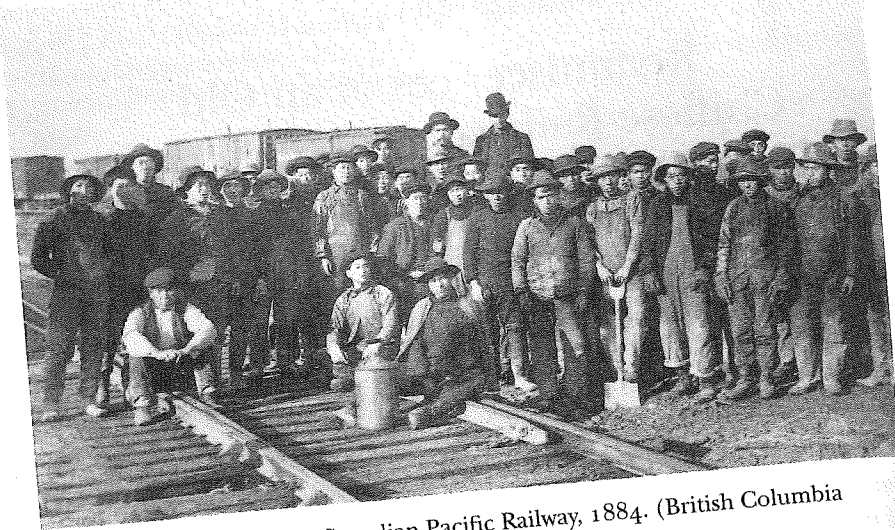
Chinese first began to enter Canada in the mid-nineteenth century as miners, and between the years 1881 and 1885 over ten thousand Chinese were recruited from San Francisco and China to work on the British Columbia section of the transcontinental railroad. The CPR labor contractor in charge of overseeing the Chinese testified before the Canadian government that approximately six hundred Chinese were killed during the railway's construction, mainly due to frequent accidents, poor food, and weather conditions. This averaged four Chinese lives for every mile of track laid. The actual number of deaths is most likely higher, although Wong Hau-hon's estimate of three thousand is probably too high. The numbers, however, reflect the railroad's fearsome reputation among the Canadian Chinese.

Wong hailed from Xinhui District in Guangdong Province and offered these recollections in 1926, soon after Canada tightened its laws against Chinese immigration.

I first came to Canada in 1882 (the 8th year of Guangxu)¹ on a sailing vessel. There were ninety or so fellow Chinese on the same ship. We debarked at Westminister in mid-March of that year.

After a few days ashore, I set out on foot with a group of about four hundred Chinese to join the railroad construction crews at Yale [British Columbia].

1. Reigning title of the ninth emperor of the Qing dynasty who ruled from 1875 to 1906.



Chinese work crew on the Canadian Pacific Railway, 1884. (British Columbia Archives #D-07548)

In the daytime we walked and at night we slept in cloth tents beneath the trees. Those who did not have tents hung up their blankets to act as makeshift shelters.

After our arrival at Yale, we had worked only two days when the white foreman ordered the gang to which I was assigned to move to North Bend. We started on our way at seven in the morning; there were many Chinese in our traveling group. The weather was bad, for it rained all day, and we were all wet and cold. Among our traveling companions there were some arrivals who were unaccustomed to the exposure of the Canadian climate and sickened. Some died as they rested beneath the trees or lay on the ground. When I saw this I felt miserable and sad. Fortunately I was in more robust health and continued my journey until I reached the destination.

When we arrived at North Bend, we pitched our tents by the river. But the river level rose because of the recent rains and within a week we had to move our camp three times. The floods also severed the road from Vancouver to North Bend in several places so that pack trains could not come through. Our food supply was cut off and our store of provisions dwindled.

Our foreman then ordered us to pack up and return to Yale. So, although already suffering pangs of hunger, we had to start on our way immediately. When we were passing China Bar on the way, many of the Chinese died from an epidemic. As there were no coffins to bury the dead, the bodies were stuffed into rock crevices or beneath the trees to await their arrival. Those

whose burials could not wait were buried on the spot in boxes made of crude thin planks hastily fastened together. There were even some who were buried in the ground wrapped only in blankets or grass mats. New graves dotted the landscape and the sight sent chills up and down my spine.

When we returned to Yale, we worked there for a while. Then the foreman ordered us to move to Hope. At that time I belonged to gang No. 161. Each gang consisted of about thirty workers and I heard that there were more than 380 gangs.

The work at Hope was very dangerous. On one occasion, there was a huge rock on the slope of the mountain that stood in the railroad's path and must be removed by blasting before the tracks could go through. However, the sides of the rock were nearly perpendicular all around and there was no easy way to reach the top. The workers had to scramble to the top by use of timber scaffolding and by ropes fastened to the rock. After they reached the top they drilled holes in the rock to hold the dynamite charges.

I was one of the workers who were assigned the task of drilling. Each morning I climbed the rock, and after I had finished the day's work I was lowered again by rope. I remembered that in blasting this rock more than three hundred barrels of explosives were used.

When blasting, all of the workers usually hid away in a safe place. But in spite of this there was one, Leung, who was killed. Actually Leung had already gone behind another hill, where he thought he would be safe. He then sat on the hillside and lit his pipe while he waited for the blasting to proceed. Unexpectedly, a huge boulder thrown up by the blast landed on the hillside where Leung was sitting and rolled down the slope, hitting him in the back. We heard a piercing shriek, and by the time we reached him Leung was already dead.

Another incident occurred about ten to fifteen miles west of Yale. Dynamite was used to blast a rock cave. Twenty charges were placed and ignited, but only eighteen blasts went off. However, the white foreman, thinking that all of the dynamite had gone off, ordered the Chinese workers to enter the cave to resume work. Just at that moment the remaining two charges suddenly exploded. Chinese bodies flew from the cave as if shot from a cannon. Blood and flesh were mixed in a horrible mess. On this occasion about ten or twenty workers were killed.

In 1883 I moved from Hope to Thompson River and worked there a month. Fortunately I suffered no accidents. Later I moved again to work in a barren wilderness for more than a year. There, more than one thousand Chinese laborers perished from epidemics. In all, more than three thousand Chinese died during the building of the railroad from diseases and accidents.

I am now sixty-two and I have experienced many hardships and difficulties in my life. I am proud of the fact that we Chinese contributed much to the development of transportation in Canada. Yet now the government is

enforcing forty-three discriminatory immigration regulations against us. The Canadian people surely must have short memories!

SOURCE: *East/West*, May 5, 1971, p. 6. Translator: Him Mark Lai.

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Memorandum No. 29 to Envoy Zheng (1882)

Huang Zunxian

Following their conquest of China in 1644, the Manchus (Qing dynasty) for decades had forbidden Chinese emigration to prevent loyalists to the dethroned Ming emperor from going abroad. This policy changed after the ratification of the Burlingame Treaty of 1868, which allowed for free migration between China and the United States and the right of China to appoint consuls at U.S. ports. After repeated requests by the Chinese Six Companies for the Qing regime to send officials to protect the interests of Chinese in America, two Chinese ministers, Chen Lanbin and Yung Wing, were finally appointed to Washington, D.C., in 1875. The two men had previously been assigned to supervise the Chinese Educational Mission in New England in 1872. Once made aware of the many problems facing the Chinese in California, they requested and were granted the authority to appoint a consul general in San Francisco. In 1881, Zheng Zaoru, known for being a skilled diplomat, replaced the two ministers in Washington and served as envoy until 1885. He appointed Huang Zunxian, a scholar from Guangdong, to be the consul general of San Francisco.

As the following report from Consul Huang to Envoy Zheng shows, both were in constant communication with one another over matters of grave concern to Chinese immigrants. Their job was to defend the Chinese against racial discrimination and mistreatment according to the stipulations of the Burlingame Treaty. This included making appeals to the U.S. government, filing lawsuits, and seeking reparations on behalf of wronged individuals. During Zheng's four-year term of office, he did what he could to protest treaty violations in the Chinese Exclusion Act, to fight discrimination against Chinese laundrymen, to stop the trafficking of Chinese women, and to negotiate indemnities for victims of the Rock Springs massacre in 1885. Although he was successful in many of these cases, his frustrations in dealing with lawlessness and violence against the Chinese soon led him to request a transfer. Consul Huang, known for his mediation skills in San Francisco Chinatown, left office at the same time.

Your Excellency's letter No. 27 arrived on the ninth day of this month, followed by letters No. 28 and No. 29 on the twenty-fifth and twenty-seventh, respectively. I have studied each of them carefully and understood their contents. The following is my report, in which I have attempted to provide information and responses, per your instructions.

Regarding the matter of Chinese laborers borrowing passage [through the United States], a subject which your Excellency has repeatedly discussed with the State Department, I have just learned that the U.S. Attorney General has written to the State Department advising that, in view of the new Exclusion Act and treaty regulations, Chinese laborers in transit through the United States are considered to be different from those contracted to work here and this therefore does not infringe on the new Exclusion Act restricting entry of Chinese laborers. If this is the case, the right of passage is permitted and all Chinese laborers residing in South America and the West Indies will be grateful for this act of kindness and glad for the convenience they will enjoy in their travels. I wonder if your office has received any dispatch about this from the State Department. Please advise if there are additional stipulations.¹

As for new ordinances against laundry facilities, they were first challenged and refuted by our attorney. Then, in the middle of October, the regulatory board drafted a new ordinance with seven articles. The Chinese who have come to the U.S. to work are generally engaged in mining, road construction, and restaurant work. The only area where they can offer any kind of competition to Americans is the laundry business. Laundries can be found in numbers in cities everywhere. For example, just in the city of San Francisco, there are five to six thousand people engaged in laundry work. In the laundries, clothes are allowed to pile up, creating fire hazards. Water consumption is high and filthy conditions exist. Sometimes laundry workers carouse through the night, disturbing the neighbors, causing ill feelings, and attracting hostility. That is why laundries are often sued. A new ordinance was passed last year stipulating that only brick buildings are allowed to house laundries. This year another ordinance passed that requires recommendations from twelve property owners in the vicinity before a laundry can commence operation. Both the above-mentioned laws were repealed. This time, there is a new ordinance with seven articles. Article Five bans operation between ten o'clock in the evening and six in the morning. Article Six prohibits the sheltering of people with communicable diseases. In truth, both articles should be observed. The same also applies to the third and fourth

1. It was due to Zheng's diplomatic skills that President Chester Arthur first vetoed the Chinese Exclusion Act, reduced the period of immigration suspension from twenty years to ten years, and allowed Chinese laborers passing through the country to be exempted from the Exclusion Act.

articles about fire prevention and sewage construction, which are not unreasonable. Yet I am genuinely concerned by the Board's requirement of a license. I'm afraid that the process is just an excuse to cavil and find faults so as to drive laundries out. I have no choice but to challenge them in court. At the present time I have instructed the laundries to continue operation under prior regulations and have also retained attorneys to represent us, since the new law is about to take effect and legal action should begin before long. In my opinion, even if we are fortunate enough in getting the new law repealed, we should still instruct the laundries to establish formal guidelines to regulate themselves so as not to cause trouble in the future.²

The Ma Din case was tried in a local court at the end of the tenth month of the lunar calendar. One man pushed a Chinese off a building. Another man assembled a crowd by beating a gong and encouraged them to use thick ropes to pull down the building. The Americans who witnessed what happened, who lent the gong and who supplied the ropes, all came forward to testify. Yet, despite the many reliable depositions, the presiding judge handed down the decision to acquit. (McAllister was assigned to handle this case, but he refused.)³ The attorney, [Thomas] Riordan, said he heard that the two men spent a huge sum of money to hire attorneys and to bribe all the investigating officers. That was why they were acquitted. "Those characters paid a heavy price in this case, so that should serve as a warning against similar crimes," added Riordan. "But if one wants to get them convicted, it is close to impossible. It happened in a small community where honest men are few and the so-called officials are no better than the criminals." Earlier, the foreman, Seeto, presented a list of damages totaling a little over a thousand dollars (not really a heavy loss in my estimation); nevertheless the official in charge rejected it for lack of proof. Riordan also said, "If we want compensation, we need to have the case moved and tried at some other court. However, I'm afraid it will cost too much and the loss will outweigh the gain." At present, the three other men arrested with the two culprits have not been tried yet; presumably they will also be acquitted. I have not decided whether further action should be taken to deal with Seeto's loss. After the whole case is settled, I will have the attorney make a copy of the entire trial proceedings and forward it to Your Excellency.

2. The Chinese laundrymen would eventually take their fight all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, resulting in the famous 1886 *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* decision, which determined that the San Francisco ordinances discriminated against the Chinese and violated the "equal protection" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

3. Hall McAllister, of the established law firm McAllister and Bergin, was the lead counsel in the *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* case and had been retained by the Chinese community a number of other times.

It was recently reported in the newspapers that the Treasury Department⁴ dispatched an agent, Yu Sun, to Port Townsend, Washington, to investigate the case of a group of Chinese laborers and immoral Chinese women attempting to enter the United States in violation of the new law. Port Townsend borders Victoria, British Columbia. Recent reports revealed that a dozen or so Chinese women were shipped from Hong Kong to Victoria. Local Chinese businessmen brought charges before the British authorities that these women are prostitutes. An official investigation followed but no evidence was found. Nevertheless, the media reported that those prostitutes were in fact destined for the United States, so a Treasury agent was sent to look into the matter. The new Exclusion Act restricts entry of Chinese laborers and is never meant to bar women. In a recent case in Portland, not only was a Chinese woman allowed entry, it was also ruled that a woman can enjoy the same rights as her husband; if a Chinese laborer is here, his wife and daughters are permitted to be here as well.⁵ The only problem is that among the female population in San Francisco, there are more prostitutes than decent women. Every time a [Chinese] prostitute arrives, fighting would erupt among the Triad members⁶ who battle each other for a share of the profits, even resorting to kidnapping. Because of the money that can be made, impoverished Tanka⁷ people and unscrupulous merchants plot and scheme to get women to the United States. (A woman brought to San Francisco, for example, can fetch over a thousand dollars. Leung Tai Kee, a trading company in Hong Kong, is actually a trafficker in prostitutes, and responsible for shipping those prostitutes who came here in the second lunar month this year. It is said that the owner of that company came from a well-off family but suffered a financial setback this year due to a shipwreck, and now he will stop at nothing to make money.)

The issue is constantly on my mind. On one hand, I really don't want the new Act to ban Chinese women as well; on the other hand, in light of what is happening in San Francisco, neither do I want prostitutes to come here under false pretenses to create trouble. In a previous report, I submitted a proposal to refute the new Exclusion Act. I suggested that before the Chi-

4. The first Bureau of Immigration was established within the Treasury Department in 1891. Before then, the collection of customs and inspection of ships were within the purview of the Treasury Department. It was not until 1940 that immigration came under the supervision of the Department of Justice.

5. Two years later, in the cases of *Ah Quan* and *Ah Moy*, the federal court would rule that wives of Chinese laborers assumed their husbands' status as laborers and were therefore barred from entry.

6. Triads were secret societies that engaged in criminal activities such as gambling and prostitution.

7. A loose term for people who live and make their living on boats in the South China coastal region.

nese authorities issue a passport, any woman who wants to come to the United States must first show proof of sponsorship from a business owner in San Francisco, subject to verification by the Consul General who will then issue a certificate. Only with this certificate in hand is the person eligible for a passport. In this way we can stop fraud and abduction and eliminate trouble. I await your decision on the feasibility of my proposal.

SOURCE: Huang Zunxian, "Shang Zheng Yuxuan qinshi bingwen [Reports to Envoy Zheng]," in *Jindai ziliao* [Contemporary historical documents] (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1984), pp. 54-55. Translator: Ellen Yeung.

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