

Supplementary Notes on US media coverage of Zhigang's mission

These notes were compiled during the course of my research on *Qing Travelers to the Far West* in 2010-2012. They informed how I understood and wrote about the mission, but most of these materials did not make it into the book.

2-19-1869 *Daily News* “Relations Between Great Britain and China”

In this exchange between Anson Burlingame and the Earl of Clarendon, the Foreign Minister of the Great Britain, it is clear that Britain had a much firmer agenda for the treaty revision. After agreeing that they understand that China needs more time, Clarendon says that “Her Majesty’s Government expected China a faithful observance of the stipulations of existing treaties.” “Provincial Governors are too often in the habit of disregarding the rights of foreigners, trusting to impunity as regards to Central Government of Peking...It rests with the Central Government so to order its intercourses with Great Britain and the Queen’s subjects as to avoid cause of difference.”

5-18-1868 *New York Times* “China and America: The Chinese Embassy Banquet in San Francisco”

- Those attended were “leading officials and business men” and representatives of other official or commercials of all the great powers of the world”: Anson Burlingame, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from the Chinese Government to the Treaty Powers; Chih Tajen and Sun Tajen, Chinese Ministers; J. McLeavy Brown, First Secretary of Legation; Monsieur E. de Champs, Second Secretary of Legation.
- Gov. Haight’s speech was a proud celebration of American superiority, Western civilization and Burlingame’s achievement in bringing into contact the oldest, most secluded (and presumably clueless) nation and one of the “the young, impulsive, progressive civilization.”
- He began his speech with “The object of this festival is the proper commemoration of a great historic event, and to welcome in this first landing place in the territory of the United States a distinguished gentlemen, your guest, who is on his way to represent the Chinese Empire at the capital of America and Europe. The event to which I refer is one of those which mark a step forward in human progress, introducing, as it goes, an Empire, one of the oldest, if not the oldest, of all that exist on the globe, into the great family of nations.”
- Burlingame’s speech emphasizes the misunderstanding until the West came into contact with the central authority in 1860. Outlines the cooperative policy: “An agreement on the part of the Treaty Powers to act together upon all material questions; to stand together in defense of their treaty rights; and the determination, at the same time, to give to these treaties a generous construction; a determination to maintain the foreign system of customs, and to support it by a pure administration, and upon a cosmopolitan basis; an agreement to take no concessions of territory to the Treaty of Powers, and never to menace the territorial integrity of China.” Lists the commercial, political, and intellectual progress in China after the execution of these policies. Commemorates Sir Frederick Bruce, the late British Minister at Washington, for bringing forward the policy. “That great man, recalling the traditions and the practices of his own country, said that they

jarred upon the moral sense of England, and that he was ready upon his own responsibility to reverse them.”

- Zhigang’s speech (probably disappointed his hosts with how little he responds to the enthusiasm of the previous speakers about the political significance of this mission). He merely thanked Burlingame and quickly concluded with a traditional 谕 to his countrymen (Zhigang has in his journal the Chinese text he read aloud), translated by Brown according to English conventions. “On Leaving Pekin I was charged by his Majesty, our august Emperor, to assure you of his affectionate interest in your welfare. It is his Majesty’s hope that, though living in a distant land, you will ever strive, by your conduct, to uphold the respectability and good name of your native country. To do so, let me urge you not to forget the precepts which have been handed down from age to age by the wise and good men of China. Do not fail to pay due regard to the requirements of the various social relations and neglect not your moral duties as men. Be careful to obey the laws and regulations of the nation in which you reside.”

5-28-1868 *Brooklyn Eagle* “The Embassy” (This newspaper usually reports in a highly racist and sarcastic tone, and with little attention to accuracy.)

- On 5-27 the mission visited the Cooper Institute. “All the points of interest therein were shown up, and talked of, and during all the time the interpreter’s tongue was kept very busy.” The Chinese were interested in their exhibition of Chinese charts and maps. Went to the Geographical Society, Art Galleries (went onto the roof to survey the city) Then they went to the Astor Library, and then Tiffany and Co’s Jewelry Store.
- On 5-28 the embassy will visit the 7th Regiment, N. Y, and the Union Squire.

6-20-1868 *Glasgow Herald* “The Chinese Embassy and Secretary Seward”

- An account of the exchange of letters with Secretary Seward. Led by the two Tajens, one of whom, in spectacles, looks extremely like a masquerading professor of divinity...” “Chih Tajen was the first introduced to the Secretary by Mr. Burlingame, and passed along with a little facetious pantomime to make way for Sun Tajen, the lively and irrepressible philosopher of the party. If Sun could have delivered himself in the vernacular, Seward would evidently have been delighted, as it was easy for him to see in the merry twinkle of Sun’s diplomatic eye a man after his own heart.” ...” While Secretary Seward was drawing out a sort of passport to enable the Embassy to travel all over Europe, Chih Tajen, who is a man of calmly contemplative turn, retired to the recess of a window overlooking a suburban part of the city, and appeared absorbed in noting the features of the scene before him.”

6-25-1868 *New York Times* “Facts for the Chinese Embassy”

The author is passionate about readdressing the inequalities that the Chinese in California have been treated with. First he cites Burlingame’s favorable depiction of the Chinese as a civilized, intelligent, industrious, polite, and sober people, and goes on to warn him that mere rhetoric is not enough. “This is high praise, and the demands are but justice. But it is exceedingly to be hoped that these eloquent words of the Chinese Ambassador may not end merely in philanthropic and social sentiments, or after-dinner enthusiasm.” The Chinese in California were excluded from working in mines, from locating mining claims, compelled to pay a tax of four dollars (which Mexican and Spanish vagabond works were

entirely free from), and “no testimony of a Mongolian, with reference to crimes committed on his race by whites, can be received by the Courts.” The author is clearly from the Republican Party.

7-7-1868 *Daily News* “Mr. Burlingame and the Chinese Embassy”

A transcript of Burlingame’s speech on June 23, during a dinner with leading New York merchants and officials. He gave a moving speech on the virtues of the Chinese and why the West shouldn’t use cannons to convince her. Stressing the civility and learning of the Chinese, and its equality (“It’s a land where the privileges are equal; it is a land without caste. The power flows through the competitive system from that people into practical government; they make scholarship the test of merit.”

7-10-1868 *Daily News* (dated on 6-25)

It is a reflection the mission, inspired by the speech that Burlingame gave on the New York dinner. It looks forward to the completion of the Pacific Railroad across the continent, which the author deemed would create an enormous amount of trade and replace the sea route. It was hoped that “all Oriental products consumed in Europe, as well as in the United States, are brought over the Pacific Railroad, instead of round Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope.”

It also asserts that the Burlingame mission is “the triumph of the American idea of what the treatment of Eastern nations by the more civilized and the stronger ones of the West should be over the idea so long held and acted on by France and England.” Author’s proud of American’s record in being free from using force. “They have with tolerable consistency denounced and opposed all attempts at coercion, and all attempts like those of Captain Osborn to convert China into a theatre for the display of the heroic qualities of what are called “imperial races,” or into a field in which “roving Englishmen” might gratify their love of knight-errantry.

8-5-1868 *New York Times* “The Chinese Embassy – Visit of the Embassy to Secretary Seward at Auburn – Their Future Movements” (dated 8-4)

On 8-5 the embassy will visit the prison, the farm of Mr. H. S. Dunning (to witness an exhibition of mowers and reapers), and the next day they’ll go to Willow Brook.

8-5-1868 *New York Times*

“The march of the convicts to their dinner, with the lock-step an perfect order, seemed to be very interesting to the Chinese. Their visit evidently gave them a favorable impression of the American mode of punishing criminals.

8-7-1868 *New York Times*

The dinner at the mansion of Secretary Seward. “Their amusement at the strange sight of ladies and gentlemen joining in the dance was a marked feature of the evening.”

The next day they will visit the farm of H. S. Dunning to take a look at the Kirby reaper.

8-10-1868 *San Francisco Bulletin* “English Opinion of the Chinese Embassy”

A rebuttal of the attack on the embassy from the *English Saturday Review*, which states that “the head of Embassy was chosen not for his knowledge of Chinese history, policy, or language, for he is ignorant of all three, but because he has the pushing importunateness of the Yankee mind, and sees in his mission a means of making political capital for himself.” The Review also warns Lord Stanley “not to be wheedled out of every advantage which England has obtained in China ‘by two great and expensive expeditions.’”

8-17-1868 New York Times “Visit to Buffalo – Reception by the Mayor and Board of Trade – Steamboat Excursion – Accident to Sun Tajen”

“While the dignitary was crossing a rickety old wharf he was precipitated by a loose plank through the wharf into deep water. On coming to the surface the Ambassador seized a plank handed him by Rev. Mr. Stone, President of Hobart College, and Capt. Dalgrave, of the Embassy, and kept himself afloat until a deck hand of the steamer Wabash, named George Boyce, who had jumped overboard, swam to his assistance. Boyce passed a rope under the arms of Sun Tajen, by which he was raised to the wharf. After all danger had passed the unfortunate Minister and the Embassy had a good-natured laugh over the accident.”

8-18-1868 *Liverpool Mercury* etc. “The American Treaty with China”

This British editorial points out several things, all dominant in the British media: 1) The US-Chinese treaty, which grants China lawful jurisdiction over US citizens) should not serve as an example for England, for the English commercial interest in China is too high, and the number of Englishmen in China far exceeding the number of Americans; 2) The US-China treaty is also injurious to the introduction of “grand but practicable schemes of internal improvement for China which require the application of British capital and scientific skill.” For the mandarins, “it is physical science which they fear, and its effect upon the acute and practical intelligence of the Chinese nation. They form a peculiar civil service, which is a clerical cast of secular priests devoted to the worship of the Celestial Empire, their temporal deity, and qualified for their functions by mere literary accomplishments and dogmatic professions. Their occupation and influence might be endangered if the people over whom they rule, with a stolid conservative air of Papal infallibility which has made the title of mandarin a byword of ridicule, had an opportunity of beholding and studying the marvels of steam and electricity, ‘the fairy tales of science,’ the mighty works of modern engineers, the discoveries of natural philosophy, the infinity and harmony of creation, in which all China is a petty speck.” (It’s funny given how careful Zhigang studied these things during his trip!)

8-18-1868 *New York Times*

“The Chinese-born Ambassadors are unbending in the freedom of ‘the wild West’, and being, doing and suffering in a remarkable way. The two Tajens are generally taken in hand by ladies and other gay persons, and stripped, so to speak, of their old habits. Chih bears all this better than Sun. Both being at the ball at Niagara Falls, were importuned to dance, and Chih was almost persuaded, but the figure deterred him. He, however, pinned a lady’s nosegay on his hat, and looked very debonaire and festive. He is more adventurous than Sun, for he was the first man, not connected with the work, to cross the

new Suspension Bridge over Niagara, at a tremendous height, in a little soup, drawn by pulleys on wire cables. It was almost a Blondin feat. He has been under the cataract and over it, and will tell stories of Niagara when he goes home. Sun looks more to his safety, and yet fate was near finding him out. At Tonawanda he went pottering about an old wharf, and fell through the flooring into the late, -- more like a rat than an Ambassador. But he was soon fished out, and is no doubt he is about to leave the West for the sedate civilization of old Shawmut, and the easy stairs of the Bunker Hill Obelisk.

8-18-1868 *New York Times* (dated 8-7) "The Chinese Embassy-Their Entertainment in Auburn – Departure for Niagara Falls"

"After the dinner the Embassy paid a visit of inspection to the enginehouse and headquarters of the Auburn Water Works Company. Upon arriving there the two Tajen became very much interested in the working of the ponderous machinery by which the water is forced through the mains and supply pipes, which traverse every part of the city. Chih Tajen especially was quite diligent in his inspection of the wheels and the force pumps, the register, pulleys, lever, pipes, &c., &c.

8-23 *New York Times* "The Banquet in Boston – Speeches of Mr. Burlingame, Senator Sumner, Hon. Caleb Cushing and Others – Poem by O. W. Holmes."

This is a huge piece with transcriptions of long speeches. Burlingame was a representative of the Boston district, so his return was showered with particular welcome and festivity.

8-24 *New York Times* "Their Visit to Boston, the Unique, and the Attention Shown Them"

8-30 *New York Times* "On Tuesday the Orientals visited Lawrence, and were initiated into all the mysteries and processes of manufacturing woolen and cotton goods... Chih Tajen inquired very intelligently and minutely into all he saw at the mills, and almost intuitively comprehended the explanations given him... On Wednesday the Embassy visited the State House, and visited Gov. Bullock, who welcomed Mr. Burlingame in a brief speech..."

8-31-1868 *Brooklyn Eagle* "The Embassy was at Chelsea on Saturday. Poo-Tajen Burlingame said there was an agreement that there should be no speeches, and then proceeded to make one in which he said a great deal more about himself than about his associates or the country he represents. The Embassy develops a liberal quantity of Burlingame to a meager allowance of Chinese."

9-2 *New York Times* (Dated 9-1) Visit of the Chinese Embassy to the Waltham Watch Manufactory. "The Chinese were particularly interested in the delicacy of the work performed, and Chih Tajen, with his associates, studied the entire process of watch-making, from the crude metals to the complete time-keeper. Chih Tajen said these works were more astonishing than anything he had seen."

9-24 *Brooklyn Eagle* "Punch's journalistic Mrs. Gamp, the London Standard, warns the Ministry to inquire closely into the genuineness of the Chinese Embassy, and see whether the Commissioners are real, or only foreign meddlers and mediators. This is a smart slap in the face

for Poo-Tajen Burlingame, who finds that he is not so great or popular in England as he was in Boston.”

9-14 *New York Times* “The Blunder of the Chinese Embassy” From the Chicago Evening Post, 9-9

- It’s a fictional and comical dialogue between the Chinese emperor and members of the Embassy. The emperor gets angry that they didn’t visit Chicago and orders to have their heads chopped off.

9-15 *Brooklyn Eagle* “Miscellaneous News Items”: “The entertainment of the Chinese embassy by the city authorities of Boston cost about \$15,000”

9-19 *Brooklyn Eagle* “The Chinese Embassy amused themselves at New York by looking out of the hotel windows and choosing wives from the pretty women that passed in the street below.” ...“Fung, one of the interpreters of the Chinese Embassy, said that if his parents were with him he should like to live for the rest of his days in the United States.”