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Chinese Diaspora Charity and the Cantonese Pacific, 1850–1949

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Contents

Introduction

Diaspora Charity in the Cantonese Pacific, 1850–1949

John Fitzgerald and Hon-ming Yip

Charity is a common feature of diaspora communities the world over. Chinese overseas are no exception.[1] Wherever they landed, emigrants from China maintained close family, native-place, and social connections with their communities of origin long after their departure from China, entailing obligations to meet the basic requirements of communities back home while supporting one another in times of need abroad. The monetary value of charitable giving on the part of Chinese communities overseas is difficult to quantify, particularly for the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and yet the prominence of charity in the life of the Chinese diaspora and the value placed on charitable initiatives by communities themselves are widely recognized in the historical literature. With this volume we add to that body of work a selection of studies on the place of charity among Cantonese settlers in Australasia and North America over the century leading to the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Historians Yen Ching-Hwang, Michael Godley, C. F. Yong, Glen Peterson, and others have long drawn attention to the generosity of Chinese communities and business leaders throughout Southeast Asia.[2] Similarly, histories of Chinese communities in North America routinely mention the charitable provision of sick relief and burial services, the construction of schools and hospitals, and the contributions of hard-earned dollars by Chinese Americans to charitable causes in China.[3] The charitable contributions of Chinese Australians to China have also been noted in general histories and specialist studies.[4] And yet the often-remarked charitable work

1. Peter F. Geithner, Paula D. Johnson, and Lincoln C. Chen, eds., *Diaspora Philanthropy and Equitable Development in China and India* (Cambridge, MA: Global Equity Initiative, Asia Center, Harvard University, 2004).
2. Michael R. Godley, *The Mandarin-Capitalists from Nanyang: Overseas Chinese Enterprise in the Modernization of China 1893–1911* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Yen Ching-hwang, *A Social History of the Chinese in Singapore and Malaya 1800–1911* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986); C.-F. Yong, *Tan Kah-Kee: The Making of an Overseas Chinese Legend* (Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific, 2014); Glen Peterson, "Overseas Chinese and Merchant Philanthropy in China: From Culturalism to Nationalism," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 1, no. 1 (May 2005): 87–109.
3. Guenter B. Risse, "Translating Western Modernity: The First Chinese Hospital in America," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 85, no. 3 (2011): 413–47; Guenter B. Risse, *Plague, Fear, and Politics in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012); Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco 1850–1943* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).
4. Zhao Ling Yang 趙令揚 and Yang Yongan 楊永安, *Jiuzai yu jiuguo: 20 shiji 30 niandai Aozhou Huaren de Zhongguo qinghuai* 救災與救國：20世紀30年代澳洲華人的中國情懷 [Disaster relief and national salvation: Chinese-Australian concern for China in the 1930s], in *Jindai Zhongguo yu shijie: Di er jie Zhongguo yu shijie xueshu taolunhui lunwenji* 近代中國與世界：第二屆中國與世界學術討論會論文集 [Modern China and the world: Proceedings of the Second Conference on Modern China

of Chinese merchants and communities overseas has rarely drawn attention to the practice of charity itself or to the place and function of charity in Chinese diaspora networks commensurate with its visibility and importance.[5] This is one aim of the present book. The history of Chinese diaspora charity deserves attention not because it has been overlooked, or because charity studies make up a growing subfield of historical studies in China itself, but because the charitable initiatives of Chinese overseas offer new insights into Chinese diaspora studies and new perspectives on the history of charity in diaspora communities.

Although the quantity of charitable giving among Chinese communities a century or more ago is difficult to tally, the growth of charitable institutions and the character and evolution of charitable initiatives among Chinese overseas can be traced through available historical sources. Authors in this volume draw on a range of personal papers, public archives, and print publications of the day to explore the history of charitable activities among Chinese overseas over the century from 1850 to 1949, a period now recognized as part of the second high tide of migration in world history.[6] We focus particularly on the Cantonese "Gold Rush" communities of the East and South Pacific, communities that have come to be known collectively as the "Cantonese Pacific."

The term Cantonese Pacific refers to a loosely integrated network of émigré communities drawn from Cantonese-speaking counties in China's southern Guangdong Province who lived, worked, and moved among English-speaking settler societies of the Pacific littoral. Initially coined by historians Henry Yu and Elizabeth Sinn, the term implicitly contrasts the sphere of international trade and migration traced by mobile Cantonese-speaking merchants and laborers around the Pacific, on the one hand, against the comparable sphere created by Hokkien-speaking and Teochow-speaking traders and laborers who lived and moved in colonial Southeast Asia (Nanyang) on the other.[7]

Distinctive features of Pacific settlements shaped the history of Cantonese émigrés in ways that distinguished them from Teochew-speaking Chaozhou natives of northern Guangdong and sojourners from Hokkien, Hainan, and other communities that settled in the British and Dutch settlements of Southeast Asia and in the Spanish Philippines who together made up the fabled Nanyang communities of Chinese diaspora settlement in Southeast Asia.

Pacific Rim Cantonese communities were distinguished from Nanyang communities by several factors, including the dominance of Cantonese dialects and hometown ties, the relative scarcity of indentured labor, a distinctive style of business practice, and the distance they

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and the World], ed. Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2005), vol. 2, 381–401.

5. Peterson, "Overseas Chinese." For exceptions focusing on charitable associations in Hokkien communities in Thailand and Singapore, see Lin Wushu 林悟殊, Taiguo Dafeng zushi chongbai yu Huaqiao Baode shantang yanjiu 泰國大峰祖師崇拜与華僑報德善堂研究 [Research into Master Dafeng worship and overseas Chinese Baode charitable halls in Thailand] (Taipei: Shuxin chubanshe,1996); Su Qinghua 蘇慶華, "Xin, Ma Chaoren de Songdafeng chongsi yu shantang: Yi Nanyang Tongfeng shantang wei li 新、馬潮人的宋大峰崇祀與善堂：以南洋同奉善堂為例 [Song Dafeng ancestor worship and charitable halls in Singapore and Malaya: The case of Tongfeng Charitable Hall in Nanyang]," in *Ma Xin Huaren yanjiu: Su Qinghua lunwen xuanji* 馬新華人研究：蘇慶華論文選集 [Research on Chinese in Malaya and Singapore: Selected writings of Su Qinghua] by Su Qinghua (Kuala Lumpur: Malaixiya Chuangjia Xuehui, 2004), 65–80.

6. Qiu Liben 丘立本, Cong shijie kan Huaren: Huaren yanjiu xintan 從世界看華人：華人研究新探 [Observing Chinese from the world: New studies of the Chinese people] (Hong Kong: Nandao chubanshe, 2000), 3; Wang Gungwu, "Migration History: Some Patterns Revisited," in *Global History and Migrations*, ed. Wang Gungwu (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 5.

7. Elizabeth Sinn, *Pacific Crossing: California Gold, Chinese Migration, and the Making of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 189, 291; Henry Yu, "The Cantonese Pacific: Migration, Historiography and Unsettling Settler Societies" unpublished paper for presentation, Princeton University, November 11, 2013, and University of Melbourne, November 26, 2013.

maintained from local and colonial authorities in their conduct of business and government. Some of these distinctions applied to charity.

Among Nanyang communities, charitable activities often reflected a business model in which a small number of individual merchants accumulated immense wealth through extractive industries carried out under license from local and colonial authorities.[8] The legacy of Chinese diaspora charity among Nanyang communities in Southeast Asia is typically one in which very wealthy individuals make memorable contributions to their communities and to favored causes in China, while generally refraining from engaging in contentious politics.[9] The prominence of wealthy merchants in Southeast Asian charity was further sanctioned, Michael Godley has noted, through adoption of the British ethic of the modern "gentleman."[10]

Few fabulously wealthy individuals loom as large in the history of Cantonese Pacific charity as they do in Southeast Asia. In North America and Australasia, diaspora charity reflected a style of local business practice based chiefly on small-to-medium business networking and entrepreneurship of the kind that characterized the Cantonese Pacific more broadly.[11] Patterns of life and work experienced by members of the Cantonese Pacific were shaped as well by the self-governing settler and colonial regimes that generally prevailed at their sites of settlement.

In particular, rights of entry and settlement were restricted and periodically prohibited over the course of the century across an arc of "White Men's countries" stretching from Canada and the United States to New Zealand, Australia, and islands of the South Pacific.[12] Restrictions on entry and settlement framed a number of distinctive features of the Cantonese Pacific including sustained transnational networking, intensive transoceanic communication, and high rates of mobility among families, firms, and civic associations from Vancouver to San Francisco and Sydney and sites of settlement in between. The restrictions also bred familiarity with Anglo American notions of rights, liberties, rule of law, and voluntary civic participation that enabled and encouraged recourse to legal action and civic protest to affirm the rights of Chinese residents as equal citizens of their host states around the Pacific. This involved engaging in often contentious local politics.[13]

It also involved charity. One feature of community networking across the Cantonese Pacific was its focus on charity events and charitable giving as a medium of cross-cultural negotiation with dominant Anglo-settler societies. From the late nineteenth century, Chinese community leaders working through civic associations pioneered models of public charity that challenged color boundaries and in effect demanded acceptance of Chinese as equal citizens of colonial society. Another feature of charity in the Cantonese Pacific was the increasingly prominent role played by women in initiating, organizing, and managing charitable activities.[14]

8. See, for example, Kunio Yoshihara, *The Rise of Ersatz Capitalism in South-east Asia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988); Godley, *Mandarin-Capitalists*; Mei-fen Kuo, *Making Chinese Australia: Urban Elites, Newspapers and the Formation of Chinese Australian Identity, 1892–1912* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2013).
9. Wang Gungwu, *The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).
10. Godley, *Mandarin-Capitalists*.
11. Henry Yu, "The Intermittent Rhythms of the Cantonese Pacific," in Donna R. Garbaccia and Dirk Hoerder, *Connecting Seas and Connected Oceans: Indian, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and China Seas Migrations from the 1830s to the 1930s* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 393–414; Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*.
12. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the Question of Racial Equality* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2008).
13. See Kuo, *Making Chinese Australia*.
14. For this period, see Xia Shi, *Women and Charity in Late Qing and Early Republican China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

Pacific Cantonese also distinguished themselves from one another after their own fashion. Observers have long pointed to native-place nostalgia among Chinese overseas and to the emergence of an emerging pan-Chinese identity complementing clan and native-place sentiment with the rise of Chinese nationalism from the turn of the twentieth century. While not immune to nostalgia or to nationalism, Chinese of the Pacific Rim also distinguished among themselves by nationality—Canadian, American, Australian, New Zealand—to indicate the national cultural capital they carried with them as they moved about the region or visited Hong Kong and China. Unlike Southeast Asian returnees, known collectively as Nanyang, they were generally identified by the particular countries where their families settled. The term "Cantonese Pacific" is a recent invention.

The communities of the Cantonese Pacific remained in routine contact with one another through their trading and family networks and their schools, churches, political parties, and regular newspaper columns. Chinese Australians attended college in Boston and built branch offices of their firms in San Francisco. Chinese Americans read political news from Canada and visited their relatives north of the border. Chinese New Zealanders started up businesses in Australia. To date, the histories of communities based in North America have received considerably greater attention than those that made a home in Australasia. In this study we seek to restore some balance to the history of the Cantonese Pacific by introducing a number of case studies from Australia telling stories and highlighting features of the Cantonese Pacific relating to charity.

One place that brought them all together was the port city of Hong Kong, which served as the hub of Cantonese communities of the Pacific region. Initially founded as a free port under British colonial administration in 1842—not long before the Gold Rushes that drove Cantonese migration to North America and Australasia—the creation of Hong Kong greatly facilitated Cantonese Pacific migration. At the same time, the mid-nineteenth-century Gold Rushes shaped and accelerated Hong Kong's own development as a transit point for people and as an entrepôt for seaborne trade and shipping over the following century. From the 1850s the economy and society of Hong Kong expanded, diversified, and became increasingly integrated with the economies of the Pacific ports through which its merchant houses shifted people and cargo at scale.

The growth of Hong Kong, in turn, shaped the institutional development of communities across the Cantonese Pacific. The port's success as a regional hub for business and industry was founded on the local Chinese community's capacity for self-government in dispute resolution, in provision of social welfare and health care, and in making representations to government, no less than upon the laissez-faire policies of the British colonial administration.[15] Across Hong Kong, an extensive institutional apparatus of local trade guilds, chambers of commerce, neighborhood organizations, hometown associations, hospitals, charitable associations, temples, churches, and clubs grew up alongside the colonial administration to provide business, social, and welfare services to Chinese residents of the city. Merchants' wealth and leadership were central to these developments.[16]

This pattern linking business and community interests in Hong Kong was matched at many points across the Cantonese Pacific by an institutional arrangement of churches, clubs, and societies created to manage local community affairs, provide welfare support, and mount claims

15. John Carroll, *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).
16. Elizabeth Sinn, *Power and Charity: A Chinese Merchant Elite in Colonial Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003).

through the press and to the government for equality of treatment. The network of civic institutions that emerged in San Francisco, Vancouver, Auckland, and Sydney, although scaled down to the size of their respective communities, was modeled on the civic architecture developed initially in Hong Kong. Together, these institutions supported trans-Pacific community and trading networks that enabled communication, business, and social engagement around the spokes of the Cantonese Pacific emanating from a hub in Hong Kong.

Seen through the lens of charity, at the center of this trans-Pacific network sat Hong Kong's Tung Wah Hospitals complex (Donghua sanyuan 東華三院). The founding of the charitable hospital in 1870 anticipated a rapidly growing demand among mobile Cantonese labor and merchant émigrés of the Pacific for partners in south China to help manage their charitable work, particularly for the repatriation of the bones of departed sojourners on behalf of hometown associations in North America and Australasia. In time, the Tung Wah Hospital network emerged as a central intermediary institution in the development of charity work across the Cantonese Pacific.[17] The charitable practices and institutions that evolved across the Pacific were then in many ways beholden to charity innovations and initiatives pioneered in the Tung Wah Hospital.

Charity and Philanthropy

In writing of charity, we refer to private financial contributions for community or public benefit. These may range from fund-raising drives, to charitable donations by individuals, to community giving practices, through to the work of institutional charities such as the Tung Wah Hospital complex. The voluntary giving of time and talent for public or community purposes falls within the scope of diaspora charity as we understand it.

We are mindful of the distinction often drawn between charity and philanthropy. Charitable giving is generally characterized as ameliorative, affective, informal, particularistic, and religious in character. Philanthropy, by contrast, is defined as preventive rather than ameliorative, rational rather than emotional, formally regulated, universal in its humanitarian ethics, and secular in nature.[18] Leaving aside the historically questionable assumptions that inevitably accompany hard-edged definitions of this kind, sharp categorical distinctions can serve as useful heuristic devices for distinguishing the institutions and activities common to diaspora donors in the Cantonese Pacific a century ago from those of globalizing philanthropy today. They help also to frame and comprehend the thinking and choices of the organizers and donors at the heart of our studies.

Donors in the Cantonese Pacific were not, as a rule, out to solve the world's problems; they were closely attached to the communities they served, they were accountable to their communities if not to regulators, and in many instances they framed their giving in religious terms.[19] While they were every bit as thoughtful, imaginative, and innovative in their giving as contemporary philanthropists, they did things in different ways. On these terms, the donors,

17. Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, 189, 291.
18. Didier Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*, trans. Rachel Gomme (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012). For an application of Fassin's model to Asian and Asian diaspora communities, see Katy Gardner, "'Our Own Poor': Transnational Charity, Development Gifts, and the Politics of Suffering in Sylhet and the UK." *Modern Asian Studies* 52, 1 (2018): 163–85. On these distinctions as they apply to diasporas generally, see Kathleen Newland, Aaron Terrazas, and Roberto Munster, *Diaspora Philanthropy: Private Giving and Public Policy* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2010).
19. On religion and charity in China see Robert Weller and Fan Lizhu, *Religion and Charity: The Social Life of Goodness in Chinese Societies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

practices, and institutions that concern us here are probably best described as charitable, rather than philanthropic, with notable exceptions where particular philanthropists or distinctively philanthropic sensibilities are noted.

To take one example, philanthropy is closely associated in North America and Australasia with grants to charitable institutions and other nonprofit organizations in return for tax concessions. By law and custom, donations that attract tax concessions are not to be used directly for the benefit of the donor's family or friends or to generate material benefits for donors. Distinctions of this kind do not generally apply to the community welfare activities, charitable institutions, or donors at the heart of these studies. As a rule, tax concessions were neither sought nor applied, and donors and charities across the Cantonese Pacific typically sought to benefit communities or individuals with which they shared kinship or hometown ties. Diaspora charity involves contributions to extended families and lineages or to village communities organized along clan and family lines where activities and donations are intended to support a community or public benefit. From a diaspora donor or charity perspective, this form of giving was and remains a legitimate form of charity rather than a form of self-dealing. So we join with other analysts of diaspora charity in arguing for definitions that make allowance for voluntary and charitable giving practices specific to diasporas and their family and hometown ties as customary forms of charity.[20]

Charity in China and the Diaspora

The practice of charity in the Cantonese Pacific was shaped by the legacy of charity in China no less than by life in the diaspora. Wherever they landed, Cantonese communities carried with them ideals of mutual assistance and ethical assumptions about the responsibility befalling merchants and wealthier members of the community to support those in need, particularly the sick, the indigent, the elderly, and the homeless. After the Communist Revolution in 1949, they preserved abroad charitable traditions lost in China.

Indeed the nature and scale of China's rich charity legacy has only recently been rediscovered within China itself.[21] For three decades following the founding of the People's Republic, private charity was regarded with contempt as a domestic feudal remnant or imported instrument of foreign imperialism. Research and publication on the history of Chinese charity was taboo. This changed in the 1980s when Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening agenda rekindled interest in the contributions made by private and religious charities to the development of public health and education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the turn of the twenty-first century, improved access to historical archives and to personal papers, institutional records, and existing international scholarship on the history of charity in China helped to produce a body of local studies, biographies, and institutional histories in China today.

The resurgence of interest in the history of charity in China has been particularly beholden to Japanese scholarship on charitable and relief work in the Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties, covering state and private provision of famine and disaster relief, the work of orphanages,

20. Paula D. Johnson, *Diaspora Philanthropy: Influences, Initiatives, and Issues* (2007). Available at: http://www.philanthropy.org/SEMINARS/documents/Johnson_Diaspora_Philanthropy_FinalMay2007.pdf.

21. Recent surveys of Chinese charity history include Yang Zhengjun 楊正軍, "Jin 30 nian lai Zhongguo shantang shanhui zuzhi yanjiu shuping" 近30年來中國善堂善會組織研究述評 [Review of research on the organization of Chinese charitable halls and societies over the past thirty years], *Kaifeng shidai* 開放時代 [Open Times] 2 (2010): 149–57; Zeng Guilin 曾桂林, "Jin 20 nian lai zhongguo jindai cishan shiyeshi yanjiu shuping" 近20年來中國近代慈善事業史研究述評 [Review of historical research on the modern history of charitable enterprises in China over the past twenty years], *Jindaishi yanjiu* 近代史研究 [Modern history research] 2 (2008): 147–60.

widow halls and welfare relief, and the evolution of charitable associations (*shanhui* 善會) and charitable halls (*shantang* 善堂) in China. Japanese historians have also drawn attention to the evolution of charitable institutions in the cosmopolitan city of Shanghai.[22] The rediscovery of charity in China is also beholden to historical scholarship in Taiwan and Hong Kong on international charity assistance, the history of charity in the Ming and Qing dynasties, domain-specific studies on health and education, and institutional histories of the Po Leung Kuk (Baoliangju 保良局) and Tung Wah Hospitals.[23] Similar work has been undertaken in the United States, with additional emphasis on the place of charity in missionary history, US-China relations, and in the study of state-society relations in the late empire and early Republic.[24]

Together, researchers in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, and the United States between them have demonstrated connections linking charitable institutions and practices to long-term social trends in China including the emergence of merchant wealth in Ming times, competition for status within the gentry-official stratum and among merchants and gentry, and growing participation by merchant elites in government enterprise and management over the last decades of empire. Many of the key charitable organizations and networks that offered charitable services have also been identified along with the motives of charitable actors, the causes they supported, and the beneficiaries they hoped to assist through their charitable activities.

22. For a Chinese survey of foreign charity history, see Zeng Guilin 曾桂林 and Wang Weiping 王衛平, "Ri Mei ji Gang Ao Tai diqu jin wushi nian dui Zhongguo cishan shiye shi de yanjiu 日美及港澳台地區近五十年對中國慈善事業史的研究 [Research on the history of Chinese charity in the past fifty years in Japan, America, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan], *Shixue lilun yanjiu* 史学理论研究 [Historical theory research], 2 (2008): 100–109. On Japanese research in recent decades, Zeng and Wei note particularly the contributions of Michihata Ryōshū 道端良秀, Fuma Susumu 夫馬進, Takahashi Kōkichi 高橋孝, Yamamoto Susumu 山本進, Matsuda Yoshirō 松田吉, and Kohama Masako 小濱正子. For a detailed bibliographical listing, see Zeng and Wei, 102–4.

23. See, for example, Huang Wende 黃文德, *Feizhengfu zuzhi yu guoji hezuo zai Zhongguo: Huayang yizhenhui zhi yanjiu* 非政府組織與國際合作在中國：華洋義賑會之研究 [Nongovernment organizations and international cooperation in China: Research on the China International Famine Relief Commission] (Taipei: Xiuwei zixun keji gufen youxian gongsi, 2004); Zhang Yufa 張玉法, ed., *Zhonghua minguo Hongshizihui bainian huishi 1904–2003* 中華民國紅十字會百年會史1904–2003 [Centenary history of the Chinese Red Cross] (Taipei: Chinese Red Cross, 2004); Liang Qizi 梁其姿, *Shishan yu jiaohua: Ming Qing de cishan zuzhi* 施善與教化：明清的慈善組織 [Charity and moral transformation: Charitable organization in Ming-Qing China] (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1997); Angela Ki Che Leung, *Leprosy in China: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Elizabeth Sinn, *Power and Charity*; Zhang Xueming 張學明 and Liang Yuansheng 梁元生, Lishishang de cishan huodong yu shehui dongli 歷史上的慈善活動與社會動力 [Charitable activities and social dynamics in history] (Hong Kong: Xianggang jiaoyu tushu gongsi, 2005); Ye Hanming 葉漢明, *Donghua yizhuang yu huanqiu cishan wangluo: Dangan wenxian ziliao de yinzheng yu qishi* 東華義莊與寰球慈善網絡：檔案文獻資料的印證與啟示 [The Tung Wah Coffin Home and global charity network: Evidence and findings from archival and documentary materials] (Hong Kong: Sanlian [HK] Co. Ltd. 2009).

24. Lillian M. Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market, and Environmental Decline, 1690s–1990s* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); Joanna Handlin Smith, "Benevolent Societies: The Reshaping of Charity during the Late Ming and Early Ch'ing, " *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 2 (1987); Joanna Handlin Smith, "Chinese Philanthropy as Seen through a Case of Famine Relief in the 1640s," in *Philanthropy in the World's Traditions*, ed. Warren F. Ilchman, Stanley N. Katz, and Edward L. Queen, II (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Joanna Handlin Smith, *The Art of Doing Good: Charity in Late Ming China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009). For the modern period, see Nara Dillon and Jean C. Oi, *At the Crossroads of Empires: Middlemen, Social Networks, and State-building in Republican Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Paul Richard Bohr, *Famine in China and the Missionary: Timothy Richard as Relief Administrator and Advocate of National Reform, 1876–1878* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972); Andrew J. Nathan, *A History of the China International Famine Relief Commission* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); Mary Brown Bullock, *The Oil Prince's Legacy: Rockefeller Philanthropy in China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2011); Dong Wang, *Managing God's Higher Learning: U.S.-China Cultural Encounter and Canton Christian College (Lingnan University), 1888–1952* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007); Jennifer Ryan, Lincoln C. Chen, and Tony Saich, eds., *Philanthropy for Health in China* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014). Unpublished dissertations include Pierre Fuller, "Struggling with Famine in Warlord China: Social Networks, Achievements, and Limitations 1920–21," PhD diss., University of California, Irvine, 2011; Sue Ellen Gronewold, "Encountering Hope: The Door of Hope Mission in Shanghai and Taipei, 1900–1976," PhD diss., Columbia University, 1996; Caroline Beth Reeves, "The Power of Mercy: The Chinese Red Cross Society, 1900–1937," PhD diss., Harvard University, 1998. On charity and the public sphere, see William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City, 1796–1895* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989).

Growing familiarity in China with this range of foreign scholarship, and improved access to domestic historical sources, has enabled China's historians to expand the scope of charity research into local histories, biographies of philanthropists, and a number of institutional studies of charity in modern China. Charity now features in urban histories of Shanghai 上海, Beijing 北京, Ningbo 寧波, and Macao; in regional histories of Guangdong 廣東 and Jiangsu 江蘇; and among biographies of prominent figures who helped to shape charity in modern China, including Xiong Xiling 熊希齡 and Zhang Jian 張謇.[25] A number of institutional histories have extended studies to the charitable work of the Swastika Society, the International and China Red Cross, the International Famine Relief Commission, and the post-war United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.[26] As China's charity legacy resurfaces through historical investigations, the new charity history has helped to inform the judgment of the contemporary charity sector in China on the relative merits of Chinese and Western traditions of charity funding, management, and activity in ways that were inconceivable before the advent of Reform and Opening. They have also found their way into studies of China's modern history more generally, compelling belated acknowledgment of the long-neglected contributions of Western missionaries and foreign relief aid during Japan's occupation of China from 1937 to 1945.[27]

Historical studies of charity in China have yet to take on board the history of charity in the Chinese diaspora and its impact on charity innovation in China itself. The history of charity in the diaspora also offers useful points of comparison on how charities operated in practice. As a rule, charitable organizations and activities were managed on site in China, at the local level, with the result that distance and isolation were not generally pressing issues in the organization, funding, and monitoring of charitable activities. In so far as charity activities were locally

25. Song Zuanyou 宋鑽友, *Tongxiang zuzhi yu Shanghai dushi shenghuo de shiying* 同鄉組織與上海都市生活的適應 [Hometown organizations and the adaptation of city life in Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2009); Wang Juan 王娟, *Jindai Beijing cishan shiye yanjiu* 近代北京慈善事業研究 [Research on charity enterprises in modern Beijing] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2010); Sun Shangen 孫善根, *Minguo shiqi Ningbo cishan shiye yanjiu, 1912–1936* 民國時期寧波慈善事業研究, 1912–1936 [Research on charity in Ningbo in the Republican period, 1912–1936] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2007); Huang, Yanhong 黃雁鴻, *Tongshantang yu Aomen Huaren shehui* 同善堂與澳門華人社會 [Tongshantang and Chinese society in Macao] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan. 2012); Huang Hongshan 黃鴻山, *Zhongguo jindai cishan shiye yanjiu: Yi wan Qing Jiangnan wei zhongxin* 中國近代慈善事業研究：以晚清江南為中心 [Research on modern Chinese charity enterprises: Focusing on Jiangnan in the late Qing] (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2011); Qiu Jie 邱捷, *Wan Qing Minguo chunian Guangdong de shishen yu shangren* 晚清民國初年廣東的士紳與商人[The gentry and merchants in Guangdong in the late Qing and early Republic] (Nanning: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2012); Zhou Qiuguang 周秋光, Xiong Xiling yu cishan jiaoyu shiye 熊希齡與慈善教育事業 [Xiong Xiling and charitable educational enterprises] (Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991).

26. Chi Zihua 池子華, *Hongshizihui yu jindai Zhongguo* 紅十字會與近代中國 [The Red Cross and modern China] (Hefei: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 2004); Zhang Jianqiu 張建俅, *Zhongguo Hongshizihui chuqi fazhan zhi yanjiu 1912–1949* 中國紅十字會初期發展之研究, 1912–1949 [Research on the early development of the Chinese Red Cross] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007); Zhou Qiuguang 周秋光, *Hongshizihui zai Zhongguo* 紅十字會在中國 (The Red Cross in China) (Beijing: Beijing renmin chubanshe, 2008); Cai Qinyu 蔡勤禹, *Minjian zuzhi yu zaihuang jiuji: Minguo Huayang yizhenhui yanjiu* 民間組織與災荒救濟：民國華洋義賑會研究 [Civil organizations and disaster and famine relief: Research on the International Famine Relief Commission] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2005); Cai Qinyu 蔡勤禹, *Guojia, shehui yu ruoshi qunti: Minguo shiqi de shehui jiuji, 1927–1949* 國家、社會與弱勢群體：民國時期的社會救濟, 1927–1949 [State, society and the disadvantaged: Social relief in the Republican period] (Tianjin: Renmin chubanshe, 2003); Wang Dechun 王德春, *Lianheguo shanhou jiuji zongshu yu Zhongguo, 1945–1947* 聯合國善後救濟總署與中國, 1945–1947 [The UN Rehabilitation and Relief Commission and China, 1945–1947] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2004); Zhu Hu 朱滸, *Difangxing liudong ji qi chaoyue: Wan Qing yizhen yu jindai Zhongguo de xinchen daixie* 地方性流動及其超越：晚清義賑與近代中國的新陳代謝 [Local mobility and its transcendence: Late Qing charitable relief and the metabolism of modern China] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2006).

27. Zhou Qiuguang 周秋光 and Zeng Guilin 曾桂林, *Zhongguo cisahan jianshi* 中國慈善簡史 [Brief history of charity in China] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2006); Deng Yunte 鄧雲特, *Zhongguo jiuhuang shi* 中國救荒史 [History of famine relief in China] (Shanghai: Shangwu chubanshe, 1993); Zhou Qiuguang 周秋光, Zeng Guilin 曾桂林, Xiang Changshui 向常水 and HeYongtian 賀永田, *Zhongguo jindai cishan shiye yanjiu* 中國近代慈善事業研究 [Research on modern charity enterprises in China] (Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2013).

based, basic accounting procedures and local community sanctions generally worked to ensure a reasonable measure of accountability and effectiveness. This was less the case in the Cantonese Pacific where charity often operated over vast distances, across national and colonial boundaries, under a variety of legal requirements and customary norms, and functioned through a range of different languages and idioms. The charitable institutions of the Cantonese Pacific may have been modeled on those in China or Hong Kong, but their ways of working also adapted to the way charity operated in host societies in, for example, Melbourne or San Francisco. In consequence, charity and charities evolved and innovated in the Cantonese Pacific in ways that came to distinguish them from their counterparts in China. From time to time diaspora charity innovations made their way back into China and had a notable impact on the evolution of charitable practices in China itself.[28]

For Chinese overseas, the management of charity mattered materially. How were community fund-raisers and donors in British Columbia to ensure that funds committed to a charitable cause in their native counties actually made it safely across national boundaries to a town or village in China? How were donors to be assured that charitable donations were put to good use and fully accounted for over great distances? Questions of how money was raised and spent, how records were maintained, how trust was ensured, and how benefits were delivered as they were intended all mattered in an immediate and material sense. For merchants, laborers, farmers, and their families overseas, questions relating to management, networking, accountability, and trust in charitable activity lay at the heart of the charity enterprise over the century to 1949. One aim of this volume is to probe how charity worked in practice in the back-office operations and everyday transactions of charitable networks and organizations both within China and crisscrossing the Cantonese Pacific.

This Book

The chapters in this volume cover many of the who, what, when, where, and why questions that always arise in the exploration of charitable institutions and activities in China and the Chinese diaspora. In addition, a number of our chapters pay particular attention to questions of how things were done, including the mechanics of long-distance networking, accountability, and intercultural exchange over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Further, we pay particular attention to signs of innovation and evolution in charity practices across the Cantonese Pacific. Whether we are dealing with remittance networks (*yinxin* 銀信 lit. "money letters"), native-place and benevolent associations (*huiguan/gongsuo* 會館/公所), or charity schools and hospitals, each of the charitable institutions under consideration evolved in response to changing demands and environmental conditions, contributing to the vitality of social networks linking the Cantonese Pacific through an extensive range of charitable engagements.

Elizabeth Sinn frames the collection with a multidimensional overview of Chinese diaspora charity that challenges us to consider charity as an enduring feature of the Chinese diaspora. She suggests that the history of charity reflects the complex networking of individuals, groups, and subgroups that make up the diaspora, often interacting and juxtaposed with each other in untidy ways. The contours of diasporic networking can be traced by following discrete vectors of charitable giving—including giving on site at places of residence overseas, giving home to family and community, and intra-diaspora giving from one site of settlement to another—which

28. Mei-fen Kuo and John Fitzgerald, "Diaspora Charity and Welfare Sovereignty in the Chinese Republic: Shanghai Charity Innovator William Yinson Lee (Li Yuanxin, 1884–1965)," *Twentieth Century China* 42, no. 1 (January 2017).

together reveal the multiple layers of obligations and expectations facing wealthy and not-so wealthy émigrés abroad. By mapping the relative intensity of charitable activities over time, she argues that we can also trace the intensity of diasporic sentiment from one period to another. The study of diaspora charity enables us to explore, through charity, the structure and function of diaspora networks while at the same time revealing the lived and felt experience of Chinese overseas over time.

A central question about charity in China and overseas, then and now, was how donors and charities are to assure that their funds are put to good use and fully accounted for. In addressing this question, David Faure draws us back from the diaspora to the practice of charity within China itself, from late Ming times, and considers how domestic approaches to charity management may have differed from those in colonial and foreign settlements. In tracing these connections, he follows a single thread: the development of procedures and techniques for ensuring that secular charitable associations can account for their donated funds. Faure scopes some of the different approaches to accountability adopted by religious and secular charities in China, highlights the differing accounting requirements for real charitable assets and returns on assets, as distinct from financial donations, and considers the roles that merchant philanthropists and periodic central and local bureaucratic interventions played in the evolution of charity management and accountability. Transposed to Chinese communities outside of China, familiar domestic practices of charity organization and accountability adapted to the contours of colonial and foreign law.

Gregor Benton and Hong Liu explore the place of remittance "money letters" (letters written home by Chinese overseas) in the history of Chinese diaspora charity, outlining the mechanisms, impact, and implications for charity of the complex world of *yinxin* remittance. Chinese archivists have collected around 160,000 *yinxin* originating from regions of Chinese settlement overseas in Southeast Asia and the Cantonese Pacific. From these records it is clear that the networks set up to service *yinxin* also served as channels for charity work, connecting Chinese overseas and communities in China through their donations. *Yinxin* illustrate three key characteristics of charity among Chinese overseas: a strong sense that family and friends came first, clear evidence of cross-fertilization between giving to families and donations to institutions, and strong indigenous roots in the shaping and conception of diaspora charity.

Institutions and networks are also key words in Hon-ming Yip's study of the connections linking Chinese native-place and benevolent associations overseas with home communities in China through the agency of charitable institutions. Drawing on correspondence and other documents preserved in the voluminous Tung Wah Coffin Home Archives in Hong Kong, she shows how one group of charitable organizations, the Tung Wah Hospitals group, facilitated transshipment of thousands of coffins and boxes of bones back to China each year through Hong Kong on behalf of Chinese benevolent associations overseas over the first half of the twentieth century. Through the nineteenth century Hong Kong played a pivotal role in coffin shipments to the birthplaces of the dead or to interment under local charitable burying grounds. Following the establishment of Tung Wah Coffin Home in 1900, the network of sending and receiving points and the mechanisms of coffin/bone repatriation were increasingly institutionalized. In mapping their points of dispatch and arrival, Yip delineates the function of Chinese benevolent associations around the world as key organizations in the evolution of charity networks in a globalizing Chinese world. The implications of their operations for maintaining connections between host countries and native places of Chinese overseas are also explored.

The following chapters offer case studies of diaspora charity operations linking China with North America and Australasia, two of the main destinations for Cantonese migrants during

the Gold Rush era. Dong Wang offers a comprehensive account of fund-raising efforts in the United States and worldwide seeking charitable contributions in support of Canton Christian College (Lingnan University, 1888–1951) in Guangzhou City. Christian universities and colleges opened new possibilities and avenues for charitable support among diaspora communities in Asia, Australasia, and North America. The college's fund-raising strategies offer a glimpse into the aspirations and motives of these communities as seen through the marketing strategies of fund-raisers for Lingnan University. These involved packaging and repackaging higher education as a fluid symbol of opportunity, hope, native-place identity, Christian values, modernity, progressiveness, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism, often targeted at the specific donor base to whom the appeals were addressed.

Focusing on the history of early Chinese America from the Gold Rush era, Yong Chen's chapter on Chinese communities in San Francisco explores a range of collective and individual charitable activities designed to benefit compatriots in China and the United States. This historical account of charity in the Cantonese diaspora presents an opportunity to re-examine Chinese and Western notions of charity and philanthropy and identify some of the forces that motivated and mobilized Chinese overseas to give generously and constantly. Chen finds the spirit of giving among Chinese Americans to have been animated not only by universal humanitarian ideals but also by ethnic solidarity and nationalism. Other significant motivations include cultural traditions and Chinese Americans' desire to improve their status in the United States. He argues that Chinese American charity was not always private or voluntary, either, as Chinese Americans collaborated with Chinese government officials in charitable activities. Leading organizations often called upon their moral and social authority to compel members of the community to participate in charity.

Pauline Rule focuses on Chinese community charity for public purposes in her detailed historical account of Chinese community participation in charitable fund-raising activities in the colony of Victoria in the southeastern corner of Australia over the second half of the nineteenth century. Chinese settlers were not alone in lacking family or state-based sources of support for the sick, elderly, and poor in the recently settled colony of Victoria, with the result that virtually all human services were provided by community-based public charitable institutions. Fund-raising was a constant concern for these institutions, which held frequent fund-raising events including processions, fairs, carnivals, and grand bazaars. Rule shows that Chinese community clubs and societies participated actively in these events, often on a substantial scale, and proved to be great assets for Victorian fund-raising committees. In addition to serving charitable purposes, Chinese community involvement in public fund-raising activities was an innovative measure for dealing with community tensions in a period of growing restriction on Asian migration to the Australian colonies. Victoria offered the earliest and most sustained examples of cross-cultural fund-raising among Chinese communities in the Australian colonies.

Mei-fen Kuo carries the story from the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century, and from men to women, in a chapter on the evolution of Chinese Australian charity organizations during a time of rapid social change in Australia. With her focus on women and charity in the Cantonese diaspora, Kuo's chapter echoes recent research into the charitable activities of married nonprofessional women in China over the same period.[29] She credits women with the "invisible work" of building informal networks within and between the formal organizations that otherwise dominate community life in mainstream histories of the Chinese diaspora.

29. Xia Shi, *At Home in the World*. On the growing role of women in philanthropy in Chinese communities generally, see Weller and Fan, 2017.

The impact of women in the evolution of Chinese Australian voluntary organizations, Kuo argues, is easily obscured by the attention paid to male-dominated organizational structures and norms. There was more to these organizations than meets the eye. The role of women went beyond "feminizing" these organizational structures to developing a new kind of philanthropic sociability that traditional male modes of organization could not supply. In time, a new spirit of philanthropic sociability allowed a range of charitable organizations to emerge that were at once creative, purposeful, and effective. The chapter also explores how contrasting traditions of Christian Chinese charity met and mingled over time.

Denise A. Austin offers a detailed case study of women and Christian charity in her biographical study of the life and work of Mary Kum Sou (Wong Yen) Yeung (Chen Jinxiao 陳金笑, 1888–1971) in Australia and China. Austin argues that a radical redemptive theology of Christianity, added to customary notions of responsibility toward native place, could empower women to undertake old-style native-place charity in novel forms. Through close attention to biographical detail, she shows that Mary Yeung was marginalized in China both as a woman and as Christian, and at the same time marginalized in Australia by her Chinese ethnicity and her radical Pentecostalism. It was her faith in Pentecostalism's promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit that enabled her to overcome her disadvantages and lead an active life of charitable service. Drawing on a range of primary sources including journals, letters, sermons, and missionary publications, supplemented by interviews and supporting secondary sources, the chapter identifies the qualities that inspired and enabled Mary Yeung to care for the poor and marginalized in her hometown community in China, giving new meaning to diaspora hometown charity.

John Fitzgerald concludes with a chapter on the relationship between charity and trust in the evolving associational life of the Cantonese Pacific. By tracing the parallel evolution of associational forms and charitable practices over the century to 1949, he draws attention to the way Chinese overseas employed charity to build trust within and among their own communities and with their host societies in Australia and North America. Fitzgerald argues that diasporas base business and social transactions on personalized trust networks, and that the changing associational forms and varieties of charitable activity that characterized the Cantonese Pacific proved to be flexible instruments for building and extending trust. Drawing on a range of sources, including the findings of chapters in this volume, he highlights point of continuity in the work of community organizations over a period of significant institutional innovation: their consistent focus on charity and community service from the late Qing dynasty to the founding of the People's Republic, and the role of charitable organization and activity in building and maintaining community trust.

By focusing on charity in the Cantonese diaspora as a subject in its own right, this collection of studies brings new perspectives to bear on the history of charity and the history of the diaspora, including institutional innovations not always apparent within China itself. The history of Chinese overseas rightly belongs in world history, and that of diaspora charity in the history of charity in China and the global history of philanthropy.[30] With this volume, we hope to make small contributions to all three.

30. Wang Gungwu 王賡武, "*Haiwai Huaren yanjiu de diwei*" 海外華人研究的地位 [The position of research on overseas Chinese], trans. Tan Tianxing, in *Haiwai Huaren yanjiu de dashiye yu xin fangxiang—Wang Gengwu jiaoshou lunwen xuan* 海外華人研究的大視野與新方向：王賡武教授論文選 [Macro perspectives and new directions in the studies of Chinese overseas: Selected treatises by Prof. Wang Gunggwu], ed. Liu Hong 劉宏 and Huang Jianli 黃堅立 (River Edge, NJ: Global Publishing Co., Inc., 2002), 61, 68.

4

Huiguan (會館) as an Overseas Charitable Institution

*Homebound Burials and the Global Chinese Diaspora, 1850–1949**

Hon-ming Yip

Introduction

Chinese benevolent associations, known as *huiguan* 會館 or *gongsuo* 公所,[1] have been the subject of intensive research over the years but few studies have paid attention to their charitable role overseas in repatriating the coffins and bones of the deceased from their host countries to their native towns in China for burial.[2] The role played by *huiguan* in supporting this long-standing and culturally specific custom, which continued till the early years of the People's Republic, can

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1. Hereafter *huiguan* 會館, as the two Chinese terms refer to the same kind of Chinese benevolent associations in China and overseas. See Qiu Pengsheng 邱澎生, Shiba, shijiu shiji Suzhoucheng de xinxing gongshangye tuanti 十八, 十九世紀蘇州城的新興工商業團體 [New industrial and commercial organizations in Suzhou city during the eighteenth through nineteenth centuries] (Taibei: Guoli Taiwan daxue chuban weiyuanhui, 1990). For the use of the two terms as well as other terms of similar meaning in China, see Zhongguo huiguan zhi bianzhuan weiyuanhui 中國會館志編撰委員會 [Compiling Committee of the History of Chinese Benevolent Associations], *Zhongguo huiguan zhi* 中國會館志 [The history of Chinese benevolent associations] (Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 2002), 4–8; see also its discussion on *huiguan* overseas. See also Wang Rigen 王日根, *Zhongguo huiguan shi* 中國會館史 [The history of Chinese benevolent associations] (Shanghai: Dongfang chuban zhongxin, 2007). For a detailed chapter on the Chinese American *huiguan* system, see Him Mark Lai, *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions* (Walnut Creek: A Division of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), Chapter 3.
2. Recent studies occasionally cover brief accounts of the service, see, e.g., David Chuenyan Lai, *Chinese Community Leadership: Case Study of Victoria in Canada* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2010), which presents the history of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Victoria, Canada, pp. 83–86; see also Chūka Kaikan 中華会館, comp., *Rakuchi seikon: Kōbe Kakyō to Shinhan Chūka Kaikan no hyakunen* 落地生根：神戸華僑と神阪中華会館の百年 [Roots in a new homeland: A hundred years of Chinese in Kobe-Osaka and their association] (Tōkyō: Kenbun Shuppan, 2000), 293–94.

now be told through the voluminous Tung Wah Coffin Home Archives in Hong Kong, which have been opened for research in recent years.

Correspondence between the Tung Wah Hospital (Donghua yiyuan 東華醫院), the hospital that managed the Tung Wah Coffin Home (Donghua yizhuang 東華義莊) in Hong Kong and Chinese benevolent associations all over the world tracks the movement of thousands of coffins and boxes of bones shipped back to China through Hong Kong each year over the first half of the last century. The Tung Wah Coffin Home (hereafter TWCH) was built in 1900 to house coffins and exhume bones awaiting shipment to the birthplaces of the dead or interment at local charitable burying grounds. This was a relatively late development. Up to this time, the Man Mo Temple (Wenwu miao 文武廟) near the Slaughter House in Kennedy Town, in Hong Kong, ran a similar service from around 1875. In 1899 the service was relocated to Sandy Bay, on Hong Kong Island, and resumed in 1900 as the TWCH, a unit of the Tung Wah Hospital complex.[3]

While the sending points included places on five continents, the receiving points were mainly districts in south China, the hometowns of most of the Chinese emigrants from the time of the Gold Rush era in the 1850s. In mapping the sending points, this chapter attempts to delineate the function of Chinese benevolent associations as key organizations in the charity network of the global Chinese diaspora, and to exemplify and explain the historical connections linking the host countries and native places of overseas Chinese through Hong Kong.

Huiguan in the Largest Body of Source Materials on Homebound Burial

For over a century, the Coffin Home architectural cluster has borne silent witness to a significant phase in the history of Hong Kong and overseas Chinese. It covers an area of approximately 6,050 square meters and encloses several groups of buildings including gateways, a pagoda, a garden, pavilions, ninety-one rooms and two halls. As suggested by its size, the Coffin Home played a key role in the charity network of the global Chinese diaspora linking *huiguan* overseas and Chinese migrants to Hong Kong and China from its founding in 1900. Its historical significance was acknowledged in 2005 with the Award of Honor in the Heritage Preservation and Conservation Awards presented by the Antiques and Monuments Office of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government. Hong Kong's Antiques and Monuments Office commended the Coffin Home for preserving an important chapter in the history of the overseas Chinese. It also received the Award of Merit in the Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards presented by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on successful completion of a large-scale restoration project carried out in 2003 and 2004. In its accreditation report, UNESCO highlighted the role and development of the Coffin Home as a material manifestation of cultural heritage marking the march of progress in Hong Kong's social history.

The history of Hong Kong and China were closely bound up with world history when Chinese people left the country in great numbers in the late nineteenth century to earn a living abroad and returned to their homeland before and in many cases after death. Hong Kong, in turn, developed into an international hub for shipping, commerce, information flows, and cultural exchange, and became the pivot of an emerging global Chinese network centered on the port and the city.

In addition to rare historical buildings, a wealth of detailed textual information bears testimony to this period in the form of the TWCH archives, which record the provision of coffins

3. For homebound burial arrangements before the Tung Wah Coffin Home was built, see Elizabeth Sinn, *Pacific Crossing: California Gold, Chinese Migration, and the Making of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), Chapter 7.

and bone repatriation services for deceased Chinese in Hong Kong and abroad over the first half of the twentieth century. Repatriation of remains to the deceased's hometowns for burial was a traditional custom in Chinese death culture, and provision of free coffins and burial assistance was one of the main services of Chinese charitable organizations.[4] Coffin homes, meanwhile, were set up to provide temporary refuge for coffins and skeletal remains awaiting repatriation to the deceased individuals' hometowns. It was, nonetheless, an exceptional development that the TWCH, planned in 1899 and completed in 1900, evolved into a hub for repatriation of coffins/bones of Chinese worldwide for slightly over half a century. While the architectural cluster of the Coffin Home sets the physical backdrop for this unique chapter in history, its archives record a remarkable span of human activity down to the minutest detail.

The Tung Wah Museum has in its collection 101 archival entries from the TWCH dated between 1915 and 1972. Currently undergoing restoration, the archives include registers, documents, loose papers, and records, among others. Apart from a large number of certificates for inbound and outbound coffins and bones of local and overseas Chinese, the entries comprise guarantee forms, registers, records of coffin intakes, collection forms for overseas coffins and bones, shipping documents, funeral receipts for deceased overseas Chinese, lease records, and statistical documents for rent arrears. The TWCH Archives also include over 20,000 pages of the official correspondence of the Coffin Home, letters informing Tung Wah of coffins and bones to expect, and letters from around the world regarding the remains of overseas Chinese being transported to Hong Kong.

In a broader sense, the Coffin Home Archives also include archival records of the Tung Wah Hospital itself (which was established in 1870 and became the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals after 1931) concerning the Coffin Home. Among these historical documents are meeting minutes of the Board of Directors of Tung Wah, minutes of meetings on hospital affairs, government correspondence (letters from the Secretary for Chinese Affairs), letters from Tung Wah to the government, letters to and from Tung Wah to external parties, compilations of letters regarding Tung Wah's operations, advertisements placed by Tung Wah, annual accounting reports of the Tung Wah Hospital and its Man Mo Temple, records of events of the Tung Wah, and more. The materials selected from among 10,000 pages of documents consulted in the course of my research, leading to publication of my 2009 book *Donghua yizhuang yu huanqiu cishan wangluo: Dangan wenxian ziliao de yinzheng yu qishi* ('The Tung Wah Coffin Home and global charity network: Evidence and findings from archival and documentary materials),[5] represent no more than a fraction of the key archival entries available. The wealth of information contained in the archives of the TWCH makes up the largest extant collection of original source materials on coffin/bone repatriation of the Chinese people in the world.

The archives reveal that coffin home services included provision of temporary refuge for the remains of deceased Hong Kong residents, while their relatives searched for burial sites,[6]

4. Zhou Suping 周蘇平, *Zhongguo gudai sangzang xisu* 中國古代喪葬習俗 [Chinese ancient funeral and burial customs] (Xian: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 1990); Luo Kaiyu 羅開玉, *Zhongguo sangzang yu wenhua* 中國喪葬與文化 [Chinese funeral/burial and culture] (Haikou: Hainan renmin chubanshe, 1988).
5. Ye Hanming 葉漢明, *Donghua yizhuang yu huanqiu cishan wangluo: Dangan wenxian ziliao de yinzheng yu qishi* 東華義莊與寰球慈善網路：檔案文獻資料的印證與啟示 [The Tung Wah Coffin Home and global charity network: Evidence and findings from archival and documentary materials] (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian [HK] Co. Ltd., 2009).
6. I am grateful to Prof. David Faure and Prof. He Xi for sharing with me the story of a Hong Kong resident who was buried in his hometown, Shiwan. According to the records in *Guan Yaoyuan fujun Shiwan Jiazi Langgang kuangzhi* 關耀垣府君石灣甲子塱崗壙志 [Inscription at the Langgang tomb for the late Mr. Guan Yaoyuan in Shiwan in the Year of Jiazi](n.p., n.d.), Guan Yaoyuan died of illness in Hong Kong in 1928 and his remains were deposited at the Tung Wah Coffin Home. After acquiring a burial site in Guan's hometown, his family transported the remains from Hong Kong to Foshan. There, the remains were placed in the Guangfu Coffin Home before they were buried in Shiwan in the beginning of the following year. The records

along with the remains of the poor and destitute. In addition, the TWCH served the more important function of coordinating coffin/bone repatriation for Chinese overseas as well as providing free Jinshan 金山 (literally "Gold Mountain") coffins for people who died onboard ocean liners sailing American routes. Information on bone repatriation services makes up the largest share of archival documents, and letters on this subject from all over the world constitute the majority of archival entries about homebound burial. Apart from documents, records, and bills of incoming and outgoing coffins and bones from foreign countries, the Coffin Home archives hold ample files of overseas correspondence. This includes incoming correspondence and outgoing letters from Tung Wah supplemented by inquiries addressed to Tung Wah from overseas Chinese organizations or individuals regarding arrangements for the repatriation of remains. From the turn of the twentieth century to the 1950s, tens of thousands of such letters were written or received. Given the fact that a shipment arriving in Hong Kong typically comprised hundreds or even thousands of coffins and boxes of bones, researchers have deduced that from 1870 to shortly after World War II, Tung Wah might have cared for the remains of over 100,000 individuals.[7] In any case, it is certain that this unique collection of documents makes up the largest holding of information on the repatriation of bones/remains of Chinese people anywhere. The peculiarity, global nature, concentration, and scale of the archival holding are unique.

Some 150 overseas Chinese benevolent associations, mainly *huiguan*, can be identified from the thousands of pages of correspondence stored in the archives.[8] When I visited San Francisco and Vancouver with the Television Division of RTHK in August 2008 to trace the footsteps of Chinese ancestors, I took copies of relevant archival files with me as I did not expect to come across letters sent by the Tung Wah Hospital to Chinese associations and charitable organizations in the two cities. Nor did I find any, as they did not retain copies themselves. And yet hand-copied drafts or duplicates of most of these letters can be found among letters from Tung Wah to external parties in the archives. When representatives of overseas Chinese organizations saw the duplicates in my possession they were amazed and thrilled and regarded the documents as true treasures. All that they had retained were documents of their subordinate charitable societies, called *tang* 堂 (halls), which were created by *huiguan* to perform the specific mission of repatriation of bones of deceased natives to their hometowns, an important aspect of their charity work. They also provided other charitable services including provision of lodging; medical care for the infirm, aged, or sick; and support for home visits or the final return of those in need.[9]

As elaborated in the following section, from their earliest days, the *huiguan* in the host countries of the Chinese immigrants played a leading role in charitable homebound burial arrangements. Established and led by merchants or men of independent means, these organizations functioned as community coordinators, adjudicators, and protectors of their members.

contain land ownership documents and authorization certificates and also describe in great detail the coffin transport process. Apparently, many Hong Kong people were buried in mainland China in the early days but it is not easy at the moment to find relevant documents from the archives of the Tung Wah Coffin Home. In contrast, the archives include many documents on the repatriation of coffins and bones of overseas Chinese via Hong Kong.

7. Gao Tianqiang 高添強, "Sangzang fuwu yu yuanji anzang 喪葬服務與原籍安葬 [Funeral/burial service and homebound burial]," in *Yishan xingdao: Donghuasanyuan 135 zhounian jinian zhuanti wenji* 益善行道：東華三院135周年紀念專題文集 [Publication of research project on the history of Tung Wah—A collection of commemorative works of Tung Wah in celebration of its 135th anniversary], ed. Xian Yuyi 冼玉儀 and Liu Runhe 劉潤和 (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing [Hong Kong] Ltd., 2006), 106.
8. See Ye, *Donghua yizhuang yu huanqiu cishan wangluo*, Chapter 4, allowing a small number of unavoidable overlaps.
9. Lai, *Becoming Chinese American*, 57.

One of their key obligations was undertaking death and burial management, generally assigned to their subordinate *tang*.

Early Overseas Chinese Charitable Homebound Burial Arrangements

Decades before the founding of the TWCH, as mentioned, coffins and bones were already repatriated from overseas through Hong Kong. Indeed, Hong Kong was the pivot for both emigration from China and the return of the overseas Chinese to their native places in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Opened in 1841 by Britain (its colonial master) as a free port, Hong Kong functioned to facilitate trade, communication, traffic, and transport of goods, money, and population. The earliest known record of the shipment of dead Chinese to Hong Kong from the United States dates from 1855, some seven or eight years after the discovery of gold in California, when the Hong Kong *China Mail* reported a story recorded in *Alta California* on May 16 regarding a vessel called "S.S." heading from America to Hong Kong with a cargo of 200 bags of potatoes and "94 boxes of dead Chinamen."[10] Nothing is known regarding the causes of death, nor can we verify whether they were among the first generation of Chinese emigrants to California in Gold Rush times. From the report we do know, however, that Chinese migrants' remains were being repatriated to Hong Kong as early as the 1850s, well before the establishment of the TWCH in 1900.

Elizabeth Sinn, who has written on bone repatriation via Hong Kong before the Tung Wah Coffin Home was established, holds that the aforementioned shipment in 1855 would have most likely been organized by a Chinese charity association. William Speer, a missionary active in the San Francisco Chinese community at the time, reported that an association had completed preparatory work for the repatriation of the remains of the dead in June 1855 and had arranged for a vessel to convey the coffins back to their native villages.[11] Sinn's inference seems reasonable, as under the custom of "second burial" in south China, exhumation of bones for re-interment usually took place five or seven years after initial burial.[12] The 1855 shipment could then have been the first batch of returned bones following the arrival of the earliest cohort of Chinese in "Gold Mountain" in the late 1840s.

The 1855 preparatory work for bone repatriation appears to have set a general pattern for the later practice of *jianyun* 撿運, or exhuming Chinese migrants' bones for repatriation to their hometowns for re-interment.[13] These *jianyun* arrangements were extremely arduous and expensive, requiring specialized assistance from associations such as charitable halls. When prominent reformer and intellectual Liang Qichao 梁啟超 visited north America at the turn

10. *China Mail*, July 12, 1855. "S.S." referred to Sunny South according to *Alta California*, May 16, 1855.
11. Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, 271; Elizabeth Sinn, "Moving Bones: Hong Kong's Role as an 'In-Between Place' in the Chinese Diaspora," in *Cities in Motion*, ed. Sherman Cochran and David Strand (Berkeley, CA: China Research monographs, IEAS, University of California, Berkeley, 2007), 271; see also William Speer, *The Oldest and the Newest Empire: China and the U.S.* (Hartford, CT: S. S. Scranton & Co., 1870), 614–15.
12. Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850–1943: A Transpacific Community* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000); Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars, eds., *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005). For the "second burial" custom, see James L. Watson, "The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence, and the Primacy of Performance," and "Funeral Specialists in Cantonese Society: Pollution, Performance, and Social Hierarchy," and Rubie S. Watson, "Remembering the Dead: Graves and Politics in Southeastern China," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, ed. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988); Zhou Suping, *Zhongguo gudai sangzang xisu*; Luo Kaiyu, *Zhongguo sangzang yu wenhua*.
13. For more accounts on exhumation in California, e.g., see Wendy L. Rouse, "'What We Didn't Understand': A History of Chinese Death Ritual in China and California," in *Chinese American Death Rituals*, ed. Chung and Wegars, 37.

tens of thousands of pages of correspondence linking these organizations and the Tung Wah Hospital.[41]

At sending points of the homebound burial network, *huiguan* made up the majority of overseas Chinese organizations. In some areas such as San Francisco, site of the largest Chinese settlement in the United States in the Gold Rush era, *huiguan* assigned the repatriation mission to sub-branches called *tang*, as we have noted. Understandably, *huiguan* organizations were led by people of resources and it took resourceful organizations to manage community affairs and to perform charitable work on the scale and level of intensity required. Only occasionally would clansmen's associations or individual shops owned by merchants take up the responsibility, if the relatively small number of cases mentioned in the archives are any indication. Chinese masonic associations were also occasionally involved in the task.

At the receiving end, charity organizations were more diversified. Besides well-known charitable societies known as *tang*, a variety of charitable hospitals (termed *fangbian yiyuan* 方便醫院, lit. "hospitals of convenience"), merchants' associations, prominent shops, official offices, and so forth were involved at the county, township, and village levels, along with bureaus of commerce, charitable cemeteries, and local societies of returned overseas Chinese mentioned in the Tung Wah Coffin Home Archives as contacts at receiving points of the homebound burial network.

The correspondence in the archives also reveals that a great number of Hong Kong agencies or representative offices of overseas/mainland organizations in Hong Kong were responsible for or helped to claim the remains from the TWCH. These organizations include native benevolent organizations and merchant associations, companies trading with North America, and other business establishments. Examples include the Taishan Chamber of Commerce (Taishan Shanghui 台山商會), a Taishan regional association known as the Fengcaitang 風采堂, the Kaiping Chamber of Commerce (Kaiping Shanghui 開平商會), a regional association of Kaiping and Enping called Guangfutang 廣福堂, the Nanhai Chamber of Commerce (Nanhai Shanghui 南海商會), Sanshui Chamber of Commerce (Sanshui Shanghui 三水商會), Zengcheng Chamber of Commerce (Zengcheng Shanghui 增城商會), and the Wing On Company.

From the archives it is abundantly evident that the repatriation of remains of overseas Chinese, which lasted the better half of a century, involved a Chinese charitable network extending to almost every corner of the globe.[42] It was also through this network that the majority of Guangdong natives leaving China for foreign countries traveled through Hong Kong after the mid-nineteenth century. They also returned home via the port city. Hong Kong's proximity to Guangdong province helped facilitate the flow of Chinese laborers and other Chinese (mostly natives of Guangdong) between China and foreign countries.[43]

To exemplify the operation of the charity network of homebound burial operations, the following representative cases are presented with details gathered from archival sources and field investigations on communication among the *huiguan* and their counterparts in the host countries of Chinese migrants, the *huiguan*'s agents in Hong Kong, and charity organizations in China. Correspondence between Tung Wah and benevolent associations in North America, Australia, and southeast Asia, as well as charitable organizations in China constitute the majority of archival materials on homebound burial, far exceeding the volume of documents on the

41. See Ye, *Donghua yizhuang yu huanqiu cishan wangluo*, Chapter 4 for the list of overseas organizations and the list of mainland organizations.
42. See the maps in Ye, *Donghua yizhuang yu huanqiu cishan wangluo*, 185–87.
43. For details of the socioeconomic background against which Cantonese traveled to California to earn a living, see June Mei, "Socioeconomic Origins of Emigration: Guangdong to California, 1850–1882," *Modern China* 5, no. 4 (1979): 463–501.

communication between the hospital and other parts of the world such as Europe and Africa, probably because more Cantonese migrated to America, Oceania, and Asia than Europe and Africa. It is therefore easier to find cases of homebound burial in North America, Australia, and Asia, as illustrated in the following examples.

Case 1: San Francisco–Hong Kong–Xinhui

Chinese *huiguan* organizations were established in many cities and towns across North America starting in the Gold Rush era. One of these *huiguan* organizations, the Gangzhou Huiguan 岡州會館 on Pine Street, San Francisco, sought help from Tung Wah to move coffins/bones of natives of Xinhui County back to their hometowns from the early years of the twentieth century to the late 1940s. The Tung Wah Coffin Home Archives as well as documents of the Tung Wah Hospital preserve correspondence between the Gangzhou Huiguan and Tung Wah and that between Tung Wah and the Renan 仁安 Hospital in Xinhui, the organization that received the shipments and helped notify the families concerned to pick up the remains of their relatives. From one of the most substantial sets of archival materials documenting the 1932 and 1948 shipments sent by the Gangzhou Huiguan, we learn the number of boxes of bones dispatched, the charity organizations tasked with receiving them for delivery to the hometowns of the dead, the names of the ocean liners sailing from San Francisco to Hong Kong with coffins/bone cargos, the boats arranged by Tung Wah to transport coffins or bones to the receiving points in south China, and the expenses incurred and to be paid by the Huiguan through agents in Hong Kong (such as charity societies, shops, trading companies, chambers of commerce, etc.). Tung Wah also helped pass burial fees donated by the Huiguan to families of the deceased following the general practice observed by all charitable organizations at sending points.

For example, in the correspondence to Tung Wah on a 1932 shipment, Gangzhou Huiguan indicated that twenty-seven boxes of bones were to be sent by the TWCH to the Renan Hospital in Xinhui while three boxes were sent to a local charitable society named Tongshantang 同善堂 in a market town called Shapingxu 沙坪墟 in Heshan 鶴山. Another single box was to be claimed by the relatives of the deceased (named Yi 易) from Canton. A subsequent letter sent out one day later by the Huiguan attached the bill of lading for Tung Wah to pick up the boxes from the liner. Tung Wah was also reminded to make the request for reimbursement of the expenses for this and the previous shipments to China. In the latter part of the month (November), the third party, Renan, the charity hospital in Xinhui, notified Tung Wah that it would send a Mr. Dai to Hong Kong to accompany the shipment to the native places concerned.[44]

More substantial documents relating to a 1948 shipment contain the name of the liner, the *General Gordon*, and details of a shipment of 240 sets of bones in 42 boxes to Hong Kong from San Francisco for transport to the Renan Hospital in Xinhui and the Tongshantang in Shapingxu. Also clearly indicated was the agent, a trading company in Hong Kong called Guomin 國民, which was to pay Tung Wah HK$3,360. Also detailed in a letter dated May 23, 1948, were transport fees of HK$4 for each set from the liner to Tung Wah and HK$10 each for transport from Hong Kong to Xinhui or Heshan. Burial money (HK$5 for each set of bones) donated by Gangzhou Huiguan was mentioned as well. A voucher with Tung Wah's seal was attached to the correspondence to acknowledge receipt of transport fee and burial money totaling HK$3,360.

The 1948 correspondence between the Gangzhou Huiguan and Tung Wah also demonstrates the value of the Tung Wah Coffin Home Archives as documentary evidence testifying to

44. Tung Wah Coffin Home Archives: Correspondence on Coffins/Bones from Foreign Countries, 1932–1936.

Tung Wah stressed, would be sent to the charitable hospital Chengxi Fangbian Yiyuan for burial in the charitable ground owned by the Lingnan Dunshantang in Kobe.

The archives also mention that a shop in Hong Kong called Qichangtai 其昌泰 had given Tung Wah HK$4,000 as burial money and paid other fees. Attached to the letter was a detailed expenditure list including burial money, fees for advertisements about the repatriation, and a travel allowance for the charitable association's representative in Hong Kong. A copy of the third letter sent by Tung Wah referred to the "convenience hospital" in Canton and reported that there were five unclaimed coffins and three sets of bones. These were to be transported by boat to the hospital for burial under the charitable burial ground owned by the *huiguan* in Kobe, and the burial money was to be sent to the hospital in due course. In response to Tung Wah, the charitable hospital in Canton sent Tung Wah a receipt, which was then followed by an official letter acknowledging the arrival of the five coffins and three sets of bones from Tung Wah, and reporting that except for a coffin that was claimed by relatives of the dead, all other remains would be buried at the charitable cemetery owned by Lingnan Dunshantang. After Tung Wah remitted the burial money (HK$83) in early 1937 to the Chengxi Fangbian Yiyuan charitable hospital in Canton, through the Dao Heng Bank in Hong Kong to a native bank in Canton, the hospital sent Tung Wah a report in February 1937 reporting on the use of the burial money in building new graves for unclaimed remains as well as refurbishing old ones at the charitable graveyard. Attached to the letter was a list of the tasks done by the undertaker and the expenses incurred.[47]

In this case, although letters from the *huiguan* in Kobe are missing, thanks to Tung Wah's practice of keeping drafts of outgoing letters we can reconstruct details of the operation, supported by documents appended including official certifications, invoices, receipts, bills of lading, and the like. All in all, these documents demonstrate the significant role played by overseas *huiguan* in initiating repatriation of coffins/bones of overseas Chinese, the reactions of local charitable organizations at the receiving end, and the function of Tung Wah as a pivotal hub facilitating the operation of the system and steering the massive global network, particularly after the establishment of the TWCH.

Conclusion

From the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, Cantonese Pacific communities came to be linked with one another and with China through an extensive network of benevolent organizations centered in the port of Hong Kong. In this chapter I have focused my discussion on the institutional linkages servicing the practice of homebound burial/reburial of Chinese emigrants through the network. It should be stressed, however, that the trans-Pacific institutional links that serviced the dead also worked to facilitate outward migration and return journeys to China, to support remittance and business networks, and to provide logistics and information flows as well. Through these networks, Cantonese communities of the Pacific were connected not only by shared language, customs, and traditions, but by a number of substantial social institutions that drew them into a wider regional trading and social system, again centered on Hong Kong.

The TWCH archival records confirm and illustrate the Tung Wah Hospital complex's unique place in this transnational network as a charitable service provider par excellence. To be sure, not every aspect of coffin and bone repatriation was charitable; it was, for example, a

47. Tung Wah Coffin Home Archives: Correspondence Regarding Coffins/Bones from Overseas, 1936/37.

profitable business for the steamship companies involved in the enterprise.[48] But the Tung Wah Hospital complex and the benevolent associations with which it partnered overseas all operated on a "combination of charitable and mutual aid principles," in Elizabeth Sinn's considered judgment.[49] What impressed me most in reading the archival records is the seriousness with which the TWCH performed its arduous and morbid task, the highly systematic procedures it developed to do so, its commitment to detail, its determination to maintain full and accurate records, and in turn the remarkable persistence of the institution and its network of affiliated *huiguan* around the Pacific, Southeast Asia, and beyond.

The 1950s were a time of abrupt changes that eventually brought the practice to an end. From the TWCH's archives we estimate that around 100,000 sets of coffins or bones were repatriated from 1900 to 1950, averaging around 2,000 sets each year. There is no way to establish with any precision the ratio between bones/remains repatriated and those that remained buried overseas. Indeed, there are many known instances of overseas Chinese pioneers who chose to remain buried in their host countries.[50] Further, records at some sites appear to contradict the impression that deceased Chinese were usually returned to their native places.[51] Around the Pacific today, charity associations such as the Yuqingtang of the American Xinning Huiguan, which were historically involved in coffin repatriation, continue to take care of burials in the United States and arrange annual visits to graves, although no longer in China. In this sense, *huiguan* and their charity branches continue to uphold the traditions and perform the rituals concerned with burial long after the century-old practice of coffin and bone repatriation drew to an end.[52]

For all their richness of detail, the TWCH archives alone cannot tell us what lay behind the novel century-long practice of large-scale transcontinental coffin and bone repatriation.[53] For this purpose, the archives need to be read alongside other source materials, including field information, to help us build a broader picture of the lived experience of early generations of diasporic Chinese. The *jianyun* documents confirm comments from field investigations concerning the problem of racial discrimination encountered by the first generation of Chinese emigrants to Gold Mountain. They provide evidence of discrimination after death in, for example, the Changhoutang documents cited above. My field visits to old cemeteries in California largely verify claims found in the documents.

The imperative to survive in a hostile environment needs to be factored into any explanation of the charity programs that arose to service Cantonese immigrant communities in ways that went beyond mere mutual aid. With respect to charitable repatriation of the dead, explanations that resort to traditional customs, religious beliefs, and emotional attachment to hometown communities need to be supplemented by reference to the lived experience of migrants in their host societies of a kind that would encourage them to plan for the return of their bodies, and more importantly, their souls, at the end of their journeys. Discrimination even applied in

48. For average cost for sending bone boxes, see Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, 268.
49. Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, 277.
50. For example, the case of Ah Tye in Lani Ah Tye Farkas, *Bury My Bones in America: The Saga of a Chinese Family in California 1852–1996, from San Francisco to the Sierra Gold Mines* (Nevada City: Carl Mautz Publishing, 1998), 64.
51. Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars, "Introduction," in *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors*, ed. Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 8. Their claim that "during the twentieth century fewer Chinese bones were shipped back to China" does not however appear to be borne out by the TWCH archives, which show that large numbers continued to be repatriated well into the twentieth century.
52. According to field work conducted in 2012–2013.
53. There appear to be echoes of what Edward Shils calls a "substantive tradition" in relation to the primeval psychological inclination of humankind to hold deep respect for the divine, ancestors, native land, and so on, which persist, or revive, even in face of challenges. See Edward Albert Shils, "Introduction," in *Tradition* by Edward Albert Shils (London: Faber & Faber's, 1981).

10

Building Trust

*Private Charity (*cishan 慈善*) and Public Benefit (*gongyi 公益*) in the Associational Life of the Cantonese Pacific, 1850–1949*

John Fitzgerald[1]

Introduction

This concluding chapter traces the parallel development of charitable practices and associational forms in the Cantonese Pacific over the century to 1949 with a view to seeing the degree to which Chinese overseas employed charity to build trust within their own communities and with their host societies in Australia and North America. Business activities and social transactions in Chinese communities, including Chinese diaspora communities, are said to be embedded in personal trust extending to networks (*guanxi* 關係) of trust.[2] The chapter argues that innovations driving the evolution of charitable practices and associational forms among Cantonese diaspora communities of the Pacific largely conform to this pattern. By drawing attention to some of the connections linking civic associations and their charitable activities to a range of trust-building strategies over time, the chapter highlights points of continuity in the work of Chinese community organizations overseas during a period of rapid institutional change from the late Qing 清 dynasty to the founding of the People's Republic—the relationship between engaging in private charity and working for the public benefit to build community trust.

In highlighting the importance of trust, we also seek to contribute to wider appreciation of the place of diaspora charity in historical understanding of gift-giving more generally. In *The Gift* (1925), Marcel Mauss explained how gift-giving among individuals and communities differs from market exchanges in so far as it is a total social phenomenon involving moral, religious, and aesthetic as well as economic dimensions.[3] Among the body of literature seeded by Mauss' pioneering study, a number of anthropological inquiries have identified similarities and differences that distinguish reciprocal gift-giving among individuals from wider charitable practices or modern institutional philanthropy. Some find modern charity to be highly exclusionary, and to conceal elite status and power, in contrast to the mutuality and reciprocity that

1. Research for this chapter was undertaken with support from Australian Research Council Grant DP130102864, "Asia-Pacific Philanthropies."

2. Wai Keung Chung and Gary Hamilton, "Social Logic as Business Logic: Guanxi, Trustworthiness and the Embeddedness of Chinese Business Practices," in *Rules and Networks: The Legal Culture of Global Business Transactions*, ed. Richard P. Appelbaum, William L. F. Felstiner, and Volkmar Gessner (Oxford: Hart, 2001), 302–49.

3. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Ian Cunnison trans. (London: Cohen & West, 1966 [1925]).

characterizes classical gift exchanges.[4] And yet we find that the charitable institutions and practices of the Cantonese Pacific were designed to overcome exclusion by extending trust among and between dispersed diaspora networks, and by building trust between vulnerable diaspora minorities and more powerful mainstream communities, in rapidly developing and urbanizing immigrant states around the Pacific rim.

Charity and Organization

The charitable purposes underlying civic associations set up by Chinese overseas are often noted but rarely studied.[5] Over the second half of the nineteenth century, Cantonese merchants and laborers on the Californian, Canadian, and Australasian goldfields established a range of kinship, hometown, and brotherhood societies to provide support for their clansman and neighbors in the towns and villages where they settled similar to those set up by Chinese settlers in Southeast Asia and Latin America. These were modeled, in turn, on the home-county and provincial associations that Cantonese merchants operated in Guangxi 廣西, Shanghai 上海, Wuhan 武漢, Beijing 北京, and elsewhere within China to care for the interests and well-being of sojourners away from home.[6] Hometown, clan, and brotherhood societies were on the whole exclusive associations that limited their membership to men of a common surname or county, or who swore oaths of camaraderie around rituals of quasi-family brotherhood. Their charitable services were largely directed toward their own members. Charity and organization were, in effect, united as one.

From around the turn of the twentieth century a number of more inclusive associations emerged around the Cantonese Pacific including consolidated hometown associations, chambers of commerce, church groups, women's associations, luncheon clubs, political parties, and Chung-Hwa (Zhonghua 中華) associations. Although these new organizations rarely replaced or supplanted earlier ones, they helped to establish new standards for existing organizations, some of which refashioned themselves into more inclusive and formally structured civic associations after the style of the day. And while each of the new associations emerged in response to particular local conditions at different sites of settlement, similar patterns of organization emerged from one site to another.

Some of these developments corresponded closely with changes under way among civic organizations within China, particularly along the rapidly developing east coast, as the country transitioned from the Qing empire to the Republic of China. In the case of chambers of commerce and Chung-Hwa associations overseas, the connection with China was a direct one in so far as Chinese government representatives in North America and Australasia played a catalyzing role in their creation. For the most part, however, institutional innovations were driven from within communities themselves.

The old societies and new associations did not have a lot in common, but one thing many shared was a commitment to charity. The San Francisco Square and Circle Club, for example, was founded by seven young women in San Francisco's Chinatown in 1924 and its membership, leadership, management style, and mode of operation were far removed from those of

4. See for example John H. Hanson, "The Anthropology of Giving: Toward A Cultural Logic of Charity," *Journal of Cultural Economy* 8, no. 4 (2015): 501–20.
5. Glen Peterson, "Overseas Chinese and Merchant Philanthropy in China: From Culturalism to Nationalism," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 1, no. 1 (May 2005): 87–109.
6. Philip A. Kuhn, *Chinese among Others: Emigration in Modern Times* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008); Stephen B. Miles, *Upriver Journeys: Diaspora and Empire in Southern China, 1570–1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

the hometown associations set up by men in that city in the 1850s. The first of these hometown associations, the Kong Chow (Gangzhou 岡州) Association founded in 1850, was created to arrange labor and transport to and from America for men from Sunwai (Xinhui 新會) County in Guangdong 廣東, and to raise funds to care for them when they were injured or infirm, and if all else failed to repatriate their bones to their home villages in Sunwai.[7] The Square and Circle Club, on the other hand, was set up by a small group of women friends in the Chinese Congregational Church of San Francisco to encourage business and professional women to raise funds and engage in charitable work including, in good time, a patriotic bond-purchasing campaign to raise funds for China's war of resistance against Japan. An organization of professional women that employed self-consciously gendered forms of philanthropic sociability, to borrow Mei-fen Kuo's phrase, to bring women together to "use our talents, our energy, and be more loving and caring in doing things for the community" marked a radical development from the patriarchal clan associations, Chinatown brotherhoods, and hometown associations responsible for community services in earlier years.[8] And yet they were each in their way devoted to charitable service of one kind and another.

The earliest extant constitutions and regulations of hometown associations in California and Australia generally make reference to charity. As Yong Chen notes in his chapter, one association reported in the San Francisco press listed several charitable activities in its charter, including assisting the sick to return to China; the provision of medicines, coffins, and funeral expenses; the repair of tombs; and coverage of expenses associated with lawsuits. Similar wording is to be found in hometown association charters published in the Australian colonies in the 1850s. The 1854 regulations of the earliest known Chinese native-place society in Victoria, the See Yup Association (Siyi huiguan 四邑會館), stated that its main purpose was the provision of charity and welfare.[9] The Square and Circle Club listed charitable service under its founding charter's second article, which set out the primary purposes of the club as "to develop a spirit of cooperation and service by promoting and fostering philanthropic and community projects."[10]

Another thing they had in common was a place-based focus for their charity work. The Square and Circle Club's hometown focus was San Francisco's Chinatown, not a native place in China, and its charitable remit extended well beyond the interests of its members to embrace all of the identifiable needs of the local community as well as pressing needs within China. It raised funds for orphans, poor families, the elderly, and for relief efforts in China, and it lobbied for housing and public facilities in San Francisco. For all its innovation it was the Club's focus on place-based charitable services and on charitable causes locally and in China that cemented its place in the long tradition of Cantonese associations and their charitable activities overseas.

Charity was at the heart of associational life in the Cantonese diaspora for several reasons. For their merchant leaders, Elizabeth Sinn observes, charitable donations were a mark of trustworthiness in business, and for ordinary members they were a form of social insurance.[11] One

7. The first hometown association in California, the Kang Chow Society, was founded in 1850 by male natives of Sunwai (Xinhui 新會) County. It was followed shortly afterward by the Sam Yup (Sanyi 三邑) and Sze Yup (Siyi四邑) multicounty regional associations. Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco 1850–1943* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 70–72.
8. Alice Lowe (moderator), "The Emergence of Chinese American Women," *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* 1 (January 1, 2007): n.p. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3167/is_2007_Annual/ai_n29334782; Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). On philanthropic sociability, see Mei-fen Kuo's chapter in this volume.
9. Mei Weiqiang, *A History of See Yup Society of Victoria Australia 1854–2004* (Melbourne: See Yup Society of Victoria, 2004), Appendix 1.
10. Judy Yung, "Alice Fung Yu, Schoolteacher and Community Organizer," in *Unbound Voices: A Documentary History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 375–86.
11. See Elizabeth Sinn's chapter in this volume.

of the primary purposes of early clan and hometown associations was provision of care for fellow members in the absence of family, religious, or state assistance for the sick, the disabled, and the dead. For a community of donors, the act of giving beyond an association's membership to support a wider public benefit such as schools or flood or famine relief in China, or donations to hospitals and orphanages at sites of settlement, helped to build associational life and elevate community status in wider social circles. As associational forms expanded and developed to embrace larger and even whole Chinese communities at overseas sites of settlement, bringing outsiders into networks irrespective of clan or hometown affinities, large-scale charitable fundraising drives and donations helped to build trust and commitment among different families and dialect groups working toward a higher-order public benefit (*gongyi* 公益) rather than in the service of sectional or private benefit (*siyi* 私益).

Charity and Trust

Doing things for others, and not simply for oneself, is a trust-building strategy. The place of trust in diaspora networks is well established in histories of Armenian, Greek, Jewish, and other dispersed communities of the Mediterranean region. The success of these diaspora trading networks can be attributed in part to patterns of network trust built up within kinship, religious, cultural, and hometown networks extending across multiple states and markets. Typically, successful diaspora business networks also build trust across ethnic and cultural boundaries, both with their host societies and with other diaspora networks, no less than with their own kind.[12]

Charity has a special relationship with trust. Handing over funds or assets to a stranger for charitable purposes without thought of financial advantage on either side is a test of trustworthiness in any relationship. At the same time, outwardly selfless acts of charitable giving build trust among networked groups otherwise wary of self-seeking behavior or duplicitous conduct on the part of others, especially in relations involving strangers. Further, participation in voluntary associations helps to develop bonds of trust through joint action for the common good.[13] The community-building functions of voluntary association and charitable giving among Cantonese living abroad appear to have cemented ritual ties of trust founded on notions of common ancestry and embedded in social networks linking native places and native sons and daughters throughout China and the world.[14]

The predominance of kinship and hometown forms of association and charity among Cantonese overseas in the late imperial period calls to mind Frances Fukuyama's characterization of China as a "low-trust" society, in which trust rarely extends beyond family or kinship networks. On Fukuyama's model, in low-trust societies trust is strong within kinship groups but drops off precipitately at the perimeters of the family or quasi-family (hometown) network, beyond which conduct in relationships cannot be held accountable to the norms and rules governing behavior within the family or wider kin group.[15]

Chinese businesses appear to have operated on such a model. Historian Gary Hamilton observes that business and social transactions in historical Chinese communities were

12. Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, Gelina Harlaftis, and Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou, eds., *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History* (New York: Berg, 2005).
13. Robert L. Payton and Michael P. Moody, *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 164; Dietlind Stolle, "Clubs and Congregations: The Benefits of Joining an Association," in *Trust in Society*, ed. Karen Cook (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003), 202–44.
14. Peterson, "Overseas Chinese," 92–93.
15. Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

conducted through "networks of people whose actions are oriented by normative social relationships." Institutionally, following Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong, Hamilton suggests that Chinese society is made up of networks that "rest on relationships and not jurisdictions, on obedience to one's roles and not on bureaucratic command structures."[16] In so far as these relationships are built on trust, interpersonal trust is an essential feature of successful business networks. Whether in business, in charity, or in everyday social relations, considerable organizational effort needs to be invested in building and maintaining relationships by building and maintaining personal trust networks.

To extend this model to the Cantonese Pacific a century ago and suggest that trust rarely extended beyond family or quasi-kinship networks at that time is not to imply that levels of trust were low. It simply means that trust outside of family or established networks was not easily given or assured. Within a formal associational network, levels of trust were relatively high as norms and transactions could be enforced immediately by family, neighbors, storekeepers, and others. Individual people could observe firsthand who did and did not keep their promises and could inform on transgressors through the same interpersonal networks.

In relation to charity, for example, association members could cast their eyes over a society's book-keeping papers, including donation records (*zhengxinlu* 徵信錄) which, David Faure notes in his chapter, routinely listed donations along with the purposes for which they were made. The wrath of the gods could be invoked as an additional sanction. When family or quasi-family affiliations alone proved insufficient to ensure trust, the fierce stare of a patron deity glaring down upon association members from a pedestal high on the communal altar offered a divine injunction to comply with associational norms and unwritten contracts.[17]

Similarly, to say that people outside a community or network were not to be trusted is not to suggest that they were inherently less trustworthy, merely that communal enforcement strategies and the oversight of patron deities did not apply to strangers as effectively as to members. Trust between insiders and outsiders was not something that could be taken for granted.

Trust could nevertheless be earned within evolving networks through charitable activity. One way of building and extending networks beyond family and hometown ties in Cantonese Pacific communities was to expand the boundaries of community associations themselves by reaching out to Cantonese (and other Chinese overseas) who were neither relatives nor neighbors. Another was to work toward high-level cooperation among trust-bound associations, enabling effective cooperation among networks while depending on each network's own internal compliance strategies to ensure trust. A third way to build trust was to start anew with civic associations that overlooked kin and locality-based networks in favor of higher-order principles based on religion, patriotism, community welfare, or other common causes.

When each of these community-building strategies was tried and tested at sites of Cantonese settlement around the Pacific, charity generally formed part of the test. Through expansion, cooperation, and institutional innovation, networked associations earned and built trust through conspicuously selfless acts of charitable giving and welfare service. Routine cooperation among clan and hometown associations and collaboration among more broadly based civic associations was then cemented in periodic acts of charitable giving that bound relative strangers together not for themselves (*si* 私), as it were, but for the common (*gong* 公) good.

Cantonese Pacific communities went further still. In addition to building trust among their own kin through charitable activities, their community associations worked to establish trust in

16. Gary G. Hamilton, *Commerce and Capitalism in Chinese Societies* (London: Routledge, 2006), 21–46.
17. See David Faure's chapter in this volume.

relations with their dominant host communities at sites of settlement from Melbourne to San Francisco. Leaders of community associations represented their communities in negotiations with local authorities for recognition of Chinese as equal citizens and in seeking political concessions relating to race-based immigration restrictions among other demands. They earned the right to negotiate by building relations based on public charitable exchanges. In such cases charity could serve as a medium for negotiation among relative equals on matters of race and citizenship.

When it came to institutional innovation, charity, and expansive inter-network trust building, the great pioneer and exemplar for the Cantonese Pacific was the Tung Wah (Donghua 東華) Hospital complex in Hong Kong. As Hon-ming Yip observes, Tung Wah's founding in 1870 coincided with rapidly growing demand among hometown associations of the Pacific Rim for reliable partners in south China to manage their charitable work and particularly, for the repatriation of the bones of departed sojourners. In meeting these demands predictably over time, Tung Wah emerged as a central intermediary institution in the development of the Cantonese Pacific.[18]

Across the Pacific, Cantonese community organizations preferred to cooperate with the Tung Wah Hospital over other institutions because it was a reliable and trustworthy charity partner. The Hospital coordinated a formidable list of shipping, credit, and payment operations associated with its charitable activities, corresponding in the process with countless institutions overseas and within China at any one time. It worked over a vast geographical scale, acting on behalf of local hometown associations stretching from North America through Peru, New Zealand, and Australia to the Islands of South Pacific, while at the same time transhipping bones within China from town to town on behalf of overseas community associations. It set new standards of accountability, as David Faure points out, chiefly in relation to financial transactions but also bearing on the delivery of outcomes.[19] Tung Wah's reputation for honesty, rigor, reliability, and trustworthiness was a key to its success as a community organization. "Without trust," Elizabeth Sinn concludes in a major study of the charity hospital, "the repatriation of remains, and the concomitant remittance of funds, would not have been realizable."[20]

Second Generations, Women, and Christian Charity

Underlying the institutional adaptations and innovations we are tracing here across the Cantonese Pacific from traditional hometown associations such as the Kong Chow Association to charitable organizations like the Square and Circle Club lay major demographic shifts in urban centers in the region. Other factors not to be overlooked include local political and social dynamics at different sites of settlement, racially restrictive immigration policies, relations between Chinese communities and their host societies, and the exemplary effect of parallel developments underway in China itself as the Great Qing gave way to the Republic of China.

Demographic changes saw second-generation Cantonese women, for example, emerging to play a greater role in charitable work, often framed within a Protestant Christian institutional mission. At the time the Kong Chow Association was founded in California and the See Yup Society opened in Victoria, Australia, the overwhelming majority of Chinese residents were

18. See Hon-ming Yip's chapter in this volume.
19. See David Faure's chapter in this volume.
20. Elizabeth Sinn, *Pacific Crossing: California Gold, Chinese Migration, and the Making of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 189, 291.

men. The ratio of women to men shifted appreciably over time as the number of males entering each country fell on account of racially based immigration restrictions and as the residual male population fathered boys and girls of the second and third generation in equal number. The number of women and girls in the local Chinese population grew appreciably in relative terms.

At the beginning of the 1860s in Victoria in Australia, for example, no more than eight women were recorded among the 24,732 (0.03%) Chinese residents of the colony. In Australia as a whole, the Chinese Australian population of 29,627 at the time of Federation in 1901 included just 474 women (1.6%). Over time, however, intermarriages and second-generation marriages between female offspring and Chinese Australian males pushed the gender ratio toward a more natural balance. By the late 1920s and 1930s, historian Paul Jones has estimated, females with one or two parents of Chinese descent made up close to one quarter of a relatively diminished Chinese Australian community.[21]

The growth in the number of women was matched by higher levels of female education and employment outside the home, often in professional and service industries. Opportunities opened up for the spouses of wealthy merchants and for second-generation professional women (first-generation Americans, for example) to pioneer new kinds of civic associations for charitable services such as the Square and Circle Club in San Francisco and a variety of clubs and societies affiliated with Christian congregations and organizations in the United States, Canada, and Australia, including the YMCA and YWCA. Local conditions in these countries encouraged next-generation Chinese to take up these opportunities.[22]

Early in the twentieth century, a number of new-style Chinese community organizations emerged to engage in voluntary and charitable work and community advocacy around the Pacific Rim. Some were associated with particular Christian congregations and institutions, others with Chinese national (*Zhonghua* 中華) affiliations. And in many cases these new organizations were seeded by the social and political conditions common at sites of settlement in North America and Australia, including changing gender patterns and expectations, racially based immigration restrictions, and opportunities for organized representation and civic action.

Racial discrimination was a particular feature of the Cantonese Pacific. From the late nineteenth century, race-based immigration restrictions compelled Chinese associations in North America and Australasia to move beyond particularistic kinship and hometown networks in order to defend wider community interests more effectively. Among Chinese residents of the Pacific Rim, old-style native-place associations came to appear ineffective in the struggle to confront race-based policies and other legislation harmful to Chinese community interests. In her chapter, Mei-fen Kuo highlights the case of the Rev. Huie Kin (Xu Qin 許芹 1854–1934), who was persuaded while working as a young laborer in California that the main problem facing the Chinese community in its struggle with racial prejudice was the hidebound attitudes of traditional clan and native-place associations. Working with Chinese American Christians, he worked to create new kinds of church-based associations to advocate more effectively for Chinese community interests in the face of discrimination and at the same time provide charitable and voluntary services for incoming arrivals from China.[23]

21. Paul Jones, "The View from the Edge: Chinese Australians and China, 1890 to 1949," i*n East by South: China in the Australasian Imagination, ed.* Charles Ferrall, Paul Millar, and Keren Smith (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2005); Paul Jones, "What Happened to Australia's Chinese Between the World Wars?" in *After the Rush: Regulation, Participation and Chinese Communities in Australia 1860–1940*, ed. Sophie Couchman, John Fitzgerald, and Paul Macgregor. Special edition of *Otherland* 9 (December 2004): 217–36.
22. John Fitzgerald and Mei-fen Kuo, "Diaspora Charity and Welfare Sovereignty in the Chinese Republic: Shanghai Charity Innovator William Yinson Lee (Li Yuanxin, 1884–1965)," *Twentieth-Century China 42, no. 1, (2017): 72–96.*
23. See Mei-fen Kuo's chapter in this volume.

Kong suppliers went out of business, the Canadian office dispatched a specialist brickmaker from Canada to Taishan to complete the project. If, as occasionally happened, a locally contracted builder faced liquidity problems and could not pay his laborers, the School Building Office paid workers directly.[51]

There was little that the Canadians' Hong Kong and Taishan offices would not do to ensure that Canadian donor funds were well spent and accounted for, apart from entrusting a local association or agency to do the work. To this day, Taishan No. 1 Middle School stands as a remarkable testament to the generosity and professionalism of early Chinese Canadian donors working within hometown traditions to achieve something that had never been accomplished on that scale to that time. And yet the entire project was not only funded but also managed on site by Chinese Canadians entrusted by fellow Taishan Canadians to deliver the goods—indicating the strong bonds of trust linking Taishan communities across the length and breadth of Canada but the limited trust placed in authorities and community organizations in Taishan in the Republican era.

Other returning Chinese brought their experience and skills to bear in innovative ways to Republican Shanghai. Having tired of community organizing and letter writing in Sydney, charity entrepreneur William Yinson Lee visited the United States in 1922 and 1923 and from there traveled to China with national distribution rights for Brewer pharmaceuticals and powered milk. To build commercial trust in the firm, he launched charity initiatives in Shanghai promoting children's health and welfare, along with charitable innovations introduced from around the Cantonese Pacific, drawing on his experience in Sydney and his contacts in San Francisco. Lee won YMCA approval to establish the first overseas branch of the Y's Men's Club, a charitable arm of the YMCA, in Shanghai in 1924. In time he extended the club into a national network of charity clubs and served as president of the Men's Club network from 1924 to 1926 and again from 1932 to 1933. As the clubs' regional president for China, in 1933 he oversaw eleven clubs with around five hundred members drawn from "the leading business and professional men" of Shanghai and other cities, including Hong Kong, Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuhu, Hankou, Fuzhou, and Xiamen. Members were almost all Chinese nationals or of Chinese descent. He also introduced new kinds of charity fund-raising events to China, including charity fashion parades, beauty pageants, and cute baby contests, with the proceeds going toward children's health clinics and playgrounds, commoners (*pingmin* 平民) vocational schools, and hospitals for leprosy care and treatment. Lee found Shanghai as lively a field of intercultural negotiation over charity as Sydney and San Francisco.[52]

Conclusion

Dense patterns of Chinese community association around the Pacific Rim from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries illustrate the value placed on associational life by Cantonese immigrants in Australasia and North America. Initially based on kin and hometown networks, many of these associations retained connections with their communities of origin in China and with hometown networks and charities in Hong Kong while at the same time communicating with one another across different sites of settlement around the Pacific. They were valued for facilitating travel, trade, and communications, and for fostering camaraderie. The associations were also valued for the charitable services they provided to members. From extant charters

51. Huang and Zhang, *Bainian qiaoxiao*, 14–39.
52. Fitzgerald and Kuo, "Diaspora Charity."

of kin and hometown societies, we know that the provision of charity to members was part of their mission.

As the age profile and gender composition of Cantonese Pacific communities changed with the passage of time, and immigration restrictions were extended around the Pacific, older organizations were compelled to cooperate and new associations were formed to meet changing community demands. Recurring patterns of adaptation highlighted some of the dynamics at work in Cantonese associational life. Prominent among these dynamics were the need to cooperate in the face of racial discrimination; a tendency to maintain hometown affiliations in charitable activities despite institutional adaptations; and consistent efforts to replicate levels of trust to be found in kin and native-place associations in more inclusive kinds of associations of "strangers," including new associational forms such as women's clubs, youth groups, Christian church congregations, and Chung Wah Societies. In each case private charity played a part, not simply in doing good, but in building trust through doing good. This could be achieved through mutual self-help in the case of kin and hometown associations, or through contributions toward a broader public benefit in the case of more inclusive civic associations such as clubs, churches, and United Benevolent or Chung Wah Societies.

New forms of charity supported institutional innovation and local adaptation by helping to build trust among otherwise skeptical networks and institutions. Outside of established trust networks such as those based on kinship and hometown ties, the default position for relations among "strangers" tended toward mistrust. The same applied to relations with host societies around the Pacific Rim. Efforts to overcome mistrust among hometown associations, in part to combat exclusion from dominant host societies, drove institutional innovation and adaptation, yielding more inclusive collaborative societies, new forms of association, and new forms of charity activity. Even so, new associations never quite escaped their roots. Some Chinese Christian charities replicated hometown patterns in their charity work, even as new models of older associations such as United Benevolent and Chung Hwa Societies conspicuously struggled to escape the pull of hometown ties and county deities in their charitable activities.

Charitable acts for public benefit helped to build associational life because they stood as a rebuke to selfish interest. Where sanctions enforcing trust could not be readily applied, notably outside of kin or quasi-kinship networks, a common assumption prevailed that selfish interests or pursuit of private benefit would trump common interests and the public benefit. To counter this tendency, periodic donations of money or services intended for public benefit, including rituals associated with charitable festivals, offered public demonstrations of unselfish intent that went beyond the particular interests of a donor network in the service of a wider community.

Where demonstrations of good intentions yielded concrete outcomes benefitting the wider community, in for example discrete associations rallying together in support of disaster relief for floods and famines in China, or in provision of schools, hospitals, and asylums at overseas sites of settlement, the ritual force of good intentions was tangibly reinforced by actual public benefits. A measure of trust was earned in the common currency of charity. Where that trust was earned, the practice of charity suggested it was far from incidental to the mission and effectiveness of associational life in the Cantonese Pacific.

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Index