

A MISCONCEPTION:

The Relationship between the Chinese-English Daily Newspaper and the Chinese Times

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TO MANY LOYAL READERS' surprise, on 3 October 1992, the front page of *Tai Hon Kong Bo* 大漢公報 (*Chinese Times*) announced the suspension of publication. The reader would wait in vain for its suspension to be lifted: the announcement marked a full stop to the daily's many decades of publication. Indeed, it had been the longest-operating Chinese diaspora newspaper in Canada. Noticeably, the paper's subhead records its inauguration year as 1907, an error that was sustained until the final day of publication.¹

Launched in Vancouver in the first decade of the twentieth century by *Chee Kung Tong* 致公堂 (the Chinese Freemasons), a leading Chinese community association, *Tai Hon Kong Bo* is one of the most dynamic of the Chinese diasporic media in Canada. Witnessing critical times in the twentieth century, *Tai Hon Kong Bo* recorded key historic events that deeply affected Chinese life in Canada: the head tax, the *Xinbai* Revolution, the two world wars, the *Chinese Immigration Act*, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, and so on. During its more than eighty-year run, the newspaper maintained a dual focus, paying attention both to local community welfare (contextualizing Chinese immigrants' transcultural and transnational life experience into its daily reports) and to the national affairs of both the host and heritage countries (responding to broader social and political events and issues with strong local and community importance). Reflected in the pages of this daily newspaper is the long

* We want to acknowledge that the events and history being discussed in this article took place largely in Vancouver, unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples. This study is supported by York University's SSRHC Explore Grant. Our thanks to Blair Galston, Regional Archivist at Bob Stewart Archives, United Church of Canada, Pacific Mountain Region, for his invaluable help with our archival research. We are grateful to the two anonymous readers for their insightful advice.

¹ The year the *Chinese Times* was first published is key to this article and is closely analyzed. In order to avoid confusion, we use *Tai Hon Kong Bo* as the standard name for the *Chinese Times* throughout.

and complicated history of the acculturation of Chinese immigrants into multicultural Canada. As the newspaper navigates between emerging ideas of Canadian multiculturalism and traditional Chinese cultural values, *Tai Hon Kong Bo* offers a unique model of transcultural media practice. Yet, despite its importance as a rich primary source for studies of the Chinese diaspora, the early publication history of *Tai Hon Kong Bo* has up until now remained unclear; the date of its first appearance, controversial. This article aims to clear up the long-standing confusion regarding the year *Tai Hon Kong Bo* was launched and its affiliation with another early Chinese diaspora newspaper, *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* 华英日报 (*Chinese-English Daily Newspaper*), the first Christian newspaper in the Chinese language published in Canada. The purpose is not only to restore *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*'s position in the print history of Canada as an autonomous entity but also to restore its mission of Christian moral reform in Chinese communities in particular and in Canada in general.

The earliest Chinese diaspora newspapers published in Canada appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century, when the Chinese labourers who participated in the gold rushes and railway construction settled on the West Coast and in other parts of Canada. They include *Yat Sun Bo* 日新报 (*Daily News*, 1903–12), *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* 华英日报 (*Chinese-English Daily Newspaper*, 1906–09),² *Xinminguo Bao* 新民国报 (*New Republic*, 1909–89),³ and *Tai-Hon Yat-Bo* 大汉日报 (*Chinese Times*, 1910–15, renamed *Tai Hon Kong Bo* 大汉公报 in 1915 and ceasing publication in 1992). Among these, *Tai Hon Kong Bo* has the longest record of continued publication.

Yet multiple versions of its commencement year make it difficult to ascertain the newspaper's running years with any degree of accuracy. More important, the provision of the year 1907 on the final day of *Tai Hon Kong Bo*'s circulation tends to obscure the prominence of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* and thus alters the cultural and political landscape of Chinese communities in the first decade of the twentieth century.

In the conventional view, *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* was *Tai Hon Kong Bo*'s predecessor, the latter functioning to amplify the former. This ambiguous view is the one that prevails in scholarly books and articles, and it has become the standard interpretation of the affiliation between the two

² In the following, we use the newspaper's own Chinese Romanization – *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*.

³ The year *Xinminguo Bao* was first published is recorded in Xu Chang'an, "Jianada Huawen chuanmei fazhan zongshu" 加拿大华文传媒发展综述 [A summary of the development of Chinese media in Canada]; <http://newstar.superlife.ca/2015/08/23/加拿大华文传媒发展综述>. David T.H. Lee did not note the year of its initial publication but indicated that the newspaper was founded before the *Xinbai* Revolution of 1911. See David T.H. Lee, *Jianada Huaqiaoshi* 加拿大华侨史 [A history of Chinese in Canada] (Vancouver: Jianada ziyou chubanshe, 1967), 350.

newspapers. In the same vein, some scholars believe that the inception year of *Tai Hon Kong Bo* should be pushed back to 1906, the year *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* began publication. Obviously, this suggestion views *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* as the first stage of *Tai Hon Kong Po* – the same newspaper under a different name.

This article begins by clarifying *Tai Hon Kong Bo*'s controversial inaugural year and then analyzes why both this newspaper and contemporary scholars regard *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* as its predecessor, even though the owners of the two newspapers differed considerably in their political orientations and goals. Finally, we examine *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*'s significance in the creation of *Tai Hon Kong Bo*, one of the most influential Chinese diaspora newspapers in Canada and the propaganda outlet of *Chee Kung Tong*, which promoted the association's ideology.

THE INAUGURAL YEAR OF WA-YING YAT-PO

In conventional narratives, scholars treat *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* as the first phase of *Tai Hon Kong Bo* instead of as a publication in its own right. For instance, the introductory editorial note that prefaces the microfilmed version of *Tai Hon Kong Bo* states that the newspaper was “[f]ounded in 1907 in Vancouver, BC, under the title of *Chinese English Daily News* (*Hua Ying jih pao*) ... In the summer of 1910, it was reorganized and changed to *The Chinese Daily News* 大汉日报 (*Ta Han jih pao*) ... Finally it was changed to the present title: *The Chinese Times* (*Ta Han kung pao*) in 1915.”⁴ This treatment is common in scholarly books and articles in Chinese diaspora studies that refer to the two newspapers. To add to the confusion, the introductory editorial note claims that *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* was founded in 1907.

David Chuenyan Lai, known as “the Father of Canadian Chinatowns,” followed the introductory editorial note and considered *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* as a forerunner of *Tai Hon Kong Bo*. In the bibliography of his *Chinese Community Leadership*, David Chuenyan Lai lists the newspaper as “*Wah Ying Yat Bao* (Chinese Times), Vancouver, 1907–September 1910, renamed *Tai Hon Yat Bo* (Chinese Daily News), Vancouver, October 1910–5 November 1915, renamed *Tai Hon Kung Bo* (Chinese Times),

⁴ See introductory editorial note to the microfilmed version of the *Chinese Times* (*Tai Hon Kong Bo*) in the University of British Columbia Library, Asian Studies Division. The digital version of the newspaper, from August 1914 to 1992, is available online at <http://chinesetimes.lib.sfu.ca/>. The editorial note spells *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* as *Hua Ying jih pao*, very close to modern Chinese standard pronunciation. *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* is based on Cantonese pronunciation.

6 November 1915–3 October 1992.”⁵ Lisa Rose Mar holds the same view: “The long period of time that the *Da Han Gong Bao* was published (1907–1992) suggests that its news appealed to many Chinese Canadians. Before late 1915, the paper was called *Da Han Ri Bao* (Chinese Daily News).”⁶

What makes the controversy more complicated are the accounts by *Tai Hon Kong Bo* itself. In its early accounts, *Tai Hon Kong Bo* gives 1906 as the launch year of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*, but it also sees that newspaper as the first period of *Tai Hon Kong Bo*. The earliest available newspaper, the 1 August 1914 edition, displays the subheading: “The Only Chinese Daily Published in Canada Established in 1906.” On 16 September 1939, an article for a special issue of *Tai Hon Kong Bo* asserts:

This newspaper is the initial Chinese daily newspaper since Canada started to print newspapers in Chinese. It was inaugurated in the year of Guangxu 32nd [i.e., 1906] close to the end of the Qing Dynasty ... At its commencement, the newspaper was named *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* (Chinese-English Daily Newspaper) ... It was retitled as *Tai Hon Yat Bo* (Chinese Daily News) ... Later changed to *Tai Hon Kong Bo* (Chinese Times).⁷

Fourteen years later, on 1 October 1953, the newspaper’s literature column *Hansheng* (“The Chinese Voice”) featured a note about the newspaper’s inception: “THE CHINESE TIMES established in 1907, is the oldest Chinese newspaper in Vancouver. Published every day except Sundays and holidays by The Chinese Freemasons in Canada Publishers Ltd.”⁸ Starting on 4 November 1953, the subheading “The oldest Chinese daily newspaper in Canada. Established since 1907” began to appear right below the newspaper title *Tai Hon Kong Bo*.⁹ From 18 November 1963, the language of that subheading changed to “Established in 1907, is the oldest newspaper in Vancouver. Published every day except Sundays and holidays by The Chinese Freemasons in Canada Publishers Limited.”¹⁰ On the final day of publication, 3 October 1992, the front page read:

⁵ David Chuenyan Lai, *Chinese Community Leadership: Case Study of Victoria in Canada* (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2010), 239.

⁶ Lisa Rose Mar, *Brokering Belonging: Chinese in Canada’s Exclusion Era, 1885–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 137. The author uses the Chinese Romanization system *pinyin* for the titles of the newspapers.

⁷ Ming Xin (明心), “Benbao chuangzao ji qiaopian shilüe” 本报构造及乔迁史略 [A brief history of the newspaper’s origin and its recent relocation], *Tai Hon Kong Bo*, 16 September 1939, 1. Unless otherwise identified, translations are ours.

⁸ *Tai Hon Kong Bo*, 1 October 1953, 5.

⁹ *Tai Hon Kong Bo*, 4 November 1953, 1.

¹⁰ *Tai Hon Kong Bo*, 18 November 1963, 1.

“Published every day except Sundays and holidays by The Chinese Freemasons in Canada Publishers Limited. The oldest Chinese daily newspaper in Canada. Established since 1907.”¹¹ One can imagine that the inaugural publication year of 1907, noted in the introductory editorial note to the microfilmed version of the newspaper and repeated in many other sources, is based on the account provided by *Tai Hon Kong Bo* itself. The inconsistency in the newspaper’s own claims about its origin has obviously affected the database of the Canadian print history.

Xiaoning Shi’s recent research on *Tai-Hon Yat-Bo* supports the traditional version of its relationship with *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* but contends that 1906, not 1907, is the newspaper’s first year. In her article “Cui Tongyue and Canada’s *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* and *Tai Hon Kong Bo*” she argues that “*Tai Hon Kong Bo* was first published in December 1906 under the name of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*”¹² and that “the accurate account should be that *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* is the predecessor of *Tai Hon Kong Bo*.”¹³

What is the exact year of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*’s inception? No library in North America has collections of this newspaper. We can assume that copies of it are no longer extant, except for a few pages scattered in the hands of private collectors. Yet some scholars believe that 1906 was its inaugural year. Dr. S.S. Osterhout, in his *Orientalists in Canada*, writes, “In the year 1906, Mr. Dickman was induced to remove to Vancouver, in order, with others, to organize and publish the first Chinese daily paper in Canada, a periodical which was designed to be used in combating gambling and other evils rife among the Chinese people.”¹⁴ David Lee’s *Jianada Huaqiaoshi (A History of Chinese in Canada)* also marks 1906 as the beginning of the newspaper: “*Wa-Ying Yat-Po* was founded in Vancouver in the 32nd year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu [i.e., 1906].”¹⁵ In his *From China to Canada*, Edgar Wickberg writes, “One of Chan Yu Tan’s converts was Kwan Mow Lung, who later worked for the bilingual Chinese newspaper, the *Wah Ying Yat Bo*, when Fong Dickman and other Christians commenced publication in 1906.”¹⁶

¹¹ *Tai Hon Kong Bo*, 3 October 1992, 1.

¹² Xiaoning Shi (石晓宁), “Cui Tongyue yu Jianada Huaying ribao, Dahan gongbao” 崔通约与加拿大《华英日报》、《大汉公报》 [Cui Tongyue and Canada’s *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* and *Tai Hon Kong Bo*], in *Writer, Place, Gender and Identity: Studies of Chinese Canadian Literature*, ed. Xueqing Xu and Hua Wu (Guangzhou: Jinan University Press, 2015), 22.

¹³ Xiaoning Shi, 29.

¹⁴ S.S. Osterhout, *Orientalists in Canada: The Stories of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1929), 88.

¹⁵ David Lee, *Jianada Huaqiaoshi* [History of Chinese in Canada], 348.

¹⁶ Edgar Wickberg, ed., *From China to Canada: A History of the Chinese Communities in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 123. So far, we have found no concrete evidence indicating the bilingual nature of the newspaper. In his autobiography, *Cangbai shengping* 沧

In Jiwu Wang's *His Dominion and the "Yellow Peril,"* the author quotes from David Lee and Osterhout: "It was also in 1906, with the assistance of others, that he [Fong Dickman] organized and published *Huaying ribao*, the first Christian newspaper in the Chinese language published in Canada."¹⁷

Yet none of the above scholars either provides concrete historical evidence to prove his or her assertions or refers to the following two news reports printed in 1906. On 27 August 1906, the *Ladysmith Daily Ledger* published an article titled "Chinese in Vancouver," in which the reporter writes: "Vancouver is to have a Chinese daily newspaper. The office is situated on Abbott Street, and the paper will be issued in about two weeks ... Mr. Fong Dickman is manager and editor of the *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*, or Chinese Canadian Daily newspaper."¹⁸ On the same day, the *Vancouver Daily World* published a report on the upcoming newspaper under the title "Chinese Editor's View of Chinese Newspaper, *Waying Yatpo*": "Fong Dickman, editor and manager of the future paper offers a counterpoint to the rather unflattering editorial cartoon & introduction from the previous edition of the paper"¹⁹ (see Figure 1).

So far, these two reports are the closest in time to when *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* was founded. Together, they indicate that the newspaper originated in September 1906, not 1907, with Mr. Fong Dickman as the editor and manager.²⁰ They also confirm Osterhout's contention that Fong Dickman was the organizer of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* and that this was his mission in Vancouver.

Osterhout was the BC Conference's Home Missions superintendent in charge of the "Oriental Mission" from 1911 to 1939, during which time he was the superintendent first under the Methodist Church and later (after church union in 1925) under the United Church of Canada. We believe that, because he was directly associated with Fong Dickman,

海生平 [My life], Cui Tongyue, the man who was invited to be chief editor of the newspaper, records his education in the Classics and Chinese literature as well as his short-term studies at a Japanese university. There is no mention of his having learned English. Judging by Cui Tongyue's language ability, we agree with the claim that *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* was a Chinese-language newspaper.

¹⁷ Jiwu Wang, *His Dominion and the "Yellow Peril": Protestant Missions to Chinese Immigrants in Canada, 1859-1967* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 38. Wang uses *pinyin*, the Chinese Romanization, to spell the newspaper's name.

¹⁸ "Chinese in Vancouver," *Ladysmith Daily Ledger*, 27 August 1906, 1.

¹⁹ "Chinese Editor's View of Chinese Newspaper, *Waying Yatpo*," *Vancouver Daily World*, 27 August 1906, 1.

²⁰ Xiaoning Shi's inference that "*Wa-Ying Yat-Po* initiated in December 1906" is based on Cui Tongyue's recollection of his arriving in Vancouver in December 1906 to assume the editorship of the newspaper. See Xiaoning Shi, "Cui Tongyue," 28. However, we cannot find any evidence in Cui's memoir that the newspaper started after his arrival in Vancouver.



Figure 1. "Chinese Editor's View of Chinese Newspaper, Waying Patpo." *Vancouver Daily World*, 27 August 1906.

his writing on *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* is the most reliable source for the newspaper's origins. A photo on the front page of the *Western Methodist Recorder*, 1923, features both Fong Dickman and Osterhout (see Figure 2). They also appear together in another photo dated 1935 (see Figure 3). Also, the fact that Osterhout gave the benediction at Fong Dickman's funeral, which was held in Vancouver on 13 April 1946, further confirms their very close relationship.²¹ As a polemical church historian, in his *Orientalism in Canada*, Osterhout offers one of the earliest detailed studies of the Christian mission to Chinese immigrants in Canada.

²¹ Chinese United Church, *93rd Anniversary of the Chinese United Church Vancouver, BC, 1888-1981*, special issue, ed. Rev. James Ko, Rev. Lem Burnham, Mrs. Laura Li, Mr. Siu Yu Chan, Dr. Tsi Kuen So, and Mr. Jonathan Lau (Vancouver: Master Printing Ltd., 1981).



Figure 2. Rev. S.S. Osterhout, Rev. Fong Dickman, and a group of Chinese missionaries. *Western Methodist Recorder*. Volume 22, June 1923, page 1. RecordID 9367.

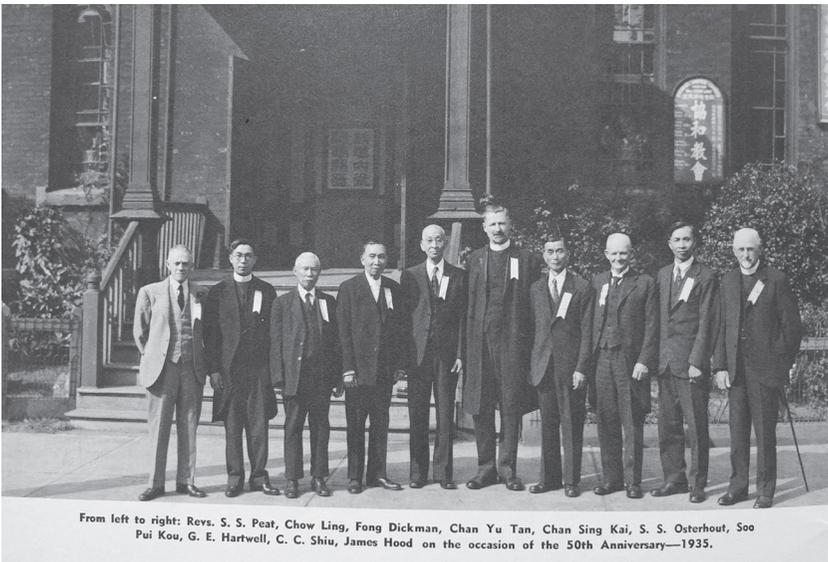


Figure 3. "Chinese United Church golden jubilee." *Western Recorder*. Volume 39, June 1938, page 14. RecordID 5262.

THE OBJECTIVES OF *WA-YING YAT-PO*

As mentioned above, the editorial note on the microfilmed version of *Tai Hon Kong Bo*, a number of scholars, and *Tai Hon Kong Bo* itself (in accounts written years after the fact) all consider *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* to be the predecessor of *Tai Hon Kong Bo*. In order to explicate the relationship between these two newspapers, it is desirable first to identify their organizers' objectives.

In 1906, two early Canadian newspapers, the *Vancouver Daily World* and the *Ladysmith Daily Ledger*, tell us that Mr. Fong Dickman was the manager and founding editor of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*. Fong Dickman was a passionate Methodist priest and had a strong influence on the Chinese community around him. Born in 1860 in Yan Ping, Kwangtung (Canton), China, Fong Dickman (Fong Tak Man, 1860–1946) came to Canada in 1884 to find a better life.²² While attending first in New Westminster and later in Vancouver a mission school conducted by Mrs. C.J.E. Monk, daughter of Reverend Ebenezer Robson, Fong developed an ardent passion for Christianity. In *Orientalism in Canada*, Osterhout records the following details about his friend Fong:

In the spring of 1888 we find Mrs. Monk conducting a mission school on Hastings Street, a few doors west of the present site of Woodward's Departmental Store. Among other pupils, she had an apt learner in Fong Tak Man (Fong Dickman) who had previously been a pupil in her school in New Westminster, where he first came in contact with Christianity.²³

Fong Tak Man was baptized by Reverend Ebenezer Robson at the Princess Street Methodist Church in Vancouver and was appointed to the Chinese Methodist Church in Nanaimo as missionary in 1898 with Mrs. C.J.E. Monk's solid recommendation.²⁴ His name was then Anglicized to "Dickman."

The Chinese in Nanaimo, mainly those of the mining class, tended to stick to their native religions rather than convert to Christianity. With patience and hard work, Fong Dickman effectively guided these Chinese miners, preparing them for baptism and for becoming Christian. Osterhout highly admired Dickman's work in Nanaimo: "Mr. Dickman proved a man of sterling Christian character, of modest life and

²² Lisa Smedman, *Immigrants: Stories of Vancouver's People* (Vancouver: Vancouver Courier, 2009), 40.

²³ Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada*, 80.

²⁴ Chinese United Church, *93rd Anniversary*, 87.

profession, and of a patient, persevering temperament ... Being a man of prayer and faith in the Gospel he has instilled in his people a spirit of reliance upon God in all the affairs of life.”²⁵

Fong Dickman came to Canada at a time when churches were engaged in attempting to Christianize Chinese labourers who had settled in British Columbia. The Chinese began to arrive in Canada after the gold rush to California in 1849. The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1880s brought in even more Chinese workers. The community soon attracted the attention of the churches, who were more closely in touch with the Chinese than any other white people and who challenged popular hostility towards the Chinese. Great efforts were made in British Columbia to convert the Chinese to Christianity, especially by setting up schools for them. The Chinese were keen to adjust to new ideas and views of life, and “were ready to accept the teaching of the Missions, which was given them at the night schools which they eagerly attended in order to learn English.”²⁶ Fong Dickman was one of the Chinese who, after conversion, “continued to influence the lives of his people so that from time to time groups of young men [were] prepared for baptism and received into membership of the church.”²⁷ After twenty-five years of service, Fong Dickman was ordained into the full work of the ministry in 1923. He retired in 1939 and died in 1946.

As noted, according to Osterhout, in 1906, Fong Dickman was transferred to Vancouver “to organize and publish the first Chinese daily paper in Canada, a periodical which was designed to be used in combating gambling and other evils rife among the Chinese people.”²⁸ Osterhout clearly describes the chief goal of the newspaper. Gambling was common in Chinese communities and was the most popular pastime among Chinese immigrants. When Liang Qichao visited Canada in 1903, he observed that the most prosperous business in Vancouver was gambling, the major form of leisure for Chinese labourers: “It is estimated that in Vancouver the Chinese spent on gambling about US\$300,000 per year in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”²⁹ Many people lost all of their earnings and savings through gambling. They were unable

²⁵ Osterhout, *Oriental in Canada*, 87.

²⁶ N. Lascelles Ward and H.A. Hellaby, *Oriental Missions in British Columbia* (Westminster: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1925), 45. In Ward’s and Hellaby’s records, “Over 20,000 Chinese have in this way passed through the night school of the Vancouver Mission” during the first two decades of the twentieth century (45).

²⁷ Osterhout, *Oriental in Canada*, 40–41.

²⁸ Osterhout, *Oriental in Canada*, 88.

²⁹ L. Eve Armentrout Ma, “A Chinese Statesman in Canada, 1903: Translated from the Travel Journal of Liang Ch’i-ch’ao,” *BC Studies* 59 (Autumn 1983): 34–36.

to send money to their families in China or to purchase a return ticket. As a consequence, according to David T.H. Lee, criminal charges against Chinese immigrants tended to begin with gambling, moving on to robbery and murder as a result of gambling. Those addicted became beggars wandering the streets. Gambling created serious social problems for the Chinese community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁰

“Other evils” refers to opium smoking and female slavery. After 1880, Victoria became the centre of the opium trade. There were about eleven opium business operations in Victoria in 1883, and these supplied more than half of local Chinese smokers as well as other ethnic smokers across North America. Records of *Zhonghua huiguan* 中华会馆 (the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association) indicate that free opium was provided to its staff so that they could smoke it during association meetings.³¹

In a report to federal Minister of Labour Rodolphe Lemieux, W.L. Mackenzie King, his deputy minister who was then investigating damage claims after the 1907 anti-Asian riots wrote: “While in Vancouver, I received the following communication from the secretary of the Anti-Opium League, an organization composed of Chinese residents of the province.”³² The letter was written by Peter Hing, the secretary of the Anti-Opium League and an editorial contributor to *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*.³³ The letter’s signature address is recorded as “*Wa-Ying Yat-Po*, The Chinese Daily Newspaper Publishing Co., Ltd., Vancouver, BC” and is dated 29 May 1908. In his follow-up letters to Mackenzie King, Hing used *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*’s official address as his only contact information. Mackenzie King’s report includes his correspondence with Peter Hing, in which they discuss the possibility of their anti-opium cooperation. Mackenzie King met Peter Hing and P.T. York, the editor of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*, during his visit to Vancouver in 1908 upon York’s request for help with “the suppression of opium.”³⁴ Peter Hing was the son of Ng Mon Hing, the Chinese lay missionary and Presbyterian minister who was in charge of the Vancouver mission from 1903 to 1907. Ng Mon Hing was

³⁰ Lee, *Jianada Huaqiao shi* [History of Chinese in Canada], 105–6. See also Wang, “*His Dominion and the “Yellow Peril,”*” 19–21.

³¹ Lee, *Jianada Huaqiao shi* [History of Chinese in Canada], 103–4. See also Wang, “*His Dominion and the “Yellow Peril,”*” 19–21.

³² Dan Malleck, *When Good Drugs Go Bad: Opium, Medicine, and the Origins of Canada’s Drug Laws* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015), 225.

³³ “Seek to Check Opium Manufacture,” *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 3 July 1908, 7.

³⁴ Malleck, *When Good Drugs Go Bad*, 225. Steffen Rimner, *Opium’s Long Shadow: From Asian Revolt to Global Drug Control* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 218.

praised by the Presbyterian Church for his help in the “campaign against Chinese gambling.”³⁵ Influenced by his father, Peter Hing became a determined leader of the anti-opium movement. As Rimner describes it, “Peter Hing of the *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*, the Chinese Daily Newspaper Publishing Company, and concurrent secretary of the Anti-Opium League in British Columbia, had pressed Mackenzie King to take an ‘interest in the social condition of the Chinese’ in the province.”³⁶ With Hing’s push, Mackenzie King “promised to do his best in trying to have the opium trade stopped,”³⁷ and he later joined the British delegation as the Canadian delegate for the first International Opium Commission held in Shanghai in February 1909.³⁸ Thus, the anti-opium campaign in Canada became part of the global fight to suppress opium trade and consumption.

Peter Hing received his law degree from McGill University, graduating at the top of his class. Mackenzie King was very impressed by Peter Hing’s “efforts to reform his countrymen.”³⁹ King’s report on Hing confirms that opium smoking was one of the “other evils” against which *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* strove to fight, and it encouraged the newspaper and the federal government to cooperate in this endeavour.

Before discussing the organizer and chief aim of *Tai Hon Kong Bo*, we need to examine how *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*’s original intention to combat gambling and opium smoking was partially derailed, and how this dragged the newspaper into a lengthy lawsuit that eventually resulted in its bankruptcy.

WA-YING YAT-PO’S BATTLES WITH YAT SUN BO

The key factor that linked *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* and *Tai Hon Kong Bo* was Cui Tongyue (1864–1937), who, due to his Christian background and rich experience in media, was invited to take over the editorship of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* soon after it was founded in 1906.⁴⁰ Originally named Cui Chengda, he changed his name to Tongyue after converting to Christianity. Shortly

³⁵ Mona-Margaret Pon, “NG MON HING,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 15 (University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/ng_mon_hing_15E.html.

³⁶ Rimner, *Opium’s Long Shadow*, 218.

³⁷ “Seek to Check Opium Manufacture,” *Victoria Daily Colonist*, 3 July 1908, 7.

³⁸ Rimner, *Opium’s Long Shadow*, 217–18.

³⁹ Malleck, *When Good Drugs Go Bad*, 225.

⁴⁰ *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* asked Zhong Rongguan (钟荣光), chancellor of Canton Christian College, to recommend an editor for the newspaper. Zhong nominated Cui Tongyue. See Feng Ziyou (冯自由), *Zhonghua Minguo kaiguoshi* 中华民国开国史 [History of the overseas Chinese revolution] (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1947), 104.

after *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* started up, its publisher invited Cui Tongyue, a journalist and educator, to join the newspaper as a journalist and chief editor. Cui Tongyue was a student of Kang Youwei, a reformer of the late Qing court and advocator of constitutional monarchy.⁴¹ Soon after Cui converted to Christianity he joined Sun Yat-sen's *Xingzhonghui* 兴中会 (Revive China Society) in 1900 and, later, *Tongmenhui* 同盟会 (Chinese Revolutionary Alliance) in 1905, becoming a devotee of the revolution.⁴² Along with being an educator, Cui Tongyue devoted his life to the newspaper business. He founded *Nanyang Shiwubao* 南洋时务报 (*Nanyang Times*, 1897) and co-founded *Shijie Gongyibao* 世界公益报 (World Charity, Hong Kong, 1903). He also worked as a journalist and/or editor for a number of newspapers that were sympathetic with or supported Sun Yat-sen's ideology, such as *Xianggang Zhongguo Ribao* 香港中国日报 (*Hong Kong's China Daily*, 1900–06) and *Shaonian Zhongguo Chenbao* 少年中国晨报 (*Junior China Morning News*, 1911).⁴³

From his first day working for *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*, Cui Tongyue wrote articles attacking the Qing government and promoting revolutionary ideas, which, as he described in his autobiography, “stunned local Chinese fans of monarchy royalists” but were applauded by local Chinese Christians and *Chee Kung Tong*, the Chinese Freemasons.⁴⁴ Cui's revolutionary voice and his anti-Qing court discourse made *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* the first Chinese newspaper in Canada to respond to Sun Yat-sen's call to overthrow the Qing government.⁴⁵ This change in the newspaper's path alarmed local members of the Empire Reform Association, a political force led by late Qing political reformers Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. The association was headquartered in Victoria, but it had branches in Vancouver, Toronto, and other parts of Canada, and it enjoyed great support from the Chinese in Canada, especially after Kang's and Liang's visits to the country between 1899 and 1911. The Empire Reform Association produced Canada's first Chinese newspaper, *Yat Sun Bo* (*Daily News*, 1903–11) in Vancouver to help gather both financial and political support from the Chinese community in Canada.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Cui Tongyue (崔通约), *Canghai shengping* 沧海生平 [My life] (Shanghai: Shanghai Canghai chubanshe, 1935), 6, 18–19, 38.

⁴² Cui Tongyue, 40.

⁴³ Cui Tongyue, 77–81, 84.

⁴⁴ Cui Tongyue, 73, 82. In Ma's description, Ts'ui began publishing pro-revolutionary and anti-Manchu editorials in *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* after the lawsuit with *Yat Sun Bo*. See L. Eve Armentrout Ma, *Revolutionaries, Monarchists, and Chinatowns: Chinese Politics in the Americas and the 1911 Revolution* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), 112.

⁴⁵ Cui Tongyue, *Canghai shengping*, 82.

⁴⁶ Wickberg, *From China to Canada*, 75–76; Lee, *Jianada Huaqiaoshi* [History of Chinese in Canada], 348.

According to Eve Armentrout Ma, the result of Cui's editorship of the Christian newspaper was that "in Canada the rift between the Christians and the *Pao-huang hui* (保皇会 the Empire Reform Association) was becoming more acute."⁴⁷ To counter Cui's advocacy of revolution, *Yat Sun Bo* started its campaign against *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*. A newspaper war thus erupted between *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* and *Yat Sun Bo* that lasted almost three years. What ignited this crisis was the Qing court's issuance of a list of wanted members of the Empire Reform Association – a list that was originally printed in *Yangcheng Ribao* 羊城日报 (*Yangcheng Newspaper*). Cui Tongyue reprinted the piece of news in *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*, which infuriated Kang's followers in Vancouver.⁴⁸

Not long after this, the Empire Reform Association in Vancouver took *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* to court, altogether suing it ten times for defamation. As Ma describes, "Pao-huang hui leaders in Vancouver were furious with Ts'ui (Cui) and the Christian newspaper, and brought suit against the paper, accusing it of slander."⁴⁹ Peter Hing, the secretary of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* and also a lawyer, defended the newspaper in court. *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* finally won the suit after more than two years. Although *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* received strong support from *Chee Kung Tong* during the drawn-out battle, it could not recover from the huge debt that the lawsuit generated. In the meantime, "The Pao-huang hui exerted pressure on the proprietors, and toward the end of 1908, the paper was forced to close down."⁵⁰ In 1910, *Chee Kung Tong* took over *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*, starting its own newspaper – *Tai-Hon Yah-Bo* (*Chinese Daily News*).⁵¹

So that *Tai-Hon Yah-Bo* could better implement *Chee Kung Tong's* desire to publicize Chinese revolutionary propaganda, the association's Vancouver office invited Feng Ziyou, Sun Yat-sen's principal assistant and editor-in-chief of *Zhongguo Shibao* 中国时报 (*China Times*) in Hong Kong, to be *Tai-Hon Yah-Bo's* chief editor.⁵² Feng's taking over of the editorship signified the newspaper's new direction in 1910–11. Cui Tongyue was subsequently re-invited to be the chief editor of *Tai-Hon Yat-Bo* from 1911 to 1915, shortly before the newspaper changed its name to *Tai Hon Kong Bo* (*Chinese Times*).

⁴⁷ Ma, *Revolutionaries, Monarchists, and Chinatowns*, 112.

⁴⁸ Cui Tongyue, *Canghai shengping*, 73.

⁴⁹ Ma, *Revolutionaries, Monarchists, and Chinatowns*, 112.

⁵⁰ Ma, *Revolutionaries, Monarchists, and Chinatowns*, 112.

⁵¹ Cui Tongyue, *Canghai shengping*, 73, 81–82.

⁵² Feng Ziyou, *Feng Ziyou huiyilu* 冯自由回忆录 (上卷) [Memories of Feng Ziyou, vol. 1] (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 2011), 147.

TAI HON KONG BO

Unlike *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*, which had its origins in a Christian mission focused on moral and social improvement, *Tai-Hon Yat-Bo*/*Tai Hon Kong Bo* was an official organ of *Chee Kung Tong*. Originally a secret society, *Hongmen* (洪门, the initial name for *Chee Kung Tong*) was formed in the early Qing Dynasty in 1664, its goal being the overthrow of the Qing dynasty and the restoration of the Ming dynasty of the Han nation.⁵³ Luo Xiaobai, in his “Soliciting Essays for *Tai Hon Kong Bo*’s House Warming,” explains the major difference between the objectives of the two newspapers this way:

The first Chinese newspaper in Vancouver was named the *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*, co-organized by the *Chee Kung Tong* and Christian missionaries. Because of the disparate aims of running the paper, *Chee Kung Tong* took it over and changed its name to *Tai-Hon Yat-Bo*. Since then, the newspaper has promoted revolutionary spirit, and contributed to the fight to bringing China back to the Han nation. It has accomplished great achievements.⁵⁴

The first branch of *Hongmen* in Canada was founded in 1863 in the gold rush town of Barkerville, British Columbia.⁵⁵ Later, the organization spread to other parts of the country, and, by the turn of the twentieth century, it was the most influential Chinese association in Canada. Anyone who supported its goal of ousting the Qing regime and building the Republic of China could become a member of this association,⁵⁶ regardless of whether the work they did was mental or physical.⁵⁷ By 1912, *Chee Kung Tong* had established forty-three branches in forty-three cities and had attracted ten to twenty thousand members in Canada.⁵⁸ By then, in addition to “the overthrow of the Qing and the restoration of the Han nation,” one of *Chee Kung Tong*’s chief aims was to look after its members’ welfare and to “maintain a friendly relationship among our countrymen and to accumulate wealth through proper business methods for the benefit of all members.”⁵⁹ These aims were publicized

⁵³ See Li Quan’en (黎全恩, David Chuenyan Lai), *Hongmen ji Jianada Hongmen shilun* 洪门及加拿大洪门史论 [Discourse on the Freemason and the history of Canadian Freemasonry] (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2015), 12.

⁵⁴ *Tai Hon Kong Bo*, 16 September 1939, 2.

⁵⁵ Lai, *Hongmen ji Jianada Hongmen shilun*, 82. See also Wickberg, *From China to Canada*, 30.

⁵⁶ Lee, *Jianada Huaqiao shi*, 239.

⁵⁷ Wickberg, *From China to Canada*, 31.

⁵⁸ Lai, *Hongmen ji Jianada Hongmen shilun*, 99; Wickberg, *From China to Canada*, III.

⁵⁹ Stanford Lyman, W.E. Willmott, and Berching Ho, “Rules of a Chinese Society in British Columbia,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 27, no. 3 (1964): 534.

in its newspaper *Tai-Hon Yat-Bo*, whose distribution was much wider than that of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*.

In the early twentieth century, the Chinese community in Vancouver was divided into three ideological groups: followers of the Empire Reform Association, Christians, and members of *Chee Kung Tong*. According to Cui Tongyue, the last two groups endorsed revolution and shared a common political view of the Qing government.⁶⁰ As Ma observes, the Christians in North America had switched their support from, and turned their backs on, the Empire Reform Association beginning in late 1904 in the United States and in 1906 in Canada.⁶¹ It was their shared political stance with the Christians that led *Chee Kung Tong* to support *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* when it was dragged into a newspaper war with *Yat Sun Bo*. *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*'s three-year run laid the foundation for *Tai-Hon Yat-Bo*'s success. Indeed, the latter inherited the former's newspaper equipment, and some of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*'s experienced staff; for instance, Cui Tongyue took charge of its editorship from 1911 to 1915. Most important, *Tai-Hon Yat-Bo* continued *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*'s bias against conservative constitutional monarchy and went even further, supporting Sun Yat-sen and becoming actively involved in the politics of the heritage country. Especially when Sun Yat-sen visited Canada in early 1911 to raise funds for his revolution, *Chee Kung Tong* and its newspaper played a crucial role in supporting his mission. Sun Yat-sen's fundraising in Canada was astoundingly successful: he raised 100,000 Hong Kong dollars (CDN\$35,000). This figure came as "a big surprise" to Sun Yat-sen and made Canada's *Chee Kung Tong* his largest financial supporter among overseas Chinese communities.⁶²

As *Chee Kung Tong*'s office organ, *Tai-Hon Yat-Bo* gradually expanded its coverage to include both domestic and international daily news as well as commercial, cultural, and pedagogical activities. Its contents included editorials, political polemics, special columns, literary supplements, business advertisements, and so on. Throughout its run of eighty-two years, the newspaper maintained its dual local and international focus, devoting substantial space to news about China and carefully following contemporary China's politics. In the period of the *Chinese Immigration Act* (1923–1947), the newspaper voiced Chinese immigrants' anger and frustration, and recorded their battles against the racial discrimination that was imposed on them. During the Second World War, the

⁶⁰ Cui Tongyue, *Canghai shengping*, 73.

⁶¹ Ma, *Revolutionaries, Monarchists, and Chinatowns*. III.

⁶² Feng Ziyou, *Zhonghua Minguo kaiguoshi*, 107

newspaper organized fundraising in Chinese communities to support Canada's fight against Nazism, and it encouraged young Chinese to enlist in the Canadian Armed Forces. *Tai Hon Kong Bo* had a long and intricate history of attempting to acculturate Chinese immigrants into Canada's multicultural society. As one of the oldest Chinese newspapers and one of the most dynamic of the Chinese diasporic media in Canada, *Tai Hon Kong Bo* helped shape the consciousness and cultural identities of the community it served.

In the last three decades of the twentieth century, waves of immigrants came to Canada from Hong Kong and Taiwan, bringing with them capital and technology. A number of Chinese newspapers soon mushroomed in big cities, especially in Vancouver, the Canadian city with the largest percentage of ethnic Chinese. *Tai Hon Kong Bo* was not able to compete with the new generation of Chinese newspaper publishers. While the new transnational newspapers employed emerging computer technology, *Tai Hon Kong Bo* was still using an old-style printing machine with metal blocks of Chinese characters. The reason for closure of the newspaper was similar to that for the closure of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* more than eighty years earlier: financial crisis.

CONCLUSION

Contrary to the conventional discourse on the relationship between *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* and *Tai Hon Kong Bo*, which claims that the latter is the continuation of the former, this article offers a more complicated story and concludes that the two newspapers are independent entities, each with its particular agenda and objectives. *Wa-Ying Yat-Po*, we argue, deserves to be recognized as holding an autonomous position in the history of Chinese diaspora media and should not be treated as a part of *Tai Hon Kong Bo*.

Our conclusion derives from an assessment of the different organizations and tasks of the two newspapers. *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* was founded and operated by Methodists. It was regarded by historians of religion as the first Christian newspaper in the Chinese language published in Canada, and its chief aim, in alignment with its Christian orientation and mission, was to curb gambling and other moral and social problems in the Chinese community.⁶³ On the other hand, *Tai Hon Kong Bo* was the mouthpiece of *Chee Kung Tong*, an influential Chinese Canadian

⁶³ Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada*, 88; Wickberg, *From China to Canada*, 123, 278; Ma, *Revolutionaries, Monarchists, and Chinatowns*, 111–12; Wang, "His Dominion" and the "Yellow Peril," 38.

association with a broad community and strong political agenda. The “predecessor” claim is based on the fact that the organizer of *Tai Hon Kong Bo* took over *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* after it went bankrupt. Before taking it over, the former provided financial support during the latter’s lengthy lawsuits with another early Chinese newspaper. The close relationship between the two is salient but is not sufficient to support the assertion that *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* is merely the first stage of *Tai Hon Kong Bo*. The fact that the latter has its own name further confirms that it is not a continuation of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* but a freshly founded newspaper with a new and broader mission. The claim that *Tai Hon Kong Bo* started in 1906 or 1907 effaces the distinct three-year existence of *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* and helps erase the key historical intertwining of the early Chinese community and Christian missions.

The dynamics of Chinese communities in Canada in the first decade of the twentieth century arose from the multicultural and transnational engagement with China’s political reform/revolution. Chinese Christians shared nationalist sentiments with various community associations and political organizations. In their conviction that a strong China would protect their rights in Canada, these community and political associations became Chinese strongholds in the fight against racial discriminations, and Chinese Christians were committed to getting the Chinese to adopt and live with Christian values. By appropriating *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* as the predecessor of *Tai Hon Kong Bo*, *Chee Kung Tong* might have strengthened its position among the Chinese communities when competing with *Zhonghua huiguan* (Chinese Benevolent Association) for leadership and so sustained its status as the pioneer of the Chinese diaspora media in Canada while competing with newly established newspapers for survival in the second half of the twentieth century. Whatever the motivation might have been, it dismissed Chinese Christian endeavours towards establishing social and moral progress, building the cultural identity of Chinese communities in Canada, supporting China’s nation building, and promoting interaction with other Chinese associations and political forces. Thus, clarifying the inaugural year of *Tai Hon Kong Bo* and acknowledging *Wa-Ying Yat-Po* as a Chinese Christian publication enables a better understanding of the history of Chinese diaspora and its media in Canada and improves the historiography of Chinese Canadians in the early twentieth century.