

黃遵憲：日本雜事詩文選

## Selections from Huang Zunxian's Writings on Japan

By Huang Zunxian

Translated by Jack W. Chen and Yunshuang Zhang

浩浩天風快送迎  
隨槎萬里賦東征  
使星遠曜臨三島  
帝澤旁流遍裨瀛  
大鳥扶搖搏水上  
神龍首尾夾舟行  
馮夷歌舞山靈喜  
一路傳呼萬歲聲

由上海啟行至長崎

### Setting Off from Shanghai and Arriving at Nagasaki<sup>1</sup>

The surging winds of Heaven are quick to send me on my way,  
Following the raft for ten thousand miles, I compose on the occasion of this eastern  
expedition.<sup>2</sup>

The 'dispatched stars' distantly shine over the Three Islands,  
Imperial favour widely flows throughout the surrounding seas.

The great bird swirls its wings, wheeling above the Water,<sup>3</sup>

The divine dragon from head to tail carries the boat forward.

Feng Yi sings and dances, the mountain spirits are delighted,<sup>4</sup>

Throughout the entire voyage we cry out 'Long live the Emperor!'

<sup>1</sup> Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯, *Renjinglu shicao jianzhu* 人境廬詩草箋注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), 3.199.

<sup>2</sup> Alluding to a story recorded by Zhang Hua 張華 in his *Bowu zhi* 博物志, about a man who saw a raft float by each eighth month, and choosing to follow it, found himself travelling on the Milky Way through the heavens.

<sup>3</sup> This is a reference to the huge, mythical bird Peng 鵬.

<sup>4</sup> Feng Yi 馮夷 is a divine figure identified with the River Earl (Hebo 河伯).

from **‘Self-Composed Preface to the Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects from Japan’** 日本雜事詩自序

In the winter of 1877, I was sent on a diplomatic mission to ‘follow the raft’. After I had lived in the east for two years, I gradually began to spend more time with the literati and officials there. I read their books and became accustomed to their styles. I drafted my book, *Treatises on Japan*, gathering up old lore and consulting recent politics. Then I took these miscellaneous topics, elaborated them as short commentaries, and connected them by means of poems—it was this that today circulates as the *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects*.

...

Alas! As for the Chinese literati, their knowledge is provincial, and they pay no attention to foreign matters. Now, despite having seen and heard things firsthand, I have nevertheless applied the embellishments of classical meanings to them. I have been both smug and close-minded; at times I have doubted this knowledge and at other times believed it. After having spent months and years in deep investigation and broad study, only then did I understand the difference between right and wrong, success and failure, or the essentials of the long and the short, what should be accepted and what should be rejected—how ashamed I was! Moreover, there have been others who have applauded ‘talk of Ying’ [Japan] as if it were empty illusion or indiscernibly remote.<sup>5</sup> They took Japan as a place one could gaze at like the ‘Three Mountains’ of the sea—could gaze at but could never reach! And even worse, they have denounced this as idle speculation [*tantian* 談天], scorned it as uncanonical, and shunted it beyond the six directions of the world, criticizing it as something that, if it had to exist, it should not be discussed, or if discussed, then at least not debated. In examining the affairs of a nation, how could it be easy to say anything? After I had finished editing this manuscript, I appended these several words in order to note my errors.

In the seventh month of the sixteenth year of the Guangxu era [1890], I, Huang Zunxian, wrote my own preface in the embassy at London, England.

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<sup>5</sup> Ying refers to the mythical island Yingzhou, though by the time of Huang Zunxian, ‘talk of Ying’ meant to speak about foreign affairs.

徐福  
避秦男女渡三千  
海外蓬瀛別有天  
鏡壘永傳笠縫殿  
倘疑世系出神仙

### Poem 5: Xu Fu

To escape Qin, three thousand men and women crossed,  
Beyond the sea, Peng and Ying were another world.<sup>6</sup>  
The Mirror and the Signet will forever be passed down in halls of Kasanui,<sup>7</sup>  
It is as if later generations were born of divinities and immortals.

銳意學西法  
玉墻舊國紀維新  
萬法隨風倏轉輪  
杼軸雖空衣服粲  
東人贏得似西人

### Poem 12: Keenly Learning from Western Methods

Within the old nation's jade walls, the institutions have been reformed,  
Its ten thousand laws with the wind are suddenly transformed.  
Although the loom is empty, the clothes are bright,  
The Eastern people come to be like the Western people.

<sup>6</sup> These are two of the three Divine Mountains, discussed in greater detail in Cheng Yu-yu's essay also published in this issue of *Renditions*.

<sup>7</sup> The Mirror and the Signet, along with the Sword, comprise the sacred emblems of Japan's imperial regalia. Kasanui is the name of the temple where the regalia was kept.

如	今	手	羲	
何	世	握	和	舊
數	日	靈	有	曆
典	官	樞	國	
祖	翻	八	在	
先	失	極	空	
忘	御	張	桑	

### Poem 13: The Traditional Calendar

Xihe had her kingdom in the land of Kongsang,<sup>8</sup>  
 In her hand she held the 'Divine Pivot' and reached to the eight limits.<sup>9</sup>  
 In the present age, the 'solar officials' on the contrary have lost the reins,<sup>10</sup>  
 How could these historical references to the ancestors be forgotten?

竟	四	改	紀	
占	十	朔	年	新
龜	餘	書	史	曆
兆	周	焚	創	
得	傳	夏	春	
橫	甲	小	王	
庚	子	正	月	

### Poem 14: The New Calendar

The 'annalistic history' inaugurated the 'royal first month of spring',<sup>11</sup>  
 They reformed the calendar and burned *The Minor Standard of Xia*.<sup>12</sup>  
 More than forty sexagenary cycles later, the celestial stems are still passed down,  
 Unexpectedly they cast the sign of the Great Transverse.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Xihe 羲和 is the sun's charioteer, though would later become identified as the goddess of the sun. Kongsang 空桑 [Hollow mulberry] is the name of a mythical mountain in the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* and is associated with Xihe.

<sup>9</sup> The 'Divine Pivot' (*lingshu* 靈樞) refers to the star Alpha Ursae Majoris (known as 'Tianshu' 天樞).

<sup>10</sup> The 'solar officials' (*riguan* 日官) are the astrological officials in charge of recording celestial phenomena.

<sup>11</sup> The 'annalistic history' (*jinian shi* 紀年史) refers here to the *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋. The phrase 'royal first month of spring' 春王月 is an abbreviation of 'the royal first month of spring in the first year' 元年春王正月, and it was first used to describe the moment when Duke Yin of Lu 魯隱公 assumed his regency, as recorded in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

<sup>12</sup> This is the title of the oldest known almanac, originally preserved in the *Da Dai liji* 大戴禮記.

<sup>13</sup> This line refers to the power struggle between the Lü 呂 and Liu 劉 clans. Many officials supported the King of Dai 代王 (the future Han Wendi) for the throne, and they cast a divination whose result read: 'The Great Transverse goes on unbroken, and I will be the king of Heaven' 大橫庚庚·余為天王.



梧桐葉落閏難知  
萸莢枝抽不計期  
只記看花攜酒去  
明朝日曜得閑時

**From the 1879 edition:**

The leaves of the paulownia tree fall, but it's hard to know when the leap  
month is,  
The podded pennycress sends out stalks, but they cannot reckon the date.  
All they care about is viewing the flowers and taking wine along,  
On some Sunday in the future when they get some leisure.

蜻  
蜓  
洲  
巨海茫茫浸四圍  
三山風引是耶非  
蓬萊清淺經多少  
依舊蜻蜓點水飛

### Poem 16: Dragonfly Island

Boundless is the vast sea, spilling over on all four sides,  
A wind draws one away from the Three Mountains—is this true or not?  
How often did Penglai become ‘clear and shallow’?<sup>14</sup>  
As always, the dragonfly skips and skims over the water.<sup>15</sup>

風  
俗  
九州地脈阻崑崙  
裨海環瀛水作門  
圓嶠方壺雖妄語  
分明世外此桃源

### Poem 19: Local Customs

The earthly veins of the Nine Regions are blocked at Mount Kunlun,  
The surrounding seas ring Yingzhou, the waters serving as its gate.  
Though Yuanqiao and Fanghu may be but false rumours,  
This is clearly a Peach Blossom Spring beyond the world.

<sup>14</sup> This is an allusion to a statement made by the female immortal Ma Gu 麻姑. See Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343), *Shenxian zhuan jiaoshi* 神仙傳校釋, ed. Hu Shouwei 胡守為 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2010), 3.94.

<sup>15</sup> The dragonfly here refers both to the insect and to Japan itself, whose shape resembles that of a dragonfly.

夕陽紅樹散雞豚  
蕎麥青青又一村  
茅屋數家籬犬臥  
不知何處有桃源

**From the 1879 edition:**

The evening sun reddens the trees and disperses the chickens and pigs,  
The buckwheat everywhere is green—another village appears.  
By the thatched huts of several families, dogs lie in hedges,  
But I do not know where Peach Blossom Spring lies.



山水  
濯足扶桑海上行  
眼中不見大河橫  
只應拄仗尋雲去  
手挈盧敖上太清

### Poem 24: Landscape

Washing my feet at Fusang, having travelled the sea,  
My eyes do not see any great rivers lying athwart.  
I should just lean on my staff and go seek out the clouds,  
Hand in hand with Lu Ao, I'll ascend to Highest Clarity.

禮服  
肘挾氎冠插錦貂  
肩盤金縷繫紅綃  
前趨客座爭攜手  
俯拜君前小折腰

### Poem 34: Ritual Garb

Clasped in my elbow, the felt hat is adorned with brocade and ermine,  
Coiling at the shoulders, the golden threads are tied to red-dyed silk.  
They hasten to proceed to the guest seats, competing to clasp hands,  
Making bows before the lord with a slightly bended waist.



化書奇器問新編  
航海遙尋鬼谷賢  
學得黎鞞歸善眩  
逢人鼓掌快談天  
留學生

### Poem 55: Overseas Students

Of the *Huashu* and *Qiqi*—they ask about the newest editions,<sup>16</sup>  
Navigating the seas, they distantly search for worthies of Ghost Valley.<sup>17</sup>  
Having studied in Rome, they come back, good at dazzling others,  
Whenever one meets another, they clap hands and eagerly discuss astronomy.

不環不釧不釵光  
鴉頭襪子足如霜  
蓬山未至人多少  
都道溫柔是婿鄉  
女子

### Poem 103: Women

No rings, no bracelets, and no hairpin's gleam,  
Wearing *tabi* stockings, feet as white as frost.  
Arriving at Penglai, how many have there been?  
All acclaim the warmth and tenderness—this is a land for husbands.

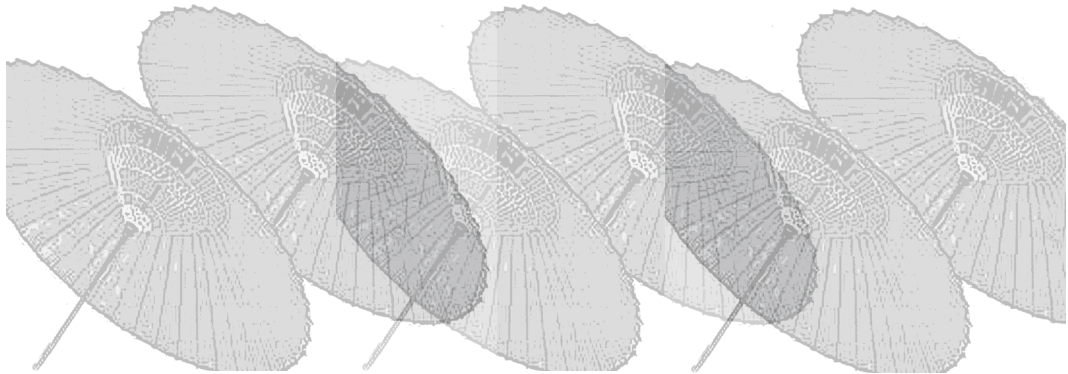
<sup>16</sup> The *Huashu* 化書 [Book of transformations] is a Five Dynasties inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) work that makes use of empirical observation and proto-scientific methods. The *Qiqi* 奇器 refers to the *Yuanxi qiqi tushuo luzui* 遠西奇器圖說錄最 [Compendium of diagrams and explanations of marvelous equipment from the Far West], a work composed by the Jesuit Johann Shreck (1576–1630) and late Ming scholar Wang Zheng 王徵 (1571–1644).

<sup>17</sup> 'Ghost Valley' refers to the *Guiguzi* 鬼谷子, the work attributed to the Warring States figure Wang Xu 王翹. This work contained political and military strategies and can be seen as the first major work of diplomacy in Chinese history.

十種金仙數曼殊  
中多綽約信蓬壺  
紅珊簪子青羅傘  
散作人間仕女圖

**From the 1879 edition:**

The ten kinds of Golden Immortals, each of them is beautiful,  
Here there are so many graceful beauties—this is indeed Penglai.  
Red coral hairpins and green silk umbrellas,  
Scatter to become paintings of beautiful girls within the human realm.



園亭  
覆院桐陰夏氣清  
汲泉烹茗藉桃笙  
竹門深閉雲深處  
盡日惟聞拍掌聲

### Poem 114: Garden Pavilion

The pawlonia's shade covers the yard, the summer air is cool,  
I draw well-water to boil tea and lean on the peach bamboo mat.  
Bamboo gates are secluded and shut, clouds wreath this secluded place,  
All day long I only hear the sound of clapping hands.

兩歧襪  
聲聲響屨畫廊邊  
羅襪凌波望若仙  
繡作蓮花名藕覆  
鴛鴦恰似併頭眠

### Poem 143: *Tabi* Stockings

Continuously echo the clogs along the painted gallery,<sup>18</sup>  
In gauze stockings she glides over waves like a goddess.<sup>19</sup>  
Embroidered with lotuses, they are called 'Covering Lotus Root',<sup>20</sup>  
It's exactly like a pair of mandarin ducks sleeping head to head.

<sup>18</sup> This line alludes to the Gallery of Echoing Clogs 響屨廊, built for Xi Shi 西施 by the King of Wu.

<sup>19</sup> This is an allusion to the Goddess of the Luo River 洛神, as depicted by Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232).

<sup>20</sup> This refers to the stockings worn by Yang Guifei 楊貴妃, as recorded in the anonymous Song miscellany, *Zhixu zazu* 致虛雜俎.

尾聲  
紀事只聞籌海志  
徵文空誦送僧詩  
未曾遍讀吾妻鏡  
慚付和歌唱竹枝

### Poem 200: Coda

In recording history, I only know the treatise on ‘Marking the Seas’,<sup>21</sup>  
In citing texts, I pointlessly chant poems on seeing off monks.  
Never before did I read thoroughly the *Azuma kagami*,<sup>22</sup>  
Ashamed to respond to the *waka*, I sing my bamboo branch songs.

<sup>21</sup> This was a chapter from *Haiguo tuzhi* 海國圖志 by Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794–1856), one of the first Chinese scholars to write of world geography.

<sup>22</sup> This is a historical chronicle, written in parallel prose, that covers shogunate politics from 1180 to 1266.

Translator’s Note: For more on Huang Zunxian, see Noriko Kamachi, *Reform in China: Huang Tsun-hsien and the Japanese Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1981); Zhang Tangqi 張堂綺, *Huang Zunxian ji qi shi yanjiu* 黃遵憲及其詩研究 (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1991); J. D. Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm: The Poetry of Huang Zunxian, 1848–1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Richard John Lynn, ‘“This Culture of Ours” and Huang Zunxian’s Literary Experiences in Japan’, *CLEAR*, 19 (Dec 1997) 113–38; and Lynn, ‘Women in Huang Zunxian’s *Riben zashi shi*’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd ser., 17/2 (2007), 157–82.