

Who Was Homer Lea (1876–1912), and Why Should We Care? Myth and History in the “American Century”

Lawrence M. Kaplan. *Homer Lea: American Soldier of Fortune*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010. x, 314 pp. Hardcover \$40.00, ISBN 978-0-8131-2616-6.

Homer Lea (1876–1912), whose short but full life ended a century ago, shared the stage with Sun Yat-sen at a critical moment in modern Chinese history: the early days of the Republic of China in Nanjing. Sun and Lea, who sailed together from France, reached Shanghai in December 1911 with a vision for China that scarcely accommodated the complexities of those final months of the Qing dynasty. A decade earlier, Homer Lea had dreamed of occupying center stage with Kang Youwei and the emperor of China; in 1942, thirty years after his death, the significance of his life and work was revisited, recreated, and reimagined in ways that resonated with a stunned America in the first weeks and months after Japan’s attack at Pearl Harbor.

When Lea landed at Shanghai in 1911, it was not the first time he had been in East Asia. In 1900, he had sailed from San Francisco in hopes of aiding Kang Youwei’s violent effort to restore to power the Guangxu emperor, whose reforming impulses had been checked by the empress dowager in 1898. Kang Youwei needed guns for his men in Guangdong and the mid-Yangzi provinces, and it was to Lea that he turned for guns and the training of troops.¹ Lea, undaunted by his failures in 1900—neither guns were obtained nor troops trained—had sought to train and drill young Chinese men living in Los Angeles in 1904–1905 at the Western Military Academy. In this period, Lea also helped organize the visit of Liang Qichao, Kang’s ally, to Los Angeles (1903), and he traveled in 1905 with Kang Youwei on his high-profile visits to Washington, DC (where they met with President Theodore Roosevelt), New York, Philadelphia, and other American cities with large populations of Chinese overseas. While completing a book about military affairs in 1909, Lea also conspired to raise money and troops for a mercenary army that he hoped would invade South China and topple the Qing dynasty.

Like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, Sun Yat-sen needed as many Western allies as possible, and Lea’s growing reputation as a military strategist, when combined with his revolutionary credentials, gained him access. Sun, having worked together with Lea in the United States in 1910, met Lea again in London in the fall of 1911 after the beginning of the 1911 Revolution. In London, and then in Paris, Lea and Sun sought the government backing, both diplomatic and financial, that the revolution needed. Doors were opened, but neither promises nor money was obtained. En route to China, Lea, who had been informing reporters and the U.S. Department of State that he would be Sun’s military chief of staff, was forced by circumstances and U.S. neutrality laws to relinquish this dream. He continued,

however, to be called General Homer Lea by the press, although clearly with a sense of irony in some cases (p. 178). But it was Sun's revolutionary ally Huang Xing, not the one-time Stanford student and now-acclaimed author of the military treatise *The Valor of Ignorance* (1909), which had warned of an impending Japanese attack on America, who would be assigned the military portfolio in Sun's short-lived cabinet.²

Sun Yat-sen ceded his position as provisional president to Yuan Shikai, the northern-based Qing official and military leader, whose Republican presidency was supported by both revolutionaries and reformers alike. Sun returned to his ambitious schemes for modernizing China. Homer Lea, who had suffered a debilitating stroke the day before the abdication of the Qing emperor on February 12, 1912, returned to America with his new bride, Ethel Powers, who had been his secretary intermittently during the previous five years.

Many have asked for more than a century, who was Homer Lea? Lawrence Kaplan has addressed that question in his new biography, which follows Lea from childhood to his early death in 1912. Kaplan admits that "many questions remain about Lea's exploits and the full extent of his influence [but] there can be no doubt that Homer Lea left an indelible mark on the history of his times" (p. 214). But why is the simple question "Who was Homer Lea?" so difficult to answer? Homer Lea died on November 1, 1912, and shortly thereafter, his wife burned most of his correspondence, documents, and notes. Some say the cash-strapped widow, who had to move out of the house they had been renting, could not manage so much material; others say she and Lea's colleagues knew how much of the material documented activities that were either illegal or nearly so (p. 189).³ Surviving documents, especially those identified with Sun Yat-sen, were kept by Ethel until her death in 1934—she had been working on a biography of her late husband (p. 200)—and in 1968, these were donated by the Powers family to the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace (Joshua B. Powers Papers) (p. 208). After their mother's death, both Joshua and Alfred were careful stewards and enterprising advocates for the historical significance of their stepfather's life. Neither brother seems to have questioned Lea's honorific "general," first used in 1901 after Lea's return from Asia in publicity such as the April 21, 1901, headline for a story written by Lea titled "How I Was Made a General in the Chinese Army" that ran in the weekend magazine section of the *San Francisco Call*.

As we will see, there is still no convincing evidence that corroborates the claims made in Lea's article and its sidebars, and yet the basic story and subsequent embellishments came to be accepted by some as true. Lawrence Kaplan, who sides with those who have believed Lea's basic story, documents some of the myth-making and tries to isolate small kernels of truth. His book-length biography, the first one in which Homer Lea gets sole billing, builds on more than a century of work by a parade of chroniclers, beginning with Homer Lea himself. The template for the story was fashioned in the first decade of the twentieth century, a period in

which America was coming to terms with its newly acquired Pacific empire. In an increasingly connected world, news from Asia in general and China in particular was avidly sought and consumed. China mattered for economic reasons, and it remained an object of interest and concern for missionaries, reformers, and revolutionaries eager to aid China's entry into the family of civilized nations. In this context, the Homer Lea saga developed. With Lea's death and the apparently mistaken prediction he had made about Japan's threat to the United States, his notoriety faded, but in the 1930s, as Japan and the United States began eyeing one another with increasing suspicion, Lea's warnings were reconsidered.

In 1939, five years after Ethel Powers's death, Charles Kates, a U.S. Army Reserve officer, began working with the materials she had saved and organized for her planned biography of Homer Lea. Soon after Japan's attack at Pearl Harbor and invasion of the Philippine Islands, Kates, with the permission of the Powers family, shared his work with Clare Boothe (p. 207), who added her own research in turn-of-the-century newspaper and magazine files. Boothe's work appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in March 1942 (pp. 205–206) and had been previewed in a short unsigned piece, "Battle of America: Invasion of the United States?" in her husband Henry Luce's *Time* magazine's December 29, 1941, issue.⁴ The only photo accompanying this article was of Lea in a general's uniform, circa 1905, not the one custom made for him in London in the fall of 1911. Its caption read: "China's Homer Lea: He Could Not Wait."⁵ Boothe also reintroduced Homer Lea to the American reading public in Harper's reissue in March 1942 of *The Valor of Ignorance*, in which she reminded readers in her short biography "The Valor of Homer Lea" of his prevision of Japanese aggression. As Kaplan notes, Boothe repeated "earlier misinformation and exaggerations about Lea" (pp. 205–206). Carl Glick's 1945 book about Lea's Western Military Academy, *Double Ten: Captain O'Banion's Story of the Chinese Revolution*, did not help. This book continued the effort by the Powers brothers, begun with Charles Kates, to enlist writers to burnish Homer Lea's credentials. It was Alfred Powers who had introduced Glick to Captain O'Banion. Later, Kates, burdened with postwar responsibilities, urged Glick to take on the Lea biography, but Glick declined (pp. 207–208).

Kates continued his project with a diligent Harvard undergraduate and future U.S. diplomat, Frederic L. Chapin. Chapin submitted his 145-page thesis "Homer Lea and the Chinese Revolution" on April 12, 1950; it was read closely by one of Chapin's professors, John King Fairbank. In appendix 1, where Chapin wrestles with the question of when Lea and Sun first met, Fairbank wrote: "[T]his note is too condensed and so unclear. . . . Set up the variant stories. . . . Use more space and quote more."⁶ Fairbank, who trained generations of China scholars at Harvard, had approved, the year before, Joseph Levenson's dissertation on Liang Qichao.⁷ Levenson, who served as a teaching fellow and tutor in Harvard's history department (1946–1948) and then was admitted to the Society of Fellows at Harvard while Chapin was working on his thesis, cited the work of Chapin and Kates in

his *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China* (1953), in a passage about the "Falkenberg Affair." This controversy, which led to U.S. government investigations, erupted in 1903–1905 when Homer Lea and Richard Falkenberg vied for Liang Qichao's and Kang Youwei's blessing to lead an effort to train and drill young Chinese living in major American cities.

Fairbank's and Levenson's fleeting attention in the early 1950s to Homer Lea marked the high point of interest in him by scholars of modern Chinese history. For their part, Kates and Chapin abandoned their valiant effort to find the real Homer Lea. Kates, who tried to improve Chapin's thesis and to find a publisher, wrote to Ethel's son Joshua on 20 September 1955: "There is a great lack of personal information about Lea, as well as serious gaps in the chronology of his life" (p. 208). Nonetheless, scholars outside the field of modern Chinese history remained undaunted.

Homer Lea studies became the province of military historians, such as Lawrence Kaplan, and scholars in Asian American studies. The topic also intrigued researchers such as Eugene Ansel, a German-born writer whose still-valuable *Homer Lea, Sun Yat-sen, and the Chinese Revolution* (1984) was based in part on the Joshua B. Powers papers. In the same year, using much of the same Western-language materials, the academic Key Ray Chong published *Americans and Chinese Reform and Revolution, 1898–1922*. This post-1950 work usually followed in the footsteps of Kates and Chapin and consulted new material, but there was a tendency also to retrace their steps and return to the turn-of-the-century periodical literature and hearsay-strewn secondary literature of the pre-1950 period. This practice was fraught with risk, as Joseph Levenson had warned in 1953. For example, he called Carl Glick's 1945 book about Lea and his exploits, an as-told-to book based on the forty-year-old memories of Lea's colleague Captain Ansel E. O'Banion, "so fantastically garbled that, in the absence of corroborative evidence, little credence can be given to any of its author's statements."⁸

Kaplan's biography follows its antecedents in many ways, although he does insist that the sources mentioned above, plus those now available on the Internet, finally allow us to separate fact from fiction and move Lea studies forward. He has, indeed, located much new material from archives, the periodical press, and family histories. Unfortunately, Kaplan's characterization of Ansel's book—"His biographical account contained numerous historical errors and continued to perpetuate several Lea myths" (p. 209)—could be applied to his new biography of Lea. It both obscures and clarifies Homer Lea's life. Ansel's book, which has the merit of using the methodology urged by Fairbank on Chapin—gives variant versions of stories and quotes liberally—should still be consulted.

How are we to evaluate this new biography of Homer Lea? Unlike Chapin and Ansel, Kaplan does not appear to have shared his manuscript with China scholars who might have helped him avert some mistakes and misunderstandings. Kaplan's use of some of the standard English-language sources helped, but he

never used them at the expense of the story he wanted to tell, which was the same story Lea himself had told. His Homer Lea, American soldier of fortune, needs to become a lieutenant general in Kang Youwei's so-called Baohuanghui (Protect-the-emperor society) army in 1900 to train soldiers in Guangdong and Guangxi and to try to restore the Guangxu emperor to power (pp. 3–4). In chapter 3, “A Don Quixote in China,” Kaplan sketches these activities in 1900 and claims that Lea “apparently” (p. 47) also made it as far as Henan Province before giving up on his effort to rescue the emperor from the grasp of the empress dowager.

Did Lea really do all this? Lea did travel to Asia under the auspices of the San Francisco branch of Kang Youwei's Baohuanghui during the summer of the Boxer Uprising of 1900, he may have talked with agents of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao in Macao, and his landing at Hong Kong was reported by the press,⁹ but no persuasive evidence that he was in China, let alone serving as a general and leading troops, has come to light. In addition to press coverage, we know Lea did reach the Hong Kong–Macao region because the crown colony's governor Henry Blake informed London about Lea's plotting there to raise an invasion force to attack Canton. As Kaplan tells us, Blake called Lea's plan “mere vapouring” (p. 44). Kaplan does not present enough evidence to overturn the scholarly consensus that Lea's closest approach to the Qing empire was Macao and Hong Kong, the Portuguese- and British-held territories in South China. Jane Leung Larson, the granddaughter of one of Kang Youwei's (and Lea's) Los Angeles allies, Tan Zhangxiao (1875–1931), in her fine collection of letters between Tan, Kang, and other members of the Chinese Empire Reform Association (also known as the Protect-the-Emperor Society), wrote in 1992: “There is no verifiable evidence that Lea got to China or led troops there in the 1900 uprising.”¹⁰ Larson, who expressed the consensus view put forward by Anshel and Chong, did not convince Kaplan, who otherwise made excellent use of this underappreciated treasure trove of correspondence.¹¹

Kaplan interweaves these documents with another family history, that of Kang Youwei. Like the Lea/Powers family, Kang Youwei's family also preserved documents and sought to advance Kang's centrality in the histories written of this period. Kang Youwei's autobiography, which ends in 1898 after the collapse of the reform movement, was supplemented through the efforts of his devoted daughter Tongbi and her son, Luo Rongbang (Lo Jung-pang). In their influential collaboration, Luo and his mother drew on Kang's writings and an extensive range of other primary and secondary sources. The focus for their narrative of 1900, much like standard accounts such as Li Jiannong's *The Political History of China, 1840–1928* (1948), is Tang Caichang's mid-Yangzi uprising. Kaplan draws on Luo's work, although he does not mention Tang Caichang by name. Instead, Kaplan conflates Tang's uprising with whatever actions Kang's allies were taking in Guangdong. Thus, in Kaplan's account Tang's military forces, which were styled the Independence Army (Zili jun), march as the “Pao Huang Hui's military force at Hankow.”

Kaplan, with Homer Lea as a guide, does challenge the conventional historiography of 1900, which associates Kang Youwei with Tang Caichang's Yangzi plot and Sun Yat-sen with various Guangdong plots. But Kang Youwei wrote a letter dated June 27, 1900, to Tan Zhangxiao that suggests Kang's connection to insurrectionary actions in Guangdong:

Now there are many Westerners who wish to join us in our campaign. . . . Fire-arms are, however, in short supply, and the districts in the Yangzi and Guangdong need more than we can supply. Now the date for the uprising has been decided [August 9]. I reckon that when my letter arrives, our troops should have started moving.¹²

Neither Kang nor his biographers explained the Guangdong-Yangzi connection in his plans, but Lea talked about his actions in Guangdong and the mid-Yangzi as related, and Kaplan follows his line. Although it does not appear that Lea did anything in South and Central China, the letter just quoted is evidence that Kang Youwei contemplated a multiprovince uprising. In Guangdong, both Kang Youwei and Sun Yat-sen were competing for combatants; Sun was much more successful. While their respective strategies diverged after 1900, on the ground in 1900 there was little to distinguish between Sun's revolution and Kang's restoration. Both Kang Youwei and Sun Yat-sen urged their followers to use violence against the empress dowager.

Lea's later understanding of the confusing events of 1900, which was added to what he learned in Asia in 1900, may have been informed by Kang's June 27, 1900, letter to Tan quoted above. We do know that Kang Youwei had become frustrated with Lea by mid-1901. In a letter dated July 5, 1901, Kang wrote to Tan:

Kong Ma Li [Homer Lea] does not understand our internal situation, and his idea is not feasible. . . . [I]t costs us several thousand dollars for Kong Ma Li, who was of no help to us. . . . Kong Ma Li's words are merely like someone talking in his sleep (pp. 59–60).

Based on what we know about the events of 1900, the only part of Kaplan's Baohuanghui army that mobilized is the Independence Army associated with Tang Caichang's ill-fated Independence Society (Zili hui). Tang and his associates planned an uprising in the central and lower Yangzi region that was discovered and brutally suppressed by Zhang Zhidong and his fellow Qing officials in August 1900. Funded by a Chinese overseas businessman in Singapore who supported Kang's efforts, the four-port uprising broke out prematurely in the Anhui port city of Datong. (Kaplan confuses [p. 46] this Yangzi port, midway between Nanjing in Jiangsu Province and Jiujiang in Jiangxi Province, with the landlocked northern city of Datong in Shanxi Province.) Kaplan claims, citing Luo Rongbang, in his discussion of Kang's plans for 1900 that "Lea was slated to play a minor but potentially significant role with the overall reform plan: his mission was to help generate this grassroots support" (pp. 44–45). Luo makes no such statement; this characterization, it would appear, is an uncorroborated claim of Lea's alone.¹³

Although Kaplan's account of this era is incomplete, it does merit attention. With the caution prompted by "A Don Quixote in China" one can still glean some useful information from Kaplan's account of Lea's post-1900 activities; Kaplan does return to the documentary collections used earlier by scholars, and he has identified new sources as well. This is particularly true of his work on the Chinese militia-training organization styled the Western Military Academy, branches of which could be found in major American cities (chapters 4–7). It is stirring to imagine, in a California still marred by anti-Asian discrimination in early twentieth-century America, Lea's Chinese cadets marching proudly in the 1905 Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena (pp. 83–85). Furthermore, it is striking to learn, in Kaplan's telling of the Red Dragon conspiracy of 1909–1910 (chapter 9), how hubristic and gullible American men with money and influence could be in this period, with their visions of sponsoring mercenary forces that would revolutionize China and guarantee them access to the China market. Nothing came of this plan, but conspirators were bold enough to approach J. P. Morgan (p. 153). It was not that difficult for Homer Lea to persuade his fellow conspirators, who would have known how a group of American businessmen in Hawai'i had been part of the effort (1893–1898) to prod the American government into annexing the islands.

It is unlikely that Homer Lea's short life and checkered career would be remembered in the centenary year of his death had not the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941. Homer Lea's anti-Japanese bias in *The Valor of Ignorance*, combined with a career record that displayed an interest in, if not respect for, the Chinese, matched the American mood and needs of the 1940s. As we have seen, within three months of Pearl Harbor, Clare Boothe Luce would be championing to a national audience Lea and his geopolitical vision, first announced in 1909 in his *The Valor of Ignorance*, a call for America to arm and mobilize in the face of a threat across the Pacific, Japan, that would soon, he argued, threaten America's newly acquired Pacific possessions—the Philippines, Guam, and Hawai'i—and, from the mid-Pacific, the western coast of America.

In an age in which militaries around the world were just beginning to establish the general staffs that would engage in war planning, Lea single-handedly wrote a well-received and influential war plan of his own. Lieutenant General Adna R. Chaffee, who had led U.S. forces in China during the Boxer Uprising and had written an enthusiastic introduction to *The Valor of Ignorance*, was army chief of staff when Japan attacked Russia in 1904. General Chaffee asked America's recently established (1903) general staff, the Joint Army-Navy Board,¹⁴ for a war plan. This request led, years later, to War Plan ORANGE, which "provided the strategic concept and missions to be followed in the event of war with that nation [i.e., Japan]."¹⁵

However, the effort first initiated by General Chaffee yielded only a statement of principles; we can imagine Chaffee's delight when, several years later, he read

Lea's manuscript. Lea had written a detailed war plan, albeit from the perspective of a Japanese general staff (Japan had established a general staff in 1879),¹⁶ that greatly impressed Chaffee. But Chaffee was also responding to the militarism in Lea's book. In his introduction to *The Valor of Ignorance*, Chaffee had called for a mobilized America with national conscription for men and women.¹⁷ In 1942, as Chaffee's introduction was included in the March 1942 reissue of Lea's book, his words were no longer ignored.

Clare Boothe, whose work informed the December 1941 *Time* article "Battle of America: An Invasion of the U.S.?" discussed Homer Lea's assessment about a potential threat to Hawai'i posed by Japanese immigrants, many of whom, he thought, had arrived in Hawai'i with military training. There was no time to waste. In his detailed forty-three-page war plan of a Japanese invasion of the West Coast, he estimated that Japan could transport two hundred thousand troops to America in four weeks.¹⁸ The *Time* article appeared in the newly designated section "World Battlefronts" and was paired with "Battle of China."¹⁹ The article highlighted and updated Lea's concern that "Hawaii . . . would be assaulted from within by the 1909 version of a fifth column." This worry was soon addressed when President Franklin Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, issued Executive Order 9066, which triggered the forced relocation of Japanese living in California, Oregon, and Washington. Although Lea's plan made no mention of the espionage and sabotage feared by Roosevelt, table 2 of his 1909 book, which was also published in the 1942 Harper's reissue, contained the following passage from a memorial adopted in Seattle in February 1908 by the Asiatic Exclusion League of North America:

The living in our midst of a large body of Asiatics, the greatest number of whom are armed, loyal to their governments, entertaining feelings of distrust, if not of hostility, to our people, without any allegiance to our government or our institutions, not sustaining American life in times of peace, and ever ready to respond to the cause of their own nations in times of war, make these Asiatics an appalling menace to the American Republic, the splendid achievements wrought by the strong arms and loyal hearts of Caucasian toilers, patriots and heroes in every walk of life.²⁰

Like Lea's plan, a 1938 version of the U.S. military's War Plan ORANGE, as summarized by Louis Morton, did not address the potential for espionage and sabotage by Japanese Americans and Japanese aliens living on the West Coast. Executive Order 9066, issued four years later, did.²¹

With respect to China, careful observers in the 1940s might have noted a parallel between the convictions of Lea, who had convinced Sun Yat-sen that he should be his chief of staff, and General Joseph Stilwell, Chiang Kai-shek's military advisor and chief of staff, who insisted that China's military fate would be most secure if its troops were commanded by an American general. This became the most contentious issue between Chiang and Stilwell, leading to President Roosevelt's recall of Stilwell in October 1944.²²

Clare Boothe saw the significance of Homer Lea's life and work in even grander terms. America, which had been assured by Roosevelt in his Fireside Chat of December 29, 1940, that the United States need only be the "the great arsenal of democracy," saw the world anew after December 7, 1941. Now, in an America needing men and arms, Boothe reimagined Lea as an inspirational "soldier of Democracy" who had recognized that China, not Japan, would be America's "democratic ally" in Asia.²³ She ends her biography with a flight of fancy clearly connected to the present crisis: Might not Sun Yat-sen, after he was inaugurated the provisional president of the Republic of China in 1912 with Homer Lea standing nearby, have looked out over the Nanjing reception hall and seen Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Meiling?²⁴ In fact, Chiang and Madame Chiang (Soong Meiling) did not meet until 1921, and Chiang had yet to meet Sun, but *Time's* 1937 Man and Woman of the Year need not worry about facts when these were dwarfed by myths.²⁵ In the very dark days of early 1942, when the Japanese empire was still expanding, Boothe cast Lea as a seer whose vision of a strategic United States–China relationship, which she dated to 1900, would now be realized. Boothe then described the ailing Lea sitting before the "wide sunny Pacific" spreading before his "sightless eyes." And yet he "saw, as in a great white horrible light, the bombs bursting over Pearl Harbor . . . and the dawn coming up like thunder out of China." Homer Lea's "unfinished work," Boothe promised, would now be completed by China and America.²⁶

Homer Lea was resurrected in an extraordinary time of national crisis. His lonely and quixotic crusade at the turn of the century had become the cause of a generation. Kaplan documents in fascinating detail the range of post-1942 interest in Homer Lea's life, including plans in Hollywood and New York to bring the Lea story to movie and TV screens. Now, perhaps, we can better understand why, in 1948 (p. 242 n. 20), as America was watching its wartime ally Chiang Kai-shek lose his battle with the Chinese Communists, Frederic Chapin thought Homer Lea might be an interesting thesis topic. The fascination continues, most recently, in the People's Republic of China, where Homer Lea shared the movie screen with Sun Yat-sen and Huang Xing, played by Jackie Chan, in Zhang Li's epic production *1911*, released in 2011 to mark the revolution's centenary.²⁷

Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Sun Yat-sen—revolutionaries who could not risk living in China—desperately needed money, arms, and diplomatic support to achieve their goals. All three men were willing to sacrifice Chinese sovereignty, if necessary. They needed Western and Japanese allies; they needed the support of Chinese overseas. Someone like Homer Lea, with his promises of access to men of power, influence, and money, was a welcome and absolutely necessary ally. The power elites of the great powers included those who promoted imperial adventures and others who abhorred them. Moreover, none of the great powers trusted one another, whether in Europe or Asia. Homer Lea negotiated these treacherous waters with skill, spirit, and intelligence. In Kaplan's book, we learn more about

Lea as well as about Americans trying to understand and shape a confusing new world.

What Lea could not have anticipated, and what makes this strange story even stranger, is the way in which the contingencies of history brought Homer Lea back to the center stage he so loved and relished, a posthumous encore performance of an imaginary role that, for reasons of national security, was presented as real. After years of an informal alliance between the United States and Chiang Kai-shek's Republic of China—a world with secrets and subterfuge that would have been familiar to Lea—in 1942 the U.S. military was openly aiding the Chinese and planning to fight with the Chinese against Japan. Neither Lea nor the United States followed such policies for purely altruistic reasons. Furthermore, their various Chinese allies had designs and goals of their own, but Lea's implicit call for this strategic relationship in East Asia, implicit because it can be discerned only by analyzing both his actions and his thoughts, is a call whose story is worth telling.

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NOTES

For an informative discussion and analysis of the term the “American Century,” see Hunt, pp. 232–234. Luce's famous February 1941 editorial in *Life* is reprinted in Hogan, pp. 11–29. Michael J. Hogan, editor of *Diplomatic History*, commissioned a series of essays about Luce's “American Century” that was published in the journal in spring 1999. Revised essays, and Hogan's introduction, appeared in his *The Ambiguous Legacy: U. S. Foreign Relations in the “American Century”* (1999). Hogan writes of Luce's editorial: “[It] urged the American people to accept their destiny and use their influence to remake the world according to their own values.” See Hogan, p. 1.

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1. Tang Zhijun, one of the foremost Chinese scholars of this period, related this to Jane Leung Larson, in an interview she conducted in December 1990. See Jane Leung Larson, “New Source Materials on Kang Youwei and the Baohuanghui: The Tan Zhangxiao (Tom Leung) Collection of Letters and Documents at UCLA's East Asian Library,” *Chinese America: History and Perspectives, Journal of the Chinese Historical Society of America* 7 (1993): 188 n. 40. According to the Hong Kong correspondent of the newly established *Daily Express* (London), quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* of August 4, 1900, upon his arrival in Hong Kong Lea claimed to have money that the correspondent thought would “presumably be utilized in connection with the revolutionary movement against the Empress Dowager, a movement quiescent since 1898 until within the last few weeks.” See “Reformer from America,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 4, 1900.

2. Howard L. Boorman, *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 196.

3. Eugene Anshel, *Homer Lea, Sun Yat-sen, and the Chinese Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1984), p. xiv.

4. “Battle of America: Invasion of the United States?” *Time*, December 29, 1941, pp. 18–19. Kaplan cites this article (p. 277 n. 87), but does not discuss its content or manner of presentation. He gives an incorrect citation: *Time*, December 23, 1941, pp. 8–19 (p. 287).

5. For Lea’s custom-made London uniform see Anshel, p. 163. *Time* used the photograph of Lea that accompanied the March 1912 *Strand* article by Sun Yat-sen titled “My Reminiscences.” This photo (p. 304) is titled “General Homer Lea, Sun Yat Sen’s Chief Military Adviser.” Another photograph, almost certainly taken in the same studio sitting, had been published in the occasional “Unconventional Portrait” series in *The Bookman* in its June 1908 issue on p. 338. Kaplan uses this photo on his title page, dating it to about 1905. (Kaplan’s citation—*The Bookman*, April 1908, p. 130—is incorrect; he gives the correct citation, and describes the uniform and its medals, at p. 268 n. 73.)

6. Frederic L. Chapin, appendix 1, p. 114.

7. John K. Fairbank. “J. R. L.—Getting Started,” in *The Mozartian Historian: Essays on the Works of Joseph R. Levenson*, ed. Maurice Meisner and Rhoads Murphey (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 28; Maurice Meisner and Rhoads Murphey, eds. *The Mozartian Historian: Essays on the Works of Joseph R. Levenson* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 195.

8. Joseph R. Levenson, *Liang Ch’i-ch’iao and the Mind of Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2nd. rev. ed., 1959; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 75 n. 75. Citations are to the University of California Press reprint.

9. Homer Lea’s arrival in Hong Kong was noted by the Hong Kong correspondent of the *Daily Express* and contains details that correlate with Lea’s preparations in America. In the April 22, 1900, issue of the *San Francisco Call*, the Chinese consul general in San Francisco, who was shown, before publication, the front-page story about Lea, characterizes Lea as a “young American citizen . . . plotting with the leaders among the Chinese revolutionists. . . . It is unfortunate that an American should submit to be made the tool of the insurrectionists, under the guise of reforming China. . . . [I]f [an insurrection is] ever attempted these people will find themselves well met at every step.” See Kaplan, appendix B, p. 216. A month later, a front-page headline in the *San Francisco Call*’s June 22, 1900, issue announced: “Homer Lea, a Stanford Student, Sails for China with a Big Sum of Money Collected for the Purpose of Raising an Army to Outwit the Empress Dowager.” The article identified Lea as a Baohuanghui secret agent with \$60,000 (p. 39). In Hong Kong, Lea’s story was similar, although he was called the “resident agent in the United States of the Society for the Reformation of the Chinese Empire.” Also, in Hong Kong the 60,000 U.S. dollars became 60,000 British pounds. The correspondent presumed this money would be used for “the revolutionary movement against the Empress Dowager.” See “Reformer from America,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 4, 1900.

10. Larson, “New Source Materials,” p. 158.

11. Lyon Sharman, in her 1934 book on Sun Yat-sen, argues that Lea went no further than Hong Kong and Macao, “exhausted his funds,” and had to be furnished passage home to California. See Lyon Sharman, *Sun Yat-sen, His Life and Its Meaning: A Critical Biography* (New York: John Day, 1934; reprint with introduction by Lyman P. Van Slyke, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), p. 90 (page citation is to the 1968 edition). Marius Jansen, writing about the Huizhou Uprising in Guangdong Province in 1900, says of Lea’s claim that he was a participant

(which Kaplan does not advance): “The writings of Sun Yat-sen and the Japanese who were involved do not support this view.” See Marius B. Jansen, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 247 n. 38. Harold Schriffin’s forty-page account of the uprising, based on Chinese- and English-language sources, including contemporary diplomatic and newspaper reporting, corroborates Jansen’s survey of the Japanese sources. See Harold Z. Schriffin, *Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 214–254. In a letter dated March 2, 1982, Eugene Anshel asked Schriffin about his position; Schriffin said that he “was not at all certain that Lea was in China in the summer of 1900.” See Anshel, p. 223 n. 5. Kaplan did locate a “Greetings from Canton” postcard with a note to his sister Ermal, still held by the Lea family. But he notes that the postcard is undated, which suggests it lacked a postmark (p. 231 n. 20). This is the only new archival evidence and, given that it is not an independent corroboration of Lea’s presence in China, it is not enough, in my judgment, to overturn the scholarly consensus on this point.

12. Larson, “New Source Materials,” p. 163.

13. Kaplan is citing Lo Jung-pang [Luo Rongbang], ed. and trans., *Kang Yu-wei: A Biography and Symposium* (Tucson: Association for Asian Studies, University of Arizona Press, 1967), p. 186. For Luo’s narrative of 1900 see pp. 184–187.

14. Dallas D. Irvine, “The Origins of Capital Staffs,” *Journal of Modern History* 10, no. 2 (June 1938): 178.

15. Louis Morton, “War Plan Orange: Evolution of a Strategy,” *World Politics* 11, no. 2 (January 1959): 222.

16. Irvine, “The Origins of Capital Staff,” p. 178 n. 48.

17. Clare Boothe, “The Valor of Homer Lea,” a biographical sketch written for the 1942 reprinting of Homer Lea, *The Valor of Ignorance* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1909; repr., New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), p. xlv. Citations to the 1942 reprint.

18. Homer Lea, *The Valor of Ignorance* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1909; repr., New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), pp. 178–220. For Lea’s estimate of the trans-Pacific troop-transport time see Lea, p. 181. Citations are to the 1942 reprint.

19. See *Time*, December 22, 1941, p. 9, for the announcement of the department “World Battlefronts,” which would present “[a]n integrated story of the actual fighting by both the U.S. and its Allies.”

20. Lea, *The Valor of Ignorance*, table 2, pp. 223–225. Quoted material, pp. 224–225.

21. Morton, “War Plan Orange,” pp. 248–249. For the background and implementation of Executive Order 9066, see David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 748–760.

22. Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911–1945* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), p. 502.

23. Boothe, “The Valor of Homer Lea,” p. xxv; Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, pp. 468–469. Clare Boothe’s argument was anticipated by Henry Luce’s *Life* magazine “American Century” editorial of February 1941. Quoting Roosevelt’s “arsenal of democracy” locution, Luce argued that America had no choice but to fight in Europe and Asia. In the editorial section “America is in the War,” Luce suggested that after a Hitler triumph in Europe, his Asian ally, Japan, “might then attack the South Seas and the Philippines. We could abandon Philippines, abandon Australia and New Zealand, and withdraw to Hawaii.” See Henry R. Luce, “The American Century,” in *The Ambiguous Legacy: U. S. Foreign Relations in the “American Century,”* ed. Michael J. Hogan (New

York: Cambridge University Press, 1999; *Life* editorial first published on February 17, 1941), p. 14. Henry Luce did not mention Chiang Kai-shek or China in his editorial.

24. Boothe, "The Valor of Homer Lea," p. xxxvi.

25. Chiang, who was still in Shanghai, did not meet Sun until December 1913. See Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 27, 61.

26. Boothe, "The Valor of Homer Lea," p. xxxvii. In her biography of Lea, and in the *Time* article, Boothe claims that Sun and Lea met in 1900 when Sun learned of Lea's military brilliance and Lea "offered to throw in his lot with me." See Boothe, "The Valor of Homer Lea," p. xxv. Boothe is quoting from or paraphrasing the March 1912 *Strand* article by Sun Yat-sen titled "My Reminiscences." This passage can be found at p. 304 in the *Strand* article. Kaplan gives no credence to this account; he located in the Charles O. Kates Papers a 1939 letter to Kates from the pioneering Sun Yat-sen biographer Lyon Sharman, in which she concludes that "Lea was the author or main collaborator of this article." See Kaplan, p. 266 n. 58. We do not know if Kates shared Sharman's suspicion with Clare Boothe in 1941–1942. Frederic Chapin had access to the Sharman letter, which he referred to in appendix 1 of his thesis. See Chapin, "Homer Lea and the Chinese Revolution," p. 113.

It is not improbable that the title for Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby's best-selling *Thunder out of China* (1946) came from Boothe's Lea biography. White credits Harry Scherman, president of the Book-of-the-Month Club. See Theodore H. White *In Search of History: A Personal Adventure* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 254. But given the national attention paid (Kaplan, p. 277 n. 87) to Harper's 1942 reissue of *The Valor of Ignorance*, Scherman, whether knowingly or not, may have been echoing Boothe's stirring words published four years earlier.

27. Homer Lea appears in four scenes and speaks in two. Lea watches Sun at a U.S. fundraiser in 1911, and also learns from Sun in a later scene why he is fighting for a revolution. The third scene, from December 1911, is in Shanghai, when Lea, after reminding Sun that he had predicted this outcome, hurries off to witness the voting that will make Sun provisional president. In the fourth scene, Homer Lea is the only Westerner in a sea of revolutionary dignitaries listening to Sun's inaugural speech in Nanjing on New Year's Day 1912.

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Whose Hong Kong? Views and Movements Local and Global

Stanley S. K. Kwan with Nicole Kwan. *The Dragon and the Crown: Hong Kong Memoirs*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009. xx, 215 pp. Hardcover \$45.00, ISBN 978-962-209-955-5.

Janet W. Salaff, Siu-lun Wong, and Arent Greve. *Hong Kong Movers and Stayers: Narratives of Family Migration*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010. vii, 259 pp. Hardcover \$80.00, ISBN 978-0-252-07704-3.

Leo Ou-fan Lee. *City between Worlds: My Hong Kong*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008. 322 pp. Hardcover \$29.95, ISBN 978-0-674-02701-5.

The three titles under review belong to markedly different genres of recent works on Hong Kong. The first volume is a personal memoir by a key functionary of its economy, the second is a collective volume by three sociologists delineating the migratory experience of Hong Kong families, and the last is a reflective cultural recognizance of the city by an intellectual historian and renowned scholar of modern Chinese literature. All three books are by, for, and on Hong Kongers who are endowed with nonlocal experiences and informed by external perspectives far beyond Hong Kong. The Hong Kong—with all its images, scenes, sights, sounds, persons, institutions, moments, events, processes, phenomena, and sentiments—that these authors have attempted to remember, observe, analyze, and portray for the readers, emerges as a densely woven fabric of the historical and contemporary place. Individually and collectively, they have combined to present and convey to their readership, including Hong Kongers residing both in and