

A Chinese Reformer in Exile: Kang Youwei and the Baohuanghui in North America

Organized by Jane Leung Larson

Kang Youwei, in exile from 1898 to 1913 following the demise of the Guangxu Emperor's reforms, led the largest overseas Chinese political organization of the late Qing. With Kang as president and Liang Qichao as vice president, the Baohuanghui (or Chinese Empire Reform Association) sought to make China a constitutional monarchy. Key to the organization's success was North America (the U.S., Canada and Mexico), where the Baohuanghui was founded in Victoria, B.C., and would grow to at least 95 chapters, dominating the Baohuanghui network of some 160 chapters in Asia, the Americas, Australia and the Pacific, and Africa. Kang visited North America for long periods between 1899 and 1909 coinciding with the organization's heyday, when overseas Chinese responded to the Baohuanghui's nationalistic message and gave their energies and funds to the cause of constitutional reform. The study of the Baohuanghui belongs at the intersection of Chinese diaspora history and Chinese history, or transnational Chinese history. Yet, the only book-length study in English devoted to Kang and the Baohuanghui is the prodigiously-documented, much-cited, but never-published 1972 Georgetown University dissertation of Robert L. Worden, "A Chinese Reformer in Exile: The North American Phase of the Travels of K'ang Yu-wei, 1899-1909." This panel brings Worden together with scholars who have updated and re-interpreted Worden's research, incorporating newly available archival materials on Kang and the Baohuanghui.

PAPER TITLES AND PRESENTERS:

"Kang Youwei's Travels in Canada, the United States, and Mexico, 1899–1909," Robert L. Worden, retired, Library of Congress.

"The United States as a Site for Baohuanghui Activism," Jane Leung Larson, independent scholar, USA, founder, [Baohuanghui Scholarship](#).

"Kang Youwei in Canada and the Early Development of Baohuanghui in North America, 1899-1905," Zhongping Chen, Associate Professor of History, University of Victoria.

"Kang Youwei in Mexico," Evelyn Hu-DeHart, Professor of History and Ethnic Studies, Brown University.