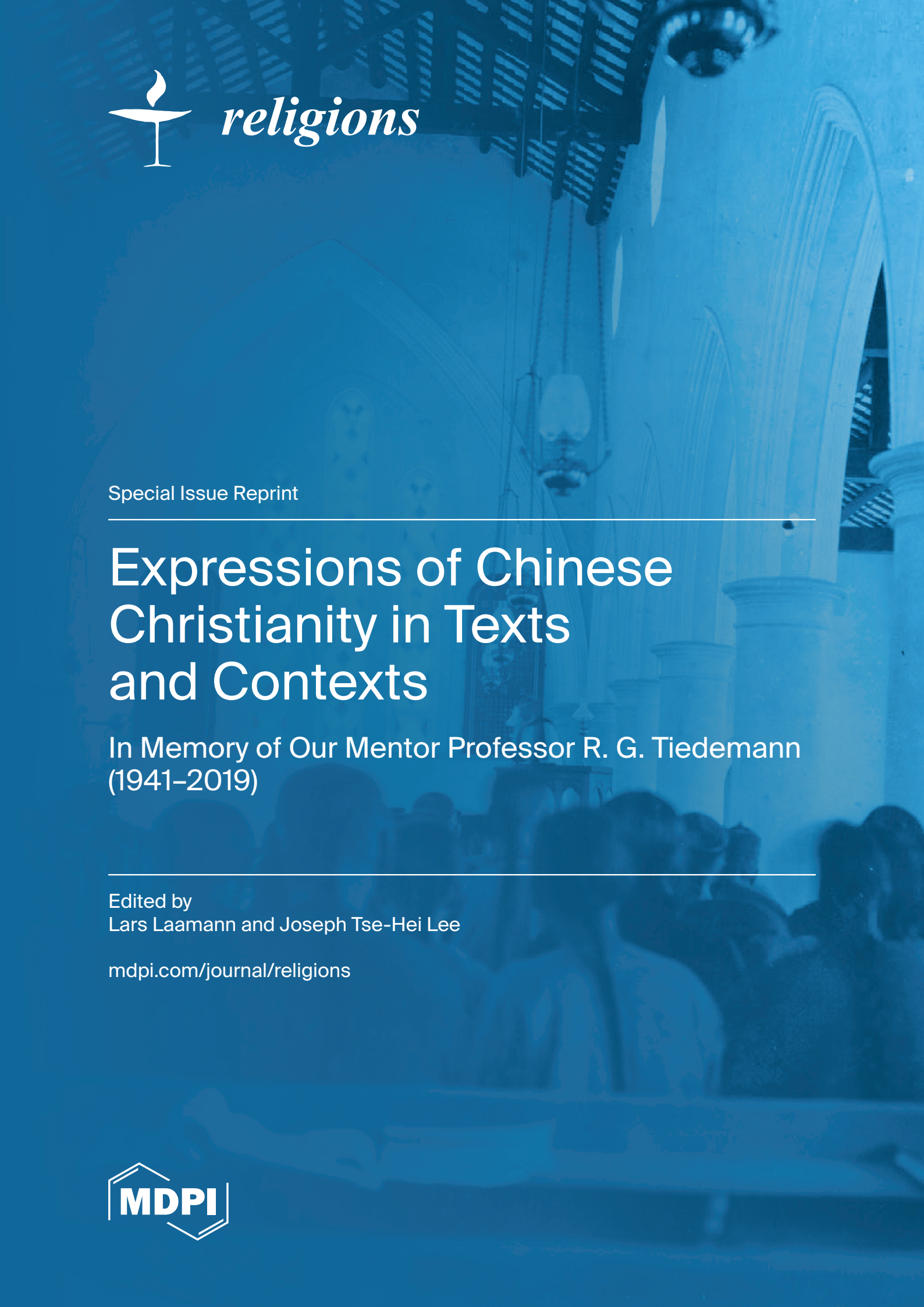

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Special Issue Reprint

Expressions of Chinese Christianity in Texts and Contexts

In Memory of Our Mentor Professor R. G. Tiedemann (1941–2019)

Edited by
Lars Laamann and Joseph Tse-Hei Lee

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Guest Editors

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Contents

About the Editors

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Lars Laamann is an Associate Professor in the History of China at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, as well as Chair of the Centre for World Christianity at SOAS. In addition to his growing fascination with the language, culture, and history of the Manchus, his research interests focus on the interface between medicine and popular religion, with a particular focus on Christianity, particularly from the 16th to 19th centuries. The dichotomies between urban and rural settings, as well as between dominant ethnicities and peripheral identities, also play a significant role in his work. Dr. Laamann's publications, which include *Narcotic Culture: A History of Drugs in China* (2004, with Frank Dikötter and Zhou Xun), *Christian Heretics in Late Imperial China* (2006), *Critical Readings on the Manchus in Modern China* (2013), and *The Church as Safe Haven: Christian Governance in China* (2018, edited with Joseph Tse-Hei Lee), clearly reflect this interest.

Joseph Tse-Hei Lee

Joseph Tse-Hei Lee is a Professor of History and Director of the Global Asia Institute at Pace University, New York City. In Spring 2024, he was a Taiwan Fellow and Visiting Scholar at the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, Taipei. His research focuses on the intersection of faith and politics in modern China. He is the author of *The Bible and the Gun: Christianity in South China*, 1860–1900 (New York: Routledge, 2003; Chinese edition, Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2010), and co-author, with Christie Chui-Shan Chow, of *Context and Horizon: Visualizing Chinese-Western Cultural Encounters in Chaoshan* (Beijing: Sanlian chubanshe, 2017). He has also edited several volumes on Sino-Western interactions, including *Christianizing South China: Mission, Development, and Identity in Modern Chaoshan* (New York: Palgrave, 2018), *The Church as Safe Haven: Christian Governance in China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2019, with Lars Peter Laamann), *Empire Competition: Southeast Asia as a Site of Imperial Contestation* (New York: Pace University Press, 2021, with Amy Freedman), and *From Missionary Education to Confucius Institutes: Historical Reflections on Sino-American Cultural Exchange* (New York: Routledge, 2024, with Jeff Kyong-McClain).

Preface

This Special Issue emerged as an expression of our shared academic journey and longstanding interest in the history of Christianity in modern China. Our fascination with this subject began during our doctoral studies under the supervision of Professor Rolf Gerhard (Gary) Tiedemann at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Gary's profound knowledge of Christian missionary activities and his expertise in the complexities of global and local Chinese Christian networks have shaped our work. His vast knowledge and insightful guidance have influenced numerous scholars in both East and West, and his legacy continues to be a guiding force in our research.

We are grateful to the contributors who, through their meticulous research and patience, have enriched this project and made our collaboration both fruitful and enjoyable. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee wishes to acknowledge the support of the Provost's Office of Pace University for granting him sabbatical leave in early 2024, as well as the Dyson College of Arts and Sciences for the generous summer faculty research awards. These contributions enabled him to dedicate time to this project.

Lars Laamann and Joseph Tse-Hei Lee
Guest Editors

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Editorial

Editorial for Special Issue "Expressions of Chinese Christianity in Texts and Contexts: In Memory of Our Mentor, Professor R. G. Tiedemann (1941–2019)"

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1. Introduction

Chinese Christianity, or Sinophone Christianity, has gained increasing attention in recent decades as both a socio-cultural phenomenon and a subject of inquiry. The resilience of Catholic and Protestant churches in China and the diaspora, marked by diverse expressions of faith and practice, has drawn interest from scholars.[1] At the same time, there is significant debate about the historiography of Chinese Christianity as a distinct field within the history of modern China.

This debate has been profoundly shaped by Professor Rolf Gerhard Tiedemann (1941–2019), also known as R. G. or Gary Tiedemann (狄德滿), a pioneer in presenting a "grassroots view" of the Christian missionary expansion into China. His scholarship shifted the focus from the traditional narrative of Western missionaries to the reception of Christianity within local Chinese communities. This approach is still relatively new in the field, spanning less than a single academic generation. Predictably, early analyses of Chinese Christianity centered on the most educated segments of Chinese society and the highly trained missionaries who interacted with them—especially Jesuits and Sinologically inclined Protestants like Robert Morrison and James Legge. Tiedemann's research was groundbreaking in its focus on a neglected stratum of the Chinese "mission field": the ordinary, often less educated population. Rejecting the conventional portrayal of Boxer rebels as demonic purveyors of martyrdom, Tiedemann reinterpreted them as "fighters for righteousness and harmony", situating their uprising within a broader tradition of popular religious movements. Rather than dwelling on their alternative identification as social revolutionaries, he placed the Boxers within the late-nineteenth-century landscape of competing millenarian aspirations—peasant uprisings that opposed the Qing state. In the case of the Boxers, however, their aspirations were channeled into organized collective violence against the Western powers that had come to shape China's development (Bickers and Tiedemann 2007).

What sparked Tiedemann's fascination with both Christian missionaries and their Chinese audience? The answer lies in his upbringing (M. Tiedemann 2019). The parallels between the humble origins of many Western missionaries—Catholic mendicant orders and Protestant preachers from working-class backgrounds—and the rural Chinese communities they sought to reach, often described as "bare sticks" (*guanggun* 光棍) in contemporary missionary correspondence, resonated with Tiedemann on a personal level. Born into a poor farming household in wartime Germany, he instinctively grasped the deep connections between rural endurance and insurrection, popular religion, and Christian missions. This Special Issue discusses themes related to Tiedemann's rural origins and the

enduring appeal of Christianity in modern China. Above all, it highlights the historical actors who mattered most to him—the ordinary people—while showcasing cutting-edge historical and social–scientific research on the transformations within Chinese Christian movements. Major analytical contours in this field include the following:

1. Examining the spatial and temporal diversities of the Christian missionary presence and Chinese church movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries;
2. Investigating the transnational connectivity of Chinese Christian communities and their evangelistic agents, including individuals, organizations, linguistic contributors, artistic expressions, and multipolar networks;
3. Mapping the interconnectivity of Christian faith experiences in China and the rest of the world via the exchange of religious prints, songs, and modern knowledge;
4. Reflecting on the scholarly access to new and old archival sources, the re-conceptuali zation of Christian terminologies, doctrinal interpretations, lived religious experiences, and reassessments of key historical moments.

Contributors challenge the longstanding state-centered paradigm that defines Chinese mission institutions and indigenous churches against Euro-American Christianity. Instead, they investigate intra- and inter-church exchanges across Sino-Western linguistic, socio-cultural, and political boundaries, highlighting the trans-local church networks. They argue that Chinese Christian expressions evolved in resistance to Western missionary efforts and in response to decades of socio-political upheaval that profoundly influenced Chinese churches and believers in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The analytical category of "Chinese Christianity" reflects shifting interpretations and methodologies in studying its diverse landscape over time and space. All twelve articles explore the reciprocal nature of Chinese–Christian encounters and can be divided into the following themes: linguistic innovations in knowledge exchange, Chinese Christians' engagement with nationalism, and the consolidation of Cantonese and Wenzhou Protestant identities.

2. Theme 1: Linguistic Innovations in Knowledge Exchange

The first three articles address the importance of translation in religious and scientific knowledge exchange. Influenced by the revivalist movement in Europe and North America, Protestant missionaries believed they were God's "chosen and elect" people tasked with Christianizing the Orient. They believed in the importance of the Bible, personal conversion experiences, and evangelism. Upon arriving in southern China, they faced linguistic barriers, including differences between the different dialects of Guangdong Province and the Mandarin spoken in northern China. Missionaries overcame this challenge by transmitting Christianity in vernacular expressions. Following Buddhist translators' footsteps over a millennium ago, missionaries used transliteration to introduce "proper names from the Bible and Western history and philosophy, untranslatable terms from the sciences and the humanities" to Chinese (Wright 1959). Shin Kataoka and Yin Ping Lee examine the first Protestant missionary, Robert Morrison's pioneering translation work, including the first Chinese Bible (1823) and the three-volume Cantonese learning aid, *A Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect* (1828). Their findings reveal missionaries' linguistic contributions to the diachronic study of the Cantonese language.

Another problem facing missionaries was the low literacy rate among the local population, necessitating the design of a new curriculum for children. Missionaries viewed literacy as essential for conversion and encouraged first-generation converts to send their children to Christian schools. The mission schools provided an immersive Christian environment, shielding students from hostile neighbors and fostering a Christian worldview. Sixing Chen investigates Protestant missionaries' vernacular education efforts since the late nineteenth century, arguing that their church school textbooks bridged linguistic di-

vides and encouraged the development of dialect-based elementary education across the Pearl River Delta. Similarly, Man Kong Wong revisits the medical career of Benjamin Hobson, an active medical missionary in Guangzhou (Canton) from the late 1830s to the 1850s. In addition to demonstrating new medical and surgical skills, Hobson translated several Western medical texts into Chinese. His ministry of healing and enlightening represented what R. G. Tiedemann called "a concerted effort by the West to transform Chinese society" (R. G. Tiedemann 2010).

3. Theme 2: Chinese Christians' Engagement with Nationalism

When Chinese nationalism gained momentum in the early twentieth century, the localization of Christianity became a contentious issue. Five articles in this issue reflect on the reactions of missionaries and church leaders toward nationalism. Zhu Haiyan and Xiao Lin draw on declassified Soviet and Chinese documents to revisit the Anti-Christian Movement in mid-1920s Shanghai and Beijing, shedding light on the Communists' weaponization of patriotic sentiments against mission institutions. However, the local picture of mission–state and church–state conflicts is far more complex than has been acknowledged in the secondary literature. Silje Dragsund Aase consults the Norwegian missionary sources on the Lutheran Middle School in Hunan Province, where Chinese Lutheran teachers and students negotiated conflicting claims on church membership and national citizenship in the 1920s. Unlike the organizers of the Anti-Christian Movement in Shanghai and Beijing, local Lutherans were keen to speak of Hunanese identity.

In this climate of heightened nationalist agitation, some prominent Catholic and Protestant figures moved beyond the ideological divide to advance the spread of Christianity in modern China. Zhiyuan Pan looks at Fr. Vincent Lebbe's early twentieth-century Belgian Catholic project for Chinese students, which aimed to foster intercultural understanding and integrate the students into the Belgian Catholic milieu. Junhui Qin draws attention to Chinese theologian and biblical commentator Jia Yuming's role in advancing spiritual independence in churches. While navigating nationalism and theological dialog, Jia sought to reconcile Chinese Christian identity with global churches. If we bring in the centralizing state, the Chinese church's challenge was more complicated during the regime transition, as exemplified by Peter Kwok-Fai Law's study of Chao Tzu-chen in the post-1949 era. Focusing on Chinese higher education in the 1950s, Law uses the story of Chao to show how the socialist state's remolding of Christian universities and schools ended the emerging, yet fragmentary, sphere of civil society. A cosmopolitan Christian thinker like Chao Tzu-chen was obviously marginalized in a state-controlled theological institution and struggled to serve God and the state simultaneously.

4. Theme 3: Consolidation of Cantonese and Wenzhou Protestant Identities

As the twentieth century progressed to the twenty-first century, we saw the proliferation of multiple expressions of Christian faith and practice in Chinese local and diasporic settings. The last four articles examine Cantonese churches in Hong Kong and Wenzhou diasporic congregations in Europe. Christina Wai-Yin Wong documents the hidden history of Cantonese Christian literature, such as religious pamphlets, prayer books, and dictionaries. The proliferation of these works marks the beginning of the standardization of written Cantonese and the formation of a Cantonese Christian identity. By contextualizing Hong Kong's hymnological development at the intersection of music and identity, Shin Fung Hung argues convincingly that with the decline of the old Chinese Protestant centers of Shanghai and Guangzhou, the growth of Cantonese popular culture and Hongkonger identity fostered the rise of Cantonese worship songs at the end of British colonialism. Yi

Yang revisits the literary works of Xu Dishan and Chen Zanyi from Cold War Hong Kong, illustrating how Christian thoughts merged with local traditions. Nanlai Cao and Lijun Li use ethnographic data to explain that social networks and religious motivation have driven the transmission of Chinese Christianity among the Wenzhou migrants in today's Europe. The diverse patterns of cross-fertilization have embedded Christianity into the fabric of the Hong Kong and Wenzhou identities.

Together, these articles seek to move beyond nationalistic or state-centered narratives of Christianity, illustrating the diverse experiences of Chinese Catholics and Protestants. By studying the intersections of religion and literacy, faith and politics, and personal agency and institutional structures, this Special Issue invites future researchers to engage with new source materials and examine the dynamics of Chinese Christianity within changing historical, socio-cultural, and transnational contexts.

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Notes

[1] See similar case studies in (Laamann and Lee 2018, 2024).

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Article

Linguistic Contributions of Protestant Missionaries in South China: An Overview of Cantonese Religious and Pedagogical Publications (1828–1939)

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Abstract: Robert Morrison 馬禮遜, the first Protestant missionary to China, came to Guangdong as an employee of the East India Company and with the support of the London Missionary Society in 1807. Amongst his path-breaking translation work, he published the first Chinese Bible (*Shen Tian Shengshu* 神天聖書) in 1823. As many foreigners in Guangdong could not speak Cantonese, Morrison compiled a three-volume Cantonese learning aid, *A Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect* (1828), using specifically Cantonese Chinese characters and his Cantonese romanization system. In consequence, missionaries translated Christian literature and the Bible into Cantonese, for they realized that proficiency in Cantonese was essential for proselytization among ordinary people. Over the past twenty years, we have collected and identified around 260 Cantonese works written and translated by Western Protestant missionaries, and these Cantonese writings can be categorized as follows: 1. dictionaries; 2. textbooks; 3. Christian literature; 4. Bibles; and 5. miscellanea. In the study of the Western Protestant missions, their linguistic contribution is relatively under-represented. Through analyzing the phonological, lexical, and grammatical features of early Cantonese expressions in these selected missionary works, we strive to highlight the missionaries' contributions to the diachronic study of the Cantonese language in modern southern China.

Keywords: Bible; Cantonese; Chinese Christianity; dictionaries; missionaries; textbooks

1. Introduction

For the Protestant missionaries arriving in China in the first half of the nineteenth century, the first step of proselytization was focused on the acquisition of spoken and written Chinese languages. They quickly uncovered the diversity of China's linguistic landscape in which different languages or dialects co-existed and were used by different social classes. In Guangdong Province, for example, the literati spoke Mandarin (*guanhua* 官話) and used classical Chinese[1] as the written form of communication. The middle-class people spoke Cantonese and could read and write formal Chinese,[2] with an occasional mixture of Mandarin and Cantonese vernacular lexemes. The lower classes spoke Cantonese only and were illiterate. To better communicate with people of different classes, missionaries in Guangdong's Pearl River Delta had to learn formal Mandarin, classical Chinese, and vernacular Cantonese (Turner 1894).

The most important training center for Protestant missionaries was the Anglo-Chinese College 英華書院 first established in Melaka by the Ultra Ganges Mission in 1818 and, following the Opium War, transferred to the newly established British Crown Colony of Hong Kong in 1843 (Tiedemann 2021). Since the Anglo-Chinese College taught only classical Chinese and Mandarin and there were no other teaching materials for foreigners, missionaries in Guangdong took the first step to produce Cantonese dictionaries and textbooks.

To write Cantonese sentences, they borrowed dialect characters from the printed local vernacular (Li 2011) and added phonetic symbols to create their romanization system.

The next step was to produce Christian literature, such as the Bible and tracts, in Cantonese. Akin to the Protestant reformers in Europe, the missionaries believed that it was only through their own mother tongue that Cantonese speakers would be able to understand God's words accurately. For the literati class, Bibles in classical Chinese produced by Robert Morrison and his successors were thought to be appropriate. Meanwhile, the missionaries considered it more desirable to produce new versions of biblical texts in vernacular Cantonese. Therefore, American missionary Charles F. Preston 丕思業 translated the Gospels of John and Matthew into Cantonese in 1862. As the lower class was illiterate and could not even recognize these Cantonese writings, the German missionaries Wilhelm Louis 呂威廉 and Ernst Faber 花之安 decided to translate the Gospel of Luke into romanized Cantonese in 1867.

Because of the different views taken by various denominations, missionaries often debated about the proper Chinese rendering of major religious terms for "God" and "Spirit". The British missionaries preferred 上帝 (*Shangdi*) and 聖神 (*Shengshen*), whereas their American colleagues opted for 神 (*Shen*) and 聖靈 (*Shengling*). Missionaries in Guangdong basically followed the same convention in translating the Cantonese Bibles.

Since the first Cantonese missionary work was published in 1828 and the last entire Cantonese Bible in mainland China was printed in 1939,[3] we decided to focus on the evolvement of Cantonese works by Protestant missionaries during the period 1828 to 1939.[4]

2. Background

Many missionaries in China were actively engaged in the production of religious and secular publications in Chinese because they believed it was the quickest and most effective way to convey their mission. The importance of Western missionaries' translation of the Bible in late Qing and Republican China has been studied by many scholars (Broomhall 1934; Zhongwen Shengjing Xinyi Hui 1986; Zetzsche 1999; Mak 2016; Tong 2018). Their focus was mainly on the socio-cultural impact of classical and Mandarin Chinese Bibles and little attention has been paid to the history of vernacular Chinese Bibles.

The lists of Chinese Bibles compiled by the British and Foreign and American Bible Societies (Darlow and Moule 1903; Hykes 1916; Spillett 1975) mentioned many vernacular Bibles including those in Cantonese but provided no information on other Cantonese religious publications. For example, in *Readings in Cantonese Colloquial*, James D. Ball 波乃耶 (Ball 1894) listed many religious publications other than Bibles and referred to them as "Cantonese colloquial literature", including catechisms, liturgies, hymns, Sunday school materials, and novels. Ball placed Bibles in the category of "literature", but this article treats Cantonese Bibles as a separate item because publications of this sacred text far outnumbered those in other genres. Nonetheless, Ball should be credited for putting together the first comprehensive list of translated Cantonese Christian literature.

A new approach was brought to the study of missionary materials when linguists started to use missionaries' pedagogical materials in their diachronic study of Chinese dialects; examples include Cheung (2021, 2023) and Yue (2004), both of whom thought highly of the missionary materials as linguistic data for research. Due to the limitations of language manuals, it was difficult for them to conduct discourse analysis of religious texts such as Bibles and Christian literature. There are five online corpora that have been developed by linguists for early Cantonese materials.[5] However, their coverage is limited in terms of the number of materials used.

You (2002) compiled a detailed list of materials on dialects published by missionaries in South China. He classified these diverse materials into four categories, namely: Bible, dictionaries, textbooks, and books of common reading. Each entry included bibliographical information and the library that housed the materials. Although You provided good guidance relating to the missionary literature on dialects, he offered no detailed content information and his work contained particular errors concerning the Cantonese publications.

In addition, many missionaries in Guangdong developed their own Cantonese romanization systems. Bauer (2005) examined Morrison's and Williams' systems. Lee and Kataoka (2006) explored the impact of Morrison's romanization and Lee (2009) compared it with other missionary systems. Kataoka and Lee also analyzed the practicality and impact of these systems in separate papers.[6] Thus, the diverse patterns of Cantonese romanizations are discussed in this article.

3. Methodology

Although Cantonese religious and pedagogical materials are equally important in the study of missionary publications in Cantonese, no research has ever attempted to cover both areas. The objectives of this article are five-fold: 1. collecting more information on Cantonese religious and pedagogical materials through analyzing information from a variety of historical publications as well as the relevant secondary literature; 2. creating a typology of the identified materials; 3. scrutinizing the biographies and contributions contained in *Chinese Recorder*, *China Review*, the pioneering work by Alexander Wylie (1867), and the archival data of the related mission societies; 4. exploring the linguistic properties of Cantonese in terms of lexis, syntax, and phonetics; 5. examining the contribution of the above materials to Cantonese linguistics.

4. Cantonese Publications by Western Missionaries

We identified 267 Cantonese works by Protestant missionaries between 1828 and 1939. Following the classifications by Ball (1894) and You (2002) with some modifications, we divided the works into five categories: 1. dictionaries; 2. textbooks; 3. Christian literature; 4. Bibles; and 5. miscellanea. Figure 1 shows that the earliest published works were largely dictionaries and textbooks. From 1862 onwards, missionaries published an increasing number of Christian literary works, and individual translations of the Cantonese Bible began to appear. Starting in the 1870s, the missionaries of different societies decided to work collectively on the translation of the Cantonese Bible. Subsequently, the number of Cantonese Bibles continued to increase, reaching its peak in the 1910s.

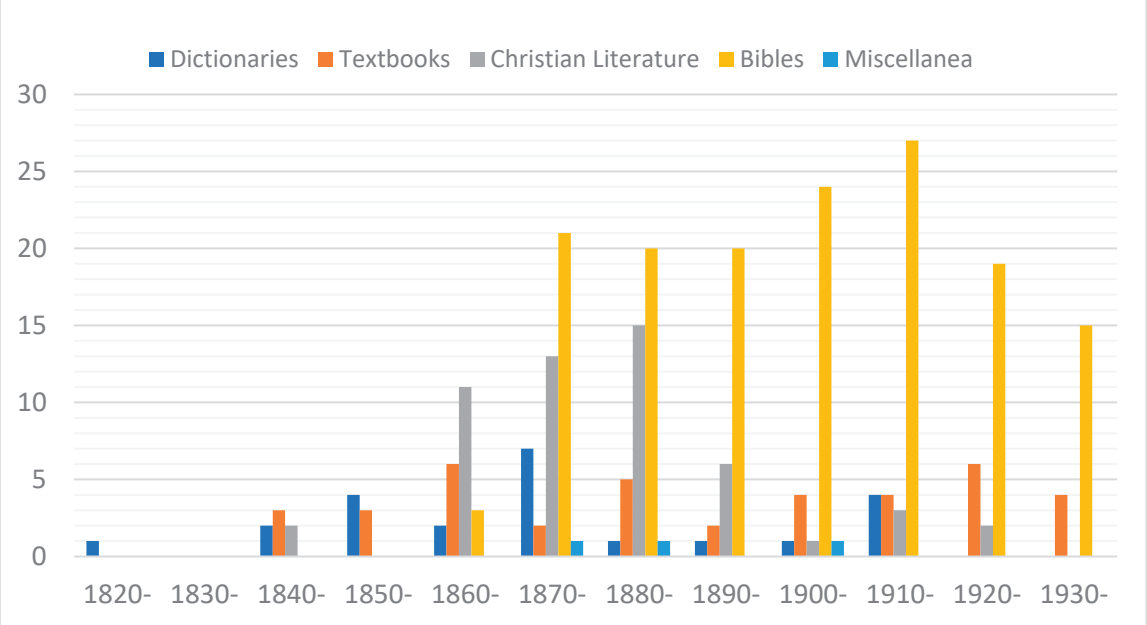

Figure 1. Quantification of publications by categories.

Then, we analyzed representative publications belonging to each category of the missionaries' linguistic contributions to the diachronic research into Cantonese.

4.1. Dictionaries

4.1.1. *An English and Cantonese Pocket Dictionary* 英粵字典

Published in Hong Kong in seven editions from 1859 to 1907, *An English and Cantonese Pocket Dictionary* was well received by contemporary readers. The language spoken in Guangzhou had previously been generally referred to as the Canton dialect, but after this dictionary came out in 1859, the word "Cantonese" had become the most common term used in later Cantonese learning manuals. Despite its small size, with only 163 pages, this English–Cantonese dictionary was convenient as it covered a wide range of expressions used in daily life. Benjamin C. Henry described this dictionary as "a most useful book" (Henry 1885, p. 226).

The author, John Chalmers 湛約翰 (1825–1899), was affiliated with the London Missionary Society. He began studying Chinese as soon as he arrived in Hong Kong in 1852. After a few years, he had mastered the language and could preach in Cantonese in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. He compiled the dictionary to help foreigners learn Cantonese. The first edition was published by the London Missionary Society Press in Hong Kong in 1859.

Organized in alphabetical order, each English entry was given an equivalent in Chinese characters followed by the Cantonese romanization (Table 1).

Table 1. Entries by Chalmers (1859).

A	Abacus, 算盤 *suen*‵-p‘oon
Z	Zebra, 虎斑馬 *foo*′-*paan*-ma′

The Cantonese romanization designed by Chalmers employed the Anglicized spelling, which was more familiar to the English-speaking communities in Guangdong. The sound [yn] was spelled 'uen' as in 'suen' 算, and [u] as 'oo' as in 'p'oon' 盤, which contrasted with the European continental spelling of vowels in Elijah C. Bridgman 裨治文's Cantonese textbook (1842), where [yn] and [u] were spelled 'ün' and 'u', respectively. The Cantonese tones were marked with diacritics at the end of each syllable as well as using italic fonts for the high tones. The Cantonese rising tones were marked with the acute accent ′ as in *foo*′ 虎, symbolically indicating the rising contour. The spelling rules and tone marks used in Chalmers' dictionaries influenced later Cantonese romanization systems, especially the "Standard Romanization" system (Cowles 1920), which can still be partially found in place and personal names in Hong Kong.

The words and phrases in the dictionary provide helpful information about the nineteenth-century Cantonese lexicon. Below are some examples:

- Terms still used in modern Cantonese, e.g., slipper, 拖鞋 *t*′*oh*-haai;
- Terms different from modern Cantonese, e.g., kiss, 啜面珠 *chuet*-min′-*chue*;
- Cantonese colloquial expressions, e.g., nothing, 冇乜野 mo′-*mat*-ye′;
- Formal Cantonese expressions, e.g., almighty, 無所不能 moo-*shoh*′-*pat*-nang;
- Loanwords of the time, e.g., (country) America, 亞默利加 *A*′-mak-li′-*ka*, (food) cheese, 牛奶餅 ngau-naai′ *peng*′, (religion) Bible, 聖經 *Shing*′-*King*, (month) April, 英四月 *Ying-sze*′-uet;
- Historical terms that are no longer used, e.g., sedan chair 轎 *kiu*′.

4.1.2. *A Chinese Dictionary in the Cantonese Dialect*

Compiled by Ernst Johann Eitel 歐德理 (1838–1908) in 1877, this dictionary was a comprehensive Cantonese and Chinese learning aid.

Having arrived in Hong Kong as a member of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society in 1862, Eitel first evangelized among the Hakkas. In 1865, he transferred to the London Missionary Society and started to preach in Cantonese. He later served as a senior civil officer in the Hong Kong colonial government. He compiled this dictionary to sat-

isfy the needs of many learners who wanted to master Cantonese terms used in different linguistic registers. He collected the colloquial, written, and classical languages through consulting the dictionaries of his predecessors, in addition to Cantonese expressions that he had learned while in Guangdong. The dictionary was published by Trübner & Co. in London in 1877, while the second edition was revised by Immanuel G. Genähr 葉道勝 and published by Kelly & Walsh in Hong Kong in 1910–1912 as *A Chinese–English Dictionary in the Cantonese Dialect*.

Eitel's Cantonese romanization system was a modification of Williams' system (Williams 1856), changing the total number of Cantonese tones from Williams' eight tones to nine tones based on the accurate observation by the German missionaries Louis and Faber in their Gospel of Luke in Cantonese romanization (1867). The dictionary had 1018 pages, with entries arranged alphabetically based on the Cantonese pronunciation of Chinese characters. Each entry was given its Chinese character, its pronunciation in romanized Cantonese, and the meaning in English, followed by examples of compound words or phrases indicating their linguistic categories with abbreviations, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of entries from Eitel (1877).

A	呀	[a.p. ˏngá, o.p. ˏá and á²] *Ca.* an emphatic final particle. See ˏá.—**Co.** 唔好 | ˏm ˋhò á² not at all good.
Y	116,4. ˋ野 Yé	**Co.** 一支 | *yat, ˏchi ˋyé* a ballad; | 仔ˋyé ˋtsai bastard; 有 | ˋyau ˋyé there is something; 有啲 | ˋyau tik, ˋyé a little; 閒 | ˏhán ˋyé an ordinary thing; 好 | ˋhò ˋyé a good thing; 也 | *mat, ˋyé* what; 做也 | *tsò² mat, ˋyé* why? 爲也 | *wai² mat, ˋyé* why? 叫做也 | *kiu³ tsò² mat, ˋyé* what is it called?

Eitel summarized the collected vocabularies into 24 categories and used abbreviations next to each word or phrase to indicate which category it belonged to. For example, readers focusing on learning Cantonese would pay attention to expressions with the abbreviation *Ca* (Table 3).

Table 3. Abbreviations used by Eitel (1877).

	Abbreviations	Remarks	Words	Phrases
1	*B*	In Buddhistic phraseology	*fat₂* 佛	*B. fat₂ kau⁻* 佛教 Buddhism
2	*Ca*	In the Cantonese Dialect	*⁻wá* 摑	*Ca.* read *⁻wé* cratch
3	*Cl*	The following phrases are purely classical	*₂in* 焉	*Cl. ⁻i ₂in ˏtsoi* 已焉哉 classical writing final particles
4	*Co*	The following phrases are purely vernacular	*hi⁻* 戲	*Co. hii⁻ ⁻t'ai hi⁻* 去睇戲 go to see a play
5	*T*	A Technical or scientific term	*₂mi* 微	*T. ⁻hin ₂mi keng⁻* 顯微鏡 microscope

4.2. *Textbooks*

4.2.1. *Chinese Chrestomathy in the Canton Dialect*

This textbook was primarily designed for foreigners to learn Cantonese, but the author claimed that Cantonese people could also use it to learn English. It recorded many newly coined loanwords, reflecting the increasing cross-lingual communications between Cantonese and Westerners, thereby enriching the Cantonese lexicon.

Elijah Coleman Bridgman 裨治文 (1801–1861) of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions began studying Chinese upon his arrival in Macau in 1830. In 1832, he founded *The Chinese Repository*, the first periodical to introduce Chinese history and culture to Westerners. He wrote this textbook because no comprehensive textbooks were available for foreigners to learn Cantonese. Published in 1841 by Williams in Macau, the *Chrestomathy* has 373 pages in 17 chapters covering the study of Chinese, the human body, kindred relations, classes of men, domestic affairs, commercial affairs, and medicine.

In the introduction, Bridgman explained that one standard method of rendering Cantonese characters was to put the radical mouth "口" on the left side and the homophones of the word on the right, for example: "口" + "丫" = "吖." This method influenced later missionaries in writing Cantonese colloquial words with the radical mouth. The content was presented in three columns, with English sentences aligned to Cantonese characters and their romanized pronunciations (Table 4).

Table 4. Examples from Bridgman (1841).

English	Cantonese	Romanization
(p. 7) If so, then it is requisite to take up one topic after another and proceed in order.	咁樣就要逐一逐二學嘞。	꜂Kóm yéung꜅ , sau꜅ chuk꜇ yat꜆ chuk꜇ í꜅ hók꜇ lá꜅ .
(p. 165) Rice pancakes should be fried till they are brown	飯班戟要煎嫩	Fán꜅ ꜀pán kik꜆ íú꜆ ꜀tsín nün꜅ .
(p. 181) Do the Chinese use milk and sugar with their tea?	唐人有摵牛乳共糖嚟攪茶有冇呢？	꜁T‘óng ꜁yan ꜃yau ꜃kái ꜁ngau ꜃yü kung꜅ ꜁t‘óng ꜁lai ꜂káu ꜁ch‘á ꜃yau ꜃mò ꜀ní?

What follows are various examples of nineteenth-century Cantonese.

- Phonology: "咁" (p. 7) was transliterated as "kóm," but it is now pronounced "kam" (or "gam" in current romanization), which suggests the syllable "óm" historically merging with "am".
- Lexicon (1): Currently, the term for "pancake" in modern Cantonese is a loanword "班戟." The example "班戟" (p. 165) indicates that this loanword has been in use in Cantonese for at least 180 years.
- Lexicon (2): The morpheme "唐" (p. 181) originates from the name of the Tang dynasty (618–907 A.D.). However, today's Cantonese does not use the compound "唐人" to mean Chinese people except for the fixed expression referring to old Chinese migrant settlements, "唐人街" (Chinatowns). The term "唐人" was commonly used in the nineteenth century.
- Syntax: The word order of the yes–no question "有+object+有冇呢？" (p. 181) in this textbook is different from the contemporary pattern "有冇+object？". This variation reveals that the interrogative pattern in Cantonese has changed since the mid-nineteenth century.
- Culture: The question, "do the Chinese use milk and sugar with their tea?" (p. 181) reveals a cultural difference between China and the West. It is now a widespread practice for Chinese to drink black tea with milk.

4.2.2. *The Beginner's First Book in the Chinese Language (Canton Vernacular)*

Medical missions were an effective method of evangelization in China. One famous example was Dr. Peter Parker, who reached out to patients in Guangzhou for evangelistic purposes. Authored by Thomas T. Devan 哋凡 (1809–1890), an American Baptist medical missionary who arrived in Hong Kong in 1844, *The Beginner's First Book in the Chinese Language* covered Cantonese grammar, medicine, and religion to help Western medical missionaries communicate with the Cantonese. Since there were no textbooks for him to learn Cantonese medical and religious terms, he compiled this textbook, which was published in 1847 at the "China Mail" Office in Hong Kong. Subsequently, the book was released in three editions, shaping the ways in which future missionaries published new Cantonese learning manuals with medical and religious terminologies. Devan paid much attention to the evolving social situation in Guangdong, mentioning the term "opium" in the dialogue.

Devan's text had 166 pages in total. In the first section, there were themes such as numbers, divisions of time, relations of life, buildings, furniture, dress, and food, under which English entries were aligned with Chinese characters followed by Cantonese pronunciations in romanization. The romanization system was borrowed from Williams.[7] Devan did not label the Cantonese tones in the first two editions, but he finally realized the importance of tone-marking in Cantonese and included the tone marks in the third version. He classified Cantonese words into different lexical categories based on the Western linguistic tradition.

- Lexical categories

Devan classified the Cantonese lexicon according to grammatical categories (Table 5).

Table 5. Examples of Grammatical Categories in Devan (1847).

Categories	English	Cantonese Characters	Cantonese Romanization
Nouns	baggage	行李	hang lí
Pronouns	we/us	你哋	ní tí
Adjectives	good	好	ho
Verbs	ask	問	mun
Adverbs	here	呢處	ní chú
Prepositions	towards	向	haung
Conjunctions	because	因爲	yan wei

Terms in some lexical categories, especially Cantonese classifiers and particles, differ greatly from those in English. Devan gave detailed instructions on how to use such words.

Classifiers: Devan illustrated that "*between a numeral and a noun, an appropriate word, called a Classifier, is introduced*." He gave 61 examples of classifiers, such as 封 fung.

e.g., one letter 一封信 yat fung sun

Particles: Devan presented an explanation of sentence-final particles, which he thought were fascinating. They are used to colorize sentences with the speaker's modality. He listed 17 examples of such particles, e.g., the imperative particle employed when a change of place is contemplated: 嘞 *Lá*.

- Medical expressions

Devan divided medical terms into four categories, as in the table below. He provided practical phrases that could be used in communication between doctor and patient. Asking about the habit of smoking opium reflected contemporary customs in Guangdong (Table 6).

Table 6. Examples of medical expressions in Devan (1847).

Categories	English	Cantonese Characters	Cantonese Romanization
Anatomy	Sacrum	尾龍骨	*Mí long kwut*
Diseases	Diarrahœa	肚疴	*To ó*
Remedies	Peppermint	薄荷	*Pók hó*
Medical phrases	Do you smoke opium?	你食鴉片唔呀	*Ní shek á pín im á*

- Religious expressions

Religious dialogues were designed so missionaries could effectively preach in Cantonese (Table 7).

Table 7. Examples of religious expressions in Devan (1847).

English	Cantonese	Romanization
Pray to Jesus to save your soul.	禀求耶穌救你靈魂	*Pun kow ya soo kow ní leng wun.*

4.2.3. *Cantonese Made Easy*

Cantonese Made Easy was published in four editions from 1883 to 1924 and was included in the syllabus of the Hong Kong Civil Service Examination. A Chinese–Portuguese textbook called *Phrases usuaes dos dialectos de Cantão e Peking*, published in 1884, used Cantonese sentences from this book.[8] The author designed a Cantonese romanization system that could reflect the standard sounds and tones of the time and gave very detailed explanations of Cantonese grammar with practical sentences. Because of his detailed descriptions of the Cantonese language, this textbook has been used by modern linguists for diachronic study.

The author, James Dyer Ball 波乃耶 (1847–1919), was born and raised in Guangzhou. His parents, half-sister, brothers-in-law, and father-in-law were all missionaries in Guangdong.[9] Although not a missionary, he was a devout Christian, actively involved in church activities. Being bilingual in English and Cantonese, he wrote many books and articles in English on the Cantonese language and society. He was a frequent contributor to the *Chinese Recorder* and *China Review.*

Another prominent work by Ball was his *Readings in Cantonese Colloquial* in 1894. In that book, he selected 29 works of Cantonese Bibles and tracts translated by Protestant missionaries so that Western learners of Cantonese could improve their reading ability in Cantonese. Moreover, the textbook included a list of 64 Cantonese Christian literary works translated by Western Protestant missionaries prior to 1894.

This article used the third edition of *Cantonese Made Easy* (1907) because it was the best-edited version. It was 253 pages long and included an Introduction, Text, Grammar, Appendix, and Index. The introduction explained which variety of Cantonese was considered as standard. Ball explained that only the pronunciations of "Sái Kwán" 西關 were purely standard, criticizing the pronunciations employed in Williams's (1856) and Eitel's (1877) dictionaries, such as í and ü, for which Ball used éi and öü, respectively (Table 8).

Table 8. Differences in spelling.

Example	你 (*You*)	去 (*Go*)
Williams/Eitel	ní	hü
Ball	néí	höü

It is worth emphasizing that Ball's textbook was the first to explain the variant tones in Cantonese and the different situations in which they were used. For example, the "wá"

話 in Cantonese was to be pronounced with a rising tone rather than with the low-level tone used in reading.

Ball's textbook consists of fifteen lessons, including home life, relationships, opposites, monetary concerns, trade, medicine, and education. Each sentence is presented in written Cantonese characters and romanization, with a verbatim meaning in English (Table 9).

Table 9. Examples from Ball (1907).

我講笑話啫。	˧Ngo ˥kong síú˨ wá˧ * che˨
I am only jesting.	I speak laughing words only.

In terms of the Cantonese lexicon, Ball recorded terms that were popular at the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as those used extensively in the nineteenth century and in modern Cantonese. The publication also indicates the emergence of neologisms whilst old terms were still in use (Table 10).

Table 10. Examples from Ball (1907).

19th Century	Early 20th Century	21st Century	Meaning/Function
共	孖	同	and/with
乜誰	乜人	邊個	who
曉	咀	咗	perfective aspect marker

Ball differentiated fourteen grammatical categories including nouns, classifiers, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, postpositions, conjunctions, and finals. For example, 哋 téi is the plural marker of pronouns and 啩 kwá is a sentence particle implying doubt or some degree of probability. He also recorded many words that are no longer in use in modern Cantonese, such as 嚜 pé, which is the conjunction used in disjunctive questions, meaning "or".

4.3. Christian Literature

4.3.1. *The Parable of the Prodigal Son* 浪子悔改[10]

This booklet was the first Cantonese sermon manuscript. The method of preaching with a Cantonese manuscript not only helped the missionary, but it also served to increase the Cantonese people's receptiveness to Christianity, so other missionaries followed suit. There is no year of publication or publisher listed for this pamphlet. Since it was used directly after the author arrived in Hong Kong, it is assumed that the booklet was published by the London Missionary Society in 1844.

James Legge 理雅各 (1815–1897), the well-known sinologist who first translated the Chinese classics into English, started his career in Malacca in 1839 under the London Missionary Society. He then moved to Hong Kong in 1843. It is less known that Legge was a pioneer of Cantonese literature. *The Parable of the Prodigal Son* is the Cantonese translation of Luke 15, and Legge used it as a sermon text when he knocked on people's doors from house to house and preached to the Cantonese audience. He prepared this tract for a preaching reference.[11] The pamphlet has six pages and contains the following two parts:

- Bible Stories

e.g., 有一個人有兩個仔，個個細仔對佢嘅老頭話我應得嘅家業你分過我咯，佢嘅老頭就分了過佢。

(*New American Bible*: "A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them.")

- Sermon

e.g., 聖書有話，上帝「無所不愛」，就係「溺於邪污」嘅人，上帝亦望佢。

(Our translation: "The Holy Book says that God loves all. HE will even look after those who indulge in moral defilement.")

This work has some noteworthy linguistic and stylistic features.

- Linguistically, it is interesting to notice that the recipient was expressed by "過" as in "分過我." When marking the recipient, modern Cantonese uses only "俾," e.g., "分俾我," but no instance of "俾" was found in this material.
- Stylistically, Legge used two different literary styles in this booklet. In storytelling, he employed the purely Cantonese colloquial style to make the story more vivid and attract the audience. However, for sermons containing many religious concepts, he chose a more literary style, such as "無所不愛" (love everything) or "溺於邪污" (wallow in evil influences), resulting in the sermons sounding more formal in style. Legge's selection of different expressive styles implies his advanced level of classical Chinese language.

4.3.2. *Important Selections from the Life of Christ in the Canton Dialect* 耶穌言行撮要俗話[12]

Published in 1863, this book was the first Cantonese biography of Jesus Christ. It consisted of one hundred stories about Jesus from his birth to his crucifixion and ascension in the Four Gospels and the Acts. Each story started with a heading, imitating the Chinese vernacular novel tradition, which influenced later Cantonese Bibles. Table 11 shows the number of stories from the New Testament.

Table 11. Sources of stories in Preston (1863).

Matthew	Mark	John	Luke	Acts	Total
33	11	25	30	1	100

The editor-cum-compiler, Charles Finney Preston 丕思業 (1829–1877), was affiliated with the American Presbyterian Mission. After arriving in Guangzhou in 1854, he began conducting church services and preaching in the streets. After two years of language study, he became fluent in Cantonese. Because of his friendly personality and language proficiency, he was welcomed by many Cantonese people (Henry 1877, pp. 342–44). He also trained Chinese colporteurs to distribute Bibles and Gospel tracts (Anonymous 1875, p. 235). This book recorded several nineteenth-century Cantonese words that are no longer used in modern Cantonese:

- 歡喜: verb meaning "to like" (modern Cantonese: 鍾意)

  e.g., 祈禱個陣時、咪似偽善嘅、因為佢歡喜企倒會堂。

  (When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues.)

- 倒: locative preposition used after a verb (modern Cantonese: 喺)

  e.g., 耶穌同使徒落山、企倒平地嘘。

  (Jesus and his disciples went down the hill and stood on a level place.)

- 揼: instrumental preposition meaning "with" (modern Cantonese: 用)

  e.g., 馬利亞已經懷孕適值喺個嘘，產期已到，就生個大仔，揼布包住佢、擠佢喺槽嘘瞓。

  (Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in clothes and placed him in a manger.)

4.3.3. *Bible History for the Least and Lowest* 述史淺譯[13]

Published in 1866, this book series contained the first Cantonese historical accounts of the ancient biblical world based on the Old and New Testaments (Collins 1866). At that time, there was no Cantonese version of the entire Bible, so this series served as a

key reference for other missionaries in Guangdong. J. D. Ball described this book series as "simple, though not puerile, good, and idiomatic" (Ball 1894, p. xiii).

The translator, Mrs. Mary Lucy Collins 花波, was with the American Presbyterian Mission. Her father, Dyer Ball of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, was one of the earliest medical missionaries in Guangdong. Born and raised in Guangzhou, Collins acquired native fluency in Cantonese. Her half-brother, J. D. Ball, was the author of *Cantonese Made Easy*. She translated the *Bible History for the Least and Lowest* into Cantonese. Published in five volumes, Volumes 1–3 covered the Old Testament (Volumes 1: 172p, Volume 2: 169p, and Volume 3: 134p) whilst Volumes 4 and 5 covered the New Testament (Volume 4: 129p and Volume 5: 128p).

In the preface, Collins stated that the Bible taught the equality of men and women. Like the other two female missionaries of the American Presbyterian Mission, Lillie B. Happer and Harriet N. Noyes, Collins engaged in women's education. Traditionally, women had few opportunities for schooling and missionaries played an important role in teaching women to read and write, thereby improving their quality of life. It was not until the early Republican era that secular institutions began to promote the cultural advancement of women through mass education.

Collins' proficiency in Cantonese could be seen from her use of relatively complex sentences, as in the following example:

多謝神、唔止俾番個仔約瑟過我、又加兩個孫添。

(Thanks to God, I not only got a son, Joseph, but also two grandchildren.)

Collins also recorded terms specific to the Cantonese lexicon of the nineteenth century.

- 拈: verb meaning "to hold" (modern Cantonese: 擰)

  e.g., 手上雖係拈住盞燈其實冇油嘅。
  (Though you are holding a lamp, there is no oil in it.)

- 是必: modal adverb meaning "certainly" (modern Cantonese: 一定) e.g., 將所得嘅好處嚟做唔好事，神是必刑罰我哋。

  (If we do bad things with good things we gain, God will definitely punish us.)

We also notice the author's deliberate addition of words in translation. For instance, the author added a vocative address term 表姊妹 (female cousin) to salute Elizabeth when she visited Zachariah's house. It is believed that she added the term so that Cantonese readers could easily understand the close relationship of the two well-known Biblical characters. Collins borrowed some local Buddhist terms such as 保佑 and 菩薩 to refer to the Christian terms "bless" and "gods of the Gentiles" in the Bible, so that the Cantonese people could understand Christian doctrine more easily.

4.4. Bibles

Both Tables 12 and 13 summarize the history of the Cantonese Bible.

Table 12. Brief History of Cantonese Bible (Chinese character version).

Personal	
1862	C.F. Preston 丕思業 (APS) translated Matthew and John.
1872–1877	G. Piercy 俾士 (WMMS) translated Genesis, Galatians to Revelation.
Collective	
1870	Preston, Piercy, and A. Krolczyk 公孫惠 (RM) sent a letter to BFBS to obtain their approval to publish a Cantonese Bible.[14]
1873	Preston, Piercy, and Krolczyk published the Union version (Gospels and Acts) (BFBS: 上帝 version/ABS: 神 version).

Table 12. *Cont.*

1886	A.P. Happer 哈巴安德, H.V. Noyes 那夏禮, and B.C. Henry 香便文 (APS) completed the translation of the New Testament (except Gospels and Acts), published by ABS.
1894	Noyes and Henry completed the translation of the Old Testament (except Genesis and Psalms).
1905	The entire Cantonese Bible published by ABS.
1907	The entire Cantonese Bible published by BFBS with the Old Testament revised by I.G. Genähr 葉道勝.
1908–1938	Continuous revision and publication of the entire and portions of the Cantonese Bible.
1939	The last entire Cantonese Bible published in mainland China.
1959	No Cantonese Bible was published in 1940–1958. The Cantonese Bible was reprinted in Hong Kong by HKBS in 1959 and has been revised and published since then.

Abbreviations: BFBS: British and Foreign Bible Society, ABS: American Bible Society, HKBS: Hong Kong Bible Society, APS: American Presbyterian Society, WMMS: Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society, RM: Rhenish Mission.

Table 13. Brief history of the Cantonese Bible (romanized version).

Personal	
1867	W. Louis 呂威廉 and E. Faber 花之安 (RM) published Luke from BFBS in Lepsius' system.
Collective	
1892	R.H. Graves 紀好弼 (SBC) published Mark from BFBS in the "Standard Romanization".
1905–07	The missionaries of CMS published the whole Bible from ABS in the revised "Standard Romanization".

Abbreviations: BFBS: British and Foreign Bible Society, ABS: American Bible Society, RM: Rhenish Mission, CMS: Church Mission Society, SBC: Southern Baptist Convention.

The following sections identify representative versions of the Cantonese Bible for further analysis, including the first romanized Bible and the first entire Cantonese Bible published by the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS).

4.4.1. *Das Evangelium des Lucas im Volksdialekte der Punti Chinesen* 路加傳福音書本地俗話[15]

This romanized version of the Gospel of Luke was published in 1867. It was the first Bible to be transliterated into Cantonese. Since many lower-class people in Guangdong then were illeterate, the Cantonese character version of the Bible was unsuitable for them. The missionaries first taught the romanization system to the uneducated so that they could read the Bible and understand the truths of Christianity. It was also convenient for Western missionaries to have the romanized version so they could read out the verses in Cantonese more easily. This romanized Gospel influenced the later romanized versions of the Cantonese Bible, shifting the system from Lepsius' to the "Standard Romanization" (Kataoka and Lee 2009).

The Rhenish Mission in China adopted Lepsius' "Standard Alphabet" (Lepsius 1981) in the early 1860s to romanize the Gospel of Luke into Hakka.[16] Wilhelm Louis呂威廉 (1815–1897), pastor in Guangdong and founder of a Bible school in Fuyong,[17] translated the Gospel of Luke into Cantonese, which was then transliterated into Lepsius' system by another missionary, Ernst Faber花之安 (1839–1899), in 1865. The Gospel was then published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1867.

That sixty-page booklet set out to explain how the Cantonese romanization system worked in practice, presenting twenty-four chapters of the Gospel of Luke. Each chapter was written in romanization with no Chinese characters. The following is an excerpt from Chapter 8 (Table 14).

Table 14. Excerpt from Louis and Faber (1867).

Luke 8:4–8	*4. Tšuṅˋ yan heiˊ kokˏ tšhụˋ šẹṅ lûiˈ tsuiˎ tsāp leiˋkinˋ Yẹ̄-sọ,, Yẹ̄-sọ, koṅˊ piˊ yụˎ, waˎ: 5. Yauˈ koˋ sātˏ tšuṅˊ kẹˋ yan, tšhût, hụˋ sātˏ tšuṅˊ, sātˏ koˋ ši, yauˈ ti, tšuṅˊ lok tsoiˎ lọˎ pin,, piˊ yan tšhaiˊ hiu,, tsọukˏ tseiˊ lei šẹk hiu,. 6. Yauˈ ti, lok tsoiˎ ša, kẹˋ tiˎ, šāṅ, tšhût, lei tsauˎ fu, hiu,, yan, weiˎ mọˈ mat, tẓ, yûnˎ. 7. Yauˈ ti, lok tsoiˎ kẹṅ, kẹk, lûiˈ thau, kẹṅ, kẹk, thuṅ mai yat, haˈ šāṅ,, tsauˎ khaiˈ khụˈ ātˏ tšụˎ. 8. Yauˈ ti, lok tsoiˎ fi tiˎ kẹˋ, šāṅ, tšhût, lei, kitˏ šat yauˈ yat, pākˏ phuiˈ. Koṅˊ yụn, tsauˎ taiˎ šẹṅ, waˎ: yauˈ yiˈ toˊ hoˊ yiˈ thẹṅ, kẹˋ, tsauˎ yẹṅ, koi, thẹṅ, laˋ!*

Below, we convert the romanized text into Cantonese characters and give the corresponding verses in the King James version for reference.

Cantonese characters:

4.眾人喺各村城裡聚集嚟見耶穌，耶穌講比喻，話：5.有個撒種嘅人，出去撒種，撒個時，有啲種落在路邊，被人踩嘵，雀仔嚟食嘵。6.有啲落在沙嘅地，生出嚟就枯嘵，因為冇乜滋潤。7.有啲落在荊棘裡頭，荊棘同埋一下生，就搣佢壓住。8.有啲落在肥田嘅，生出嚟，結實有一百倍。講完，就大聲話：有耳朵可以聽嘅，就應該聽嘞！

King James Version:

4. And when many people were gathered together and were coming to him out of every city, he spoke by a parable: 5. A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 6. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. 7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. 8. And others fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.)

This text was the first to explain Cantonese as having nine tones. Cantonese was always believed to have only eight tones according to previous Chinese and Western publications. Later publications followed the Rhenish linguistic framework.

This booklet also recorded the pronunciation of Cantonese in the nineteenth century, which was different from that of modern Cantonese, for instance through differentiating the dental set [ts]/[ts^h]/[s] from the palatal set [tʃ]/[tʃh]/[ʃ]. Other publications by missionaries also made this dental/palatal distinction, based on the actual pronunciation of early Cantonese. However, these consonants have merged in modern Cantonese, and only the dental set is used.

The sales of romanized Cantonese Bibles dropped drastically after the turn of the twentieth century because of the promotion of the Chinese National Phonetic Script (Stauffer 1922).[18] We believe the improvement of ordinary people's education level also led Cantonese people to prefer the Chinese character version to the romanized version.

4.4.2. *Canton Colloquial Bible* 舊新約全書: 廣東話

This first Cantonese Bible, published in 1907 by the British and Foreign Bible Society (Anonymous 1907), resulted from many missionaries' efforts after 1862. The New Testament was first translated by British, American, and German missionaries and was later revised by Immanuel G. Genähr 葉道勝 and Au Fung-chi 區鳳墀 (Spillett 1975). Most of the

translation of the Old Testament was completed by American missionaries Henry Vernum Noyes 那夏禮 and Benjamin Couch Henry 香便文 (Ball 1894; Broomhall 1907) and was later revised by Genähr (Spillett 1975). The translator Noyes (1836–1914) had been made available by the American Presbyterian Mission. In addition to establishing churches, Henry also devoted himself to education and founded the Pui Ying School 培英學校 and the Theological Seminary in Guangzhou to train local students and preachers (Anonymous 1914, pp. 310–14). He was the president of Lingnan University 嶺南大學 from 1896 to 1899 (Lee and Mill 2005). The translator Henry (1850–1901), also affiliated with the American Presbyterian Mission, went to Guangdong in 1873. He later became the president of Lingnan University from 1893 to 1894 (Lee and Mill 2005). The revisor Genähr (1897–1928) was the son of the Rhenish missionary Ferdinand Genähr 葉納清. Born in Guangdong, he had native fluency in Cantonese.[19] Apart from the Cantonese Bible, he also took part in the translation of the Union version (Wen-li). Another revisor, Au Fung-chi (1847–1914) was a leading member of the London Missionary Society and a teacher of Chinese to Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

This Cantonese Bible has many distinctive lexical features that are worth noting. For example:

- The translation of the name "David": In the previous versions of Cantonese Bibles, the name "David" was translated as "大闢" following the Delegation version. In this version, "大衛" was used, which aligns with the term used in Mandarin Bibles.
- 2, The use of the localized term for "fig leaf": In Genesis 3:7, Adam and Eve used "無花果葉" (fig leaves) to make themselves aprons to go around them after eating the forbidden fruit and realizing they were naked. Since the fig tree was not well known in China, this Bible used "蕉葉" (banana leaves), the more familiar term in southern China.
- The use of terms that are not used in modern Cantonese: e.g., 熱頭 (the sun), 共埋 (together with), 婢 (slave girl).
- The use of radical mouth: The terms "cherub" (angel/singular) or "cherubim" (angels/plural) often appear in the Old Testament, such as Genesis 3:24. Since they were unfamiliar in Cantonese, this Bible coined a word "嗰啰咏" to transliterate "cherubim". The Cantonese Bible published in 2006 by the Hong Kong Bible Society still uses "嗰啰咏," in sharp contrast to "基路伯," the transliteration of "cherub" used in the Union version.

4.5. Miscellanea

Some Cantonese publications by missionaries do not fall into the above four categories, such as Piercy's *Sacred Edict* 聖諭廣訓 (Piercy 1872), Ball's cookery book (Ball 1890), and Nelson's elementary textbook 幼學保身要言 (Nelson 1900). Although they are unique and interesting materials, it is beyond the scope of our research to discuss them in this article.[20]

5. Closing Remarks

Following the Protestant missionaries' arrival in China in the early nineteenth century, they confronted the fact that different classes of Chinese communicated in different dialects. In Guangdong Province, for example, the literati used classical Chinese as the unified form of written language, so the first religious books were translated into classical Chinese. Since the middle-class population could not read classical Chinese, the missionaries borrowed vernacular Cantonese characters to translate religious texts and created a Cantonese romanization system to translate Christian literature for the illiterate.

In our research, we found 267 items by Protestant missionaries that were classified into five categories. We were also able to examine the biographical and denominational data of the authors. The resulting evidence provided us with valuable data to explore the features of Cantonese in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Apart from their linguistic contributions, their method of writing Cantonese as it was spoken provided an

indirect modeling for the Cantonese orthography that is still used in Cantonese colloquial writing in Hong Kong today. Furthermore, the romanization of Cantonese was a remarkable linguistic contribution that the missionaries made to preserve and advance the study of Cantonese beyond the church. In Hong Kong, personal and place names in English are primarily spelled in romanized Cantonese. The Cantonese government romanization system is called the "Eitel/Dyer Ball system" in commemoration of the contributions of Eitel and Ball as Hong Kong senior civil officers (Hong Kong Colonial Secretariat 1960). Through analyzing the changing linguistic features of these works, it is now possible for us to see what nineteenth-century Cantonese was like in terms of phonology, lexis, and syntax. Compared to today's Cantonese, we can see how the language has evolved considerably over the past two hundred years.

In brief, whilst the history of the Protestant missions in China has been studied from a variety of academic aspects, only little is known about their linguistic contributions to the diachronic study of Chinese dialects. This article offers a singular perspective on the missionaries' linguistic contributions in the Cantonese-speaking region of Guangdong Province. In fact, missionaries in the Chaozhou, Hakka, Min, and Wu-speaking areas published vernacular pedagogical and religious materials (Broomhall 1907; Spillett 1975; You 2002; Choi 2018),[21] following the widespread appreciation of vernacular works at the 1877 general missionary conference in Shanghai (Goodrich 1877). These translated materials are still of great value in the diachronic study of these dialects today and should open new avenues for further research into Chinese missionary linguistics.

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Notes

1 Western Protestant missionaries referred to classical Chinese as 深文理 or Wen-li.

2 Western Protestant missionaries referred to plain classical Chinese as 淺文理 or Easy Wen-li.

3 A Cantonese Bible was reproduced in 1959 by Hong Kong Bible Society and several versions have been published since then. See Section 4.4 for the brief history of the Cantonese Bible.

4 Catholic missionaries also produced both religious and pedagogical Cantonese works, but they were small in number and therefore are not included in this article. These works can be found in You (2002) and Kataoka and Lee (2022).

5 These five corpora are as follows: 1. Early Cantonese Colloquial Texts: A Database; 2. Early Cantonese Tagged Database; 3. Database of Early Chinese Dialects; 4. Database of the 19th Century (1865–1894) Cantonese Christian Writings; 5. The Database of Early Cantonese Bible and Christian Literature. For details, see Kataoka and Lee (2022).

6 See Kataoka and Lee (2008) for the "Standard Romanization"; Kataoka (2014) for the Government system; and Kataoka and Lee (2022) for the Lepsius system.

7 Devan made reference to Williams' romanization used in his textbook *Easy Lessons in Chinese* (1842). The same romanization was used in Williams' dictionary (Williams 1856).

8 See the website of Biblioteca Pública de Macau: https://www.library.gov.mo/zh-hant/library-collections/special-collections/ancient-texts?ancient=book_185 (accessed on 1 June 2024).

9 Ball's family members were as follows: parents Dyer Ball and Isabella Robertson, half-sister Mary L. Collins, brothers-in-law John B. French and Andrew P. Happer, and father-in-law Samuel J. Smith.

10 The English title is our translation. There is no English title for this book. See (Legge 1844).

11 Legge described his early church life in Hong Kong in his letter to Ball. See Ball (1894, p. viii).

12 The English title is Ball's translation. See Ball (1894).

13 The English title is taken from the original English book.

14 The letter was published in the annual report of BFBS (British and Foreign Bible Society 1870). In the letter, three missionaries asked for permission to publish a Cantonese Bible in order to serve less educated people. The letter proposed that the Cantonese Bible should be translated based on the eight principles, including the use of Textus Receptus as the base, the use of elegant Cantonese terms, and featured no discussion over the terms for God, Spirit, and Baptism. It did not disclose the names of the three missionaries, but Kataoka (2022) proved that they were Piercy, Preston, and Krolczyk. See Kataoka (2022) for details.

15 The Cantonese title is taken from the title in Cantonese romanization written on the first page of this Gospel.

16 Many missionaries used Lepsius' romanization system to transliterate world languages including Chinese dialects (Lepsius 1981).

17 See the Rhenish missionary website for details: https://www.rhenish.org/Common/Reader/Channel/ShowPage.jsp?Cid=8&Pid=2&Version=0&Charset=big5_hkscs&page=0 (accessed on 1 June 2024).

18 According to Stauffer (1922), sales figures for the Cantonese romanized Bible were 15,350 for the period 1890–1920, declining to 524 in 1916–1920, indicating a drastic fall in the last four years.

19 Genähr revised the second edition of Eitel's dictionary. See Section 4.4.2. for details.

20 See Chen (2024), and Kataoka and Lee (forthcoming).

21 For example, Edkins (1868) published a reference grammar based on the Shanghai dialect.

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religions

Article

Making Knowledge in the Local Settings: Vernacular Education and Cantonese Elementary Textbooks

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Abstract: A growing number of Protestant missionaries engaged in vernacular education in the late nineteenth century. To meet the demands of the new era, Christian church education faced challenges not only in its curriculum design but also in the way it presented new knowledge. Previous studies have focused on church education at the tertiary level while overlooking the elementary level. This article discusses vernacular church education and vernacular textbooks at the elementary level in the late Qing, with specific reference to *Youxue baoshen yaoyan* 幼學保身要言 (*The Human Body for Children*). It argues that the demand for spreading new knowledge urged Protestant missionaries to compile vernacular textbooks and present Western knowledge in the local settings. Vernacular church education should be regarded as the precursor of indigenous education proposed by the late Qing Court. The local dialect, Cantonese in this case, bridged the linguistic gap between new terms and children's cognition and became an effective means of presenting new knowledge. Vernacular textbooks had an unparalleled significance in the cultural sphere of dialect writing, since the language of textbooks could drastically influence the writing and reading habits of the young generation and further influence people's attitudes towards dialects and dialect literature.

Keywords: vernacular education; Cantonese elementary textbooks; dialect writings

1. Controversy on the Language of Elementary Textbooks

Christian elementary education was the foundation of the missionary educational enterprise, accounting for ninety percent of all schools in early-twentieth-century China. In 1922, the *Jidujiao quanguo dahui baogaoshu* 基督教全國大會報告書 (*The Report of the National Christian Conference*) shows that the majority of the students who had received church education were enrolled in different levels of elementary school: 74% in lower elementary school and 16% in higher elementary school, in contrast to 7.5% in high school, 1.4% in Bible school and normal school, and only 1.3% in university (Zhang 1922, p. 48). In the same year, Protestant missions in China ran 5637 lower elementary schools with 151,582 pupils, 962 higher elementary schools with 32,899 pupils, 291 high schools with 15,213 students, 48 normal schools with 612 students, and 100 Bible schools with 2659 students (Christian Education Survey Association of China 中国基督教教育调查会 1922, p. 376). The huge gap in enrollment demonstrates that elementary education was an essential part of church education in China with wide coverage.

Despite being the largest proportion in 1922, Protestant elementary schools had a humble beginning. In 1877, there had only been 68 Protestant boarding schools (30 for boys and 38 for girls) and 259 day-schools (177 for boys and 82 for girls) (Hampden 1879, p. 286). The number of Protestant elementary schools had increased twenty times in the span of 45 years! R. Lechler, a missionary from the Baptist Missionary Society in Hong Kong, emphasized the correlation between Christianity and education. "Nevertheless it is a fact, that the church from the beginning of the world has by Divine appointment been an educational institute. This is her distinctive character and it is her duty to preserve it even unto the end of the world" (Lechler 1878, p. 161). Protestant missionaries decided

to seize the opportunity to train a new generation of Chinese people who drew near to Christianity. Elementary education was where their aspiration began.

After reviewing the existing Confucian convention of elementary learning in China, Protestant missionaries had no intention of following the old pattern. As early as the 1830s, pioneering missionaries had identified the limitations of traditional Chinese primers. Elijah Coleman Bridgman, the secretary of the Morrison Education Society (hereafter MES), argued that Chinese children viewed Chinese primers as an "irksome task" (ART. III 1835, p. 243). Bridgman believed that old Chinese primers like *Qianziwen* 千字文 (*The Thousand Character Classic*) focused on basic literacy skills, requiring students to memorize and reproduce characters in the texts, which was meaningless for catching up with practical knowledge and nurturing an independent mind. He continued that Classical Chinese primers were inappropriate in the first report of the MES:

> These books contain a large collection of moral maxims, and some remarkable sayings of the sages, with which are blended a variety of mystical dogmas, and a few historical facts. None of the branches of science, properly so called, enter into any part of these primary books. They are from beginning to end unfitted for the minds of children, being, for the most part, hard to understand, and wholly devoid of topics calculated to awaken interest in the minds of children or to enlarge their understanding. (ART. II 1837, p. 236)

When saying that Classical Chinese primers were "unfitted for the minds of children", Bridgman, de facto, identified two problems: first, traditional elementary education lacked scientific and mathematical school subjects; second, traditional Chinese primers written in Classical Chinese were hard for children to understand. The latter was more implicit, but had not been publicly noticed. Following the first meeting, members of the MES approved two letters addressing Bridgman's concern, "one to literary gentlemen long connected with one of the oldest colleges in the United States of America, and the other to the Secretary of the British and Foreign School Society in England" to ask them to assign teachers to China who were "qualified to give oral instruction in the native language, and to prepare elementary books in the same" (ART. II 1837, p. 230).

In 1877, the School and Text Book Series Committee (hereafter STSC) was established as a resolution of the General Conference of Protestant Missionaries of China with the purpose of providing a series of Western textbooks for Chinese pupils in their native languages (Report of the School and Text Book Series Committee 1890, p. 712). The STSC decided to prepare two series of textbooks, viz., a primary series and an advanced series, covering ten subjects: mathematics, surveying, astronomy, geology, chemistry, zoology, geography, history, language, and music. This significant and impactful change prompted the Protestant missions in China to design, provide, and circulate a standard series of textbooks which remedied the disorganized state of elementary education.

Like every missionary who engaged in translation, the members of the STSC faced an accustomed dilemma—determining the best writing style for these Chinese elementary textbooks. Soon after the establishment of the STSC, missionaries had a short discussion on the proper style and the best way to prepare elementary textbooks. Calvin Wilson Mateer of the American Presbyterian Mission (North) in Shandong Province put forward his ideas for textbook design in October 1877:

> School books for the Chinese should be made as plain as possible … Not only should the method be plain, but special pains should be taken to make the style clear and perspicuous. This will be all the more difficult to accomplish, seeing precision and perspicuity are not qualities peculiar to Chinese, especially to the Wen-li. For North China all primary books had best be in Mandarin. This, to say nothing of other advantages, will enable the student to study these branches before he could read the books if in Wen-li. (Mateer 1877, p. 431)[1]

The "special pains" referred to the difficulty of rendering new knowledge in vernacular Chinese perspicuously. It indicated that both missionaries and their Chinese assis-

tants faced challenges in proficient vernacular writing. Mateer proposed that the primary books should be written in Mandarin for elementary schools in North China, while the textbooks at higher levels could be written in Classical Chinese. Mateer's plea was based on children's cognitive level and that vernacular Chinese was proposed as a tactical option for elementary students with limited cognition. Essentially, Mateer's viewpoint was still conservative. He viewed Mandarin textbooks as an alternative to Classical Chinese textbooks in the transition period. At this time, he was not confident that vernacular Chinese would eventually replace Classical Chinese in textbooks.

Mateer's appeal encountered resistance from the conservative missionaries. In 1878, Alexander Williamson of the London Missionary Society reiterated the consistency of the whole series, which required the textbooks for general use to be written in simple Classical Chinese. "That the books may be of immediate and general use they are, in the first instance, to be composed in easy Wen-li, but hereafter, should there be a general demand for any of them to be put into the Mandarin Colloquial, the matter will be entertained by the Committee" (Williamson 1878, p. 307). The missionary bodies had reached a consensus that elementary textbooks should be written in simple Classical Chinese. However, Williamson's words made allowance for vernacular textbooks, especially Mandarin textbooks. He added that the requests for Mandarin textbooks could be endorsed by the Committee case by case. In fact, it was not easy to get an endorsement. One year later, when Mateer translated an arithmetic textbook of the primary series into Mandarin, Williamson asked him to change its style from Mandarin to the simplest Classical Chinese (Muirhead 1879, pp. 470–71).

The appeal for vernacular textbooks was not adopted by the STSC Committee. The annual report of the STSC of 1890 states "that arrangements should be made for the preparation of two series of school books in Chinese, viz., a primary series and an advanced series, and that the style of both series should be the simplest Wen-li, leaving subsequent translation into mandarin an open question" (Report of the School and Text Book Series Committee 1890, p. 712). According to John Fryer's statistics, ninety-seven schoolbooks were approved by the STSC. Around 30,000 volumes of books or copies of maps, charts, etc., had been issued, and about half of them were sold. Many leading Chinese officials were subscribers, including Zeng Jize 曾紀澤 (Report of the School and Text Book Series Committee 1890, pp. 715–18). These two series of schoolbooks had attracted much attention. The open verdict on Mandarin, however, left much space for vernacular textbooks and vernacular education. Not all missionaries were in favor of textbooks written in simple Classical Chinese. A few missionaries translated Western textbooks into local dialects to enable elementary students to acquire knowledge swiftly. Although the STSC did not approve these vernacular textbooks, they had been used widely by many regional church schools at the elementary level.

With the increasing demand for vernacular textbooks, missionaries launched a new discussion about the proper style for textbooks. In 1894, John Fryer and John C. Ferguson, members of the Educational Association of China, sent the following question to representatives of all the missions engaging in educational work and to different parts of China so that all dialects could be considered. "What is the best medium of conveying scientific and mathematical truth to the Chinese in our textbooks, whether by Wen-li, Mandarin or other colloquial dialects, or the Romanized?" (Fryer and Ferguson 1894, p. 329). Fryer and Ferguson pushed the question of the proper style of Chinese textbooks forward. First, the textbooks here were no longer restricted to elementary textbooks, indicating that children's cognitive level would not be the key factor when considering the language style. When raising this question, Ferguson planned to look for a standard written language for future church education. Second, the scope of vernacular writing had been expanded to include not merely Mandarin but also other Chinese dialects. Besides, the writing system was not confined to Chinese characters but extended to Chinese Romanization, which could be better adopted by Southern dialects.

Fryer and Ferguson published the representative replies on *The Chinese Recorder* in July 1894. Four-tenths of respondents voted for simple Classical Chinese and only one-tenth favored vernacular Chinese. The rest of them, the majority, advocated for the hybrid mode—combining simple Classical Chinese and vernacular.

Advocates of simple Classical Chinese asserted that it did not have regional restrictions, of which George B. Smyth's argument was most typical. "This would be much more widely understood than either Mandarin or Romanized colloquial, and would be read with much greater pleasure even by those who could read all there" (Fryer and Ferguson 1894, pp. 335–37). The missionaries' original intention in establishing the STSC was to set up a standard series of elementary textbooks. The complication of elementary textbooks in various dialects was contrary to this goal. Apart from the wide recognition of simple Classical Chinese, missionaries also needed to consider other factors, such as the labor and cost of translating textbooks into different dialects. Alvin Pierson Parker raised concerns about "the extra trouble and expense of publishing different editions of the same book" (Fryer and Ferguson 1894, p. 329) in response to whether textbooks should be written in dialects. In this regard, simple Classical Chinese was the most affordable option.

Simple Classical Chinese, however, was not as widely understood as the missionaries envisioned. Classical Chinese was only understood by a tiny portion of the Chinese population. John Campbell Gibson of the English Presbyterian Mission, a supporter of Romanization of the Chaozhou dialect in Swatow (Shantou) in northeastern Guangdong, pointed out the low literacy rate in China in 1888. "The number of readers in China was set down as certainly under 10 per cent of men and 1 per cent of the women, giving a total not exceeding 12,375,000 readers in all" (Gibson 1888, p. 1). Gibson's estimate counted people with basic literary skills who could only write and read basic characters in certain topics. In other words, this number over-estimated the population with full literacy, i.e., those who could read, write, and understand Classical Chinese.

Only John Alfred Silsby, from the American Presbyterian Mission (North) in Shanghai, defended vernacular Chinese, arguing that it would eventually overtake Classical Chinese.

> In my opinion Wen-li is a great obstacle to popular education. As the use of Latin in the middle ages educated a few at the expense of the masses so does Wen-li shut out the light of scientific, mathematical and religious truth from the masses of China, and even the educated would make more rapid advance if they were freed from its shackles. The education of the future will relegate it to a place somewhat similar to that of Latin in our Western schools. (Fryer and Ferguson 1894, p. 335)

Unlike Mateer's plea for Mandarin in 1877, Silsby put the discussion in a broader context. He compared Latin and Classical Chinese, predicting that Classical Chinese would be phased out in China like Latin was in Europe. He foresaw that Classical Chinese could not catch up with the needs of the time and thus vernacular Chinese would eventually replace it. By referring to "the masses", he predicted that a radical vernacular language movement would sweep China, starting from the reform of the educational language. China could only accelerate its modernization when it broke the shackles of Classical Chinese. Silsby's visionary argument reflected some missionaries' more open, friendly, and positive attitude toward vernacular Chinese. They no longer considered vernacular Chinese an inferior alternative to Classical Chinese, but rather a promising language for China's future. He also knew that education was the key to promoting vernacular Chinese. Literacy is the core task in elementary education, affecting how children acquire information and express themselves. Children raised with vernacular education would likely obtain and convey information by the vernacular medium in the future. Hence, Silsby particularly called for vernacular education in church schools, replacing Classical Chinese with vernacular Chinese among the new generation.

Vernacular Chinese had its drawbacks, of which the geographical limitation was the biggest; all dialects were more or less confined to a certain region. Another problem was

that there were not many people who were capable of vernacular writing at that time. It was challenging to compile textbooks in vernacular Chinese. Chinese literati (the class from which missionaries' assistants were chosen) were raised with a Classical Chinese education and therefore were unfamiliar with vernacular writing. Joshua Crowell Garritt, from the American Presbyterian Mission (North) in Nanking, once complained, "It will be harder to find a good writer of Mandarin for the position of Chinese editor than to find a good writer of Wen-li" (Garritt 1908, p. 602). Compiling vernacular textbooks was challenging for missionaries as it was difficult to hire native assistants who were proficient in vernacular writing.

Between both poles of the debate, there was a middle ground, and this view was espoused by the largest group. These individuals were conscious of the vernacular Chinese's accessibility, yet they still regarded Classical Chinese as the orthodoxy of written language, catering to the tastes of Chinese literati. They suggested vernacular textbooks for younger children and Classical Chinese textbooks for older children, or the vernacular textbooks for more basic subjects, viz., arithmetic and the first lessons in physics and chemistry, and Classical Chinese textbooks for more advanced subjects such as algebra and physical geography (Fryer and Ferguson 1894, pp. 329–36). They emphasized that the terminology in the textbooks should be the same whether the books were written in vernacular Chinese or Classical Chinese, to maintain the uniformity of the terminology throughout the system. This compromise was also conservative, implying an unspoken prejudice that Classical Chinese was superior, i.e., vernacular education was just a stepping stone for Classical Chinese education. When children's cognitive potential improved, they would eventually accept Classical Chinese education. Essentially, they were arguing the same stance as advocates of simple Classical Chinese.

Missionaries of different persuasions on the issue did not arrive at a consensus. The initiator of the discussion gave no further suggestions on the style to adopt in Chinese textbooks, leaving mission schools to make their own decisions. This survey was not merely the question of which was the proper style for rendering Western knowledge, but rather missionaries' predictions towards the promising language in China. Any language of public education influences its respective common language, as this is how the younger generation is educated. The language of education was the key point of their language planning for Christianity in China. Therefore, they wished to find a style that balanced uniformity and accessibility. The attempt to simplify the language of elementary textbooks revealed the missionaries' ambitions to promote popular education in China. Through simpler school instruction, children could learn more quickly, without spending excessive time on literary skills. New knowledge would be disseminated through plain and intelligible language, forming the basis of the new culture for the entire society. In turn, for children who grew up in vernacular education, vernacular Chinese would naturally become their spoken and written language, and they could form a solid language community. Therefore, when choosing the language style of elementary textbooks, missionaries not only considered which style was most intelligible, but also which style was the most promising. Christian literature, like the Bible, tracts, novels, and hymns, had a broad readership spanning across classes, including masses of illiterate people, who had no time to learn to read and write Classical Chinese. A plain language style was necessary for everyday evangelization. However, the textbooks had a targeted readership, i.e., the students who would receive systematic training in mission schools. Even if missionaries translated or compiled textbooks in the high style of Classical Chinese, students could learn them through professional instruction, although it would take longer to learn than using plain language. Therefore, they not only looked for a simple language in church education but also sought the most promising language for China's future. This was why the discussion on textbook language was a widely contentious topic, second only to the language used in Bible translations.

While simple Classical Chinese was in an advantaged position over vernacular Chinese, voices calling for vernacular education were growing louder. The status of vernacu-

lar Chinese had been raised speedily in the early twentieth century. In 1909, the Qing court decreed Kwan-hwa (Mandarin) as its national language. Protestant missionaries quickly responded to this decree. They no longer discussed the language of elementary textbooks, defaulting to Mandarin as the most promising textbook language. Accordingly, an increasing number of church schools began to implement vernacular education. In 1920, the Educational Department of the Republic of China promulgated a regulation mandating that, starting from the fall of that year, Mandarin would replace Classical Chinese as the language of Chinese subject for the first and second grades in all national schools, in order to unify written and spoken Chinese (Xiaoxue guowenke gaishou guoyu zhi buling 1920, p. 10). This announcement signaled a belated victory for vernacular Chinese as well as vernacular education. Whatever the debate over the language had been, it had settled down, and Western missionaries, together with Chinese intellectuals, plowed their energies into vernacular education.

2. Human Physiological Knowledge with Indigenous Attire: *Youxue baoshen yaoyan*

In 1903, the Qing court issued the *Zouding chudeng xiaoxuetang zhangcheng* 奏定初等小學堂章程 (*The Approved Regulation for Lower Elementary Schools*) (Zouding chudeng xiaoxuetang zhangcheng 1991, pp. 291–96). This regulation proposed "Xiangtu jiaoyu 鄉土教育 (indigenous education)", which required local authorities to compile elementary textbooks and prepare courses based on indigenous resources. Hence, educators in different parts of China published a series of indigenous textbooks to echo the call for indigenous education. Prior to this, Protestant missionaries had been conscious of indigenous education. They transplanted Western knowledge into the local context and published a series of textbooks written in local dialects. These textbooks should also be regarded as indigenous textbooks, as they not only drew on the local resources but also were written in the local dialect. Missionary vernacular education was also the pioneer of indigenous education.

Youxue baoshen yaoyan 幼學保身要言 (*The Human Body for Children*) is the only existing elementary physiology textbook entirely written in Cantonese and published by Protestant missionaries in 1900. Its compiler, Jeannette May Nelson, and her Chinese assistant, Lin Chengchu 林程初, had engaged in church education in Canton for years and thus were very familiar with the educational needs of South China. It was used for elementary church schools in Cantonese-speaking areas and had been reprinted several times. Hence, this book would serve as a good case study to explore vernacular education carried out by Protestant missionaries in Canton, and further the vernacular education in the South. Jeannette May Nelson was the wife of Charles A. Nelson. C. A. Nelson was a missionary from the American Board of Commission for Foreign Missions (hereafter ABCFM) and the founder of Meihua zhongxue 美華中學 (American–Chinese High School) in Canton. The Nelsons were commissioned to China in 1892 (The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions 1892, pp. 69–70). The same year, they opened the Lotak School in Canton, a boarding school for boys. In 1894, the ABCFM established the Lotak Girls' School with 36 enrolled pupils. Mrs. Nelson, accompanied by a native teacher, frequently visited these pupils' homes, and in this way, they preached among the women and the children (The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions 1894, p. 73). Mrs. Nelson and her colleagues, Miss Edna Lowrey and Miss Ruth E. Mulliken in Canton, were members of the American Chinese Education Commission, whose headquarters was in Oberlin, Ohio (Indigenous Church in South China 1932, p. 457). Lin Chengchu was a native teacher employed by Mrs. Nelson. In addition to *Youxue baoshen yaoyan*, they also collaborated on a book for women entitled *Hunyin bu rujiao zalun* 婚姻補儒教雜論 (Essays on the Contribution of Marriage to Confucianism). Unfortunately, no further information has survived, since few Chinese assistants were prominent individuals for whom extensive records would have been kept.

The Nelsons insisted on Chinese as the medium of instruction in the schools under their superintendence, even for Western school subjects. English was taught as a foreign subject separately. It was unique among mission schools (Zhou 2008, pp. 73–74). Many

mission schools only taught Chinese subjects in Chinese, while Western subjects were taught in English. In this regard, these mission schools founded by the Nelsons were local in that they utilized Cantonese as the medium and employed many Chinese educators as teachers. Even though Cantonese was the pedagogical language, it did not mean the textbooks were necessarily written in Cantonese, as local children could read aloud textbooks written in Mandarin or Classical Chinese using Cantonese. Vernacular textbooks like *Youxue baoshen yaoyan* were a bold attempt to adapt the local language to school materials, which opened a new chapter in vernacular education.

Youxue baoshen yaoyan provided the basic knowledge of human physiology for children. Human physiology, or in Chinese Shenli 身理, was one of the fifteen Western school subjects promoted by the Chinese authorities, though it is not a compulsory course in elementary education today. In 1880, Robert Hart, the second Inspector-General of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, wrote to his agent James Campbell that he wanted to order a series of science and history textbooks for Chinese schools. Hart then hired Joseph Edkins to translate these textbooks into Chinese, and finally published them in 1886 as a series titled "Xixue qimeng shiliuzhong 西學啟蒙十六種 (Sixteen Primers of Western Learnings)".[2] After the series was published, leading court officials, including Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 and Zeng Jize 曾紀澤, provided prefaces for it, indicating its endorsement from the authorities. Although *Youxue baoshen yaoyan* is a primer translated for other Western physiological textbooks instead of a Cantonese translation of *Shenli qimeng* 身理啟蒙 (A Primer on Human Physiology) in *Sixteen Primers of Western Learnings*, it still demonstrates that physiology was an important subject in modern education at the elementary level in the late Qing.

Youxue baoshen yaoyan consists of seven chapters that discuss the bones, muscles, skin, stomach, blood, lungs, and brain. Each chapter is followed by a series of short questions. This design aligns with Alexander Williamson's ideas for elementary textbooks with questions at the end of each chapter. "They are to be well illustrated, and at the end of each chapter there will be a list of questions embodying the contents of the chapter, and, in fact, every care is to be taken to make them as efficient text books as possible" (Williamson 1878, p. 307). The practice test was a new and effective way to highlight the key points, which was rarely observed in traditional Chinese primers.

Regarding the language, *Youxue baoshen yaoyan* is completely written in Cantonese. Mrs. Nelson and Lin Chengchu had no intention of adhering to the customary book language and employing the words of Classical Chinese. The paragraph below illustrates the colloquial style very well:

> 人身嘅骨，係譬如乜野呢？好似一间屋嘅棟樑噉。佢有能扶助四肢百體，彼此聯絡得坚固，又係保護身上嘅嫩枝節。好似個頭壳包住個腦，脅骨藏住個心肺。又好似腰骨共腿骨帮助人坐立，脚骨噲令人行動，手骨噲令人摩野攞野。 (Wu 1900, p. 2)
>
> (What do people's bones look like? They are like the pillars of a house. They support the arms, the legs, and all the other parts of the body, and they are tightly bound together. They also protect the body's vulnerable organs, just like the skull wrapping the brain, and the flank bones covering the heart and lungs. In addition, the lumbar bone and leg bone enable people to sit and stand, the foot bone allows people to walk, and the hand bone empowers people to touch and take stuff.)

This paragraph has been well-crafted. In terms of language, its words and phrases demonstrate a distinctive feature of the Cantonese-speaking area and thus revitalize the representation of knowledge. The determiner "ge^3 嘅 (of)", the linking verb "hai^6 係 (be)", the interrogative pronouns "mat^1 je^5 乜野 (what)", the phrase "tau^4 hok^3 頭壳 (skull)", and the phrase "mo^1 je^5 lo^2 je^5 摩野攞野 (touch and take the stuff)" are special expressions in spoken Cantonese. Because of the colloquialisms, the text sounds catchy and is easy for children to memorize. As the text does not maintain a distance from the spoken language, children can easily direct it to the counterpart of their everyday experience when reading it

aloud. This connection is established through the sound pattern. That is the irreplaceable advantage of vernacular education.

Furthermore, its structure is constructed in the question-and-answer format. It imitates the classic style derived from the catechism, which opens with a conversation between the instructor and the reader. This format had been widely inherited and tweaked in Chinese Christian literature. In the third-person point of view, it presupposes the readership is children. The instructor creates a dialogue with the children, conversing with them in their mother tongue directly. Questions appear at the beginning of paragraphs to guide children in step-by-step problem-solving. At the end of each chapter, there are also after-class questions for students to review the key points of the chapter (see Figure 1). Paired with colloquial Cantonese, this format bridges the gap between the instructor and children and opens the dialogue in a gentle manner.

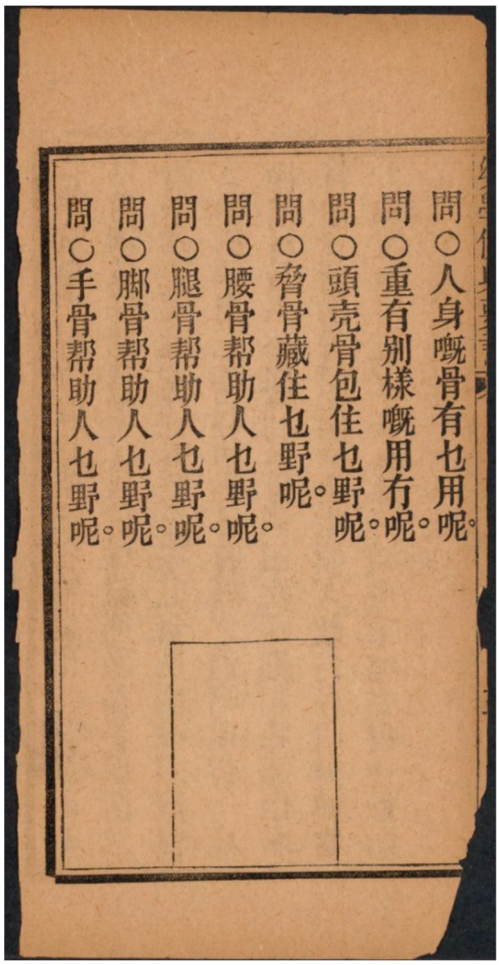
問○人身嘅骨有乜用呢。
問○重有別樣嘅用有呢。
問○頭壳骨包住乜野呢。
問○脊骨藏住乜野呢。
問○腰骨幫助人乜野呢。
問○腿骨幫助人乜野呢。
問○脚骨幫助人乜野呢。
問○手骨幫助人乜野呢。

Figure 1. After-class Questions in *Youxue baoshen yaoyan.* Image source: Harvard–Yenching Library Collection.

Considering children's natural curiosity, Williamson laid special stress on textbooks being attractive. "While, however, they are primarily intended for schools the authorship will not prepare a mere congeries of dry bones, but make them interesting and attractive so that they may win their way into the interior, and be prized by native scholars" (Williamson 1878, p. 307). By "dry bones", Williamson referred to the rigid translation word by word, sentence by sentence. He asked translators not to do literal translations, but in a creative way and preferably grounded in local resources, as to "win their way into the interior". Mateer made it clearer: Western knowledge should be localized in the Chinese context. "All figures and illustrations, however, should be drawn as far as possible from things with which the Chinese are acquainted. The book should also be specially adapted

to the place it is to fill in China, that is it should be so constructed as to make the Chinese feel that it is a book for them" (Mateer 1877, p. 430). Their suggestion was in line with the indigenous education proposed in *Zouding chudeng xiaoxuetang zhangcheng*, which stressed the linkage with indigenous resources. When preparing *Youxue baoshen yaoyan*, Mrs. Nelson and Lin Chengchu made good use of the indigenous resources. They used metaphors to make terminology concrete for children, rather than transliterations. These metaphors were constructed in the local dialect and rooted in the local context. The paragraph below is a good example:

> 骨裏頭係有好多節嘅，啲節係分開兩樣：一樣叫做舂杵節，一樣叫做轉鉸節。點解叫做舂杵節呢？卽係膊頭嘅骨節，共手臂相連個處就係喇。因為膊頭骨節個處，好似個舂坎噉樣，係窩入去嘅。手臂骨係好似一條杵噉，連住膊頭骨窩入去個處。是以個隻手臂，好似風車咁轉都得，故此就叫個啲做舂杵節咯。 (Wu 1900, pp. 3–4)
>
> (There are many joints in the bones, divided into two types: one is called the mortar-and-pestle joint, while the other is the hinge joint. Why is it called the mortar-and-pestle joint? The joint where the shoulder and arm are connected is the mortar-and-pestle joint, since the shoulder bone is like a mortar, which is recessed. The arm bone is like a pestle, which can be inserted into the recess of the shoulder bone. Therefore, the arm can move like a windmill, so we call this joint the mortar-and-pestle joint.)

The description of joints has been visualized in the indigenous narratives, associated with daily necessities. According to the paragraph above, there are two types of joints: the mortar-and-pestle joint and the hinge joint. The mortar-and-pestle joint refers to the ball-and-socket joint in the Western description. Mrs. Nelson and Lin called it the mortar-and-pestle joint because its structure resembled a mortar-and-pestle. Although the term "ball and socket joint" is vivid as well, Chinese children were unacquainted with the device and found it hard to have the corresponding image in mind. Thus, Mrs. Nelson and Lin replaced it with a mortar-and-pestle, which was used for husking and was common in Chinese families in late imperial China. This metaphor visualizes, externalizes, and simplifies the jargon in an indigenous way. It is based on children's life experiences, which facilitates comprehension. Furthermore, the narrative employs a wide range of Cantonese modal particles, strengthening the local features. The sentence-ending auxiliary modal words "ge^3 嘅", "ne^1 呢", "laa^3 喇", and "lo^1 咯" are commonly used at the end of sentences in spoken Cantonese. The use of Cantonese colloquial words and phrases such as "zung^1 ham^2 gam^2 joeng^6 舂坎噉樣 (like a mortar)" and "fung^1 ce^1 gam^2 zyun^3 風車咁轉 (move like windmills)" not only softens the tone of sentences but also establishes a vivid and tridimensional image of the jargon.

3. Budding Vernacular Education and Impacts of Vernacular Textbooks

By drawing on the local dialect and local resources, Mrs. Nelson and Lin indigenized physiological knowledge. Vernacular textbooks were genuinely indigenous textbooks and conveyed Western knowledge to local children in a vernacular way. *Youxue baoshen yaoyan* was just the tip of the iceberg in the thriving landscape of vernacular education and vernacular textbooks.

In 1906, Rev. Philip Wilson Pitcher, from the Dutch Reformed Church in Xiamen, predicted that vernacular education had been the emerging trend of the educational system in China.

> The new system of education which has been inaugurated by the Chinese government, resulting in the abolition of the official literary examinations (producing the greatest revolution the world has ever seen) and the adoption of a highly commendable national system, composed of graded courses from the primary school to the university, to take the place of that hoary time-honored system that has held this nation like an iron vise for more than twenty centuries—the opening of schools and colleges in every part of this land, even turning temples into

> school-houses—has not only put a new aspect on the whole missionary problem, but has changed completely the question of the importance of vernacular schools and vernacular education. (Pitcher 1906, p. 681)

The abolition of the imperial examinations was soon followed by the proliferation of popular education and modern schools. In 1903, there were 769 schools nationwide. This increased nearly sixfold to 4476 the following year. It grew to 23,862 in 1905, and then soared to 87,272 by 1912 (Wang 1986, pp. 109–12). The school expansion brought unprecedented opportunities for education reform in China. The vernacular language was a crucial point in meeting the challenges. In turn, vernacular education boosted the growth of modern schools. The abolition of the imperial examinations was merely a trigger. The underlying reason lay in the urgent need for the dissemination of new knowledge and new ideology, which Classical Chinese was no longer able to present and spread effectively. Protestant missionaries, in turn, sought the most straightforward means of presenting Western knowledge from the local dialect and the local resources. Simultaneously, this also indicated that church education has entered a new stage, involving not only the introduction of new school subjects but also the attempt to present knowledge using previously overlooked regional languages.

Southern missionaries like Mrs. Nelson attempted to compile textbooks in the local dialect as they were conscious of the sound pattern caused by the local dialect. The positive feedback from local Christians regarding vernacular religious publications such as vernacular Scriptures, hymns, and prayers encouraged missionaries to compile textbooks in local dialects. Regarding the nature of the linguistic sign, Ferdinand de Saussure argued, "a linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern. The sound pattern is not actually a sound; for a sound is something physical. A sound pattern is the hearer's physiological impression of a sound, as given to him by the evidence of his senses" (de Saussure 1983, p. 66). The use of linguistic signs is precisely based on a collective habit: convention (de Saussure 1983, p. 68). In other words, the connection between a concept and its sound pattern is constructed in collective recognition, rooted in daily experiences and local customs. For instance, when Cantonese children read the phrase "zyun^2 gaau^2 zit^3 轉鉸節" in *Youxue baoshen yaoyan*, the image of a door hinge would immediately come to their mind, making them understand the term "hinge joints". The local and colloquial expression presents a visual form of the term. It helps local children to find the counterpart of the term in their familiar environment and understand its meaning in the local context. The solid connection between the mother tongue and daily experiences ensures that vernacular textbooks function efficiently. Hence, the local dialect holds an irreplaceable advantage in spreading new knowledge and enlightening the local people, compared to Classical Chinese and Mandarin.

The production and circulation of vernacular textbooks had ushered in a new stage of dialect writing, challenging the well-established written system. The language of textbooks constituted the basic literacy skill of the new generation, and thereby had a significant impact on the common written language of a speech community. In traditional Chinese elementary schools in South China, Mandarin or the local dialect was the medium of instruction, while Classical Chinese was the default language of print materials. Southern dialects rarely became the written language in education, even at the elementary level. Southern educators were skeptical about whether Southern dialects were fully functional for formal writing and whether it was worth compiling vernacular textbooks that only circulated within a specific region. With these concerns, Southern educators, both Chinese scholars and Western missionaries, made little effort to produce vernacular textbooks. They preferred to compile elementary textbooks in simplest Classical Chinese, though it took longer for students to gain the knowledge. Textbooks written in the local dialect indicated a new stage in vernacular education in that knowledge could be represented and circulated by the indigenous language. More importantly, it challenged people's stereotype of dialects, that dialects could not become a formal written language. Vernacular textbooks justified the possibility and legitimacy of dialects as the formal written language. Public

education was a fundamental way to promote and sustain a language. When dialects entered the education system, particularly as the language of textbooks, they received further recognition from Chinese society.

The local dialect not only provides an intelligible way to acquire new knowledge but also maintains the emotional linkage within the speech community. In the 1890s, missionaries in Shanghai grouped students into communities according to their mother tongues so that they could employ the same dialect as the medium of instruction:

> But the cosmopolitan character of this port requires different schools for the different dialect-speaking taxpayers of Shanghai. As the Ningpo, Soochow and Shanghai dialects are similar, scholars hailing from these localities may easily be collected together under the same teachers, whilst the children of Canton and Swatow-of whom there are not a few in Shanghai-will require separate establishments. (The Education of Chinese Children 1893, pp. 751–52)

The establishment of vernacular schools targeting students from different parts of China was motivated not only by linguistic considerations but also by the resilience of regional identity. A similar cultural background tied immigrants together, and therefore they preferred to live in enclaves in new cities. They were able to speak their mother tongues and maintain their customs and traditions within their communities. The local dialect became an identity to distinguish regional groups. The local dialect as the medium of instruction provided a sense of belonging for children. The same situation existed abroad in areas with high concentrations of Chinese immigrants, such as Malacca, San Francisco, and New Zealand. In this regard, vernacular education not only served as an efficient way to learn new knowledge, but more importantly, provided a comfort zone for immigrants to integrate into the local society, maintain their identity, and build their communities.

4. Conclusions

Educational language, particularly the language of textbooks, attracted much attention from missionaries. They not only sought an appropriate language for textbooks but also a promising language for China's future. In the late nineteenth century, vernacular education gradually emerged, accompanied by an increasing availability of vernacular textbooks. Dialects were also incorporated into the educational language of church education, leading to the emergence of vernacular textbooks. Missionary vernacular textbooks and vernacular education were the precursors of indigenous education proposed by the Qing court in the early twentieth century, which called for the utilization of local resources. The local history and customs hidden in the local dialect build the inner connection between the local dialect and the signifier. The local dialect could spread new knowledge effectively by establishing a sound pattern of a new term and enabling children to understand it in the local context, as in the analysis of *Youxue baoshen yaoyan*. Thus, vernacular education and vernacular textbooks provided the momentum for popular education. In addition, vernacular textbooks ushered in a new stage in dialect writing, as the use of dialects in the field of church elementary education became increasingly prevalent. The use of dialects in textbooks was significant for the development of dialect writing, indicating that dialect writing had entered the education system, which would have a significant influence on the daily linguistic practices of the new generation.

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Notes

[1] Protestant missionaries called Classical Chinese "Wen-li".
[2] *Sixteen Primers of Western Learnings* contains fifteen textbooks and one book called *A Brief Account of Western Learning* written by Joseph Edkins.

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An Encounter between Christian Medical Missions and Chinese Medicine in Modern History: The Case of Benjamin Hobson

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Abstract: This article discusses how and why Christian medical missionaries established their foothold in Chinese society through the medical career of Benjamin Hobson, who was active in China from the late 1830s to the 1850s. Apart from his evangelical work among the Chinese, one of his key contributions was the new medical vocabularies he created to communicate medical knowledge. In addition to literary considerations, Hobson had his strategies for sharing modern medical knowledge. Moreover, he was prepared to debate with the Chinese over the validity of the pulse theory. The debate did not happen, however. His intention to establish the case for the superior position of Western medicine was not contested. His medical texts, at best, became the necessary underpinning for introducing modern Western medicine to China. When Western medical college projects took place in China at the turn of the century, biomedicine took over as the key paradigm, with Hobson's medical texts being of limited use.

Keywords: Benjamin Hobson; Christian Medical Missions; medical vocabularies; modern Western medicine

1. Introduction

In world history, faith and healing are interwoven in many instances. People's religious beliefs, rituals, and healing systems are all part of their cultural identity. For this reason, medicine is a contested field between religions. By 1817, Robert Morrison, a pioneer Protestant missionary in China, had already observed the worship of healing deities among the Chinese and translated their religious titles, such as the "T'heen hwa Shin-moo" (*Tianhua Shengmu* 天花聖母: "the Sacred Mother who superintends children ill of the small pox") and "Hwuy-fuh Foo-jin" (Huifu Furen 惠福夫人: "the patroness of barren women") (Morrison 1817, p. 111). Starting from Macao and moving to other ports in Southeast Asia, Morrison and other pre-Opium War Protestant missionaries had been familiar with their potential competitors among the many Chinese folk religions—the promise to heal was one of many areas of competition. When he started his missionary work, Morrison co-created a dispensary in Macao with John Livingstone, a surgeon of the East India Company. They hired a Chinese herbalist to work "hand in hand" with Western medicine while offering medical care (Wong and Wu 1936, pp. 307–8). No doubt Morrison wanted to establish the favorable credentials of medicine for preaching the Christian message. Not being a qualified medical practitioner, Karl Gützlaff, for another example, delivered some form of healing for the sick as an itinerant preacher (Lutz 2008, pp. 46–47). Sharing the view that medicine was the key, Walter H. Medhurst called on professionally trained medical doctors to participate in Christian missions in China (Medhurst 1838, pp. 534–35). William Lockhart and Benjamin Hobson, fully qualified medical practitioners, were early examples of medical missionaries of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in China. In the nineteenth century, medical missionaries were the agents for bringing the Christian faith, religious discourses and Western medicine to China (Choa 1990; Wu 2000). Their ultimate objective was to establish a foothold in Chinese society and to proselytize the Christian faith.

Benjamin Hobson deserves special attention in the history of medical science in East Asia. Not only was he a medical missionary in China between 1839 and 1858, but the medical books that he produced "were published in Japan where they appeared in fourteen thin octavo volumes both in Yedo and Miaco." These books in Japan featured the insertion of "interlineations and various notes in Japanese, bearing on the meaning of the text" (Wong and Wu 1936, p. 366). Recent studies show that his medical books were keenly sought-after publications in China and Japan.[1] As a bridge by which East Asians explored Western medicine, Hobson's Chinese translations of Western medical texts were fine examples of ongoing cultural negotiations, religions included. His production of such medical texts has become the subject of several research articles. First of all, a textual analysis by Chan Man Sing and his research team shows how Hobson collaborated with Chinese translators in "co-authoring" two medical texts, namely *Xiyi Luelun* (《西醫略論》*First Lines on the Practice of Surgery in the West*) and *Fuying Xinshuo* (《婦嬰新説》*Treatise on Midwifery and Diseases of Children*) while creating a higher cultural position of Western medicine that might appeal to Chinese readers through the translation process (Chan et al. 2013). Furthermore, Su Ching draws on Hobson's missionary correspondence and other significant archival reports to trace and discuss how *Quanti Xinlun* (《全體新論》*Treatise on Physiology*) was produced from the perspective of the history of printing in modern China (Su 2018). Sun Zhou discusses some salient features of Hobson's translation strategy in the creation of medical terms in *A Medical Vocabulary in English and Chinese* (Sun 2010).

This article builds on the current scholarship to address how and why Hobson's translation of medical texts could help to promote Christian missions in China. Although Hobson's case cannot fully reveal the multiple contests between Christianity and popular Chinese religions, it is helpful for recognizing how religions and medicine were connected in the bigger picture of Christianity in world history. In particular, this study takes a closer look at Hobson's intellectual background and his unique mission approach in order to make sense of his cosmopolitan views of Chinese and Western medicine in practice.

2. Benjamin Hobson: His Stories and His Mission Approach

A word about Benjamin Hobson's social and academic background is helpful. He was born in 1816 into a pious family in Welford, Northamptonshire, and his father was a pastor in an independent church, a self-governed congregation that operated outside the Church of England (the Anglican Church). Hobson was brought up in a family with an intensely religious atmosphere. After his five-year apprenticeship at the Birmingham General Hospital (1830–1835), he studied at the newly founded University College London, where he completed a Bachelor of Medicine degree (1835–1838) and subsequently became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1838. Responding to the missionary call to China as a medical missionary, Hobson joined the LMS, which intended to send him to China where he would be stationed in Canton (Su 2018, pp. 94–95). Naturally, he started his work in Macao, but the circumstances before and after the Opium War made him stay in Macao longer, and he was subsequently deployed to Hong Kong.

Facilitating the Chinese to learn from modern Western medicine defined Hobson's medical missionary career. While working in Macao, Hobson had already apprenticed some Chinese assistants and achieved some remarkable outcomes. In the Medical Missionary Society hospital under his supervision in Hong Kong, he had already "fitted a small chemical laboratory, for the instruction of some young men, so as to prepare them for the study, and afterward fit them for the practice, of medicine and surgery, amongst their countrymen" (Anonymous 1845, p. 13). He persuaded the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society to commit its advocacy and fundraising to building a medical school in Hong Kong. Subsequently, he convinced John Francis Davis, the second Governor of Hong Kong to grant a piece of land to build a medical school (Hobson 1846, p. 7). Between 1845 and 1847, he had his furlough in Britain, where he furthered his campaign to start a medical school. "[T]here is no university, college, or examining board, to educate or exercise any control over native practitioners, so that their knowledge is confined to books that were

written 2000 years ago, utterly false and absurd in theory, and ineffective in practice", Hobson writes in his fundraising booklet (Hobson 1847, p. 3). In the same booklet, Hobson also told his readers that he had some successes in training up a student named Apoon, whose knowledge and skill in eye surgery was favorably recognized by the colonial surgeon and the inspector of naval hospitals (Hobson 1847, p. 4). However, the medical school project was abortive after he returned to Hong Kong in 1847. There were three reasons for this. Firstly, the China Medico-Chirurgical Society, based in Hong Kong, had firmly supported the project; however, it ended up being dissolved.[2] Secondly, he raised only £350 from his acquaintances in Britain, an amount far from adequate to start a medical school. Thirdly, he was unable to identify competent Chinese students in Hong Kong (Wong and Wu 1936, p. 360). Apart from medical education, Hobson carried out evangelical work in the hospital. He engaged with an experienced evangelist, Kew A-gong (屈亞昂), whose duties included "reading and expounding the sacred Scriptures, with prayers, to the patients, assembled for this purpose every morning before opening the dispensary" (Anonymous 1845, p. 11).

Hobson followed the same work pattern but modified some of his focus when he moved from Hong Kong to Canton in 1848 and from Canton to Shanghai in 1857. To begin with, Canton had a socio-political setting that was different from Hong Kong's. Christian missionaries did not earn instant respect in the community. Yet, thanks to the great work of Dr. Peter Parker, whose merits in delivering effective treatments to ordinary people and Chinese officials were widely recognized. Lin Tse-hsu (林則徐) was one of his patients and considered Parker trustworthy (Spence 1980, pp. 42–48). When Hobson started his work in Canton, Parker had already returned to the US after his second career as a diplomat in China. Apart from the medical credentials that opened the door for future medical missionaries in Canton, Hobson inherited from Parker another essential asset, an evangelist associate, Liang Fa (梁發). Liang had shown competence in evangelical work, which Parker described as follows: "His prayers are most fervent, and his Christian views strongly evangelical. His illustrations of the Scriptures are clear, and his appeals frequently powerful in their impression upon his auditors" (McNeur and Seitz 2013, p. 101). Co-working for seven years, Hobson made time to equip Liang with biblical knowledge further and supported him throughout his difficulties with his family and health. He spoke highly of Liang, saying that "he has kept steadfastly to the truth as he has learned it in the Bible, and to the day of his death, never turned his back upon it, nor was ashamed of it in the presence of his enemies or friends" (McNeur and Seitz 2013, pp. 110–11). Liang assisted Hobson in the conduct of Christian services in the hospital. One of the key Chinese converts from Hobson's hospital was Chau Lai Tong (周勵堂). Chau later worked as a preaching assistant and the graphic illustrator for Hobson's Chinese medical text (Wong, forthcoming). In Canton, Hobson continued teaching Chinese medical apprentices, Ho King Mun (何景文) being an outstanding example (Wong 2023, p. 341). Of all his duties, he attached the most significant importance to writing and translating Western medical texts from English into Chinese. He kept it as his top priority in Canton and subsequently in Shanghai as well. His stay in Shanghai was rather brief; he spent considerable energy on producing medical texts. His achievements in this area won universal praise. Hobson's medical texts were, according to William Lockhart, "of incalculable benefit to the Chinese… [and] worth the labor of a lifetime". He further pointed out its exemplary value of creating "a good influence on the mind of the Chinese", which he believed could convince the Chinese to "value foreign intercourse" (Lockhart 1861, pp. 157–61). Arthur Tidman, the LMS's foreign secretary, regarded Hobson's medical texts highly for their "very beneficial effects among the native professors of medicine and surgery in China".[3] John G. Kerr, an American medical missionary in South China, attached great value to preparing "young men in the healing art". In order to make it possible, he pointed out, "textbooks in the various departments must be prepared in their language". Kerr rightly pointed out that Hobson was "the first one to undertake this in Chinese". He praised the value of these texts, as they "have laid the foundation for the introduction of rational medicine" in both Japan

and China (Kerr 1878, pp. 17–18). Wong Chimin regarded Hobson's medical texts as "his greatest contribution to medicine in China". Wong elaborated that "the difficulty of such compilation can be easily understood when it is borne in mind that all technical terms had to be coined and translated into Chinese characters for the first time" (Wong 1950, p. 15).

Hobson was keen to disseminate modern Western medical knowledge because he thought it was the best way to win converts in China. It could pave the way for the Chinese to recognize the Christian missions' contribution and readily accept this religion. In 1860, two years after his return to Britain, Hobson reflected upon his entire twenty-year career in China and wrote up an extended essay entitled "The History and Present State of Medicine in China", which was published in five parts under the same title in *Medical Times and Gazette*. In his writings, he conveyed a positive view of the Chinese people as sensible and practical:

> The Chinese may be briefly described as indefatigable and industrious in their habits, and eminently a practical, matter-of-fact people. I should say of them, judging from my own experience of their character, that were a clear-thinking race, not profound in any scientific pursuits, and yet possessing a logical mind, the result of early habits of attention. Their perceptive faculties are excellent, their memories retentive, and their ability to acquire information on any subject considerable. They certainly are not a dull, unobserving, or unimprovable race; their cranial and mental developments all favor the opinion that they are, on the contrary, naturally endowed with a quick understanding…
>
> The Chinese are proverbially great utilitarians (in its ordinary signification); they, therefore, neglect the study of the natural and abstruse sciences, because they appear to them unproductive of any immediate benefit. (Hobson 1860a, p. 400)

In other words, disseminating medical knowledge among the Chinese was of particular significance because Hobson believed that the Chinese could excel at it after they realized the value of such knowledge. He further reflected that it was a key to opening China's door to the spread of Christianity. He wrote,

> Medical science is ennobled by promoting the introduction of Christianity in heathen lands. Antipathy of race is strongly felt both in India and China, but they cannot exclude disease; and with all their prejudices, every barrier is removed rather than not receive the benefit of foreign medical skill…
>
> The poor, the maimed, the blind, the deaf, and the lame, were found there daily; and accidents and casualties were received and attended to at any time; a large number of copies of Holy Scripture, religious tracts, and treatises on astronomy, medicine, etc., were widely diffused by the patients on returning to their different hamlets and homes. Preaching by the missionary (foreign or native), and healing of the sick (labouring under all forms of the disease), by the Medical man, have gone hand-in-hand together most harmoniously; and if one thing more than another has served to conciliate the goodwill of the people, and recommend to their regard the sublime truths of the Bible, it has been the working of such an institution as this, in the manner specified above. (Hobson 1861, p. 34)

Hobson healed the sick, translated Western medical texts, and published tracts. These actions were aimed at spreading the Gospel.

3. A Medical Missionary's Translation Strategies

To Benjamin Hobson, the unavoidable question when creating new medical vocabularies in Chinese was whether or not to follow existing Chinese medical terms. While translating some medical terms from English to Chinese, he had to be mindful of the medical connotations behind these terms, some of which had prevailed for centuries among the Chinese. That decision might help reinforce or weaken the authority of traditional Chinese medicine, while creating a superior position for Western medicine in his trans-

lated texts. Studies show that Hobson created some new Chinese terminology for such medical terms as anatomy, blood vessels, nerves, inflammation, and pancreas (Sun 2010, pp. 467–70). Yet, several interesting examples reveal his translation strategies from the missionary perspective.

Hobson's cautious adoption of specific Chinese medical terms might help to prepare the way for some intended Christian meanings to be conveyed in a subtle way. An example was his translation of "kidney" into "*neishen* 內腎" (lit.: "inner kidneys"), while equating "testes" to "*waishen* 外腎" (lit.: "outer kidneys") and, logically, "scrotum" to "*waishen nang* 外腎囊" (literal meaning: "outer kidney pouch") (Hobson 1858, p. 28). The usage of a pair of interconnecting words of "nei" (inner) and "wai" (outer) adheres to the conventional belief shared among the Chinese about the role of the kidneys (腎) in the male body in general and the correlation between the kidneys' health and men's potency in particular. This very Chinese concept of health was effectively implemented in the Western medical text that Hobson produced. Of course, Western medicine did not imply any connection between the kidneys and testes in any way similar to the Chinese notion of "external" and "internal" kidneys, nor was there any mention of a direct link between the kidney's function and men's sexual health. Rather, in his ensuing discussion of the physiological features of ejaculation, Hobson warns young men not to indulge in sexual pleasure. Not only does he oppose masturbation, which he considers harmful for health, but he also cautions his readers against having sex with prostitutes for fear of catching syphilis and causing grave consequences to themselves and their wives (Hobson 1991, pp. 252–53). In this way, his moral admonitions were built upon the medical knowledge that he disseminated. In doing so, the Christian notion of chastity—confining sex to within the institution of marriage—went along well with his medical teaching that used existing Chinese medical vocabulary.

Another type of adoption was to borrow a Chinese term of a similar nature—displaying similarities with Chinese concepts yet with an added sense of severity. Hobson translates "cancer" into "*yongju* 癰疽" (lit.: "blister"/"severe abscess") (Hobson 1858, p. 43). Of course, "carbuncle" is the relevant medical term to refer to "*yong* 癰" in today's medical paradigms, a phenomenon now known to be caused by a bacterial infection. It thus differs from the pathology of most cancer types. However modern Hobson's medical education had been, germ theory had not yet been established as a standard in medical reasoning, so bacterial infection was undoubtedly unknown. Moreover, whilst removing cancerous tumors by surgical procedures was a commonplace practice among Western surgeons at the time, Chinese medics were not yet receptive to the idea of surgery. As Hobson remarked in 1847, "all anatomical research [is] discountenanced and forbidden. Surgical operations, except of the most trivial kind, are never attempted" (Hobson 1847, p. 3). Cancer could be lethal, and surgery was the most feasible cure. To convince the Chinese to undergo surgery, Hobson was skillful in framing cancer as a "trivial" disease, something like a blister or abscess, and named it accordingly. It could be seen as a translational strategy to enhance the doctor–patient relationship, giving the patient the confidence to undergo a necessary procedure to cure cancer. Studies show that medical missionaries were quite famous for their surgical successes in removing cancerous tumors.[4] As such, medical missionaries established a positive reputation among the Chinese, poor and rich alike, because Chinese medicine practitioners did not undertake surgical procedures to remove tumors.

A further note by Hobson might also explain why the removal of tumors had become a topic of much excitement among the missionaries. He tried to be a myth-buster concerning the opinion that the Chinese "are peculiarly the subjects of unnatural enlargements and large growths [of tumors]". He remarked,

> In the West, tumours are removed by operation almost as soon as they appear, and hence are rarely seen; still, a large number come under the care of Hospital Surgeons and are reported in the Medical Archives. In the East—I speak more particularly of China—the excision of tumours by the knife of the native practitioner is scarcely if ever practised: I have never heard of a single case. The consequence is, that the tumours go on increasing, both in number and size, from year

> to year, and from their position and unnatural proportions, excite attention and produce the conviction of their greater frequency among the people. The reports of the Medical Missionaries also naturally foster this. (Hobson 1860c, p. 633)

There were, of course, many instances that had no direct implication for the transmission of any Christian message. An interesting case in hand that shows Hobson did not necessarily follow the prevailing practice by the Chinese is his translation of "gout", which he translates into "*jiu jiao bing* 酒腳病" (lit.: "wine foot disease") (Hobson 1858, p. 36). This was a neologism, as Hobson did not want to introduce Western medical terms to ailments that Chinese medicine might otherwise regard as the cause and effect of gout. The traditional Chinese medical theory had attributed the cause and related symptoms to "*tongbi* 痛痹" or more generally "*tongfeng* 痛風" (lit.: "pain wind"), according to a leading medical practitioner in the Ming dynasty, Yu Tuan 虞摶 (1438–1517).[5] Traditional Chinese medicine regards it under the nosology of "*bizheng* 痺症" (diseases relating to "*bi* 痺"), a result of the intrusion of such external factors as "*feng* 風" (literal meaning: wind), "*shi* 濕" (literal meaning: humid), "*ren* 熱" (lit.: "hot"), and "*han* 寒" (lit.: "cold") into the human body. These factors cause considerable pain effects on the circulation of "*qi* 氣" (lit.: "air"), blood, and the meridian system. The question here is why Hobson did not merely follow the prevailing Chinese names, as he had done elsewhere, by calling it "*tongbi*" or "*tongfeng*". I can think of two possible explanations. Firstly, Hobson wanted a more direct attribution to the source of the disease—the excessive consumption of wine. Secondly, he did not want to mix Western medicine with the Chinese theory about the intrusion of external factors—such as wind, humidity, heat, and cold—into the human body—something similar to the Hippocratic theory of the elements (earth, air, fire, and water) and their influences on body fluids (black bile, blood, phlegm, and yellow bile). It was because he, alongside Europe's modern medical experts, rejected Galenic medicine and regarded the Hippocratic theory of the elements as "absurd" (Hobson 1860a, 401). Of the two, I think the first explanation could be more probable. Hobson did not do away with all the translated terms that might have roots in the Hippocratic theory of elements. For example, Hobson translated rheumatism into "*feng shi* 風濕" (lit.: "wind humid") (Hobson 1858, p. 39). Perhaps, Hobson was faithful to the history of the English language—rheumatism was adopted in the 17th century, and it shared the notions of cause by the internal flow of "watery humour".[6] Nowadays, Western medicine attributes the symptomatic features of the "*bi* 痺" to a wide range of possible diseases, such as neuritis and arthritis, a new area of medical knowledge that emerged in the 20th century. It is out of the question that Hobson did not reference neuropathy, which is part of the modern etiology of gout. Rather, his translated term that directly relates to wine consumption finds a matching place in medical explanations nowadays, as alcohol is a cause of hyperuricemia, a significant factor in developing gout.

4. Does Western Medicine Outshine Chinese Medicine?

The question of whether Western medicine outshone Chinese medicine would have been a principal question in Hobson's mind, setting Chinese notions of health on a collision course with new Western learning. Of all aspects of Chinese medicine, the pulse theory had become the subject on which Hobson was most critical. He stated,

> Who can say, with this theory before them, that the Chinese know anything about the true circulation of the blood! … But the Chinese are not only ignorant of the circulation, but of the cause of the pulse; the propelling power of the heart, and the conducting power of the arteries are altogether unknown. There is no pulse for that important organ, the brain, or the spinal marrow, muscles, and bones, etc. But while they write learnedly about the wonderful properties of the pulse, and palm a lie upon the public, in professing to distinguish its minute and varied forms, yet I have never met with one Chinese Medical Practitioner, who dared affirm to my face that he had done so; or was willing to try his boasted skill upon any patient of mine, though offered a considerable reward, to point out any well-known disease by the pulse alone. The doctrine of the circulation of the blood

> being so important, I entered upon it very freely in a Treatise on Physiology, and I rather expected, as it ran counter to their views, and, if received, would in time prove fatal to their darling and much-vaunted theory, that it would meet with opposition and ridicule. (Hobson 1860b, p. 477)

In his *Quanti Xinlun* 全體新論 [*Treatise on Physiology*], Hobson criticized the use of pulse theory to diagnose patients (Hobson 1991, pp. 200–1). He considered William Harvey's 17th Century theory of blood circulation to be the true and total replacement of Chinese pulse theories. He oversimplified the use of pulse theories in clinical practice. Yet he made a conceited comment that his criticism "was generally admitted to be true, or at least unobjected to and unopposed in any way" (Hobson 1860a, p. 477). Seemingly he did not gain deep knowledge in this area, nor any profound thoughts regarding different schools of thought. What needs to be pointed out here is that Hobson was not the first one who rejected the validity of Chinese pulse theories. From the early nineteenth century onwards, there had already been books and reports that refuted Chinese pulse theories from European sinologists and their medical associates, such as the collaborative studies of Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat and François-Albin Lepage. Their writings inspired medical practitioners to discuss the Chinese notions of pulses in medical periodicals, like *Medical Times*, and *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, as well as some other who opted for anonymity while writing reports in popular periodicals, like *Indo-Chinese Gleaner* (Barnes 2005, pp. 258–64). Walter H. Medhurst, among other China missionaries, likewise considered the Chinese pulse theories ungrounded. He pointed out that practitioners of Chinese medicine likened blood circulation to a Chinese notion of cosmology of "unceasing revolutions of the heavens and the earth." In this regard, a rudimentary form of Chinese religiosity was embedded in the Chinese pulse theories.[7] Yet, he reminded his readers that European doctors before the birth of experimental science linked medicine with astrology (Medhurst 1838, pp. 110–11). If one could presume that Medhurst's book was one of Hobson's sources, one could argue that Hobson took a step further to confront his Chinese readers regarding the paucity of pulse theories in Chinese medical knowledge.

Furthermore, Hobson pointed out four significant obstacles confronting the advancement of Chinese medicine, namely (1) the lack of anatomy and proper pathology, (2) poor symptomatology, (3) the underdevelopment of knowledge in diseases in the domain of the brain and nervous system, and (4) "theorising and drawing deductions on mere speculation" (Hobson 1861, p. 33). He was of the view that Western medicine outshone Chinese medicine. He thought it required a direct intervention from the central governmental level. He remarks that "no radical improvement will be effected until Schools of Medicine are formed under the auspice of the Government, and placed under the direction of foreign Medical teachers, or intelligent natives educated in foreign Medical Schools" (Hobson 1861, pp. 33–34). The first Western medical school for the Chinese was established in 1887, the Hongkong College of Medicine for Chinese, fourteen years after Hobson's death. If Hobson's wish was to see the founding of a proper medical college in Peking, it happened in 1906 when the Peking Union Medical College was established. In recent studies, however, the momentum to modernize Chinese medicine gradually increased due to the subtle interaction between proactive government policies and receptive practitioners of Chinese medicine (Lei 2014). Both medical colleges in Hong Kong and Peking had strong links with missionary societies. As such, medical missionaries continued to play a critical role in developing medical education in China.

5. Conclusions

Benjamin Hobson's missionary career provides us with a fascinating case study to discuss the interactions between religion and culture by introducing Western medicine into mid-nineteenth-century China. He set a daring task for himself—"to give the Chinese a rational system of medicine." This he delivered with some success—"at least a short reference to the medical publications… to promote the benefits of the healing art in China" (Hobson 1861, pp. 33–34). This article sets out the early stage for scholarly discussion as to

how and why medicine became a contested area for religions in modern China and Hong Kong. In his last chapter of *Treatise on Physiology*, Hobson made three quick references to the Christian faith—God's creation of humanity, the immortal soul of humanity, and humanity's humility before God (Hobson 1991, pp. 275–79). In spite of his Christian theological orientation, the book became a bestseller from the number of pirated editions and reprints. The Chinese literati considered his medical texts to be valuable sources of new medical knowledge. Wang Tao 王韜, for example, stated in his diary entry on 2 May 1859 that Guan Sifu 管嗣復, a translator of Hobson's medical texts, attested to the popularity of *Quanti Xinlun*. The book won many praises, and it attracted many buyers who did not mind paying a higher price to obtain a copy (Wang 1987, p. 111).

In this way, the logic of the medical missionaries' contributions in relation to the promotion of Christian missions may have sprung from the belief that Western medicine was superior, rendering Christianity more credible under the aegis of medical missionaries. In this way, Hobson wanted to show in his writings and in his work as a medical missionary that Western medicine was superior to Chinese medicine. Interestingly, he could not avoid using Chinese terms associated with Chinese medical concepts in the translation project. In other words, if Hobson convinced the Chinese that Western medicine was superior, the "Chinese appearance" of Western medicine would be a factor in transmitting this idea. The coexistence of two different sets of medical knowledge in his translated works shows the complexity of referring to cultural concepts in Western medicine.

Last but not least, we come to the question of how to make sense of Hobson's medical texts in the bigger picture of historical encounters between modern Western medical science and Chinese culture. Hobson intended to fight over the Chinese pulse theories. He met with no objection. Nor was there any dramatic encounter between Hobson and any Chinese medicine practitioner (or any priest of Chinese religions). But rather than considering this as a triumph of Christian/Western culture, it should be stressed that Hobson was a product of the last generation prior to biomedical science in the West. His medical education took place during the 1830s, at a time when the filth theory of disease prevailed, emphasizing unsanitary conditions and overcrowding as reasons for certain diseases, which would in due course engender the sanitary movement. As he returned home in 1858, the germ theory of disease began to be spearheaded by Louis Pasteur and, subsequently, Robert Koch (Snowden 2020, pp. 184–232). Hobson's medical texts, at best, became the necessary underpinning for the rise of more advanced biomedicine. If Hobson thought a medical college was essential to equipping the Chinese with Western medicine during the 1840s and the 1850s, it was even more so at the turn of the century, as can be seen in the history of the Hongkong College of Medicine for Chinese and the Peking Union Medical College (Bullock 1980; Ho 2017). In this way, Christianity presented itself as a more complicated entity for modernity and faith, while Christian hospitals and biomedicine went hand-in-hand in the first half of the twentieth century in China (Klassen 2011). Of course, this was totally beyond Hobson's original medical remit.

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Notes

1 Hobson's contributions to the development of Western medicine in East Asia are constantly attracting historical interests from historians and medical practitioners. For recent studies in the past decade, see the following research articles (Bosmia et al. 2014; van der Weiden and Mori 2014).

2 The China Medico-Chirurgical Society consisted of leading doctors in Hong Kong. It had been a scientific association that searched for a suitable venue to display specimens of natural history and morbid anatomy as well as to manage a medical library. But it had a rather short history (Rydings 1973).

3 Together with church and political leaders, Arhtur Tidman, the foreign secretary of the LMS, made a public appeal for a bigger sum of donation for the China mission field under the LMS (Anonymous 1859, p. 6).

4 Peter Parker hired Lam Qua, a Chinese painter, to create dozens of images about patients who developed different sizes and forms of tumour and received surgery from him (Barnes 2005, p. 291; Heinrich 2008, pp. 39–62).

5 Yu Tuan 虞摶 rejected the shamanistic tradition of medicine. He was a follower of the medical school of Zhu Zhenheng 朱震亨 (1281–1358). Yu's most influential medical text is *Yixue Zhengzhuan* 醫學正傳 (*Medical Classical Texts*). Yu spent considerable efforts in the examination of gout (Huang 2011, pp. 235–39).

6 *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "rheumatism". Internet Access: https://www.oed.com/dictionary/rheumatism_n?tab=meaning_and_use#25597652 (accessed on 30 September 2021)

7 Wang Yuanyu 黃元御, a leading imperial physician serving in the court of Qianlong Emperor in the eighteenth century, was one of the great physicians who developed sophisticated pulse theories in a chapter in his medical text entitled *Suling Weiyun* 素靈微蘊. He advocated that there was a strong link between the Chinese notion of cosmology and pulse theories as well as the Chinese notion of well-being.

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Article

Communism and the Rise of the Anti-Christian Movement in Republican China

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Abstract: Scholars have acknowledged that much of the early support for the anti-Christian movement in Shanghai and Beijing in 1922 came from radical individuals and organizations with ties to the Communists, anarchists, and the Guomindang left, but little attention has been given to the overlapping linkages between the Soviet-supported radical activists and the anti-Christian student groups in the Chinese historiography. This article fills this gap in the literature by highlighting the Communist-dominated Socialist Youth League in Shanghai as a key initiating force in managing the anti-Christian movement of early 1922. It shows how the Communists blended their anti-religious and anti-imperialist discourses with Leninist–Marxist ideology to win the hearts and minds of the Chinese youth.

Keywords: Chinese youth; anti-Christian movement; student's groups; Chinese history

1. The Historical Context

The Boxer Rebellion in 1900 represented the peak of late imperial anti-Christian agitation. In the subsequent years, there had been a sharp decline in xenophobic violence, and Christianity made remarkable evangelistic progress in China. However, after the 1920s, a vigorous anti-Christian movement was launched. In contrast to the Boxer Rebellion, which was driven by xenophobic sentiments among illiterate peasants, the goal of the 1920s campaign was to build a nation-state of urban intellectuals and students armed with modern Western ideas, such as communism and nationalism. The latter not only promoted a "nativist" version of Christianity but influenced China's political thought, religious landscape, and foreign relations; the influence of this can be said to continue even today.[1] This is because the anti-Christian movement of the 1920s involved the newly established Chinese Communist Party at the time, and the prototype of its anti-Christian policies can be traced back to this period. This urban anti-Christian movement of the 1920s originated from an anti-Christian gathering held in Beijing in 1922 against the convening of the World's Student Christian Federation Conference at Tsinghua University. The initiator was the Anti-Christian Student Federation in Shanghai, a subsidiary of the Shanghai Socialist Youth League (hereafter "Youth League"). Since then, historical studies have analyzed the participation of Chinese Communists through the Youth League, but researchers disagree as to why the Communists launched the anti-Christian campaign and what role they played. At present, the specific process of the movement and the main reasons why the anti-Christian movement spread from Shanghai to Beijing have not yet been thoroughly addressed in historical research.[2]

Scholars have acknowledged that much of the early support for the anti-Christian movement in 1922 came from radical individuals and organizations with ties to the Communists, anarchists, and the Guomindang left. However, declassification of the Soviet archives since the 1990s has thrown light on substantial Soviet influence. For example, Tao Feiya argues that, from the beginning, the Shanghai Youth League organized the Anti-Christian Student Federation, influenced by the Communist International (Comintern) in Moscow and its political advisors in China. Therefore, the anti-Christian movement in 1922 was not a spontaneous protest organized by urban intellectuals and students; instead, it was initiated and led by the Communists under the leadership of the Far East Bureau of the Comintern and the Youth Communist International (or Youth Comintern) (Tao 2005a, p. 73). Tao posits that the hostile statements against the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) were initiated by the Second World Congress of the Youth Comintern in 1921 and the Far East Revolutionary Youth Congress in 1922. Unlike Tao, Hirotada Ishikawa minimizes the leadership role of the Far East Revolutionary Youth Congress as the initiator of the anti-Christian campaign and traces the growth of anti-foreign and anti-religious sentiments to the endogenous awakening of the reorganized Socialist Youth League (Ishikawa 1995, p. 80).[3] I generally agree with Tao's view that both the Far East Revolutionary Youth Congress and the Congress of Peoples of the East, scheduled around the same time, had shaped the growth of anti-Christian agitation in China. The reason why Ishikawa downplays the Soviet Union's input has to do with the lack of concrete evidence about the institutional links between the Comintern and its subsidiaries in China. Ishikawa explains that, before the anti-Christian movement began in 1922, the Provisional Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the Provisional Central Committee of the Socialist Youth League in Shanghai failed to grasp the ideological links between Christianity and imperialism that were expressed in the Soviet-held gatherings. Following the same reasoning, Yang Tianhong points out that, even though several prominent Communists, such as Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, joined the anti-Christian movement, ordinary party members only accounted for a small portion of the anti-religious campaign on the ground. After all, the senior cadres' individual behavior hardly represented the whole organization unless everyone was instructed top down to follow the same agenda (Yang 2005, p. 249). By contrast, having studied Chinese Communist sources, Tao Feiya highlights the mobilizing efforts of the Communists through the Socialist Youth League. Tao writes, "It was precisely because of the organized promotion of the Chinese Communist Party that the trend of mobilizing hundreds of supporters to respond to a single call for collective action can be achieved in many cities across the country" (Tao 2005a, p. 73). Despite the different interpretations given by Ishikawa, Yang, and Tao, there is no doubt that the Communists led the anti-Christian campaign, albeit their anti-religious proclamations were as much shaped by Marxist–Leninist ideology as by the discourses of science and nationalism.

This article investigates the various mobilizing tactics undertaken by the Communist-dominated Socialist Youth League in the respective anti-Christian campaigns in Shanghai and Beijing in 1922. Based on such perspectives, this paper incorporates recent research findings on the history of the Chinese Communist Party, along with primary materials such as *Chen Bao* ("Morning Post") and *Minguo Ribao* ("Republican Daily News", Shanghai), as well as C.A. Darling's *China: A Record of 1921–1927*, adopting an evidence-based approach to develop its arguments. It begins with an account of the formation of the Anti-Christian Student Alliance in Shanghai in early 1922. Then, it focuses on the convergence of anti-capitalist and anti-Christian thought at the Far East National Congress and the Far East Revolutionary Youth Congress, held in Moscow in January–February 1922, where these ideological currents had been formalized and conveyed to the Chinese delegates before they returned to Shanghai to launch the anti-Christian movement. Subsequently, this

study shifts its analytical attention to the founding of the Anti-Religious Alliance in Beijing, where anti-religious sentiment provoked a stronger response from intellectuals and students than in Shanghai, and where the Communists played a crucial role. Finally, it analyzes the pragmatic motivation of the Communists to utilize the anti-Christian movement as part of their revolutionary mobilization. In particular, the mobilizers tapped into the May Fourth intellectuals' obsession with scientific spirit against religion to radicalize the youth and incorporate them into the revolutionary struggle. Only by investigating this motivation can we clarify the weaponization of the anti-Christian movement in 1922.

2. The 11th Conference of the World's Student Christian Federation and the Establishment of the Anti-Christian Student Federation in Shanghai

The direct trigger of the anti-Christian movement was the 11th Conference of the World's Student Christian Federation (hereafter "WSCF") held at Tsinghua University in Beijing. The WSCF was an evangelical Christian student body, founded in 1895 by the famous American Christian leader John R. Mott to "1. connect Christian student groups worldwide; 2. investigate the religious situation of students all over the world; and 3. promote the following undertakings: First, lead students to believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior; second, improve students' spiritual life; and third, encourage students to serve and spread the Gospel of the Heavenly Kingdom everywhere" (Xie 1922, pp. 16–17).

In November 1896, under the leadership of John R. Mott, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was established in China, which soon joined the WSCF (Gu 1981, p. 431). The YMCA then developed rapidly in China. By 1922, the YMCA had 53,821 members, 197 students and 24,135 members in forty cities, with its headquarters in Shanghai (Xie 1924, p. 45). The WSCF initially planned to hold its 11th Conference in China in 1916, but the event was postponed due to the outbreak of the World War. This international conference was scheduled on 4–9 April 1922, and 146 foreign representatives from thirty-two countries, as well as more than 550 representatives from the host country China, signed up to attend. The overall theme was "Christ in World Reconstruction", covering six topics ranging from international affairs and the transformation of Christianity to social issues and student evangelism (*Republican Daily News*, 11 March 1922). With the end of WWI, the conference issued a proclamation, urging Christian students to work for peace: "We have an absolute responsibility, that is, to do our utmost to fight for the elimination of the root causes of war and to fight for the elimination of the use of war as a means of resolving international disputes". This clearly expressed the noble goal of seeking peace and resolving conflicts through advancing Christianity in the post-war era. However, once the news of the conference was reported in early February 1922, it was strongly opposed[4] by radical students in Shanghai. On February 26, students held the first preparatory meeting and organized the Anti-Christian Student Federation. On 4 March, at the second preparatory meeting, they formulated the organizational structure, and formed an executive committee (Zhang 1927, p. 53). That night, the executive committee decided to take radical action: "I. Issue a declaration to show attitude [against the WSCF]; II. Telegram students from across the country and urge them to unanimously oppose it; III. Release anti-Christian proclamations through pamphlets and distribute them nationwide to awaken the people" (*Guangdong qunbao*, 20 April 1922). On 9 March, the Federation published the *Declaration of the Anti-Christian Student Federation* and, next day, the *Telegram of Anti-Christian Student Federation* galvanized public opinion. On 20 March, they published an article in Shanghai's *Current Affairs News*, entitled "Why do we oppose the World's Student Christian Federation?"[5] This declaration moved beyond the late imperial tendency of antiforeignism to employ Marxist–Leninist ideology to criticize Christianity as part of the West's capitalistic exploitation:

> As we know, all associations in modern society are capitalist social organizations. On the one hand there are the factory owners who reaped without having sown and on the other hand there are the proletarians who work without food. … modern Christianity and the Christian Church are the demons who "helped the former to plunder the latter and supported the former to oppress the latter".
>
> We believe that such a cruel, oppressive, and miserable capitalist society is irrational and inhumane, we must create a new and different society. (*Morning Post*, 17 March 1922; Chang 1927, pp. 187–88)

This organization, influenced deeply by communist ideology, advocated the overthrow of the "capitalist society" and the creation of a "new society", emphasizing the exploitation and oppression that divided the propertied and propertyless classes. It is evident that the weapon of its criticism was communist thought. Based on this ideology, the "manifesto" declared that Christianity and Christian churches served as the "vanguard" of economic imperialism by capitalists in various countries invading China. It further accused the "World Student Christian Federation" (WSCF) of "humiliating Chinese youth, deceiving our people, and plundering our nation's economy", thereby calling for resistance (*Morning Post*, 17 March 1922; Chang 1927, pp. 188–89). Thus, the "manifesto" was marked by strong communist undertones, and it is easy to infer the presence of communist forces behind it. Particularly, its labeling of the WSCF conference as a "thieves' conference" evokes the criticisms directed at the Washington Conference by Moscow (a topic that will be addressed later).

In fact, the Anti-Christian Student Federation was supervised by the Provisional Central Committee of the Shanghai Youth League (Ishikawa 1995, p. 79). Shortly after the publication of the anti-Christian declaration and telegram, on 15 March, the Shanghai Youth League published a pamphlet entitled "Anti-Christian Student Federation", as the fourth issue of its periodical *Pioneer*[6]. Furthermore, the Federation released more anti-Christian articles, including Chen Duxiu's "Christianity and the Christian Church" and others, even though these intellectuals constructed their anti-religious critique under the liberal framework of science and democracy.

Why did the Shanghai Socialist Youth League set up the Anti-Christian Student Federation? The Socialist Youth League was organized by Yu Xiusong, Jin Jiahuang, and radicals in Shanghai in August 1920, and all Communists in Shanghai were members. Similar anarchist and socialist organizations emerged in Guangzhou, Beijing, Tianjin, and other places, but only the Socialist Youth League was known to display a radical socialist tendency, and it was composed of Marxists, anarchists, socialists, trade unionists, etc. Its diverse membership made it difficult to have a unifying voice on domestic and international affairs, and the Socialist Youth League ceased to function in May 1921 (Research Office of the Central Committee of the Youth Movement of the Communist Youth League and Modern History Research Office of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 1985, pp. 88–89; Ishikawa 2001, pp. 181, 190; Miyoshi 2005, pp. 250–55). Later, under the intervention of the Communist International, the Socialist Youth League was re-established in November 1921 on the initiative of Zhang Tailei (Chunchun). In January 1922, Shi Cuntong was deported from Japan because of his involvement in communist activities. Upon his return to China, Shi temporarily presided the provisional central committee of the Shanghai Socialist Youth League and of the China Socialist Youth League. While Ishikawa argues that the news of the WSCF Conference in Beijing arrived at a time when the newly restructured Socialist Youth League was seeking an opportunity to gain public influence and followers (Ishikawa 1995, pp. 79–80), it was the Soviet Union's reaction that prompted the League to take on the WSCF.

3. Spread of Anti-Capitalist and Anti-Christian Agendas from Moscow to China

In order to protest against the Washington Conference, which lasted from 12 November 1921 to 6 February 1922, the Comintern held the Far East National Congress[7] in Moscow from 21 January to 2 February 1922, one month before the establishment of the Anti-Christian Student Federation in Shanghai. Of the 148 attendants, 44 were from China, including representatives of the Chinese Communist Party, the Socialist Youth League, and the Guomindang.[8] Qu Qiubai and Li Zongwu, then reporters of the *Morning Post* in Moscow, and Bu Shiqi, Liu Shaoqi, Ren Bishi, and Xiao Jinguang, students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (Kutewei) (hereafter the "Far East University") attended as translators and clerical staff (Xiao 1987, p. 28). The Congress adopted a resolution on "The Outcome of the Washington Conference and the Situation in the Far East". In the words of C.A. Darling, this was a resolution challenging the Western bourgeois fantasy of emancipating China and Korea, and the United States' claim to be the post-war liberator of Asia that freed the oppressed nations from the shackles of foreign imperialism and showed the direction for future development (Darling 1981, p. 39).

At the same time of the Far East National Congress, the Far East Revolutionary Youth Congress was held from 30 January to 2 February, upon the calling of the Youth Communist International. Seventy representatives from China, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia attended, representing thirty youth organizations with a claimed membership of 140,000 in total (Murata 1979, p. 609). Twenty-seven participants from China took part (Darling 1981, p. 45).[9] The Far East Revolutionary Youth Congress deliberately criticized the YMCA as an agent that supported the global expansion of capitalism in a long statement, the excerpts of which are shown as follows:

1. Declaration of the Far East Revolutionary Youth Congress

   > Various official organizations, such as the YMCA or the Boy Scout Corps, constantly try to draw you into their own ranks. They were obedient to you, loyal to the authorities and gentle in behavior. They want you to sell your souls and seduce you with shiny decorations. They want to pull you out of politics that can fundamentally solve your destiny.

2. Outline of the General Task of the Far East Youth Movement

   > Revolutionary youth organizations should fight against reactionary youth organizations and political organizations and expose the hypocrisy of these bourgeois democratic agents and parties. By explaining the reactionary nature of such organizations to the masses, we can liberate the youngsters from their influence. For this reason, it was necessary to expose the Christian Youth League … (Murata 1979, pp. 510, 515)

The Comintern identified the YMCA as a major rival in the battle for winning the hearts and minds of the youth in capitalist countries and criticized it as an obstacle for young people to participate in anti-colonial revolutions. Precisely using this revolutionary rhetoric by the Far East National Congress and the Far East Revolutionary Youth Congress, the Shanghai Socialist Youth League adopted the harshest antiforeign and antireligious language to launch its anti-Christian movement. Ishikawa minimizes the direct influence of these gatherings on the Chinese participants (Ishikawa 1995, p. 80) because he does not grasp the ideological discourse of the events. This study seeks to show how the antireligious sentiment and revolutionary spirit of the congresses was clearly conveyed to the Chinese delegates before their return to Shanghai.

One key evidence was the Chinese media coverage at the time. In early February 1922, *The Republican Daily News* [*Minguo Ribao*] in Shanghai published two concise reports enti-

tled "The Shanghai News of the Moscow Congress" on 1 February and "The Moscow Far East Workers' Congress" on 4 February. Beijing's *Morning Post* also released "Moscow's Far East National Congress" on 7–9 February, and "Moscow's Far East National Congress Closing" on 17 February. The Far East National Congress was a gathering of revolutionary leaders, both Communist and Nationalist, from China, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia, and a diplomatic counterweight to the Washington naval conference that excluded the Soviet Union despite its obvious interests in East Asia. These reports conveyed the anti-Washington and anti-capitalist sentiment of the Soviet gatherings. Moreover, Luo Zhanglong, a student from Peking University, a Communist and one of the leaders of the Socialist Youth League, wrote an article entitled "The Far East National Congress in Moscow has opened" for the *Workers' Weekly* (12 February 1922), a mouthpiece of the Beijing Communist Group (Luo 1984, p. 176). Luo strongly condemned the Washington Conference as a meeting of "several big capitalist countries" to discuss how to carve out their own spheres of influence in the Far East, especially China (Luo 1984, pp. 176–77).[10] Without mentioning the small scale of the congress, these reports extolled and popularized the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist ideas of the Comintern among the readers in Shanghai and Beijing.

In addition, some of the Soviet advisors and Chinese participants travelled from Moscow to Shanghai by rail on the eve of the founding of the Anti-Christian Student Federation. Darling's memoir contains evidence about a rail trip that he and others took to China to attend the first national congress of the China Socialist Youth League in Shanghai on behalf of the Youth Communist International. Darling set off from Moscow after the closing ceremony of the Far East Congress in early February and took the Siberian Railway to Chita, capital of the short-lived Far Eastern Republic, where he applied for a visa at the Chinese Consulate, whereupon he took the Siberian Railway to Manzhouli Station on the Chinese border. After that, he was held up in a remote town near Manzhouli. After receiving the Chinese certificate issued by the Beijing government to White Russians entering China, he took the international carriage of the Middle East Railway to Harbin. He stayed in Harbin for five days to obtain an entry visa issued by the Jilin provincial authorities and finally arrived in Shanghai four days later (Darling 1981, pp. 48–56). Zhang Guotao spent about ten days on the same route to China (Zhang 1971, pp. 172–74, 204). While Darling took about twenty-two days to reach Shanghai from Moscow in early March, the Chinese delegates returned to China by the same route, and without visa complications, arriving in Shanghai by late February. Darling recalled meeting the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party, who had mastered and prepared to propagate the ideological agenda and political resolution of the Far East National Congress (Darling 1981, p. 59). He wrote, "when I met with them several times later, I once talked about the YMCA, trying to convene students to organize a world congress in Beijing in April 1922", and recalled that "the YMCA in China was a pro-American organization". The Youth League "ought to expose the real pro-imperialist purpose of the YMCA" (Darling 1981, pp. 59–60).

Who did Darling meet in Shanghai? He mentioned seven people, including Chen Duxiu, Zhang Tailei, and Liu Renjing, members of the Central Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party and the Organizational Department of the National Congress of the Socialist Youth League of China. Even though Darling referred to "Qu Qiubai" as an interpreter at the Far East National Congress (Darling 1981, p. 59), Qu was hospitalized in Moscow at that time and did not return to Shanghai.[11] It was speculated that Yu Xiusong and Liu Shaoqi, students at the Far East University, had returned to China in early 1922, but there was no definite evidence.[12] Zhang Tailei, who participated in the preparation for the Far East National Congress, might also be one of the participants to come back to give a report to the national congress of the China Socialist Youth League because Zhang later accompanied Darling to southern China and served as an interpreter to Marin, the Comintern

representative (Luo 1955, p. 186). With no further archival information, it is impossible to list which returnees spoke at the China Socialist League's congress, but it seems certain that Liang Pengwan, Deng Pei, and a few attendees who had returned to Shanghai at this time, were amongst them.[13] Liang Pengwan, a member of the Tangshan Socialist Youth League, had returned in February and worked in the Secretariat of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (Ni 2006, p. 637).

On the other hand, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party paid close attention to the instructions and resolutions of the China Socialist Youth League. Li Ding (Likin, the plenipotentiary representative of the Far East Secretariat in China) replaced Wladimir Abramowitsch Neumann (the representative of the Far East Secretariat of the Comintern Executive Committee, In China, he used the surname Nicolsky.) to take charge of Shanghai's revolutionary work, stating that, after the delegates left, both the Central Committee of the Korean Communist Party and the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party were waiting for further instructions or resolutions (First Research Department of the Party History Research Office of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party 1997, pp. 82, 88). Evidently, the Far East National Congress in Moscow and the China Socialist Youth League's congress in Shanghai gave rise to the anti-Christian movement initiated by the Socialist Youth League. Therefore, the establishment of the Anti-Christian Student Federation in Shanghai by the Provisional Central Committee of the Socialist Youth League was not a coincidence but should rather be understood as part of the League's purposeful policy of promoting the Comintern's anti-imperialist agenda in East Asia and of incorporating newly formed radical groups into the Communist camp. Even though the Shanghai Anti-Christian Student Federation aroused much suspicion because of its proposition to put Communism first, it worked closely with the Anti-Religious Alliance in Beijing to garner nationwide attention as "start capital".

4. Founding the "Anti-Religious Alliance" in Beijing and Advancing the Anti-Christian Movement in Shanghai

The anti-Christian sentiment in Shanghai soon spread to Beijing. On 11 March 1922, the Anti-Religious Alliance was formed in Beijing, composed of students from Peking University, which on 17 March denounced religion as "anti-progressive" and declared Christianity a "poison to the Chinese":

> We vowed to wipe out the religious poison for human society… human beings are the outcome of evolution, while religion proclaims that "Man and all things were made in heaven ('everything was created in Heaven' according to the classic by Song Huizong *Notes of Genyue*) preordained in divine creation". Human beings are free and equal, while religion insists to lay thoughts in shackles, destroy individual personality and worship idols. Human beings are balanced and peaceful, while religion incites sectarian hatred and causes war, while deceiving people under the mask of fraternity. Human beings can work for their livelihoods while being kind, while religion lures people into believing in heaven and hellfire, by means of an inhumane authoritarian morality… Strange religion and scientific truth are incompatible. Hateful religion is completely contrary to humanitarianism. Compared with other countries, China is a pure country without religion, but in recent decades, Christianity and others have spread in China day by day … their most hateful poison was to stir up young students with all their strength … through the YMCA, as the Christian preparatory school and training center. (*Morning Post*, 21 and 22 March, 1922)

Beneath these criticisms was a recognition that Christian mission schools and welfare agencies had established a strong institutional presence in China, catering to the material

and spiritual needs of urban youth. Seeing religion as incompatible with science, truth, and humanitarianism, and fearing that Christianity corrupted the young Chinese minds, the Anti-Religious Alliance did not follow in the footsteps of the Anti-Christian Student Federation in Shanghai to advocate Communism. Instead, the Beijing group drew on the May Fourth discourse of science to oppose religion.[14] Despite the rhetorical difference, the Beijing groups' organizational capability was impressive as it telegrammed other anti-religious leagues across China, with the signatures of 79 intellectuals, students, and workers such as Xiao Zisheng (Yu), Li Dazhao (Shouchang) and Li Shiceng (Zhang 1927, pp. 31–32). Most of the signatories were Communists, headed by Li Dazhao, who presided over the northern branch of the Chinese Communist Party.[15]

The call for action immediately aroused strong repercussions. In Beijing, no fewer than nine colleges and universities, including Peking University, private schools, and the Russian Law School of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized their own student alliances that claimed to be anti-religious or anti-Christian; civic organizations such as the Young China Society and the Chinese Psychological Society also issued public statements supporting the alliance.[16] In addition, academic celebrities, such as Cai Yuanpei, Wang Xinggong, Wu Yu and other professors, expressed their willingness to join the cause, and joined fellow intellectuals like Wang Zhaoming, Hu Hanmin, Zhang Puquan, and Chen Duxiu serving in the Soviet-supported Guangdong military government led by Sun Yat-sen (*Morning Post*, 28 March 1922). On 28 March, the "Articles of Association" drafted by Luo Zhanglong and Li Mogeng, (i.e., Mei Geng, a major in German at Peking University and a Communist), was published. At the temporary board meeting, more than thirty people, including Wang Zhaoming and Cai Yuanpei, were recommended as executive officers of the Alliance (*Morning Post*, 19 June 1922). In this way, the anti-Christian movement in Beijing suddenly gained a widespread support among intellectuals and students nationwide and appeared to have won the media battle against the Church. Ten provinces, including Guangdong, Fujian, Hunan, Hubei, Zhili, Shanxi, Jiangxi, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Sichuan, established similar student-run anti-religious organizations, and newspapers everywhere were full of anti-religious and anti-Christian remarks. From March to May 1922, nearly fifty student groups telegrammed their proclamations to *Morning Post* and *The Republican Daily News*.

Faced with such a hostile situation, foreign-language newspapers headed by the *North China Daily News* (31 March 1922), regarded the anti-Christian movement as a "second Boxer insurrection", and five liberal professors from Peking University, including Zhou Zuoren, called for the respect of religious freedom. Zhou was critical of the accusations against religion, both real and imagined, and emphasized the "absolute freedom" of belief. In response, on 1 April 1922, the Anti-Religious Alliance condemned the criticisms of China's foreign press as one-sided and blamed the WSCF for violating religious freedom by propagating Christianity against other faiths. The Alliance also published the "Declaration of Anti-Religious People", written by Wang Xinggong, Li Dazhao, Xiao Zi-sheng, and others, solemnly stating the legitimate reasons for opposing religion in a modern age (*Morning Post*, 4 April 1922). Since then, the focus of media attention turned into a debate over "religious freedom", in which Zhou Zuoren and Chen Duxiu, whose liberal convictions somehow trumped his Communist leaning, defended this universal ideal against Liang Qichao, anti-religious Communists and socialists, as well as anti-imperialist Christian intellectuals.

Despite the anti-religious rhetoric in the Chinese intellectual sphere, the 11th WSCF conference was held at Tsinghua University in Beijing on 4 April 1922, as scheduled, and ended successfully on 9 April. In the afternoon of 9 April, the Anti-Religious Alliance held its first public meeting at Peking University. More than one thousand people attended,

and the meeting was presided over by Xiao Zisheng, who became a communist in France and was critical of religion. President Cai Yuanpei, professors Li Dazhao, Li Shiceng, Wu Yu, psychologist Zhang Yaoxiang, and others gave speeches. Cai Yuanpei discussed religion from the perspective of freedom of belief and criticized the conversion of underage students in mission schools. In *Independence of Education* (March 1922), Cai called for the separation of education and religion: "(I) Universities didn't have to set up the faculty of divinity, but could offer religious history and comparative religions in the department of philosophy; (II) in all schools, there should not be courses to publicize doctrinal teachings, and no prayer was mandatory; (III) people who preach a religious creed need not take part in education". Responding to Zhou Zuoren's call for religious freedom, Cai emphasized the legitimacy of the anti-Christian movement and thought that "while religious belief was free, anti-religious belief was also free", so there was no need to worry about anti-religious movements professing anti-religious beliefs (*Morning Post*, 10 April 1922).

To publicize the "harmful effects" of Christianity, the Anti-Religious Alliance also published *China's Perniciousness of Religion Map in China (by Province)* (Luo 1984, p. 96). In June 1922, with the support of Shao Piaoping, a newspaper owner, the first book series of *Anti-Religious Theory* was published (Anti-Religious Alliance 1922). Among them, there were thirty-one anti-Christian articles by thirteen authors, including Xiao Zisheng, Luo Zhanglong, Cai Yuanpei, Li Dazhao, and Li Shiceng. On June 18, the alliance also held the first board meeting. Over twenty people participated, and eight people, including Xiao Zisheng, Li Shiceng, Zhang Yaoxiang, and Wei Yu, were elected as standing directors. Among them, Zhu Wushan, Li Dazhao, Fan Hongsjie, and Miao Boying (the only female) were communists. The board meeting suggested ways to promote the cause, such as holding a national meeting of anti-religious groups, issuing a monthly magazine, and holding regular speeches (*Morning Post*, 19 June 1922). But none of these suggestions materialized in the end, and the antireligious fervor gradually died down.

How did the anti-Christian movement in Shanghai spread to Beijing? Yang Tianhong confirms Jessie G. Lutz's view that Jin Jiafeng, who was active in socialist and anarchist circles in Shanghai and Beijing, formed an important liaison between the two sides (Yang 2005, p. 109). Jin was one of the founders of the Shanghai Socialist Youth League and was involved in the Chinese Communist Party and the Revolutionary Youth League. All the telegrams of the Anti-Religious Alliance were sent to him, but the movement spread to Beijing, not so much because of these personal contacts, but because of the instructions of the temporary central Committee of the Youth League. The reason for this was Darling's statement that in order to lead the Anti-Christian movement of the Beijing Youth League, the temporary Central Committee of the Youth League was to send Zhang Tailei to Beijing and to hold anti-imperialist demonstrations in the streets of Beijing and in the auditorium during the meeting (Darling 1981, p. 64).[17] Darling was familiar with the propaganda work in Shanghai at that time, so this testimony appears credible. Luo Zhanglong also left a passage in his memoirs suggesting that Zhang Tailei was sent to the embassy, and "the CCP Central Committee attached great importance to this" (Luo 1984, p. 97). Although it was uncertain when Zhang Tailei would be sent to Beijing, considering the frequent correspondence between the Provisional Central Committee of the Socialist Youth League and its subsidiaries around the country, I think the most appropriate way was for the Beijing Socialist Youth League (and the Peking University Marxist Theory Research Association) to take action under the auspices of the Shanghai leadership, and to form an alliance together with anti-religious intellectuals and students such as Li Shiceng and Xiao Zisheng.[18] Undoubtedly, the basis of cooperation between the two groups was the anti-religious thought which had emerged since the May Fourth New Culture Movement.

In this regard, Ishikawa fails to highlight a clear pattern of organizational relations between the Anti-Christian Student Federation and the Anti-Religious Alliance, but he stresses that the latter was influenced by Chinese radicals and students returning from France. Li Shiceng served as the secretary of the Sino–French Educational Association, and Xiao Zisheng, who opposed religion, cooperated with Cai Yuanpei and Li Shiceng to form a large-scale movement. The Peking University Marxist Theory Research Association and the Beijing Socialist Youth League, headed by Luo Zhanglong, made the most positive response to this (Ishikawa 1995, pp. 73–74, 77). However, this is not consistent with Luo's recollections. Luo would comment later on the anti-Christian movement when reviewing the seminar on Marxist theory. "When we set up an anti-religious alliance, I invited Cai Yuanpei to participate, and he agreed". While preparing to publish *Anti-Religious Theory*, Xiao came back from France. "He [Xiao] not only told me that he would join our anti-religious alliance, but also invited Li Shiceng and Wang Zhaoming to participate" (Luo 1990, p. 206). This further proves that interpersonal networks were key to rallying support among anti-religious and pro-Communist intellectuals.

Why were the anti-Christian campaigns in Beijing and Shanghai so different in nature, when both were initiated by the Communists? Jessie G. Lutz was concerned about the different modes of anti-religious expression in the two cities. Although political pragmatism began to rise, Beijing was still the proud center of the New Culture Movement. For intellectuals there, criticizing religion was the basis for rejecting old traditions and seeking new ideas, while Shanghai, with its foreign concessions, was the center of China's capitalist development and the stage for radical activism. This cultural setting meant that many nationalists quickly transformed themselves into revolutionary activists, and the anti-Christian movement marked the first step toward joining the Soviet-led anti-capitalist revolution (Lutz 1988, pp. 60–61).

What happened to the anti-Christian movement in Shanghai? It ushered in a new development. On 1 April 1922, the Shanghai Comrades' Association (*Morning Post*, 6 April 1922) telegrammed the *Morning Post*, indicating its "determination to march forward together with all anti-religious comrades in Beijing". Subsequently, the students of Fudan University set up an anti-religious alliance, in support of its counterpart in Beijing (*Morning Post*, 11 April 1922; *Guangdong qunbao*, 13 April 1922). Prominent intellectuals, such as Zuo Shunsheng, Zhang Wentian, Shao Lizi, Shen Xuanlu (Ding Yi), and Shen Yanbing (Mao Dun), wrote articles and gave speeches in support of the movement. Their opinions mainly refuted Zhou Zuoren's "declaration of advocating religious freedom" in Beijing. The fiercest refutation was Shen Xuanlu's "Imploring anti-religious believers to oppose the anti-Christian movement". Shen Xuanlu, one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party and, alongside Dai Jitao, editor of the Shanghai-based *Weekly Review*, wrote that "the weak were comforted by deceptive assurances, while the strong used religion as a lethal weapon". Religious superstition was perceived as a trap for the proletariat to be misguided by the bourgeoisie, and Shen's article specifically blamed and ridiculed Zhou Zuoren and five other liberals (*Awakening*, 11 April 1922).[19] Not only students and intellectuals, but workers sympathized with the Anti-Religious Alliance. This was the case with Zhu Zehe, Huang Miaohai, and general "opinions of the industrial workers on anti-religious alliances". They sent a telegram to the Alliance, saying that "capitalists were good at fooling workers with religion, fraternity and equality, and intimidation of heaven and hell". To achieve the goal of "sanctifying workers", the spell of religion had to be broken (*Republican Daily News*, 13 April 1922).[20]

With the anti-Christian atmosphere penetrating all walks of urban life, the Anti-Christian Student Federation carried out its activities publicly. On 2 April 1922, just before the WSCF conference, the Anti-Christian Student Federation held a meeting[21] at Shang-

hai Pudong Middle School to discuss the means of opposition. Shi Cuntong, head of the Youth League, served as the host. Zuo Shunsheng, editor of the *Young China Monthly*, who worked for the Zhonghua Book Company at that time, renowned zoologist Chen Jianshan, Cai Hesen, and Xia Sijin, temporary secretary of the Communist Party in Shanghai, spoke at the conference (*Guangdong qunbao*, 19 and 20 April 1922).[22] The contents of their speeches varied. Chen Jianshan refuted Christian creation as a myth, stating that soul and body can be separated by evolution. Xia Sijin politicized the debate by accusing missionaries to act as spies.[23] Four or five hundred people attended the conference (*Morning Post*, 4 April 1922).[24] In addition, on 21 April, Chen Duxiu, the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, distanced himself from Zhou Zuoren and rebuked his earlier sympathetic view on religion as expressed in "Christianity and the Chinese People", published in *New Youth* (1 February 1920). Chen denounced Christianity as redundant and anti-scientific in a lecture delivered at Shanghai's Jiaotong University. Chen downplayed moral virtues, such as fraternity, love, and sacrifice, as unique characteristics of Christianity, and dismissed the doctrinal teachings of sin and atonement as insignificant in the modern world. According to Chen, in the Middle Ages, Catholicism had been evil, but during the Reformation, Protestantism emerged as a counterforce. Nonetheless, Protestant Christianity used the method of "people fishing" to "lead astray foolish men and women and young people without roots", depriving them of the true meaning of life. In addition, Christianity had aligned itself with the capitalist system. In the anti- capitalist struggle, Christianity could not be spared (*Awakening*, 25 April 1922). Chen Duxiu's intellectual shift from liberalism to Marxism had to do with his embrace of Marxist anti-capitalist ideology.[25]

Combined with this propaganda, the Anti-Christian Student Federation in Shanghai also tried to expand from the narrow basis of the Student Alliance into a larger alliance that encompassed all sectors critical of the Christian missionary institutions and Chinese churches. On 20 April 1922, the Anti-Christian Student Federation called for like-minded comrades to join its cause to awaken the nation. Its centralized action differed from the loose organization of the anti-religious alliance in Beijing.

To sum up, in April 1922, the anti-Christian movement in Shanghai reached its peak during the vigorous promotion of the Beijing Anti-Religious Alliance. Against this background, the Youth Alliance also expanded. However, as in Beijing, the movement gradually subsided when the WSCF conference had ended, and all students returned home for their summer vacations. The next storm waves against the Church came in the Educational Rights campaign and the Northern Expedition. Responding to political and ideological accusations, the Chinese Baptists in Guangzhou put Zhang Yijing in charge of the *Zhenguang Yuebao* (*True Light Monthly*), a magazine that published polemics in defence of the faith, although its influence was largely confined to Christian circles.

5. The National Congress of the China Socialist Youth League and the Anti-Christian Bill

When the anti-Christian movement was in full swing, the first national congress of the China Socialist Youth League was held in Guangzhou on 5–10 May 1922. Twenty-five delegates represented fifteen regional branches with a claimed membership of five thousand members, keen to profess their anti-Christian, antiforeign, and antireligious views (Reporter 1922, p. 117). Their "Resolution on the Relationship between the Socialist Youth League in China and Various Organizations in China" proclaimed:

> (1) It cannot be concealed that the YMCA served as a talisman of capitalism and a vanguard of imperialism. The YMCA lured Chinese youths to American capitalism through Western education, popular entertainment, and other activities in China. It assigned a department to train apprentices for American banks and

> stores, publicizing the goodwill of the United States, and expanding the Chinese market for the benefit of American capitalists. The convergence of the YMCA and China's old forces was shown in the collusion with Chinese bureaucrats. Therefore, it was necessary to publicize and expose the sins of the YMCA through the oral and printed media, so as to prevent young people from being deceived or infected…
>
> (2) The reason why anti-religious groups oppose all religions is that religion shackle the mind and align with the old forces in history. Opposing religion serves to emancipate young people's minds in order to help them march on the road of revolution. Therefore, we need to exert our strength to assist these anti-Christian and antireligious groups and organize our youth league comrades to form 'cells', which should each try its best to dominate and lead activities from within. (Reporter 1922, p. 128; China Department of the Japanese Institute of International Studies 1970, pp. 115–16)

Furthermore, it paid attention to the mission schools, stipulating in the *Resolution on Education* that students inside the mission schools were "treated unfairly and oppressed" and "for the benefit of anti-Christian youths, the Socialist Youth League should help them implement equal treatment in the mission schools" (Reporter 1922, p. 127).[26] The Socialist Youth League advocated the use of infiltration to co-opt and control the Anti-Religious Alliance, as well as student unions within mission schools.

These resolutions clearly reflected the ideas of the Far East Revolutionary Youth Congress. While confining its operation to the anti-Christian movement, most key actors in Shanghai, such as Zhang Guotao, Darling, Yu Xiusong, and Wang Zhenyi (Zhong Yi), attended the two Comintern's congresses in Moscow. They were well informed of the revolutionary spirit and agendas of the time and rallied the support of prominent intellectuals and activists such as Chen Duxiu, Shi Cuntong, Cai Hesen, Jin Jiafeng, Tan Pingshan, Chen Gongbo, and Zhang Tailei. These interpersonal networks facilitated the transmission of Moscow's anti-Christian agenda among Chinese followers and the Socialist Youth League. Qu Qiubai posited the idea of "cultural aggression" in *Various Ways of Imperialist Aggression against China* in July 1923, and the Chinese Communist Party framed the anti-Christian campaign under the slogan of opposing imperialist cultural aggression (Tao 2005b, p. 106).

So, what did the Comintern and the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party think of the anti-Christian movement in 1922? In a report to the Far East Branch of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (20 May 1922), Li Ding reasoned:

> The basic element of the anti-Christian movement was the national protest movement against foreigners… driving a youth who are politically immature but have nationalist sentiments into the movement. The second factor was… that it consituted a campaign against Christian missionaries, … agents of foreign capitalists, … an anti-capitalist protest… Thirdly, non-activists began to advocate the rejection of Christianity and took part in the anti-Christian movement. Finally, pure anti-religious intellectual atheist groups now also joined forces with the anti-Christian movement. When the movement was in full swing, they put it into the tracks of the scientific anti-religious movement. (First Research Department of the Party History Research Office of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party 1997, p. 91)

In other words, the purpose of the Communists' tactics was to arouse the "national protest movement" to rally young people to revolutionary action under the anti-imperialist banner. Finally, as expressed by Li Ding, the movement turned into a "scientific anti-religious movement" and helped the Communists achieve the expected goal. Accord-

ing to Darling, the Socialist Youth League not only experienced the political baptism of popular struggle in the movement but grew in its membership from about two thousand in early 1922 to more than three thousand, and established organizations in seventeen cities (Darling 1981, pp. 58, 63). It is undeniable that the Socialist Youth League provided a useful cover for the Chinese Communist Party to recruit many students through anti-Christian and anti-religious activism in various cities, achieving great success in youth mobilization.[27]

6. Conclusions

This article has highlighted the symbiotic relationship between the Chinese Communist Party and the anti-Christian movements in Shanghai and Beijing in 1922. The Shanghai Socialist Youth League was primarily inspired by the anti-capitalist and anti-Christian thought of the Far East National Congress and the Far East Revolutionary Youth Congress held in Moscow against the Washington Conference. When the League organized the anti-Christian movement in 1922, it strove to rally the anti-religious youth against what was perceived as the political reactionaries.

Why did this movement spread across China? First, the widespread disappointment with the Paris Peace Conference and the Washington Conference caused great dissatisfaction among the Chinese public. The outcome of the Paris Peace Conference, which ended WWI, shocked the Chinese. Despite China's contributions to the war efforts of the West, the Treaty of Versailles handed sovereignty over German-leased territories in Shandong to Japan. This development led to the May Fourth Movement in 1919 and created a favorable environment for the rise of China's Communist revolution. In other words, the Communist-initiated anti-Christian movement in 1922 was a backlash against these conferences. Another contributing factor was the anti-religious trend of the New Culture Movement, forging a grand alliance of Beijing intellectuals gathered under an anti-religious banner and gaining the sympathy of students and young intellectuals. Even though the anti-Christian movement in 1922 was ignited by geopolitical factors, it still embodied certain enlightenment ideals of the New Culture Movement. However, because the movement was initiated by the Communists, this enlightenment gradually tilted in more radical directions. The anti-imperialist and anti-Christian thought formulated by the China Socialist Youth League, which had originated in Moscow, gradually penetrated the Guomindang Left through the theory of "cultural aggression" in 1923 and helped shape the cooperation between the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party in 1924–1925. This marked an ideological turn to radicalism in the national revolution, reinforcing the anti-religious and anti-foreign elements in China's state-building process.

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Notes

1 This article is the abbreviated English version of the Japanese essay, Zhu (2016), published by the Japan Association for Asian Political and Economic Studies. The translation incorporates some modifications and additions based on the reviewers' comments, but the fundamental perspective and content remain unchanged. For a critical account of the scholarly literature, see Zhu (2018, pp. 135–56); https://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/re/ssrc/result/memoirs/kiyou36/36-06.pdf (accessed on 10 July 2024).

2 Representative studies include Yip (1980), Gu (1981), Cha (1993), Ishikawa (1995), Yang (2005) and Tao (2005a).

3 Ishikawa states that the anti-Christian movement in 1922 opposed Christianity's religious "faith" and sought to establish a belief in "science". This study argues that the beliefs in Marxism as "scientific socialism" and Christianity were fundamentally similar, a clarification essential to understanding the complexity of the Chinese Revolution.

4 To promote the 11th Conference of the WSCF, the YMCA's official publication, *Association Progress* (Shanghai), published its February 1922 issue as the "World Student Christian Federation Edition". This special issue attracted the attention of young students (Chang 1923, p. 459). On the other hand, starting in mid-February, major newspapers such as *The Republican Daily News* and other prominent local papers reported on the conference in a favorable manner.

5 There were fourteen articles in this booklet, nine of which are reproduced from the fourth issue of Pioneer (Zhang 1927, p. 355).

6 *Pioneer Magazine* (founded on 15 January 1922) was originally published by the Beijing Socialist Youth League, but it was proscribed by the Beijing government. Since the 4th issue, it was published by the Shanghai Provisional Central Bureau, with Shi Cuntong as the editor (Research Office of the Writings of Karl Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, Compilation Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party 1959, pp. 12–13; Wang et al. 1990, p. 233).

7 This article uses the term "Far East National Congress", which was initially set for Irkutsk but moved to Moscow in January 1922 and closed in Petrograd COMINTERN 1970, pp. 3, 7).

8 Among the delegates were fifteen Communist Party and eleven Youth League members COMINTERN 1970, p. 204). Yang Kuisong identified thirty-four of the thirty-nine voting delegates, including prominent members such as Deng Pei, Wang Jinmei, and Zhang Guotao. Three of the remaining five are likely Ren Bishi, Liang Baitai, and Yu Xiusong (Yang 1994, pp. 269–84).

9 The list of participants was unknown, but Communist Party members and Youth League members who attended the "Far East National Congress" would have taken part. Darling also gave a report on the youth movement at this conference (Darling 1981, pp. 46–47).

10 Although the expressions were different, its content was like that reported in Shanghai's *Republican Daily News*. The northern delegation attending the conference promised to report on the work of the group, and Ke Qingshi, one of the representatives, wrote several long reports regarding the excursion (Luo 1984, p. 176).

11 Despite being hospitalized, Qu attended the Far East National Congress, but his condition worsened afterward (Zhou 1992, pp. 72–75, 82; Zhang 1971, pp. 195–96). Zhang Guotao also mentioned Qu's illness in his memoirs (Zhang 1971, pp. 195–96).

12 Darlin is also said to have drafted the Youth League's program and regulations in Shantou while on his way to Guangzhou, along with "Qu Qiubai" and Zhang Tailei. Based on this account, some recent scholars, such as Li Yongchun and Bao Hongbo Li and Bao (2012), have argued that the "Qu Qiubai" who collaborated with Darlin in drafting the League's program was actually Cai Hesen. However, as Cai Hesen did not speak Russian, it is unlikely that he was the "Qu Qiubai" who acted as an interpreter in Shanghai, leaving this claim subject to doubt.

13 The names of the two men are confirmed by means of the list of signatures in an open telegram circulated by the Beijing Anti-Religious Federation on 17 March 1922.

14 For the formation and content of this anti-religious trend, please refer to Zhu (2010).

15 Twenty-eight people, including Deng Zhongxie (Zhongxia), Ruan Yongzhao, Miao Boying, Xu Xinkai, Jin Jiafeng, Li Dazhao, Fan Hongjie, Liu Renjing, Mao Hengren, Luo Aojie (Zhang Long), Yang Renqi, Zhu Wushan, Wu Ruming, Li Meigeng, Wang Zheng, He Mengxiong, Li Jun, Huang Rikui, Fan Tiren, Song Tianfang, He Shu (Shu), Wang Fusheng, You Tianyang, Liang Pengwan, Deng Pei, Li Zhenying, Yang Zhongjian, and Ruan Zhang, were Communists. Most of them were members of the Peking University Marxist Theory Research Association, an organization founded by Li Dazhao and others in 1920 under the leadership of the Communist Party. Its members, including workers and trade unionists, proliferated from Beijing and Tianjin to Taiyuan and other northern cities. In 1922, the organization had 150 members (Luo 1984, pp. 62–67; Ni 2006, pp. 145–46).

16 The Gongjin Society was founded by Shaanxi youths who studied in Beijing. Its leaders, Li Zizhou and Liu Tianzhang, were members of the Peking University Marxist Theory Research Association. It published *Workers' Weekly* to rally workers' support in July 1921.

17 Jessie G. Lutz described how the Anti-Christian Federation in Beijing urged the students at Tsinghua University to protest against the misuse of a public university for the WCSF conference (Lutz 1987, p. 209).

18 Zhang Guotao wrote that the Anti-Christian Student Federation was organized by the Beijing Socialist Youth League's Committee, which is incorrect. His memoirs indicated that he left Moscow in late February and arrived in Shanghai around 20 March, when the centre of the anti-Christian campaign had shifted to Beijing.

19 After this article was published in *Awakening*, Zhang Yijing, editor of the Baptist-run *Zhenguang Yuebao* [*True Light Monthly*] in Guangzhou asserted that, judging from its content and writing style, the "telegram" of the "Anti-Christian Student Federation" in Shanghai must have been written by Shen Xuanlu (Zhang 1927, p. 190).

20 They were probably the Chinese workers sent to the Western Front of the First World War by the Beijing government. Some of the returning workers played a key role in the May Fourth protests.

21 The meeting was originally scheduled to be held at Yuxian High School, Aiwenyi Road in the British Concession, but it was temporarily changed to the Pudong Middle School due to police intervention (*Morning Post*, 4 April 1922).

22 Yang Tianhong identifies the speakers as Zuo Shunsheng and Chen Jianshan (Yang 2005, p. 130).

23 He himself opposed religion because religion went against science and failed to soothe human suffering.

24 On 19 April 1922, *Guangdong Qunbao* estimated the number of participants at over 1000.

25 One reviewer mentioned Ya-pei Kuo's stimulating work, Kuo (2020, pp. 135–54). Kuo adopts a conceptual historical approach to analyze Chen Duxiu's understanding of "religion". Nonetheless, Kuo relies primarily on secondary literature and fails to consider the primary sources and the latest Asian research on Chen Duxiu.

26 The "unequal treatment and oppression" refers to Wang Zhaoming's behavior of forcing anti-religious students to attend mandatory worship and charging them high tuition fees (*Republican Daily News*, 15 April 1922).

27 Guangdong's anti-Christian movement was initially divided into anti-Christian and anti-religious camps. With the mediation of Tan Pingshan, the two factions formed a province-wide anti-religious alliance in Guangzhou, and members of the Socialist Youth League occupied its executive positions.

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Article

Competing Loyalties in a Contested Space: The Lutheran Middle School in Hunan Province, 1907–1914

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Abstract: This study explores the complexities of mission-state and church-state relations from a micro-level perspective, asking how the missionaries, teachers, and pupils at the Lutheran Middle School in Hunan Province negotiated conflicting claims on church membership and national citizenship. However, Hunan is not a microcosm of modern China. When dealing with nationalism in a Hunanese context, it is sometimes more accurate to speak of Hunanese nationalism rather than Chinese nationalism. This micro-level case study sheds light on the general trends of changing mission-state and church-state encounters, but it also emphasizes unexpected expressions of local Christianity in a context that has not so far been given much scholarly attention.

Keywords: Protestant missions; Lutheran missions; the Norwegian Missionary Society; Hunan; revolution; radicalization; mission schools; middle school; education; Taiping

1. Introduction

In 1907, the Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS) established a Lutheran Middle School in Yiyang, Hunan Province, to provide educated workers for the church and its modern institutions. However, driven by patriotic sentiments, the pupils and teachers had agendas of their own, and like other mission schools, the NMS Middle School became a contested space where Christianity encountered Chinese nationalism (Lee 2017). The political scene in early twentieth-century China was chaotic and shifting, often from one extreme to another, and the scope of the article's timeframe, 1907–1914, captures profound political, social, and cultural changes.

When the Middle School opened in 1907, China was ruled by the Qing dynasty. During the Qing, the foreign missions and the late imperial state were in conflict because of the previous official restrictions on the propagation of Christianity. In turn, the missions had allied with the colonial powers, intruding upon the sovereignty of the state by forcing China into a set of so-called "unequal" diplomatic agreements which "opened" China to foreign investments and missions. Five years after the opening of the Middle School, in 1912, the Empire was replaced by a Republic. Whereas the Empire at times perceived Chinese Christians as disloyal and the missionaries as envoys of the colonial powers, the Western-style Republic embraced Christianity as a part of the Western framework through which China needed to advance. The Republic provided freedom of religion, but as the church was still an institution with privileges guarded by the colonial powers, it was unable to escape the paradox on which it was built (Sovik 1952).

This study explores the complexities of mission–state and church–state relations from a micro-level perspective, asking how the missionaries, teachers, and pupils at the Lutheran Middle School in Hunan Province negotiated conflicting claims on church membership and national citizenship. However, as Stephen R. Platt points out, Hunan is not a microcosm of modern China. At the helm of nearly every major popular movement in modern Chinese reform and revolution, we find Hunanese leaders, but as much as they contributed

to the development of the China that exists today, they also had a vision of Hunan as a modern nation-state (Platt 2007, pp. 1–4). When dealing with nationalism in a Hunanese context, it is sometimes more accurate to speak of Hunanese nationalism rather than Chinese nationalism. This micro-level case study then sheds light on the general trends of changing mission-state and church-state encounters, but it also emphasizes unexpected expressions of local Christianity in a context that has so far not been given much scholarly attention.

2. Archival Sources and Reading Strategies

The NMS missionaries were very careful in their recordkeeping, and among the archival materials originating from the NMS enterprise in Hunan are church records, various field reports, correspondence, photos and films, art, literature, and property deeds. Out of fear of the Communist takeover in 1949, the church archives were packed and shipped out of China when the missionaries left Hunan (Aase 2022, p. 36). Today, these archives are preserved in the Mission and Diakonia Archives at VID Specialized University in Stavanger.

The key sources of this study are the minutes of the annual meetings of the NMS Missionary Conference. The minutes convey detailed discussions on principal and practical matters concerning a broad spectrum of church affairs. Discussions are carefully recorded, with readers able to follow the comments and statements made by individuals. Only the NMS Headboard and the General Assembly in Norway were meant to read these reports at that time, and in contrast to the reports addressing the NMS audience, these internal materials provide a rather unfiltered discussion of important topics. There are nevertheless several methodological issues to consider when working with these sources for research (Aase 2022, pp. 36–41).

The minutes focus on the missionary project and the story is told primarily from a missionary point of view. However, as the missionaries aimed for the conversion and transformation of Chinese society according to the Norwegian standards, they found themselves in constant negotiation with existing Chinese social practices and cultural worldviews. It was crucial to understand "the Other", and the minutes render what seem to be sincere attempts to translate the essence of indigenous self-understanding. Meanwhile, as with other Protestant missionary materials, one does frequently find the stereotypes that the missionaries used to reproduce cultural otherness (Aase 2022, p. 41).

The reading strategy for interpreting these sources is inspired by the fields of postcolonial studies and World Christianity. The conceptual lens focuses on the encounters in the "contact zones" of colonialism (Becker 2015), exploring how different stakeholders negotiated concurrent claims on reality, experience and meaning (Brydon et al. 2017). In the contact zones, or spaces, as Nicolas Standaert calls them, people dealt with their differences in new and often unexpected ways (Standaert 2002, pp. 39–47). Finally, it is relevant to bring in the concept of "transloyalties", an analytical framework derived from the research project entitled *Connected Histories–Contested Values* at VID Specialized University. The goal is to explore the making of a Lutheran identity in the contact zones of colonialism by asking how Lutherans constructed or reconstructed their values and religious identity at a time when they confronted tension between competing loyalties.[1]

3. The Norwegian Missionary Society and the Establishment of the Middle School

The Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS) was founded in 1842 as a Lutheran agency with close ties to the state church, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Norway. In 1902, Hunan came to be the third mission field, after Zululand in Southeast Africa and Madagascar (Aase 2022, p. 9) (See Figure 1).

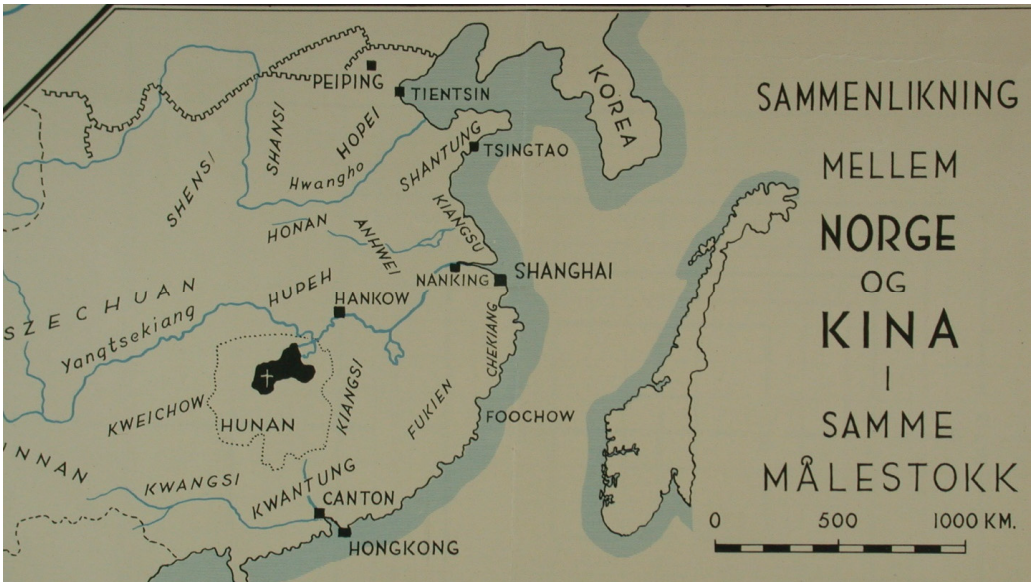

Figure 1. Map showing China and Norway at the same scale, with the NMS mission field in Hunan province marked with a black cross. When the missionaries presented the NMS mission field in Hunan to their Norwegian audience, they often talked about its vast area and dense population. Source: The Mission and Diakonia Archives, VID.

By 1912, the NMS had in total 1009 Chinese church members at six central stations and thirty-five satellite stations. The NMS adopted what they called "the general mission principles of the nineteenth century", under which the establishment of Lutheran schools "went hand in hand" with evangelization. In Changsha, where the NMS installed its first resident missionaries in 1902, a primary school was set up already in 1903. Over the next few years, the NMS established primary schools not only at the central stations, but also at the satellite stations in the interior, and in 1912, the NMS had thirty primary schools with in total 1092 pupils (Aase 2022, pp. 68–69).

At the NMS Missionary Conference in 1906, a missionary wife, Fredrikke Hertzberg (1873–1930), came to be the first to bring up the idea of establishing a middle school to provide education between the level of the primary school and the gymnasium. Being a teacher herself, Hertzberg worried about the future of the talented boys of the station schools. Unless the NMS provided them with a Christian pathway to continue their education, they would surely lose them to the "heathen schools" where they would miss out on both their Christian studies and the regular devotions, she claimed.[2] At the time, the Qing Empire looked to the West to modernize its infrastructure, and in 1905, a Western-style educational system replaced the old Confucian civil service examination. Unlike the NMS schools, the new state schools tended to be boarding schools, and propelled by the fear of falling behind, Hertzberg suggested to use the money reserved for an orphanage to set up a dormitory as soon as possible.[3]

Before turning to the response of the Missionary Conference, it should be noted that most missionary wives came to the mission field to support their husbands, and that their voices are seldom heard at the conferences (Aase 2022, pp. 11–12). Fredrikke Hertzberg was an exception. She had the degree Cand. Philol. from the University of Oslo, which was highly unusual for women at the time, and in Hunan she was entrusted with tasks of her own.[4] Given her academic training and unique status, she was free to speak her mind with confidence and take a leading role among men in a world where most women were confined to the household.

In this case, the Missionary Conference agreed with Hertzberg that there was an urgent need to move towards the opening of a Middle School. Consequently, they decided to postpone the orphanage in favour of a dormitory, and to charge Fredrikke and her husband Arthur Hertzberg (1870–1941) with the task of preparing the establishment of a Mid-

dle School.[5] The NMS enterprise depended heavily on their network of mission schools, and if needed, the Missionary Conference tended to adjust its evangelistic strategy to the recent developments in society (Aase 2022, p. 217).

As Jospeh Tse-Hei Lee points out, the 1905 reform program gave a great impetus to the establishment of an extensive network of mission schools in parallel with state schools (Lee 2017, p. 25). For the part of the NMS, the establishment of the Middle School in 1907 was a major step forward, but more developments and challenges were still ahead. In 1913, the NMS opened a Lutheran Theological Seminary in collaboration with other Lutheran mission societies in central China. A college, located next to the NMS Middle School, followed in 1923.

4. A Success Story?

The Lutheran Middle School opened in the autumn of 1907 with 16 pupils.[6] The first class graduated four years later, in 1911. Compared to the Norwegian system, the last year at Middle School equalled the first year at Gymnasium. At the time, the Middel school had in total six teachers, Fredrikke and Arthur Hertzberg, and four Chinese teachers.[7] Arthur became the school's first principal, and he was as well-educated as his wife Fredrikke. Furthermore, being an ordained pastor, Arthur had the university degree of Cand. Real from the University of Oslo.[8] The Middle School came to be known for its high academic standards and continued to grow steadily. In 1913, the school had 70 pupils, which was the number they had originally planned for[9] (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. The photograph of the Middle School pupils and teachers is not dated but the male hairstyle reveals that the photo was taken before 1911. As Arthur Hertzberg, sitting far right on the front row, still looks rather young and the number of pupils and teachers is modest, one can probably add that it was taken early in the school's history. Source: The Mission and Diakonia Archives, VID.

Enrolment at the Middle School required students to have baptism or status as catechumen. The scrolls by the Middle School entrance, as seen in the photograph above, underscored the school's evangelising purpose. When the pupils and teachers entered the gates, the scroll seen at the right side of the door stated what the NMS expected from them:

信道必篤 [信道必笃, xindao bidu], "The faith must be firm and sincere." The scroll by the left side of the door was a reminder of what it meant to be a Christian: 義路是中 [义路是中, yilu shiZhong], "The way of righteousness is the essence of Christianity".[10]

However, as also non-Christian families wanted to enrol their sons, Arthur Hertzberg allowed quite a few exceptions. Out of the 16 pupils who were admitted the first year, only four were baptized and five were catechumens.[11] Even though Hertzberg admitted having some issues with the "heathen" pupils, he was content. In 1908, eleven pupils asked for baptism. If it had not been for the Middle School, these boys would not have come to know Christianity, he argued. Another two ran away from the school, but back home they had visited the chapel, and according to Hertzberg, it meant that they too had been influenced by the Gospel.[12]

Over the next years, graduates from the Middle School became primary school teachers and evangelists in the growing Lutheran churches. With the opening of a Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1913, a few graduates took up theological training to become full-time preachers and ordained pastors. Others continued their education at the Yale University-sponsored Yali School in the provincial capital of Changsha. This mission college was very popular among the Middle School graduates and helped train medical doctors for the NMS hospitals.[13]

The Middle School lived up to Fredrikke Hertzberg's expectations. Instead of losing the talented Lutheran pupils to the state schools, the NMS kept them within the mission school system. Due to the high teaching standard, the number of pupils kept growing, enabling the school to prepare ever more young Lutherans for service in the church and its institutions. The Middle School was, in many ways, a success story. However, the Middle School was also a contested space where the pupils and the teachers developed their own independent agenda. When things did not turn out the way the missionaries intended, they could not always agree on how to compromise with their Chinese colleagues and pupils.

5. The Challenges of "Heathen Influence"

By adopting the curriculum of the state schools, the Middle School bridged the gap between the church and society. However, the precise method of how the missionaries could overcome the challenge of cross-cultural confusion, or even damage, caused by so-called "heathen influence" was intractable.

"The mind of a child is like an uncultivated field", a missionary stated in a discussion on textbooks at the Missionary Conference in 1910.[14] It was crucial to prevent "the enemy" from sowing "weeds" into the minds of the pupils, and the missionary blamed the Chinese classics for corrupting the young minds. He was anxious to make the pupils understand the concept of original sin when the Chinese classics proclaimed man to be basically good. Another missionary criticized the rejection of the Chinese classics. To him it was necessary for young Chinese Christians to know their literary heritage.[15]

Regarding the teachers, the missionaries all agreed that the Middle School needed teachers capable of being Christian models, sowing the seeds of Christ in the easily affected minds of their pupils. Nevertheless, due to the lack of competent Christian teachers, Hertzberg had to employ non-Christian teachers. He worried that the non-Christian staff would bring "heathen culture" into the school and stressed the importance of "controlling the heathen teachers".

However, when looking at the photograph above, Hertzberg does not necessarily look like a man in control. Instead, his position far right on the front row, with a slightly lax posture, dressed in a white suit with a weary looking face, makes him look rather helpless among his colleagues. Perhaps this is merely a case of Hertzberg disturbing the symmetry of the photograph and having the sun in his eyes, but the visual contrast between the missionary and the assembled local pupils and teachers in terms of body language, attire and colour scheme is nevertheless an interesting reminder of the underlying dynamic defining their relationship. The missionaries controlled the church and its institutions and

left the locals with less influence than they wanted, but what the locals lacked in formal power, they attempted to compensate for. As illustrated in the photograph, the missionaries were by far outnumbered by the locals. Consequently, they often found themselves in less control than they cared to admit (Aase 2022, pp. 114–15). Hertzberg and his fellow missionaries had to choose their strategy. Instead of elaborating on how he intended to control the non-Christian teachers and prevent them from bringing "heathen culture" into the school, Hertzberg made the best of the situation and concluded that the problem was minor as these teachers tended to either leave the school after a brief period or they were converted and asked for baptism.[16]

Underlying the 1910 Conference's discussion on "heathen" textbooks and "heathen" teachers lies the crucial question of how to exist and practice as a Christian in Chinese society. The missionaries strove to provide certain guidelines, but the pupils' minds were not as easily affected as initially thought, whereas the teachers could hardly be controlled at all.

6. Lack of Discipline and Pupils on Strike

The Middle School education meant personal advancement, and according to teacher Sten Bugge, the pupils were hardworking and eager to learn.[17] Like other mission schools, the NMS took in talented boys for free, broadening their scope of future career opportunities. To be hardworking paid off, but the dedicated pupils did not necessarily respect school authority. The Middle school was troubled by the lack of students' discipline, and the occurrences of violent strikes on campus. As already mentioned, Hertzberg had disciplinary issues with some "heathen" pupils in the class of 1907, but in the years to come, the lack of discipline became a general problem among both the non-Christian and Christian pupils. If the pupils did not approve of the food service, one of the teachers' performance, or certain school regulations, they expressed their outrage publicly by breaking the crockery, trying to beat up the teacher, or going on strike. Being a boarding school, they could easily form a critical mass against the administrators on campus.[18]

In explaining this kind of youth misbehaviour to his Norwegian audience, Sten Bugge characterized Chinese students as being very self-conscious. As only five to ten percent of the Chinese population could read and write, the educated youth felt entitled to certain privileges.[19] The breaking of crockery and the strikes were the Chinese way of protesting, and the state schools struggled with the same disciplinary issue. However, Bugge also claimed that some of the campus confrontations arose from acculturating tensions between the missionary teachers and pupils. It was easier for the pupils to take orders from their own countrymen than from foreigners.[20] The tensions that Bugge referred to should be understood as part of the intersection between foreign missions and colonial powers.

7. The Inherent Problems of Colonialism

Fredrikke and Arthur Hertzberg arrived in Hunan with their two-year-old son Gerhard in 1903. Only two years had passed since the Boxer Uprising, which ended in the murder of missionaries and Chinese Christians. A joint Western military expedition had crushed the rebellion and the following diplomatic agreements, the Boxer Protocols of 1901, led to the full enforcement of the treaty system, and ultimately to the opening of China's last closed province, Hunan. (Aase 2022, pp. 44, 55, 66). As the Hertzbergs travelled up the river to the city of Yiyang, they had ten marines and a canonboat for their protection. Upon their arrival, Fredrikke and her son were said to be "the first woman and child of the white race ever to walk in the streets of Yiyang." Over the next few days, many town leaders came to visit them, but out in the streets, Fredrikke heard people address them as "white devils".[21] Even though the missionaries soon realized that the people to be won over for Christ were hostile towards outsiders, they nevertheless found a base of people to support their cause as members of the growing congregations and employees in the NMS mission enterprise.[22] By the time the Middle School opened in 1907, many non-Christian families had changed their attitudes towards the foreigners and were keen to enrol their

sons. Some of these pupils were eventually baptised, but the missionaries could not escape the inherited problems of colonialism.

For non-Christian pupils to make their own decision to be baptized in school was a profound statement, but being part of a contact zone of colonialism, these pupils struggled with conflicting loyalties and logics. The Christian faith seemed to be part of the Western modernizing framework that China needed to embrace, but it was also the religion of Western aggressors. While offering a useful education, the missionaries could not separate themselves from the colonial enterprise aimed at tearing the country apart. The Middle School pupils constructed their religious identity while learning to navigate their relationship with the missionaries in a contested space. Their expressions of Christianity did not necessarily live up to the Christian standards of the NMS, but as Arthur Hertzberg said, they still held onto Christianity with deep conviction.[23] They were furthermore hardworking and eager to learn, but as long as the missionaries dominated the administration of the Middle School, the students tried to express their patriotic sentiment by rejecting the missionaries' authority over secular matters. In doing so, they did not necessarily oppose the missionaries as their teachers, but because they wanted to remain loyal to an anti-foreign polity. As the Qing Empire continued to yield concessions to the colonial powers, the state grew more and more unpopular. Many educated youths blamed the incompetent imperial rulers for China's humiliating defeats by the West and Japan. Instead of defending an incapable regime, they called for a revolution to remake the political landscape (Platt 2007). Being a revolutionary was a way of reconciling Christianity with the political needs and concerns of Hunanese society. The following section examines how the NMS came to grips with a revolutionary movement that envisioned a Western-style republican system during the time of regime change.

8. Christian Revolutionaries

The Qing dynasty was overthrown by Sun Yat-Sen's Republican Revolution in 1911. On 1 January 1912, the Republic of China was formally established (Fairbank 2006, p. 250). Prior to the overthrow of the Qing, many Protestant mission school students and teachers embraced radical ideas, and some of them even took on leading roles in the revolutionary movement (Sovik 1952, p. 74).

The revolutionary agenda easily appealed to young members of the urban churches partly because of the high number of educated youths in the mission schools, and partly because of a general consensus that Christianity was the spiritual source of Western strength. However, the church had also become a powerful institution, and the revolutionaries hoped to gain practical help from the church in order to reach their political goals. After all, both Christians and revolutionaries thought to have much in common: the Qing state was a mutual enemy and they all hoped for a new, cosmopolitan China. Finally, as Confucianism was associated with the imperial system, it was only logical to associate Christianity with the new revolutionary order. In one of the first public proclamations, the revolutionaries set out to publicize those who had injured foreigners, and to reward those who protected Christian churches (Sovik 1952, pp. 77–81).

In Hunan, the NMS missionaries witnessed a remarkable outcome of the ongoing negotiation between Christianity and the revolutionary movement. Apparently, the revolutionaries considered themselves heirs of the Christian-inspired Taiping Uprising.[24] In 1843, Hong Xiuquan, the Taiping leader, read Christian tracts revealing the Old Testament stories of how a chosen few, with God's help, had rebelled against oppression. Inspired by the tracts and the visions that he had during a period of mental illness, he came to believe that Jesus was his elder brother and that God had called him to save humankind. Hong became a militant evangelist and proclaimed that God had ordered him to destroy the Qing. By 1853, his followers had seized Nanjing and made it their "Heavenly Capital" (Fairbank 2006, pp. 207–9). According to the missionaries, the 20th-century Hunanese revolutionaries found inspiration from the Taiping rebels in the sense that they too wanted to bring down the empire and get rid of "the old yoke".[25] In doing so, they challenged what

we may call Qing-governed Hunan's master narrative, the story of how the Hunan Army defeated the Taipings and restored the Confucian order (Platt 2007, p. 28). The Taiping War broke out in 1851, when Hong Xiuquan declared himself the "Heavenly King" of a new dynasty (Fairbank 2006, p. 208). According to Tobie S. Meyer-Fong, the Taiping War was "the most devastating civil war in human history." In the cities and towns throughout the lower Yangzi region, as much as fifty percent of the population was wiped out (Meyer-Fong 2013, pp. 1–4). The destruction and suffering caused by this devastating war left a strong imprint on the collective memory of the Hunanese people and after the defeat of the Taipings in 1864, they considered the Hunan Army to be China's defenders against Christianity (Platt 2007, pp. 34–36).

Between the years 1884 and 1898, the Hunanese Confucian scholar Zhou Han called on the local youths to honour the glorious legacy of the Hunan Army in their fights against missionaries and converts. Before the British government put pressure on the provincial authorities to sentence Zhou to life in prison, he had published hundreds of thousands of anti-Christian pamphlets and tracts (Platt 2007, pp. 64–65). A few years later, when the first group of NMS missionaries arrived, they confirmed that Hunan lived up to its reputation as China's most anti-Christian province.[26]

Like Zhou Han and his followers, the Hunanese revolutionaries framed their radical agenda according to the Taiping war. They linked their revolutionary movement to the past, but instead of confirming Hunan's master narrative celebrated by the Confucian scholar-officials, they turned it upside down. Given the fundamental importance of this narrative in Hunan's collective identity, it was an explosive way of breaking with the past.

In the contact zone of colonialism, the revolutionaries assigned new meaning to old concepts in the tension between competing values and interests. By singing Taiping songs, the revolutionaries framed their project as something Christian, but instead of turning to the missionaries, they draw on the Taiping appropriation of Christianity—an indigenous version of Christianity that the missionaries rejected as blasphemous (Fairbank 2006, pp. 207–11).

It was not only the revolutionaries who pointed to the Taiping experience to explain the current situation; the NMS missionaries did it too. After the war, the Taiping rejection of the expressions of traditional Chinese religion in favour of Christianity had created prosperous evangelization opportunities for the missionaries, who strove to fill a perceived cultural vacuum with the Gospel. The missionaries did not succeed, but now, as the revolutionaries wanted to break with the past, the missionaries felt that they had been given a second chance to advance Christianity.[27]

However, the missions did generally not support the idea of revolution. Every moment of unrest in China meant trouble for the church, and due to the recent reforms, especially in education, the missionaries hoped that China might change without a violent revolution. They would not mind seeing the hostile Empire being replaced by a Western friendly Republic, but they wanted the church to stay out of politics (Sovik 1952, pp. 69–70). For the NMS, they had not yet sorted out the complicated relationship between church authority and state authority in the Chinese context.

9. Church Authority vs. State Authority

In the Norwegian model, the state had a theological foundation, and the laws of the church were, at least to some extent, the laws of the state (Oftestad et al. 1993, pp. 177–79). In China, on the contrary, the state had no religious foundation. Instead of being a national asset, as was the case in Norway, Christianity was rejected as a threat to Chinese culture and society. In this new context, the NMS needed to rethink the relationship between the authority of the church and the authority of the state.

With reference to Romans 13, 1–7, Christians should be "loyal to the powers that be."[28] Coming to China meant violating the Qing Empire's efforts to forbid the propagation of Christianity. However, being Norwegian citizens and envoys of the Norwegian state church, the NMS missionaries were still answerable to the Norwegian government.

Neither did they feel obliged to respect a Chinese imperial authority that attempted to prevent them from sharing the Gospel. Even though they blamed the colonial powers for being brutal towards native populations, they still believed that God used colonialism to further his kingdom (Rongen 2017, pp. 39–40).

To limit the damage of being part of the colonial enterprise, the NMS Superintendent told his fellow missionaries to respect the secular authorities. "They [the NMS missionaries] were guests in China", he stated. "Unnecessary provocations should be avoided. Any lawsuit should be settled at the local level. The treaties should never be mentioned to the Mandarin, and the Consul should only be involved in emergency situations."[29] But when the NMS failed to resolve local church disputes, they admitted that they needed a representative of the Norwegian government to petition the Chinese authorities. As it turned out, they even asked for a Norwegian Consul to be stationed in Changsha in order to take care of their ecclesiastical interests and strengthen their claims in conflicts with the Chinese officials.[30]

Whereas the loyalty of the missionaries still rested with the Norwegian government, the local Christians were told to be loyal to the Chinese government. Even though the missionaries provided support in cases concerning the Hunanese Lutherans' treaty right to the freedom of religion, they found it important to instruct the converts to contribute to local society and respect the authorities. While some converts claimed that their Christian status placed them outside the law of the Qing Empire, the missionaries had to remind the congregants of their legal status as Chinese imperial subjects. Being a Christian did not mean that they were citizens of another realm, and they had to follow the laws of their native country. For this reason, the NMS did not embrace revolutionary activities, and the missionaries often told the local Christians to be very careful in their contacts with revolutionary elements setting out to subvert the Qing government.

The larger Protestant community reached the same conclusion. In 1907, the Centenary Protestant Missionary Conference in Shanghai, where the NMS delegates also participated, warned the missionary societies to be "vigilant in the present national awakening, and make sure that the Chinese Christians would not be "led into acts of disloyalty to the government." The missions had instructed the converts about the "duty of loyalty to the powers that be", but non-Christian revolutionaries came to the churches and mission schools to spread propaganda. The propaganda was sophisticated and hard to resist, and the Conference worried that the converts through "ignorance, confusion of thought, or misdirected zeal", would make use of the church for revolutionary ends (Sovik 1952, pp. 69–70).

10. The Revolution at the Middle School

In analysing the radicalization of mission school students in the 1920s, Joseph Tse-Hei Lee points to the entanglements between the mission schools and the revolutionary movement, arguing that the tutoring at the mission schools advanced the secular ideas that produced the revolution. On one side, the mission schools promoted new ideas in politics and economics. On the other side, they provided young men with rhetorical and organizational skills essential for the success of their revolutionary activities (Lee 2017, pp. 25–32). The same can probably be said about the NMS Middle School. By the time the new Republic of China was formally established in 1912, half of the pupils had left the Middle School to join the Republican Army. When the new Republic replaced the Empire in 1912, all the teachers went to Changsha to serve the new government.[31]

To the Norwegian staff at the Middle School, the radicalization on campus came hardly as a surprise. The Hunanese Lutherans were said to be "very political", and especially so the teachers. Johan Gotteberg wrote that people in Hunan possessed a uniquely independent character which distinguished them from other Chinese.[32] In Platt's words, this phenomenon is called Hunanse nationalism, coming from a belief that the residents of Hunan shared certain characteristics that set them apart from the rest of China, as well as a unique sense of history and a shared destiny. The Hunanese reformers and revolu-

tionaries believed in a common destiny to save China from a weak Empire, and as Platt points out, the Hunanese were the largest provincial group within the Revolutionary Alliance that led the 1911 Revolution (Platt 2007, pp. 1–3) As Joseph Tse-Hei Lee points out, a "good Christian should also be a good citizen" (Lee 2017, p. 28). When the state did not deserve their loyalty, being a good citizen was being a revolutionary. At the Middle School, being a revolutionary was a way of negotiating Lutheran Christianity in response to the emerging political needs and concerns of Hunanese society.

In addition, there was a personal relationship between one of the Lutheran teachers, Liang Shi-sheng and the new provincial governor. They were old friends, and Liang was appointed as the governor's secretary.[33] The culture of *guanxi* entailed personal loyalties between friends, peasants from the same village, and teachers and students, and such generated reciprocities were crucial in Hunanese politics (Platt 2007, pp. 23–29). If the governor recruited his staff through familiar networks, he would most likely turn to people personally loyal to him such as Liang. Along the same reasoning, Liang chose his own subordinates from the Lutheran Middle School. From top to bottom, the new provincial administration was to be held together by an interlocking network of personal loyalties. The governor would be on top of a pyramid with people whom he trusted, including the teachers at the Middle School. In return, Liang and his friends had been rewarded with advancement in the new political order.

When exploring the Revolution and the establishment of the Republic from the Middle School's perspective, the bonds between teachers and students are also of great interest. According to Sten Bugge, teachers and students often shared "a heart-to-heart relationship." This special bond led to lifelong friendships between teachers and students.[34] Perhaps this bond also explained why half of the students joined the Republican Army to support their teachers.

Anyhow, when exploring these social mechanisms, we should consider the strong bonds between the pupils and missionaries. One of the pupils was Liang Giao Hsiao, a fine young man, according to the missionaries, from a good Christian family with strong bonds to the mission.[35] Whereas Liang's family paid his tuition fee, other pupils were sponsored by the NMS or mission patrons in Norway. The close linkage between a beneficiary and a recipient was relevant in relations between missionary teachers and pupils, as well as missionary teachers and local teachers. The case of Chen Ren-an, who was the "main teacher" and a close associate of Arthur Hertzberg, is an example.

Being one of the first converts, Chen was baptized in 1903, and stayed close to the NMS.[36] However, back in 1910, Hertzberg was afraid of losing Chen Ren-an. Apparently, Chen wanted something the NMS could not give him, namely education. Unlike mission societies with more resources, the NMS did not have the necessary means to send their talented young men to universities abroad. To keep him motivated, Hertzberg asked the Missionary Conference if he could bring Chen to Norway during his furlough next year. The plan was for Chen to participate in the NMS summer events for young people.[37] Chen was said to be overwhelmed with joy by the proposal.[38] However, Chen changed his mind and asked for more professional education. As it turned out, the 1911 Conference asked the Head Board for permission to send Chen to a Chinese university for three years as long as he was committed to being a Lutheran teacher for the next eight years.[39] However, after the Conference, Hertzberg learned that Chen had been a secret member of the revolutionary group. Because the NMS instructed the employees to stay away from revolutionary activity, Chen had no choice but to lie about his own political involvement. When Hertzberg told the Home Board about Chen's revolutionary ties upon his return to Norway, the request for sponsoring Chen's university education was rejected.[40] In the meantime, Chen left the Middle School to take service in the new administration After a while, he was even called to Beijing to serve in the new government.[41]

Being loyal to a revolutionary teacher meant being disloyal to the missionary teachers, and being a teacher loyal to the Revolution meant being disloyal to the Mission. Perhaps the pupils and the teachers felt torn between their conflicting loyalties to the missionaries

and the Revolution. This dilemma hardened Chen's decision to leave the Middle School. But perhaps the belief by Chen and his comrades that serving China at this critical point was the only right thing to do facilitated their decision.

11. The Return to the Middle School

Once the Revolution had succeeded, the missionaries enthusiastically proclaimed that the end of the Empire had initiated a new era for Christianity.[42] The very same missionaries who told the local Christians to stay away from the Republican Party concluded that it was mostly Christian values that gained traction with the Revolution,[43] thus interestingly taking a certain credit for it. According to Andreas Fleischer, Arthur Hertzberg's successor, the Revolution constituted no less than the first genuine progress that China had experienced during its four-thousand-year-long history and the greatest and most crucial victory that the Christian mission had won in China. Even though the Revolution was damaging for the Middle School in the short term, in the sense that all the teachers left and half of the students, the missionaries believed that the Revolution would bring them better working conditions in the long run.[44] A state with a framework to support Christianity, instead of hindering Christianity, would help the NMS to advance their work.

Furthermore, all the teachers came back to the Middle School. The new Republic proved to be unstable, and Hunan's new governor ended up being assassinated. The governor's secretary, Liang Shi-sheng, barely survived and decided to return to the Middle School[45]. Chen Ren-an came back as a headteacher after 1.5 years in public service. According to Hertzberg, he came back because he was serious about his faith[46]. A few years later, Chen attended the Lutheran Theological Seminary, aspiring to be a pastor.[47] Liang, the pupil who left school to join the Republican Army, came back to the Middle School with a plan to enrol in the Seminary to become a pastor.[48]

In addition to references to faith, the missionaries also pointed to political reasons in their attempt to explain the return of the Middle School teachers. Even though the new governor was an outstanding man and a friend of Christianity, the Middle School teachers returned because they did not consider the new governor to be sufficiently revolutionary, it was claimed[49]. Little is known about what that meant, but the importance of personal loyalties in politics was at work here. If the teachers took service in the provincial administration because of the friendship between Liang and the governor, the reason for being in politics was gone when the governor was murdered. However, the Middle School teachers were also sought after for leadership in the local administration, and after a while, they were summoned to serve in the new district administration. Again, several of the teachers left the Middle School. Besides ideological reasons, the terms provided by the missionaries were not very good. In 1914, an English teacher at the Middle School earned twenty dollars a month. A state school in Changsha offered him one hundred.[50]

The founding of the Republic in 1912 established a new social and political order, in which the Hunanese perceived a changing socio-political status from being "aliens to citizens", to borrow a phrase from Liu Yi's study of the national identity of Chinese Christians (Liu 2010). The Hunanese Lutherans found a place for themselves in both society and church. This was what the NMS expected from them. As much as the NMS wanted the Hunanese Christians to focus on their "relation to Christ", they expected them to contribute to the transformation of society. Christians should be "the light and the salt of the world", one of the missionaries claimed, arguing that the Hunanese Lutherans should spread throughout Chinese society to do God's work. Positions in the new provincial administration were mentioned as evidence of a good Christian character.[51]

12. Concluding Comments

This article has explored how the missionaries, teachers, and pupils at the Lutheran Middle School in Hunan negotiated conflicting claims on church membership and national citizenship. The NMS Middle School provides examples of the general trends in mission–state and church–state relations in the early years of the Republic, but it also reveals some

unexpected outcomes of the intense encounter between Christianity and Hunanese nationalism. As with other mission schools during the same period, the NMS Middle School was a contested space. In the contact zone of the Middle School, Chinese nationalistic sentiments underscored the problems inherent in Christianity and colonialism. Pupils and teachers negotiated the competing loyalties of their church membership and republican civic duty by rejecting the NMS's administrative supremacy in the educational sphere. Meanwhile, the missionaries navigated the boundaries between church and state in asserting ecclesiastical authority in a new sociopolitical context of China, and they seldom spoke with one voice. The future Chinese Lutheran pastors were just as rebellious as the so-called "heathen" pupils, opposing missionary teachers, as well as the Christian and non-Christian teachers. In the politicized space of the Lutheran school, there were no easily delineated categories, but multiple stakeholders coexisted and pursued different interests and agendas.

What is clear is that the Hunanese pupils and teachers actively constructed their religious identity as they adapted and adjusted to the needs and concerns of Hunanese society. Being a Christian was being a revolutionary. The Hunanese revolutionaries framed their state- and nation-building programs in light of the Taiping war, establishing a link between their radicalism and the past, but they subverted the Confucian-inspired Hunan's master narrative and proclaimed to liberate Hunan from the yoke of the Confucian imperial system. Given the fundamental importance of this narrative to Hunan's collective identity, it was an explosive break from the past. When they succeeded, the same Norwegian missionaries who had forbidden "their Christians" to interfere with revolutionaries enthusiastically proclaimed that the end of the Qing Empire initiated a new era for Christianity. By associating the 1911 Revolution with the advent of Christian values, the missionaries even claimed some of the credits for the wider sociopolitical changes for themselves. In an effort to assert the presence of the church in the post-1911 era, the Norwegians aligned with and praised the Hunanese Lutherans for finding a place for themselves in the social, political, and religious spheres.

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Notes

1 https://www.vid.no/en/research/vids-fremragende-forskningsmiljoer/connected-histories-contested-values/.

2 *Referat fra conferentsen i Changsha, fra fredag den 27de apriltil onsdag den 9de Mai 1906* (Mission- and Diakonia Archives, VID Specialized University A-1065/Db/L-0002): pp. 3–4.

3 Ibid., p. 3.

4 https://www.vid.no/historisk-arkiv/ressurser/nms-people-places/fredrikke-mariane-johanne-hertzberg/.

5 *Referat fra conferentsen i Changsha, fra fredag den 27de april til onsdag den 9de mai 1906*: p. 5.

6 *Referat for konferentsen 1908 paa Kuling* (Mission- and Diakonia Archives, VID Specialized University. A-1065/Db/L-0002/04): p. 9.

7 *Årsmelding 1908* (Mission- and Diakonia Archives, VID Specialized University. A-1065/Dp/L-0001/02): p. 6.

8 https://www.vid.no/historisk-arkiv/ressurser/nms-people-places/arthur-johan-hertzberg/.

9 *Referat fra konferentsen i Sinhwa 8-20de februar 1914* (Mission- and Diakonia Archives, VID Specialized University. A-1065/Db/L-0003/03): p. 49.

10 The text on the banner to the left of the door behind the students and teachers has this text: 湖南信義中學堂 [湖南信义中学堂, Hunan Xinyi Zhongxue Tang], "The hall of Hunan Lutheran middle school". There are two small signs by the door. The right has this text: 學堂重地 [学堂重地, xuetang zhongdi], "This is a school property". The left has this text: 毋許擅入 [毋许擅入, wuxu shanru], "No entry without permission". Translations: Gustav Steensland.

11 *Referat for konferentsen 1908 paa Kuling:* p. 9.

12 Ibid., p. 9.

13 *Referat fra konferentesen paa Taohwalun 15de til 26de mai 1915* (Mission- and Diakonia Archives, VID Specialized University. A-1065/Db/L-0003/04): p. 50. Read about a Middle School graduate at the Yali School in Feng-Shan Ho, *My Forty Years as a Diplomate* ed. Monto Ho (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Dorrance Publishing Co, 2010).

14 *Referat fra konferantsen paa Taohwalun 27de febr. til 10de mars 1910* (Mission- and Diakonia Archives, VID Specialized University. A-1065/Db/L-0002/06): p. 55.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., p. 50.

17 Sten Bugge, "China", in *Det Norske Misjonsselskaps historie i Hundre År: B. 3: Det Norske Misjonsselskaps historie: Sør-Afrika, China, Sudan.* ed. Olav Guttorm Myklebust et al. (Stavanger: Det Norske Misjonsselskap, 1949): p. 223.

18 Bugge, in *Det Norske Misjonsselskaps historie i hundre År: B. 3: Det Norske Misjonsselskaps historie: Sør-Afrika, China, Sudan*: pp. 223–24.

19 Ibid., p. 224.

20 Ibid., pp. 223–24.

21 Fredrikke Hertzberg, "Bryte nyland." *Ved den første milepæl. Fra Det Norske Missionsselskaps Kinamission gjennem 25 aar*. (Stavanger: Det Norske Missionsselskaps trykkeri, 1927): pp. 79, 81–82.

22 Ibid., p. 82.

23 *Referat for konferentsen 1908 paa Kuling:* p. 9.

24 *Referat fra konferentsen i Changsha i 1912* (Mission- and Diakonia Archives, VID Specialized University. A-1065/Db/L-0003/02): p. 16.

25 Ibid., p. 16.

26 Gotteberg, Johan Arthur. *Jernporten aabnet.* (Mission and Diakonia Archives, VID Specialized University. A-1350): pp. 21–22.

27 *Referat fra konferentsen i Sinhwa 8-20de februar 1914*: p. 27.

28 *Konferentsen i Ningxiang 21de februar til 3die marts 1909* (Mission- and Diaconia Archive, VID Specialized University): p. 10.

29 Ibid., p. 9.

30 *Referat fra konferantsen paa Taohwalun 27de febr. Til 10de mars 1910*: p. 2.

31 Bugge, in *Det Norske Misjonsselskaps Historie I Hundre År: B. 3: Det Norske Misjonsselskaps Historie: Sør-Afrika, China, Sudan.*

32 Gotteberg. p. 23.

33 Andreas Fleisher. «Fra Yiyang og Taohwalun—Revolutionen». *Norsk Missionstidende*, no 9 (1912): p. 208.

34 Bugge. In *Det Norske Misjonsselskaps historie i hundre År: B. 3: Det Norske Misjonsselskaps historie: Sør-Afrika, China, Sudan*: p. 224.

35 *Referat fra konferentsen i Sinhwa 8-20de februar 1914*: pp. 41–43.

36 Bugge, in *Det Norske Misjonsselskaps historie i hundre år: B. 3: Det Norske Misjonsselskaps historie: Sør-Afrika, China, Sudan*: p. 205.

37 *Referat fra konferantsen paa Taohwalun 27de febr. til 10de mars 1910*: p. 63.

38 Ibid., p. 63.

39 *Referat fra konferentsen i Yiyang 1911:* p. 20.

40 *Referat fra konferentsen i Sinhwa 8-20de februar 1914*: p. 48.

41 Andreas Fleisher, *Tillæg til Fleishers aarsberetning: Siste halvaar paa Toawhalun*, 1911 (Mission- and Diakonia Archives, VID Specialized University A-1065/Dp/L-0001/02): p. 2.

42 Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China, Blackwell Guides to Global Christianity* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012): p. 95.

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44 Andreas Fleisher, «Fra Yiyang og Taohwalun—Revolutionen». *Norsk Missionstidende*, no 9 (1912): p. 205.

45 Fleisher 1912, p. 208

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48 *Referat fra konferentsen i Sinhwa 8-20de februar 1914*: p. 42.

49 Fleischer 1912, p. 208

50 Ibid., pp. 49–50.

51 *Referat fra konferensen i Changsha 7-17 februar 1917* (Mission- and Diakonia Archives, VID Specialized University. A-1065/Db/L-0004/01): pp. 49–50.

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Article

Inculturation at Home: The Belgian Catholic Project for Chinese Students (1920–1930s)

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Abstract: Initiated by Vincent Lebbe in 1920, the Belgian Catholic project for Chinese students was a harbinger of inculturation. Contrary to the impression that the Catholic Church reacted slowly to the demand of indigenisation in the early twentieth century, this article demonstrates that a project specifically designed for Chinese students had already been prepared for this purpose back in Belgium. In other words, through the fostering of intercultural understanding and personal contacts between students abroad and home communities, the Belgian Catholic project became part of the Leuven school's missiological initiative, which was meant to realise Church implantation in mission countries. In order to maximise the contacts between young Chinese intellectuals and the Belgian Catholic milieu, Lebbe and his associates strategically anchored their cause into the allocation of the Sino-Belgian Indemnity Scholarship, despite stiff competition. The Catholic efforts to encourage a sense of unity evoked sympathy in Belgian society towards China, and in time contributed to charitable support for war victims at the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War. Though originally driven by evangelical purposes and ideological challenges, the spirit of inculturation gave rise to an awareness of human solidarity, a legacy worthy of a true apostolate.

Keywords: Belgian Catholic project for Chinese students; inculturation; Vincent Lebbe; missiology; Sino-Belgian Boxer Indemnity Scholarship

1. Introduction

The early twentieth century is seen as a period of growth of the indigenised Church in China (for example Charbonnier 2007; Young 2006, pp. 450–68; Duan 2017; Z. Wang 2004; Gu 2010). Compared with the narratives of the reform efforts of the Protestants, those from the Catholic mission during this period seemed to be more passive and less connected with Chinese intellectuals, hence the smaller influences. In the Protestant scene, Daniel H. Bays regarded 1900–1927 as the "Golden Age" of missions, coining the term "Sino-Foreign Protestant Establishment" to highlight a group of "well-educated, well-connected, and articulate Western and Chinese" with their associations and journal influencing the intellectual world,[1] a term which has also been noticed by Chinese scholars (Yao and Luo 2000, pp. 180–90). In the Catholic scene, attention was paid to the Belgian Lazarist (*Congrégation de la Mission*) missionary Vincent Lebbe 雷鳴遠 (1877–1940), who advocated indigenisation, and the Vatican's encouragement of this direction, overcoming the opposition of the French Protectorate (Wiest 1999, pp. 33–37; Join-Lambert et al. 2017; Young 2013). In the process, Lebbe worked closely with prominent Chinese intellectuals, such as Ying Lianzhi 英斂之 (1867–1926) and Ma Xiangbo 馬相伯 (1840–1939). Olivier Sibre stressed the trusting and direct relations maintained between Chinese intellectuals and the Holy See (Sibre 2012). Nevertheless, despite Lebbe's efforts and the papal endorsement, many Catholic missionaries were in practice reluctant to implement change (Ward 2006, p. 84; Kroeger 2013, p. 100; Bays 2012, p. 141). In addition, French opposition to protect its vested interests behind the Protectorate frustrated the joint endeavours. Robert E. Carbonneau described the period of 1919–1934 as "despite reorganization, Chinese Catholicism possessed foreign,

more than native status within the Chinese psyche. Attempts at inculturation had made limited progress." (Carbonneau 2001, p. 521).

In sum, the study on the question of indigenisation is largely focused on the happenings taking place within China. Yet, as the Vatican endorsement implied, the promotion of an indigenised Church was not specific to China but was related to a general awareness that emerged in the Church. Hence, events outside China, including in missionary home countries, also had considerate impacts on this process. A broader examination in the geographical sense would help to re-evaluate the Church's historical experiences. In this regard, utilising the Vincent Lebbe archives as a core source,[2] this research reveals the Catholic effort to facilitate inculturation[3] during the interwar period in Europe, through tracing the development of the Belgian Catholic project for Chinese students initiated by Lebbe in 1920.[4]

Inculturation, as José M. de Mesa put it, entails cultural sensitivity and its rise in the Church in the early twentieth century that prepared a climate for thinking about the Church differently. This vision turned the missionary approaches away from simply modelling on the western Church. Instead, it suggests that a local Church ought to be born anew in its own culture (De Mesa 2013, pp. 225–26). To some extent, the level of inculturation more or less precipitates the growth of indigenisation. Concerning the paradigm shifts of missions in particular, Jean-Paul Wiest furthered the analysis by David Bosch (Bosch 1991) and summarised two major styles: the "frontier model" and the "messenger model." In comparison with the "frontier model" to conquer the "uncivilised", the "messenger model" entails that missionaries dialogue with people beyond their own frontiers, by respecting cultural and religious diversities. In essence, this approach helps to promote mutual enrichment and human solidarity, serving as the preconditions for inculturation (Wiest 1997, pp. 654–81). In conformity with the latter model, "messengers" could be prepared in their home countries, regardless of the missionary target region.

This article argues that the project heralded inculturation at home by maximising the Belgian Catholic contacts with Chinese young intellectuals as an opportunity for forming mutual understanding. *Contexts of the project* first introduce the project in its ideological and theological contexts, particularly the Leuven school's missiological approach. Moving on to a closer look, *methods of maximising contacts* demonstrate how the project managed to mobilise Belgian society in favour of its cause, with the focus on the allocation of the Sino-Belgian Boxer Indemnity Scholarship 中比庚款獎學金. Finally, *implications beyond apostolate* provides an examination of its influences showing that the efforts to facilitate the spirit of inculturation contributed to general sympathy towards China in Belgium, as shown in the relief to China at the beginning of the second Sino-Japanese war (1937–1945).

2. Contexts of the Project

The project for students commenced when the endeavours to promote an indigenised Church in China were obstructed; at the same time, young Chinese intellectuals played a more and more important role in questioning the raison d'être of religion. Away from China, Lebbe found the alternative to offset this tendency by bringing Catholics in Europe in contact with students abroad. Albeit initiated in France, it was in Belgium where the project was grounded, in tandem with the development of missiology originated in Leuven.

Lebbe returned to Europe in 1920, following the conflicts with his Lazarist superior in Tianjin and a French minister concerning the "Laoxikai Incident 老西開事件" in 1916 (Leclercq 1958, pp. 146–52; Lü and Qi 2018, pp. 1–7, 33, 218). The standpoint taken by Lebbe to protest against the forced annexation using mission as pretext led to the suppression of all his social projects.[5] Meanwhile, an attempt to build the diplomatic Sino-Vatican relationship deployed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lu Zhengxiang 陸徵祥 (1871–1949) failed in 1918 (Ticozzi 2009). Formally refusing any plan for Sino-Vatican relations, the French Government declared that this action was "significantly unfriendly." (Minister of France in Beijing 1918).

Despite sympathies from the Vatican, the situation in China was far from being on Lebbe's side. In 1919, Pope Benedict XV issued the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* (That Momentous), which proposed an appreciation for cultural differences, a separation of the Church from political power, and the need to develop the indigenous priesthood (Benedict XV 1919). Yet due to the tense relationship with the Lazarist mission, Lebbe was sent back. In France, he was allowed to take care of Chinese students, under the charge of Jean Budes de Guébriant 光若翰 (1860–1935), the Bishop of Guangzhou, who had been appointed by the Holy See as Apostolic Visitor to investigate the China mission and travelled back to France together with him (Leclercq 1958, pp. 215–16).

The contemporary ideological movements prompted this "project for Chinese students in Europe (*œuvres d'étudiants chinois en Europe*)." The first two decades of the twentieth century saw the fervent Diligent Work-Study Movement to France 留法勤工儉學運動 attracting a considerable number of young Chinese, who favoured the secularised ideology. In the eyes of the students going to France, the 1905 law on the separation of Church and state made this country an egalitarian and secular model, free from religious interference (Chen 1996, p. 63). These students consolidated their view of religion when they came in contact with anti-clerical ideology in France and further took the lead to discuss the role and nature of religion in China, contributing intellectual resources to the Anti-Christian Movement 非基督教運動 in 1922, a topic studied by Zhu Haiyan, another contributor to this special issue (Lutz 1988, pp. 33–38).

Realising the prominent role of young intellectuals in influencing the Chinese public, Lebbe sensed the threat in this tendency to the faith and felt it necessary to draw the Catholic attention to Chinese students abroad (Lebbe 1925, p. 20). Beginning in Paris where work-study students gathered, Lebbe noticed their difficulties coordinating work and studies (Soetens 2003, p. 496). As an approach to access these students, he set up French-language classes and looked for placements for them through his connections (Lebbe 1920b). Though the number of students joining him gradually increased in two years, in his letters to Bishop de Guébriant, Lebbe felt that this project found little support from his superiors (Lebbe 1920a). Affiliated with the Society of Foreign Missions of Paris (*Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris*), the Bishop could offer limited help (Leclercq 1958, p.236). He suggested to Lebbe to constitute a group of people interested in and capable of continuing his good initiatives effectively (Lebbe 1920a).

In contrast with the lukewarm responses in France, his home country Belgium welcomed this project and gradually became its headquarters. The approval from Désiré-Joseph Mercier (1851–1926), Archbishop of Mechelen and Primate of Belgium, was crucial. After his personal encouragement in 1921 (Mercier 1921), the Cardinal gave this project official acknowledgement: he permitted the printing of the journal *Bulletin de la Jeunesse catholique chinoise* (Bulletin of the Chinese Catholic Youth) in 1922 (Lebbe 1922), and authorised the preaching in the Brussels parish in 1923 (Mercier 1923). In 1924, he confirmed forty Chinese students at Averbode Abbey during Easter (Storck 1924), and approved Lebbe as the chaplain of the Chinese student's organisation, Catholic Association of Chinese Youth (*Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Sinica*) (Mercier 1924).

With the constant affirmation of the Cardinal, Lebbe managed to enlist a group of devoted associates in Belgium. After his visit to Verviers, its vicar André Boland (1891–1955) enrolled in the project from 1922. Having had been in contact with Théodore Nève (1879–1963) since 1913, Abbot of the Saint Andrews Abbey (*Abbaye de Saint-André* or *Sint-Andriesabdij*) near Bruges, Lebbe was invited by Nève to give a talk to the monks in 1921 and the abbey began to welcome Chinese students (Soetens 2003, p. 498). In 1926, Lebbe obtained a building in Leuven for the purpose of establishing a "Home" for Chinese students–a centre for social events, talks, religious events and administration (Boland 1928). Before the ordination of six Chinese Bishops at the St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican in October, Nève agreed to take up the responsibilities for continuing the projects for China in his correspondence with Lebbe (Thèodre 1926). The latter would return to China in the following year, at the request of new Chinese Bishops.

On 28 January 1927, the non-profit association "Chinese Catholic Foyer" (*Foyer Catholique Chinois*, F.C.C.) was established at the abbey to manage the student association, the centre in Leuven, as well as student loans (see Section 3; Rapport à l'Assemblée Générale 1929). In October, Lu Zhengxiang, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, entered the abbey to become a Benedictine, who served as vice president of the F.C.C. In August 1930, Boland founded a new association, Society of Auxiliaries of the Missions (*Société des Auxiliaires des Missions*, S.A.M.) in Leuven (Gillet 2012, p. 123). By the decision of Willem van Rossum (1854–1932), Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Propaganda Fide*), the project for China was handed over to the S.A.M, with the headquarters shifted from Bruges to Leuven (Boland 1930b). Boland said that in 1930 an adequate number of Belgian priests had joined the project (Boland 1930a).

Thus far, the keen support evoked in Belgium consolidated the Catholic projects for Chinese students. Clues to make sense of the enthusiasm could be spotted in the objectives of the F.C.C. and the S.A.M. The former states that its main purpose was "the creation of Chinese university centers and seminaries, in all Belgium, and more particularly in Leuven, and the general philosophical and theological training of auxiliaries for the indigenous missions in China." (Rapport à l'Assemblée Générale 1929) The latter held the dual purposes: "at the service of the indigenous bishops and to look after students from the mission countries, particularly from China, both in Belgium and abroad." (Banyangira-Rusagara 2020)As the successor of Lebbe, the tasks of Boland were twofold, "continuing the apostolate among Chinese students and preparing priests to one day serve the new Chinese bishops." (Gillet 2012, p. 108) The juxtaposition indicates that the project for students in Belgium was viewed as part of the preparation for the indigenous Church in China.

The discussion of indigenisation has accounted for an important place in missiology.[6] In fact, the main impetus behind the development of the student project also spearheaded the formation of missiology as a discipline in Belgium. Though Joseph Schmidlin (1876–1944), appointed as the first chair of Catholic missiology at Münster University in 1914, was considered the "father" of this discipline (Üffing 2013, p.35), the German school focused on mission history and statistics, leaving the connection with colonialism almost entirely unquestioned. The Leuven school, instead, directly addressed the missionary issues from the field, with the main aim being church plantation (Vandenberghe 2015, pp. 169, 157). As an embryonic form, the summer course "*Semaines d'ethnologie religieuse*" (Catholic Week of Religious Ethnology) was authorised by Cardinal Mercier in 1912; the goal was both to study the missionaries' observations from the field and to provide the missionaries with ethnological knowledge to defend the religion (Courtois 2015, pp. 24, 26, 17, 35). As early as in November 1913, Lebbe was invited by the Cardinal to give a lecture at the Higher Institute of Philosophy in Leuven on China and the China Mission (Levaux 1948, p166).

Stated in 1923 by Albert Lallemand and carried out by the renowned missiologist Pierre Charles (1883–1954), the "*Semaine de missiologie*" (Missiological Week) at the Leuven University scheduled Lebbe several times as a speaker, and invited Abbot Nève to become a member of the organisational committee. In addition, Lebbe was admitted to the permanent bureau. At a speech in 1925, he called for sympathetic and just treatment from the Church towards China, so as not to be the enemy of Chinese students abroad (Soetens 2003, p. 497). During the Missiological Weeks, missionaries gathered to exchange experiences, common obstacles and practical news. Charles's initiatives had an enormous success within Belgian missionary circles.[7]

Through the journal of the Saint Andrews Abbey, *Bulletin des Missions* (Bulletin of Missions), the abbey stimulated the discussions of the danger of mixing mission with colonialism, the lack of a native clergy, the importance of social action, and the need for cultural respect (Vandenberghe 2015, pp. 158–59). The editor in charge, Edouard Neut (1890–1975), was a keen supporter of Lebbe. In 1923, the journal circulated his memoir addressed to the Propaganda Fide in 1918 on the state of evangelisation in China. In 1925, his Leuven speech

was reported in detail, together with those of other speakers on the topic of an indigenous Church (Papeians De Morchoven 2002, p. 165; Neut 1925, pp. 329–37).

In the burgeoning Belgian missiological context, the project for Chinese students was a component of indigenisation, an occasion to cultivate understandings via contacts. This connection could be seen in the foundation of the "Association for Interracial Appreciation and Collaboration" (*Association Universitaire Catholique d'Aide aux Missions*, A.U.C.A.M.) by Charles in 1925. In order to develop an interest in mission and in global populations at the university, Charles invited the academics to break down their own barriers, by trying to build bridges of understanding between themselves and the academic circles of the mission's target countries. Personal contact was the very beginning of all, which could be easily achieved in Leuven between students of different nationalities. A case in point was the "Home" for Chinese students founded by Lebbe (Van Lierde 1948, pp. 711–12).

In 1946, François Legrand (1903–1984) reiterated the opportunities of cultural enrichment offered by students abroad: "A trip to Europe or America by Chinese intellectuals is an excellent opportunity to bring them into contact with Catholic circles and activities in the countries they are visiting […] this cannot fail to have a fortunate influence and to initiate very useful cultural relations between China and Catholic countries."[8] The project for Chinese students in Belgium was referred to as "A lot of good has been done by the organisations that look after Chinese students abroad […] It is worth recalling the good work done by Father Lebbe for Chinese students in France and Belgium." (Legrand 1947, p. 62).

As Charles and Legrand championed, step by step personal contacts with intellectuals from mission countries would be helpful to prepare for inculturation, and eventually Church implantation. This ideal, however, required practical strategies to first attract public attention in Belgium. Lebbe, Boland and associates steered society towards this direction through flexible dissemination into existing Sino-Belgian enterprises.

3. Methods of Maximising Contacts

From a theological aspect, the project needed to mobilise the public to maximise the chances of personal contacts. From a financial aspect, the project demanded continuous funding to be sustained and develop. To fulfil the two necessities, one of the outreaches began with the Belgian business circle before shifting to a more stable source, the Sino-Belgian Boxer Indemnity.

In 1923, Boland founded the organisation "Belgian-Chinese Friendship" (*Amitiés Belgo-Chinois*, A.B.C.) in Verviers, with the consent of Cardinal Mercier as its honorary president in 1924 (Boland n.d.). The A.B.C. was not exclusively ecclesiastical but aimed to solve the difficulties of the Chinese students by finding sponsors among businessmen. For the Chinese students in Belgium, it offered to provide student loans and training, as well as help with work placements and housing (Boland 1923). It informed Belgian industrialists of the economic potential of China by echoing the ambitions of King Leopold II,[9] namely that "our future is in China." It argued that Belgium would be in a competitive position to benefit from Chinese economic growth if the students returned with a favourable impression of the country. Thus, the role of the A.B.C. was to facilitate Belgian businessmen's contacts with students and call for their support (Boland n.d.).

Most of the early funds came from bankers and industrialists. First, A. Simonis from 1923, then the industrialists Georges Laloux and Hubert Duquenne from 1925, members of the board of directors of the *Crédit Général Liégeois*, and finally, the businessman Paul Staes. The A.B.C. branch in Ghent received support from the industrialist Joseph de Hemptinne (Soetens 2003, p. 498). Despite such sources of income, the financial situation remained unstable and became, around 1925, "dreadful" and "catastrophic."(Boland 1924; Boland 1925b) From 1923, in order to provide student loans, the A.B.C. borrowed from the *Banque Belge pour l'Étranger* (Belgian Foreign Bank) under the guarantee of Simonis, which the students promised to repay within ten years (Boland 1925a). But in December 1924, the bank decided to cease the loans from the following year (Banque Belge pour l'Étranger

1924). The number of students requesting money increased from thirty-nine in 1923 to sixty-four in 1926 (Lebbe 1923; Boland 1926). Although the Propaganda Fide arranged to donate an annual fifty thousand francs during 1926–1928, there still remained a deficit of over 100,000 francs that needed to be found in the three years (Boland 1926).

Meanwhile, chances of seeking funds from the Sino-Belgian Boxer Indemnity emerged, which was soon noticed by Lebbe and his associates. If its allocation could help to accommodate Chinese students in Belgian Catholic institutions, it would both facilitate the project and ameliorate the financial problem. Not without competitors and opponents, they succeeded in directing the funding committee to support its cause.

After the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, China signed the Boxer Protocol to pay indemnities amounting to 450 million taels of fine silver to fourteen countries, over a course of thirty-nine years with a 4% interest charge (Xinchou Tiaoyue 1901). Belgium over-claimed by about 50% in relation to the actual damages (S. Wang 2011, pp. 40–41). Another country making exaggerated demands for the indemnity was the United States, who were the first to return the amount in 1908, on the condition that the fund be used as scholarships for Chinese students to study in the United States. Belgium followed suit. In September 1925, the Belgian Minister in Beijing and the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs agreed on the principles of managing the indemnity, but the following discussion was intermitted for four years due to the Northern Expedition 北伐戰爭 (Zhongbi Gengkuan Weiyuanhui Mishuchu 1935d, p. 1). According to the document signed by the two ministers, the money was to be remitted to a Sino-Belgian Commission allocating funds to projects including education and philanthropy (Ministers of Foreign Affairs 1925).

In 1926, Lebbe's brother Robert noticed the news of the Boxer Indemnity and suggested he take action so that the money would not be monopolised by the anti-clericalists (Sohier 1984, p. 161). Before the official agreement took place, non-governmental arrangements had been made among the anti-clerical circle. As early as in 1920, Chu Minyi 褚民誼 (1884–1946), member of the Sino-French Education Association 華法教育會, anarchist Paul Gille (1865–1950), and Jules Hiernaux (1881–1944), director of the Charleroi Labour University (*l'Université du Travail de Charleroi*) 沙勒羅瓦勞動大學 began to urge the remittance. Chinese students at Charleroi also voiced the demand. Around 1922–1923, a Chinese diplomat, Belgian politicians and educationists, including Wang Jingqi 王景岐 (1882–1941), Chinese envoy plenipotentiary to Belgium, Jules Destrée (1863–1936), socialist politician, Gille Hiernaux, among others, gathered to discuss the issue concerning the indemnity (La Dette des Boxers et Nos Amis Chinois n.d.). At this point, the money was likely to subsidise the Sino-Belgian Institute 中比大學 or 曉露槐工業專修館 affiliated to the Charleroi Labour University founded in 1924, where many work-study students from France had transferred to, including the future Chinese Communist General Nie Rongzhen 聶荣臻 (1899–1992) (Pan 2012).

When the interrupted Sino-Belgian Commission of Education and Philanthropy 中比庚款委員會 (*Commission Sino-Belge d'Instruction et de Philanthropie*) resumed in May 1929, regular meetings consisting of Chinese and Belgian representatives were held from June to August to specify the allocation of the indemnity. Concerning Chinese students in Belgium, the commission decided that 12% of the total amount would be used on academic affairs (S. Wang 2011, pp. 544–46). From 1929 to 1933, this amount was converted to fifty-four full scholarships of fifteen thousand francs a year each and twenty half scholarships worth seven thousand francs (Zhongbi Gengkuan Weiyuanhui Mishuchu 1935d, p. 1). While Chu Minyi chaired the commission[10] and Charleroi were given nine scholarships in 1929,[11] Soetens found it surprising that the number of students entering the Labour University dropped compared to prior to their availability. Judging from the overall statistics from 1929 to 1939, of the 309 grants awarded, Leuven was in the lead with 69 (Soetens 2003, pp. 495, 505).

The aforementioned might partly be explained by Lebbe and Boland's influence on the commission, starting with the letter from Robert on the indemnity. In 1927, Boland was approached by the businessman Maurice Pieters who initiated the "Sino-Belgian Inter-

university Committee" (*Comité interuniversitaire sino-belge*, C.I.S.B.) 中比大學聯合會, consisting of rectors, bankers, an executive committee and a consultative committee formed of Chinese students (Comité Interuniversitaire Sino-Belge 1927). Pieters as the secretary invited Boland to join as a member of its executive committee one week after the foundation (Pieters 1927; Comité Sino-Belge 1927). In 1928, the C.I.S.B. applied to the Sino-Belgian Commission to be its delegate in Belgium (Luo 1929a). At that time, the "Reclaim Education Rights Movement 收回教育權運動" had been underway in China since 1924. The Anti-Christian Movement turned its target to mission-run schools and universities, for fear that foreign education would obliterate the students' sense of Chinese nationhood. Student and educational societies demanded that the Bureau of Education outlaw educational institutions owned by foreigners, which became part of the anti-imperialist movement across the Republic of China (Waldron 1995, pp. 158–59). The Nationalist Government ordered in 1926 that foreign schools were to be registered with the Ministry of Education and accept its instruction and supervision (Lutz 1971, pp. 215–55; Y. Wang 2015). Given this context, the Chinese Embassy in Belgium sent back confidential reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 17 June 1929, opposing the appointment of the C.I.S.B. on the grounds that granting access to a foreign organisation with unclear intentions would violate the right to a national education. Inevitably, students had started to protest outside the Belgian embassy (Luo 1929b).

From 17 to 27 June, the Sino-Belgian Commission held five meetings without finalising the criteria and the executives of the scholarship. On the 27th, one of the Belgian representatives, Joseph Hers (1884–1965), suggested to take a pause for the commission to do detailed research on all the proposals and applications (Zhongbi Gengkuan Weiyuanhui Mishuchu 1935b, pp. 3–22).

Hers was sent to China in 1905 as a consular agent to learn the Chinese language and act as an interpreter for the Belgian legislation and consulates, before participating in the business coordination of the Belgium-invested railways, including the Lanzhou-Lianyungang line 隴海鐵路 and the Kaifeng-Luoyang line 汴洛鐵路. Spending decades in China, he forged strong links with his compatriots sojourned there, but he also sympathised with the local people and deplored discrimination (Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer 2015). As a foreign corresponding member of the C.I.S.B. from 1927 (Comité Sino-Belge 1927), Hers was in charge jointly with Chu of academic affairs (Zhongbi Gengkuan Weiyuanhui Mishuchu 1935a, pp. 31, 36, 40–41, 45), whilst judging by the study abroad guidebook published in 1934, Hers seemed to play the decisive role. The book suggested that prospective students consult Hers, and after arrival approach Pieters of the C.I.S.B. in case of any settling-in problems (Haiwai Liuxue Zixun Weiyuanhui 1934, pp. 15, 23). Chu was absent from the recommended contacts.

On 8 July, Lebbe sent an urgent letter from China to his associates in Belgium, asking for supportive evidence for obtaining the indemnity "as quickly as possible" (in capital letters) to Mr. Hers, who was a former "Leuvenist", a member of the commission and "very devoted to our cause." He concluded with an appeal for urgency: "Quick! A delay can compromise everything." (Lebbe 1929) On the 25th, Hers sent a telegraph to Boland, asking him to reveal the total number of Chinese students enrolled in Leuven last year (Hers 1929).

Four days later, on the 29th, the commission meeting restarted, during which the rules to subsidise students and the quota attributed to each educational institution were fixed. In addition, despite opposition, the C.I.S.B. was chosen as the sole delegate, to gather information and send requests to China, and to carry out the decisions by the commission in Belgium (Zhongbi Gengkuan Weiyuanhui Mishuchu 1935b, pp. 22–30). Its official status was "under the high patronage of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and Sciences and Arts of Belgium, and Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Public Education of China." Objections did not vanish thereafter. In July 1930, the "Sino-Belgian League in Belgium" (*La Ligue Sino-Belge en Belgique*) circulated a manifesto against Chu and Pieters, accusing them of colluding in order to monopolise the Boxer Indemnity for their own interests, by creating

the C.I.S.B. as a smoke screen and urging Belgian academics to discredit the organisation (La Ligue Sino-Belge en Belgique 1930). Nonetheless, the C.I.S.B. carried on. The annual reports for the years 1931–1933 stated that the commission was generally satisfied with it (Zhongbi Gengkuan Weiyuanhui Mishuchu 1935a, pp. 14, 36, 41, 45).

In principle, the C.I.S.B. had only executive duties, while the decision to grant scholarships was solely made by the commission, based on the students' performance in exams (Soetens 2003, p. 505). Yet the correspondence of Boland suggests that he could effectively influence the commission through Hers. In a letter written in October 1930, concerning a scholarship recommendation for the student Gu Yiqing 顧益卿 (Pierre Ku I King), Boland wrote: "As I have a certain influence over Mr Hers, I hope that it is still possible-given the late hour-that our friend will succeed." (Boland 1930c) According to the "Table of Sino-Belgian Box Indemnity Scholars 中比庚款委員會留比學生人名學歷表", Gu was awarded the full scholarship for his studies in commerce at the University of Liège during 1930–1931 (Zhongbi Gengkuan Weiyuanhui Mishuchu 1935c, p. 17). Having finished his studies in 1932, Gu went to Shanghai and worked as the secretary for the well-known lay Catholic industrialist Lu Bohong 陸伯鴻 (1875–1937) (Zhongbi Youyi Hui 1933, p. 23).

In July 1931, Boland wrote to Hers saying that Pieters had leaked to him Hers's plan to promote certain fields of studies, which he applauded. One of his suggestions was to discourage the study of politics and social sciences given that it was easier to achieve high marks in this course, thus depriving students engaged in "more serious and difficult" studies of the opportunity to obtain funds (Boland 1931). Hers replied that from the following year, scholarships would no longer be awarded to students in the social, economic, political, colonial and diplomatic sciences (Hers 1931). The decision was officially announced in May 1932 to Chinese students in Belgium (Comité Interuniversitaire Sino-Belge 1932).

Up to this point, the Catholic project for Chinese students successfully embedded itself into official Sino-Belgian undertakings, creating the groundwork for Catholic contacts with young Chinese intellectuals. For example, links were established between students and the Belgian families who welcomed them, including the Heureux and Braun families in Brussels, Lejeune and Gheur in Verviers, Levaux in Liège and de Brouwer in Ghent (Soetens 2003, p. 500). The underlying spirit to conduct intercultural contacts was "Christian universalism", which missiologist Charles characterised as envisaging "the community of all men, and their unity in the mystical body of Christ." (Van Lierde 1948, pp. 711–12) As a result, the mentality of a fundamental human unity generated a sense of sympathy in Belgian society towards China, not limited to apostolic outcomes.

4. Implications beyond Apostolate

In the overview of the work done in Belgium from 1922 to 1929, Boland summarised that one of the main results was the sympathy towards China through publicity. On the one hand, to eliminate misconceptions about China in Belgian opinion; on the other, to introduce the real China with its history, traditions, and moral strengths. The methods employed were over two thousand lectures defending Chinese points of view, Chinese arts displays, monthly bulletins (for five years, distributed in thirty-nine countries) as well as newspaper articles. He said: "We dare to claim that China has never had such publicists." (Boland 1929).

These aforementioned efforts yielded ripple effects. For instance, it drew Lu Zhengxiang to the St. Andrews Abbey, and thanks to his reputation and personal networks, Sino-Belgian Catholic connections were further enhanced. In 1932, after he had made his final vows, Lu drafted a letter to the chargé d'affaires to Belgium, possibly Luo Huai 羅懷,[12] expressing gratitude for his attendance, and enclosing the journal of the abbey, the *Bulletin des Missions*. He emphasised, inter alia, that journal editor Neut had promoted justice for China over twenty years, demanded the abolition of extraterritoriality, a ban on opium trade and the equal treatment of Chinese clergy. The strong compassion embodied in the journal was a major reason for him to join the abbey in 1927. He hoped that the diplomat would made a one-year subscription to the journal as a gesture of encouragement to

Neut, which would also draw more attention from the abbey towards China in the future (Lu 1932).

The contacts established and the sympathies aroused in Belgium resulted in expressions of humanitarian support towards China, especially at the beginning of the second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) before Belgium had been impacted by the later European warfare. Members affiliated to the project more or less contributed to charitable and relief programs.

In December 1938, as public opinion in Europe was influenced by pro-Japan propaganda, Yu Bin 于斌 (1901–1978), Bishop of Nanjing, asked Lu and Neut to launch a periodical in Belgium to defend the Chinese cause against invasion and to counterbalance Japan. *Le Correspondant Chinois* (The Chinese Correspondent) thus came into existence in February 1939. It inherited Lebbe's approach: Neut oriented the journal as "a publication launched in Belgium by a group of Belgians and Chinese, claiming to be part of the movement that, several years earlier, Lebbe had founded in Belgium—spreading the truth about China, its national renewal and Japan's attitude towards China and the Far East as a whole." (Neut 1942).

More tangible aid came from the wartime hospitals in Shanghai. On 19 December 1937, the Belgian Committee for Relief for the Victims of the War in China (*Le Comité belge de secours aux victimes de la guerre en Chine*) was set up in Brussels to help the victims under the patronage of the Red Cross. The members included delegates from business, as well as missionary and charitable groups, among which Franz Thys was the president of the C.I.S.B, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Members of the Belgian Committee for Relief for the Victims of the War in China.

Position	Name	Title
Chairman	Mr. Galopin	Governor of the *Société Générale*
Vice-Chairman	Professor Nolf	Chairman of the Belgian Red Cross
	Mr. Heymans	Chairman of the *Krediet Bank*
	Mr. Orts	Minister Plenipotentiary
Secretary General	Mr. Dronsart	Director General of the Belgian Red Cross
	Mr. Disière	Consul General of Belgium
Treasurer	Mr. Straetmans	Managing Director of the *Banque Belge pour l'Étranger*
Member	R.P. Joseph Rutten	Superior General of C.I.C.M. (*Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae*)
	R.P. Verhaegen	Vice Superior General of C.I.C.M.
	Mr. A. François	
	Mr. Henri Rolin	
	General Pontus	
	Mr. Callens	
	Mr. Lambert Jadot	
	Mr. Marchal	
	Mr. Franz Thys	President of the C.I.S.B.
	Mr. Goldschmidt	
	Mr. Berger	
	Mr. Cornez	

The relief programmes comprised three components: a Sino-Belgian hospital, support for maternal assistance and food aid for the civilian population. The first batch of two

hundred thousand francs telegraphed to Shanghai were followed by the surgical equipment for the Sino-Belgian hospital dispatched by the Belgian Red Cross. The committee published in Belgian newspapers asking for donations: "in the name of international solidarity, in the name of compassionate humanity, we appeal to your generosity to relieve the innocent victims of the war in China." (Association Amicale Sino-Belge 1937) The funds and supplies were managed by the Belgian Relief Committee set up in Shanghai. Its members included Joseph Hers as vice-president.[13]

In February 1938, with the subsidy of 6000 dollars from the executive committee, a new hospital named Cihui 慈惠 (Tze Huei) was set up in Xujiahui 徐家匯 (Zikawei) for the refugees in the area, following the Ci'an (Tze An) Maternity Hospital 慈安產科醫院 in Nanshi 南市 (Nantao) (Association Amicale Sino-Belge 1938a). According to its first report, up until June, it was the only one equipped for surgery in Xujiahui (operations totalled 393), and before the work was taken over by the French authorities, a total of 14,852 anti-cholera and anti-typhoid inoculations of refugees were administered by the hospital to prevent epidemics. On average, there were 123 visits to the hospital a day. The expenses borne by the Belgian Relief Committee amounted to $13,578.92 dollars (Tze Huei Hospital 1938).

For at least two winters in 1937 and 1938, a Mrs. van Cutsem gathered Belgian ladies in Shanghai to make layettes to be distributed free of charge by the Cihui Hospital and Ci'an Maternity Hospital. To the later institution, Dr. Tan Qinglan 譚慶瀾 (Jean-Marie Tan Kin Lan, 1897–1962) rendered much help before leaving for Peiping Central Hospital 北平中央醫院 in November 1938 (Association Amicale Sino-Belge 1938b). Tan had studied at the medical school in Leuven (1923–1932) with expertise in surgery and gynaecology by means of the Sino-Belgian Boxer Indemnity Scholarship. He was a member of the Catholic Association of Chinese Youth and present at one of its events in Leuven in 1926 (Q. Wang 2011, p. 270; Zhongbi Gengkuan Weiyuanhui Mishuchu 1935c, p. 20; Tan 1926).

When the Belgian Relief Committee appealed to society for help, it instrumentalised the pitiful memory of 1914, when Belgians had to flee along the roads of Flanders and Wallonia, juxtaposed to the gratitude felt for any outside help during those terrible years (Association Amicale Sino-Belge 1937), evoking sympathy by showing that human experiences resonated. The Catholic project was present, albeit more to express humanitarian concerns rather than for the sake of its apostolate.

5. Conclusions

Driven by evangelical purposes and ideological challenges in the 1920s, Lebbe launched the project for Chinese students in Europe as an alternative to the frustrated indigenisation endeavours in China. The general idea was to prepare the necessary conditions before setting off for the mission. In the case of contacting Chinese students abroad, it was an opportunity for the Catholics to cultivate intercultural understandings, which the Leuven school missiology affirmed. Identifying with this end, Belgium became the headquarters of the project. Further grounds to amplify the chances of contacts were created when Lebbe and Boland gained the upper hand in influencing the allocation of the Sino-Belgian Boxer Indemnity Scholarship. The theory and the practice of facilitating inculturation with a spirit of unity generated sympathy and humanitarian aid from Belgium to China during the war years.

The detailed study of the Belgian Catholic Project for Chinese Students intends to discover the question of inculturation of the Catholic Church in a broader perspective and serves as a case of alternatives to the current historical narrative of the Catholic Church in China. By widening the geographical scope, it shows that during the 1920s and 1930s, though to some extent hindered in China, the indigenised Catholic Church was being prepared within the wider missiological currents for missionary implantation. Moreover, it reveals that cultural sensitivities, dialogues and humanitarian spirits could be cultivated despite diversities and distances.

It needs to be added that Catholics were not the only people promoting a sense of universalism. Paradoxically, though there was ideological competition between the Catholics

and the socialists, they ended up contributing to the same result from different angles. Concerning the Sino-Japanese war, the socialists were the earliest to speak in defence of China against injustice. Émile Vandervelde (1866–1938), president of the Belgian Labor Party and former president of the Second International, is a valid example (Vandervelde 1931). This commonality across discrepancies suggests that a shared pursuit could be found beyond polemics. In a way, it also implies that the spirit of inculturation was not confined to apostolic purpose but could also have practical applications.

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Notes

1 This establishment included people such as John Mott (1865–1955), Cheng Jingyi 誠靜怡 (1881–1939), Liu Tingfang 劉廷芳 (1891–1947), Zhao Zichen 趙紫宸 (1888–1979) and Wu Leichuan 吳雷川 (1870–1944). It had associations including the China Continuation Committee, the National Christian Council of China, Shengming-she 生命社 (Life Fellowship) as well as the journal *Shengming* 生命 (Life Journal). For reform-minded Protestants in favour of indigenisation of the church in China see Bays (2012, pp. 99–104).

2 The Vincent Lebbe archives are stored in the French-speaking Catholic University of Leuven (*Université catholique de Louvain*, U.C.L) in Louvain-la-Neuve, see Guelluy (1981, pp. 401–3). On the site of the historical university (1834–1968) is the Flemish-speaking *Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* (K.U.L.). This article will use "Catholic University of Leuven" to refer to the historical university in Leuven.

3 "The term *en*culturation is supposed to have crossed over from the field of cultural anthropology to missiology through the work of Pierre Charles, but *in*culturation appeared for the first time in the work of Joseph Masson, S.J., in 1962, when he coined the phrase *Catholicisme Inculturé*, or 'inculturation Catholicism'." (Panganiban 2004, p. 61) Acknowledging that the subject in question took place before the existence of this term, this study uses "inculturation" to refer to the series of practices, such as contacts and dialogues, which led to the later theorisation.

4 Research of this project appeared as part of the history of study abroad in Belgium, see Q. Wang (2011); Soetens (2003, pp. 487–505); Pan (2012); Chen (2009).

5 Including the newspaper *Yishi Bao* 益世報 (Social Welfare) and the Catholic Action Union 公教進行會, see Levaux (1948, pp. 188, 176, 192).

6 Missiology, or mission studies, is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry into Christian mission or missions that utilises theological, historical and various social scientific methods. Scholarship in the field was recently reinvigorated by the 2010 centenary of the World Missionary Conference (Edinburgh 1910) and also by new mission statements in this century by global Christian bodies, see Kim and Fitchett-Climenhaga (2022, p. 3).

7 But they caused a storm of protest among French missionaries who felt attacked by Charles's reproach that the French missionary movement was too interwoven with French nationalistic motives and was not doing enough to prepare a full indigenous clergy, see Vandenberghe (2015, pp. 163, 169).

8 Legrand (1947, p. 62) The book was reprinted from *Dossiers de la Commission Synodale* (1945–1946) (Digest of the Synodal Commission). In 1947, it was translated by Jing Ming 景明 into Chinese, Wenhua Fangmian de Chuanjiao Gongzuo 文化方面的傳教工作, published by *Duosheng Yuekan* She 鐸聲月刊社 (Vox Cleri) in Beiping.

9 Leopold II visited China when he was Duke of Brabant in the 1860s. He had great ambitions concerning China, see Vande Walle (2003).

10 The Chinese representatives were Chu Minyi, Zeng Zongjian 曾宗鑑, Li Zhaohuan 黎照寰, Zhu Shiquan 朱世全, Cai Hong 蔡鴻 and Kong Lixing 孔力行, while their Belgian counterparts were Joseph Hers, H. Lambert, Wygerde, Lafontaine and Hubert, see Chen (2012).

11 The distribution was: Université Catholique de Louvain (16), Université Libre de Bruxelles (5), Université de l'État à Liège (5), Université de l'État à Gand (5), Université du Travail à Charleroi (9), École des Arts et Métiers Pierrard-Virton (4) and other institutions (10), see Zhongbi Gengkuan Weiyuanhui Mishuchu (1935c, p. 3).

[12] There were two chargé d'affaires at the embassy in 1932, the other one being Xie Shoukang 謝壽康 (1897–1974). Based on the letter from Luo Huai, he attended the event (Luo 1931).

[13] J. Lafontaine (Chairman), Joseph Hers and A. Loonis (vice-presidents), M. Michaux (secretary), A. Lampo (treasurer).

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Article

Neither Eastern nor Western: Jia Yuming's Support of Independent Churches in the Anti-Christian Movement

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Abstract: The Chinese Christian church was accused of colluding with Western imperialism, and this led to the anti-Christian movement. The Chinese church responded by accelerating a movement of church independence. Discussions of this movement have often been incorporated into a discourse of aggression and resistance between East and West. Such discussions obscure the differences between individuals and the plurality of thought in the Chinese church. Based on the textual analysis of his writings, the article aims to reveal previously overlooked details within Jia Yuming's justification of the independence movement by. On the one hand, Jia responded to nationalism by pointing out the ethnic and national identities and obligations of Christians. On the other hand, he avoided conflict with the Western missions in the process of independence, thus taking the church's independence out of the context of East–West confrontation. Finally, he reconciled the conflict between national identity and the Western image with the ecumenical values of Christ and the Christian reformation of society, unifying both sides with ultimate spirituality. His justification draws attention to an attuned theological path of thought in the process of indigenization of the Chinese church.

Keywords: Jia Yuming; indigenization; Chinese Christian church; the anti-Christian movement; independent churches

1. Introduction

At the Ecumenical Missionary Conference of 1900, a consensus was formed that missionary societies throughout the world had agreed to accept the realization of independence as a basic principle, allowing church development everywhere to return to the spiritual life and offerings of the local Christians themselves, rather than relying on permanent subsidy funding from the mother church (Wu 2004). The Sinicization of Christianity is a historical process that has continued up to the present time, and while the self-reliance movement of the Chinese church shares in this law of development, it also carries with it a strong background of struggle at a particular stage of history. Chinese Christians had a strong drive for self-reliance because of the external environment. In the resolution formed at the Centennial Conference on Christianity in China held in 1907, it was clearly stated that the Chinese church had the right to establish independent churches according to its own views of truth and responsibility, and that it should not be under the control of Western missionaries. The Chinese staff had a strong incentive to compete with Western missionaries for control of the church (Wu 2004). The indigenization of the Church itself was in slow development, but the opposition to imperialist aggression directly accelerated the indigenization movement. Since the late Qing Dynasty, Christianity had never been able to get rid of its image as the Foreign Religion (洋教), and opponents believed that the Church was backed by the forces of Western imperialism. The manifesto of the anti-Christian Students' Union (非基督教学生同盟), published on 9 March 1922, stated:

> 各国资本家……因而大起恐慌，用尽手段，冀延残喘于万一。于是，就先后拥入中国，实行经济的侵略主义了。而现代的基督教及基督教会，就是这经济侵略的

> 先锋队。各国资本家在中国设立教会，无非要诱惑中国人民欢迎资本主义；在中国设立青年会，无非要养成资本家底善良走狗。 (Duan 2004, pp. 184–85)
>
> (Author's translation: The capitalists of all countries …… are thus in a great panic, and are using all means in order to prolong their existence. Thus, they successively swarmed into China and practiced economic aggression. The modern Christianity and Christian churches are the vanguard of this economic aggression. The establishment of churches in China by the capitalists of various countries is nothing but to tempt the Chinese people to welcome capitalism; the establishment of YMCAs in China is nothing but to raise the loyal lackeys of the capitalists.)

The Union's circular message to all schools in China further stated that the purpose of the West was to enslave the Chinese materially with gold and iron and spiritually with the Gospel (金铁奴我以物质，福音奴我以精神) (Duan 2004, p. 184). This wave of linking opposition to Christianity with opposition to Western imperialist aggression intensified after the May Thirtieth Movement (五卅运动). It led directly to the upsurge of nationalism throughout China and the outbreak of a nationwide anti-imperialist and patriotic movement, in which opposition to Christianity became part of the opposition to imperialist aggression.

In the face of the strong challenge from anti-Christian movements, it was difficult for Chinese Christians to argue, because Christians had obtained the right to preach in China through a series of unequal treaties. Many studies on the history of Christian self-reliance in China emphasize the significance of the self-reliance of the churches in resisting Western aggression, which has its value at the macro level (Chen 2008; Wu 2004; Luo 2000; Zhang 1998). For Chinese Christians, they did not want to carry such a heavy burden of national shame, so they wanted to isolate themselves from the Western churches, and it was the consensus of the majority of Christians that they should get rid of their identity as the Foreign Religion. This gave the indigenization movement greater motivation to develop within the church. How to isolate oneself from Western Christianity was a matter that needed to be carefully considered. Neither the globalization of Christianity nor the fact that the church in China was mostly in the hands of missionaries could be completely isolated from Western Christianity. When this history is reviewed in the context of revolutionary history, the grandiose background of this East–West confrontation seems to drown out the finer details. Chen Chang has pointed out the disputes over power and interests within the Church of Christ in China (中华基督教会) during the indigenization movement (Chen 2020). In a review of the early self-supporting churches, including the Zhabei Christian Church (闸北堂) in Shanghai, Zhang Hua reveals the games played and different attitudes towards independence held between Western missions and Chinese churches, as well as among Chinese Christians (Zhang 2014). This reminds us that the viewpoint of each individual within this historical trend will obviously have been pluralistic: if he unilaterally fought against this trend, he would be crushed by the social opinion; if he flagrantly severed his ties with the Western Church, a serious severance would occur both in terms of ecclesiastical survival and his personal beliefs. It is therefore worthwhile to examine the personal views within this trend, which can make the history of the development of religious thought more vivid.

Jia Yuming (贾玉铭, 1879–1964) was one of the theologians who was instrumental in indigenization and is known for his East–West fusion theology. Born in a rural village in China's Shandong province with a strong Christian atmosphere, Jia was baptized at an early age. He was educated from primary school through to college at the church school of the Northern Presbyterian Church, where he was ordained as a pastor. Afterwards, he spent many years on the faculties of Nanking Theological Seminary (金陵神学院), Nanking Women's Seminary (金陵女子神学院), and North China Theological Seminary (华北神学院) (Wang 2016). During this period, he published a large number of theological works and received a doctorate in theology from a Presbyterian seminary in the USA for his book *Systematic Theology* (神道学) (Liu 1989, p. 148). He also founded the religious newspaper

Spiritual Light (灵光) and The Chinese Institute of Spiritual Formation (中国灵修学院). After the founding of the People's Republic of China, he also served as vice chairman of the National Committee of Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China. Jia is one of the representative figures of modern Christian fundamentalism in China and is also considered to be the most influential person on the faith of Christians in mainland China, apart from Watchman Nee (倪柝声) (Xie 2008, p. 3). The intention of this article is to discover his reconciliation of national sentiments and faith ties in the context of the indigenization movement. His justification of the independent church will help to show the plurality within the Chinese church in the context of the East–West confrontation in the context of the indigenization movement.

2. The Ethnic and National Identity of Christians

Jia's middle and young adulthood took place during a time of great social change in China. Ever since Robert Morrison launched his missionary activities in Zhaoqing, Guangdong Province in 1807, Christianity's determination to enter China had never been broken, despite all the difficulties. Protected through a series of unequal treaties, Christianity had more space and easier conditions for preaching in China at the end of the Qing Empire, and gradually developed and took root in Chinese society. However, what followed was a strong conflict between the Western identity of Christianity and the Chinese cultural environment and national sentiment, which successively led to a series of religious cases (教案). This conflict culminated in the Boxer Rebellion, during which Christianity was severely impacted. The Xin Chou Treaty (辛丑条约), which required the Qing Empire to suppress the xenophobic activities of the Chinese people, provided new guarantees for the development of Christianity in China and gave Christianity the opportunity to develop rapidly. In the Republic of China, the conflict between Christianity and China's cultural and social environment continued, and the anti-Christian movement that began in 1922 once again brought the issue of Christianity's existence and development in China to the level of the entire society, and Christianity in China was faced with a severe test of cultural legitimacy. One of the core issues of the anti-Christian movement was Christianity's collusion with imperialism, and therefore Christianity had to respond to the issue of Christian national and ethnic identity. As a theologian, Jia responded positively to this criticism of Christianity from the outside world.

He illustrated the attributes of the Christian's national identity from a hermeneutical perspective. Jia interpreted the book of Romans and argued as follows:

> 基督徒原是天上的国民，虽在世界，却不属于世界，他在这世界的时日，不过是客旅、是寄居的，但是按着肉体说，也不能无国家的关系。(Jia n.d.b)
>
> (Author's translation: the Christian is a heavenly inhabitant, in the world but not of the world. His time in this world is but a guest and a sojourner. But according to the flesh, he cannot be without a national identity.)

On the issue of whether Christians should love their country, Jia's response was very clear: they not only have a duty to the church but also have a duty to the government. For him, the church or the believer was not outside the state. Christians were part of the spiritual kingdom as well as citizens of the secular state. He described the relationship between the individual Christian and the state in several ways: First, the Christian submits to the government on the theological basis of the Apostle Peter's statement, "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme" (1 Pet. 2:13), and the Apostle Paul's statement, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1, 2). Second, they are expected to serve their country on the basis of "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Mat 22:21)" Third, Christians should be patriotic, again based on biblical references such as Moses' willingness to be removed from the Book of Life for the sake of his nation, and Paul's willingness to be separated from Christ for the sake of saving his countrymen. Fourth, Christians should pray for the nation, which he regarded as the church's highest

duty to the nation. This is an allusion to Paul's asking Timothy to pray for the nation and Daniel's praying for the nation three times a day. Finally, Christians are to work for the well-being of the nation and to promote the development of the state, society, and the people (Jia 1949, pp. 718–20).

In the Bible, Paul presents a clear model for Christians to be patriotic and to love their fellow man: "that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom, 9:2–3). Jia thought that Paul, as the apostle of the gentiles, was often regarded as unpatriotic, but in fact, from *Romans*, it can be seen that he had a strong love for his own countrymen and was willing to perish alone to save them from sinking. Jia used Paul as an analogy for the current situation in which Christian believers were considered unpatriotic because they believe in the Foreign Religion.

He also used cases such as Daniel and Nehemiah and others weeping for their country, Isaiah and Ezekiel and others shedding blood for their country, and Jesus weeping bitterly in the presence of the Holy City when he came to Jerusalem for the last time to illustrate the emotions of the biblical characters for their fellow countrymen and to prove the patriotic fervor of true Christians (Jia n.d.a). The establishment of the Holy City is recorded in the Book of Nehemiah. In Jia's view, the establishment of the Holy City actually referred to the establishment of a Christian nation, and Nehemiah was a type of Christ. In the process of establishing, Nehemiah demonstrated patriotic fervor, patriotic practice, and sacrifice. Based on this, Jia suggested that Christians should be burdened with patriotic responsibilities.

> 尼希米等不但为国家废寝忘食，撒热泪，且是高举双手，以尽爱国爱民的本分。我们教会中人，岂能对国家人民之痛苦危亡置而不顾呢？(Jia 1992, p. 246)
>
> (Author's translation: Nehemiah not only fasted, prayed and wept for his country, but also lifted up his hands with all the people in order to fulfill his duty of loving his country and his people. How can we in the church turn our backs on the suffering and peril of our country and people?)

Fasting and praying for the nation is the attitude part, and lifting up one's hands is the practice part. Jia's Christian view of patriotism not only involved outlook, but also required real application in practice. Jia further proposed a program of how spiritual Christians should be good citizens of their nation on earth. The most important thing about being a citizen to the nation was to assume responsibility for the nation. Therefore, Christians were to submit to the government and fulfill their obligations to the state. In addition to these external requirements, they must also be subjectively patriotic like Moses, Paul, and others, and care about the destiny of their country and their fellow citizens. In terms of action, it was necessary to promote social unity and development, national civilization, civic morality, and national intelligence through love. The most important patriotic duty and action for Christians was to intercede for the nation (Jia 1949, pp. 718–20; n.d.b). The patriotic stance was expressed first and foremost in the love for one's fellow countrymen. Jia even believed that Christians had an extra obligation to their fellow man to take the initiative to help people, because Jesus did not come into this world to be served, but to serve ("主耶稣来世"不是要受人服事，乃是要服事人") (Jia 1992, p. 246). He then illustrated the way of Christian patriotism through Esther's fasting and intercession for the people of Judah:

> 真爱国不在口中说些爱国的话语，面上显出爱国的精神；乃在有爱国的实行。虽此实行不必各都身列行伍，作个赳赳武夫；但能如本处以斯帖等，为国族禁食祈祷，就是真正爱国，也就是最切要最有效的爱国了。(Jia 1992, p. 305)
>
> (Author's translation: True patriotism did not lie in the words of patriotism in the mouth or in the appearance; it lay in the actual actions of patriotism. These actions did not require everyone to be in the army and be a valiant soldier; as long as one could fast and pray for the nation as Esther did, this was true patriotism, and it was also the most important and effective patriotism.)

Jia here advocated that patriotism should be practiced instead of empty slogans, and he expressed his views on how to love the country through practice. On the one hand, he did not oppose joining the army to serve the country, but he also suggested that patriotism was not all about going to the battlefield and the way of patriotism was multidimensional. Any practice that was truly helpful in saving the nation from peril had its value. For Christians, then, who fully believed in the power of prayer, it was their conviction that praying for one's country was also patriotic and was the most effective way for Christians to be patriotic. Through this argumentation, Jia gave his response to the concern that Christians were or were not Chinese. He made it clear that Christians also had a national and ethnic identity and a corresponding patriotic duty. Jia put his Christian patriotism into practice. During the Sino–Japanese War, he and the Institute of Spiritual Formation that he had founded followed Chiang Kai-shek's government as it moved westward. At the founding of the People's Republic of China, he refused the opportunity to stay abroad and returned to China.

3. Neutral Interpretations of Independence Movements

The main reason for the rapid development of Christianity in China in modern times was undoubtedly the work of Western missionaries and the missionary societies to which they belonged. However, as mentioned earlier, the Western missionary societies were already tightly bound to the image of imperialist accomplices under the circumstances. In responding to the anti-Christian movement and promoting the church's indigenization movement as patriotic Christians, the Chinese churches had to address the issue of how to relate to the Western mission. They could neither remain as they were and always exist as subordinate organizations of the mission, nor could they immediately cut themselves off and sever contact. In fact, the widespread poverty of the Christian community at that time prevented them from supporting a great deal of Christian public endeavor in China, and even many of the local churches were under too great financial pressure to function successfully on their own. The vast majority of the churches still depended on the stipends of the missionary societies for support. Therefore, although church autonomy was in essence a process of delinking from the Western mission, the Chinese church in practice had to handle its relationship with the Western mission carefully. They needed to emphasize their national identity and not allow themselves to be perceived as dependent on the Western missionary societies, but they also could not completely sever their relationship with the missionary societies.

As stated at the beginning of this paper, although the initial motivation of the mission and missionaries to promote the independence of the Chinese church was to reduce costs and increase the effectiveness of the missions, the primary aim for most Chinese Christians in the context was to be free from the control of the Western missionary societies. Nationalism and assertion of power over the churches were among the main reasons for this. In addition to demonstrating the patriotic stance of the Christians, the churches had to take practical action to prove that they had nothing to do with the Foreign Religion and that they were not under the control of the Western powers. So, it can be seen that the independence of the church was both an endogenous natural requirement in the development of the church and an active choice in the specific anti-Christian movement environment at that time. The movement of indigenization of the church gained more room for development in this context, the most direct manifestation of which was the independent church. Therefore, the independence movement of the churches in this period of time occurred against a significant background of competition with the Western missionary societies for control of the churches. Originally, most of the churches at that time were still under the charge of Western missionaries with mother churches in Europe and America. If the goal of Sinicization was to be achieved, it was inevitable that there would be conflicts with the mother churches. In fact, the historical movement to Sinicize the church had a strong background of East–West conflict. At the National Christian Conference in 1922, some Chinese Christian delegates publicly accused Western missionaries of using a policy of ignorance

and enlistment, and of treating the Chinese leaders of the Church in a way befitting the hired servants they were (Duan 2004, p. 223).

The Presbyterian Church to which Jia belonged had an early start in the independence movement. The Reformed Church in America in Xiamen had already partnered with the Presbyterian Church in England to form the United Presbyterian Church in 1857, which in turn became the Chinese Independent Presbyterian Church in 1862. The Presbyterian Church in China also established the United Presbyterian Church of China in 1915, and then joined with the London Missionary Society and American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to form the Chinese United Church of Christ in 1918. Jia was one of the executive committee members of the Chinese United Church of Christ the following year (Kwok 2002, p. 66). Confronted with the dilemma of being caught between nationalism and the mother church, Jia recognized the reality that Christianity at that time had a reputation as a foreign religion. In the minds of the Chinese people, Christianity was always regarded as the church of the Westerners, and therefore they were ashamed to join the church and were unwilling to be servants of the Westerners. Therefore, he agreed that only when the Christian Church became completely independent, free from its image as a foreign religion, and became the Church of China, could it be accepted by the compatriots. From the perspective of a true believer, he criticized the past phenomenon of the Rice Christian (吃教者) under the Western missionary system, which relied on lure to join the church, and titular Christians, who were willing to be slaves of the Westerners but did not contribute to the development of the church in China (Jia 1999, pp. 348–61). Therefore, both from the perspective of compatriots and from the perspective of true believers in the church, there was sufficient motivation to promote the independence of churches and to build the Chinese Christian church. Looking at the reality of the current, after many years of development, the Chinese church had already developed to a certain level and had a considerable number of believers who made the church their home, were willing to serve the Lord, and were dedicated to serving the church; therefore, the mature conditions for independence were present.

Jia did not hold an attitude of struggle against or hostility towards the Western missions in the pursuit of autonomy but was instead grateful and rewarding to the missionaries and the mother churches. He abandoned his position of going toe-to-toe with the Western churches and missionaries. Instead, he turned to explain the necessity of the Sinicization of Christianity from an internal point of view, that is, it was natural that churches formed of Chinese people should be managed by Chinese people, which is logical and does not require special justification (Jia 1930, p. 252). Chinese Christians building Chinese churches, becoming the mainstay of church organizations, and adapting church organizations to the needs of the Chinese people were natural parts of the development of Christianity in the region. This meant that the building of Chinese churches was not a deliberate act but an inevitable result of the development of the Christian community in China. This interpretation was in line with his pursuit of spiritual faith. Though he may have made this argument purely from faith, it objectively brought two benefits: it conformed to the trend of church independence at that time; and it avoided a direct conflict with Western missionaries at that time. Jia selectively interpreted the movement in terms of the structure of the church, weakening the conflict between positions in the process of the Sinicizing of the church.

> 自马礼逊君布道中华以来，欧美各邦之布道会，捐输巨款，遣派教士，于我祖国所成之盛功伟举，不为不美且多矣……而我中华信徒，既不费而沾此厚惠，岂可终于领受，不思有以施于人乎。(Jia 1999, pp. 348–61)
>
> (Author's translation: Since Morrison preached in China, the European and American countries of the Missionary Society here donated a huge amount of money, sent a large number of missionaries. The achievements of these endeavors in our country have been very great and fruitful. …… How can we Christians in China, who have received such favors and help so effortlessly, simply enjoy them without thinking about how to give back to them?)

Jia believed that independence was not a way to draw a line in the sand away from the Western mother churches, nor was it blindly xenophobic, but rather it was a mutually fulfilling act of sympathy for the missionary work of the mother churches and a way to lighten their burden. For the mother churches, the independence of the Chinese churches could relieve their huge investment over the long term, just as children become self-sustainable and relieve the burdens of parents when they became adults. The fact that the Chinese church was independent showed its maturity, and therefore the independence was in accordance with the expectations of the Western mother church. Jia did not resent the mother–child system. In reviewing the history of the church, he argued that from the beginning of the church in the Bible, there were developed churches branching out into new churches in the vicinity. The branched-out churches must have regarded the old churches as their mother churches, and the pastors of the new churches must have honored the pastors of the old churches as their elders (Jia 1949, p. 682). The independence of the church was independence in Christ, which was the foundation shared by the Eastern and Western churches. The self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation involved in the independence of the church were all formal manifestations. They all referred to the ability of the churches to independently undertake the pastoral work of evangelization, with the aim of reducing the burden on Western churches.

Such carefulness in his handling of the relationship between the East and West churches was more clearly reflected in his article "The Issue of Independence of the Chinese Church", which states as follows:

> 以自立二字论及中国教会，或疑与母会冲突，有排外之心……第此自立之义，乃言不受母会之供给与裨助……我母会对于已经成立之教会，可稍卸仔肩，各留余力。从事推广开垦之工。 (Jia 1999, pp. 348–61)
>
> (Author's translation: to use the word independence to talk about the Chinese church may lead to suspicion of conflict with the mother church, and make us be regarded as having a xenophobic mind …… In fact, what we mean by independence is to say that we are not to be supplied and aided by our mother church …… Mother churches can take a little of the burden off their shoulders from already established churches. Let the mother churches reserve their strength for other endeavors, for missionary work.)

Although he was talking about the independence of churches, the text reveals that he was thinking of the mother church and interpreting the independence from the perspective of alleviating the burden of the mother church. Finally, he explained that a so-called Chinese Christian church did not mean that it was different from the other churches of the world. He objected to the title Chinese Christian church, which carried a strong national connotation, and thought that the China Church should be used, drawing on the Biblical practice of calling churches by the names of places. Therefore, he proposed that the Chinese church should keep in touch with and identify itself with all denominations of Christianity in the world and treat the Christian church in the world as a community, of which the Chinese church was a branch.

Jia fully supported the building of the indigenization church. He believed that although the truth of Christianity has universal value, there were differences in time, race, political culture, temperament, psychology, and learning environment when it came to geographical, and demographic differences. In these different environments, Christianity, when combined with local conditions, would produce different forms of expression. For him, therefore, the building of localized churches was not a passive response to anti-Christian movements but a major step forward for the church to actively carry out its evangelistic mission in China. It was a new stage for Chinese believers to say goodbye to their dependence on the mother church of the Missionary Society and move towards independent development. The China Church referred to Christianity in China. The indigenization movement was not to create another denomination or to cut itself off from the churches in other countries. The China Church, like the Ephesus Church, the Corinth Church, etc., was a localized church. All churches were the same in their belief. Jia had

been very careful to distinguish indigenization from xenophobia. Through this argument, he removed the context of indigenization in opposition to the Western church and directed the meaning of indigenization to the stage-by-stage progress of the church from being missionized to independent development. His work normalized the concept of indigenization of the church and took it out of the context of the East–West rivalry. Of course, this was not a play on words on his part. He practiced it himself. He repeatedly emphasized in his faith the spiritual and essential character of the church and the ultimate goal of the unity of all churches in Christ.

4. Ecumenism and Christianization

Jia's emphasis on the national identity of Christians and his explanation of the neutrality of the independence of churches expressed a friendly attitude towards domestic public opinion and the Western missionary societies, respectively. However, if his argumentation had gone only so far, this attitude would only have been wedged in between public opinion and the Western mission. He also needed to answer the question of how the indigenization of the church could maintain good relations from a nationalistic standpoint with the Western missionary societies that were linked to imperialism. In other words, how could self-consistency be achieved within Christianity between the two completely opposite perceptions of opposing Western aggression and maintaining good relations with the mother church of the mission without splitting the church?

Jia chosen to dissolve this contradiction in the ecumenical nature of Christianity. In his system of Spiritual Life Theology, Christians and churches were of a growing nature and could grow from sinners to the level of Christ. In his view, on one hand, the reality of the church was that it was made up of sinful people and thus inevitably carried all kinds of non-spiritual elements; on the other hand, the church would ultimately grow into the Bride of Christ as the spiritual life of Christians in it grew. Therefore, in the face of the division between the world and the Eastern and Western churches, he responded in the direction of the development of church unity, except that he believed that the focus of unity should be on spiritual faith.

> (信徒)勿作离群之羊，乃要合而为一，因为是一主一信，一洗一神，而一身……今日中国信徒更宜在主内不分畛域，划除会界，使教会成为不带公会色彩有基督生命的教会。(Jia 1949, p. 680)
>
> (Author's translation: [Christians] should not be sheep that stray from the flock, but should be one. Because it is one Lord, one faith, the same baptism, one God, and ultimately one body. …… Today Chinese believers should not be divided into regions in the Lord, and demarcate the boundaries of the church, so that the church can become a non-denominational church that shares the life of Christ.)

He pointed out that the unity of churches advocated and promoted in those days was mostly a vision without a practical foundation. Participants pursued only the superficial and formal unity of the church, and involvement merely granted each denomination nominal unity, without paying attention to whether their beliefs were compatible and whether their pursuit of a spiritual life was the same. The essence of the unity he mentioned was the same faith in Christ and the same spiritual life in Christ. At that, no matter whether it was between domestic denominations or between the Eastern and Western churches, true unity would be a state of conformity but not sameness and varied but conformational (合而不合，不合而合), as if it were the way of harmony and difference among gentlemen (君子和同之道) (Jia 1949, p. 687).

> 教会宜避去西洋式等，吾人固极端赞成，但西洋之风味也，声势也，乃西洋之本色，非基督教之真相也。教会宜吸收中国之文化，国性等，亦固其宜；但中国之文化国性等，乃中国之本色，亦非基督教之真相也。(Jia 1930, pp. 254–55)
>
> (Author's translation: The church should be stripped of its Western appearance, and we are of course very much in favor of this. However, these external aspects of the Western church are characteristics of the West, not the essence of Chris-

tianity. It is certainly beneficial for the church to absorb and adapt to the culture and national characteristics of China. But these appearances in China are only characteristics of China, and again not the essence of Christianity.)

The independence of the Chinese church in his eyes would be an initiative taken within the scope of Scripture in order to promote the adaptation and preaching of Christianity in China, the most fundamental aspect of which was a return to the orthodoxy and pure faith. In Jia's view, the integration of the church with the culture, customs, and spirituality of the Chinese nation was not to clothe Christianity in the trappings of Chinese cultural traditions, which was too superficial, nor was it to fill the framework of Christian doctrines and liturgies with elements of Chinese culture, which would be to abandon the essence of Christ. Christianity was neither Western nor Eastern. The fundamental beliefs of Christianity have no national or ethnic differences, but are ecumenical. The so-called getting rid of Western features was just to get rid of the Western characteristics that it had carried for a long time in the West to survive and develop, and the combination with Chinese culture was also to add Eastern characteristics to it, while its basic principles remained unchanged. However, the times, races, political cultures, temperaments, mentalities, and intellectual environments in which individuals lived were all different, and this led to the fact that the effects produced by individuals when they came into contact with the truth of the Church varied from one person to another (Jia 1949, p. 726). Therefore, the combination of Christianity and Chinese culture was to spread Christianity among the Chinese through taking advantage of their national nature, their cultural traditions, their religious equality, their curiosity about mysticism, and their good nature. In other words, the spread of Christianity in China should adhere unchanged to the core Christian beliefs, approach the preferences of the Chinese people, and preach to the Chinese people in the way they were accustomed to. The difference between this understanding and the direct replacement of Western Christian elements with traditional Chinese rituals and religious ideas at that time was that its core purpose was to spread Christianity, not to transform it.

Jia agreed that Christianity had to be active in society and promote the Christianization of the whole society via its own actions. Just as Jesus made his disciples the salt of the earth and the light of the world, Jia believed that the gospel of Christianity was also the gospel of society, and that it had itself contributed to the renewal of society throughout history. However, he also opposed the social evangelicals in the new theology of his time who over-emphasized the social values of Christianity. He believed that the so-called social gospel in the new theology was a gospel that Christianity had adapted to the trends of the hearts and minds of society, reflecting the synchronicity between Christianity and social innovation. According to Jia, they blindly conformed to the demands of the social environment only because they were afraid of being regarded as an obstacle to social development and of arousing the world's disapproval, so they cut their feet to fit the shoes. The social gospel was a social-oriented gospel for the transformation of society, not an individual-oriented gospel for the salvation of human souls. The heart of Christianity was not the renewal or evolution of society. It was beyond the material, it belonged to the spiritual world, and it was not an ism of any kind (Jia 1930, pp. 252–62). In his view, the real value of Christianity to Chinese society lay in Christianity itself, that is, in the transformation that led to China being Christianized.

> 中国化教会最适宜之解说，即中国为基督所化，而为基督化之教会也。易言之："非中国化之基督教会"，乃"中国被基督化之教会也"。(Jia 1930, p. 261)
>
> (Author's translation: The most appropriate interpretation of the Sinicized church is: Let China be transformed by Christianity and become a Christianized church. In other words, it is 'not the church that is Sinicized', but 'the church that makes China Christianized'.)

Transformation was manifested in three ways:

1. To make Christians leaders of social movements through the church's social work of charity and schooling;

2. Through the church's work for social improvement, the church became a model for society and attracted the imitation of society;
3. Ultimately, society gradually opened up and welcomed Christianity, leading to the Christian occupation of China. (Jia 1949, p. 709)

Through adopting the spiritual life of Christ as the ecumenical fundamental faith, Jia had set a framework for ecclesial coexistence and an ultimate direction of development for the churches of the world. Under this framework, the differences between the Eastern and Western churches were only the trappings of the current stage of development of the church, and its essence was singular. In the ultimate perspective, the Church was neither Eastern nor Western, but belonged to Christ only. Thus, there was no longer a conflict between Christians' love for their country and their love for the church. The Western church that Chinese Christians loved was not the imperialist church, but the church that belonged to the spiritual life of Christ. In addition to providing this interpretive framework to dissolve the differences between the Eastern and Western churches, Jia also provided a practical path to Christianize China and the world in order to promote Christianity as an ecumenical religion.

Jia not only expected to build a successful independent and united China Church (Christianity in China), but he also wanted China to convert to Christ, so that the whole of China would become a Christian nation. Ultimately, China Christianity would become a missionary center like the European and American missionary societies and would further radiate Christianity to its surroundings (Jia 1949, pp. 732–33). This ambitious goal once again echoed Jia's understanding of the indigenization of the church, which in his eyes was not a struggle to gain control of the church from the Western missions, but rather a new stage in the development of the church in China, the starting point for the independent development of Christianity in China. The Chinese church shares a common faith and life with the American church, the Ephesian church, and other churches around the world.

5. Conclusions

The indigenization of the church is sometimes called the situationalization of the church, which refers to the adjustment and adaptation of the church to the local environment of the time. In this paper, Jia's justification of the independent Chinese churches interprets this path of situationalization. As mentioned several times in this paper, in modern history since the end of the Qing Empire, Christianity's development in China has always been accompanied by the reputation of being a "foreign religion", which means not only that Christianity was a religion of a foreign culture, but it was also associated with imperialist colonial invasion in the public opinion of the anti-Christian movement at that time. This put the Chinese Christians in a difficult situation, as they did not want to be accused of being unpatriotic, but at the same time it was impossible for them to completely cut ties with Western churches in terms of their faith and social relations. Of course, a small number of Chinese churches with a financial base became fully independent, but the majority of churches were still closely related to the mother churches of the mission. This dilemma constituted a unique situation for Chinese Christians at that time, and how to achieve church development in this situation was precisely the issue that needed to be resolved in the work of indigenization of the churches. The independence of the church was a realistic path to resolve this contradiction, and Jia's justification of the rationalization provided a theoretical endorsement for it.

Jia jumps out of the binary framework of either/or. He chooses to take the ecumenical character of Christianity as his entry point, arguing that Christianity itself is neither Eastern nor Western. Based on the teachings of the Bible, he argues that Christians have a national and ethnic identity and a duty to love their country, but that the nature of the church is spiritual, and spirituality has no national distinctions. Therefore, he does not want to associate the independence of the church with a "nationalism that cuts ties with the Western church". Indigenization in his eyes should be an initiative to promote the adaptation and spread of Christianity in China within the limits of Scripture, the most fun-

damental implication of which is a return to orthodoxy and purity of faith. Therefore, he suggests that the independence is not a clear-cut distinction from the mother church, let alone a mindless xenophobia, but rather a sign of maturity of the Chinese church, a move of mutual fulfillment to sympathize with the evangelistic work of the mother church and to lighten the burden of the mother church. He emphasizes the national identity of Christians while trying hard to eliminate the national attributes of the church. On the one hand, he suggests that the current issue of church camps is a natural result of the church's natural growth and has its own realistic rationality. On the other hand, however, from the point of view of faith, those affected by these divisions should have faith in Christ as a common premise. More importantly, these divisions are due to the limitations of practical conditions, not the original intention of establishing the church. In terms of the ultimate goal, the churches should ultimately be united in Christ. The indigenization of the church is a process of adaptation that the church has to go through in order to develop in a new environment, but the essence of the church after indigenization does not change, and it is in Christ just like the church in other countries. With this argument, he removes the context of indigenization in opposition to the Western church and directs the meaning of indigenization to the stage-by-stage developmental progress of the church from being missionized to independent development. This normalizes the concept of indigenization of the church and removes it from the context of East–West rivalry. In the specific situation of the time, the most fundamental principle that Jia adheres to in the face of the challenges posed by the anti-Christian movement is faith in Christ, that is, the pursuit of a spiritual life. He expects that the current divisions among the churches will also eventually come together as one in the Christendom he looks forward to, resolving conflicts including, but not limited to, those between nations.

Unfortunately, however, in terms of practical results, his idea did not receive a very favorable response. On the one hand, he did not participate in social activities like Wu Yaozong (吴耀宗), Wu Leichuan (吴雷川), and others in the three-self movement but was more concerned with his own theological thinking, and thus did not have any organizational influence. On the other hand, his proposal to dissolve church divisions and conflicts through the pursuit of ultimate spirituality and Christianization was only a vision for the future and could not help in the ongoing practical affairs of the independence of churches. His ideas did not create widespread waves in this historical movement, but Jia's justification of independence embodied his attempt to reconcile the situation of the church in a theoretical way, which is still worth reviewing and paying attention to. It provides an example of the plurality of perspectives within the independence of churches, which can show us that there was not simply a conflict between East and West in the development of the three-self movement, and that there is room for reconciliation between nationalism and continuity of faith.

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Article

A Caged Bird in a Communist Pavilion: Chao Tzu-chen and the Remolding of Yenching University's School of Religion, 1949–1951

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Abstract: This article examines church–state relations in the early period of the People's Republic of China (PRC) by scrutinising the thoughts and the administration of Chao Tzu-chen—a prominent Chinese Christian leader—at Yenching University's School of Religion and its successor organisation. This article largely relies on the archives of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, delving into Chao's psychological conflicts and the role of the Anglican churches in Chao's plan for the separation of the School of Religion from the university. It argues that Chao Tzu-chen's self-contradictions in his public versus private expressions after 1949 signify his disillusionment in fostering the convergence between Christianity and Communism, as demonstrated in his dilemma regarding church–state relations. Although Chao tried to adapt to the new political order by urging Chinese churches to offer practical and concrete social services, he continued his independent, critical theological reflections on the indigenisation of Christianity, as reflected in his private portrayal of the incompatibility between Christianity and Communism, and in his close connection with foreign churches in his fund-raising campaign. Moreover, apart from highlighting the importance of the Hong Kong Anglican church in financially supporting the Yenching School of Religion, this article seeks to contribute to academic research of Chinese higher education in the 1950s through examining how the Chinese Communist Party's remolding of the School put an end to the emerging public sphere of a civil society. It reveals that this liberal Christian institute, which lost its control over curriculum design and the right to accept foreign funds, was quickly converted into a government-funded, socialist theological college in service of two masters: the Party and the Church.

Keywords: Chao Tzu-chen; Communism; Christian colleges; indigenisation of Christianity; church and state relations

1. Introduction

Tracing the mission history in the founding years of the People's Republic of China (PRC), this article scrutinises Chao Tzu-chen's 趙紫宸 (1888–1979) ambivalence about the process during which he and Yenching University's School of Religion (renamed the Yenching School of Religion in 1951) adapted to the new political order under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It makes significant use of archival materials found at the archives of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (香港聖公會; Hong Kong Anglican Church, hereafter referred to as HKSKH), opening a window onto the inner world of Chao Tzu-chen after 1949 and the role of the Anglican communities in the functioning of the Yenching School of Religion—topics that have been largely understudied in modern Chinese history. It contributes to the research on China's evolving church–state relations, the indigenisation of Chinese Christianity, and the landscape of higher education by examining how Chinese Christian educators and Western churches responded to the Communist takeover of Christian colleges. This article sheds light on the divergent portrayal of Chao's attitude towards church–state relations in his public versus private expressions after 1949. It argues that Chao Tzu-chen lost faith in the idea of reconciling Christianity with Communism,

as evident in his self-contradictions regarding his views on the relationship between the church and the state. Despite Chao's overt endeavour to march in tune with the times after 1949, he continued to independently and critically reflect on his faith and church–state relations. This can be seen in his private expressions, which show his specific concerns about Communism and about his mixed thoughts regarding maintaining contact with foreign churches—organisations that were regarded by the CCP as "imperialist". He not only elucidated why Christianity could not reconcile itself with Communism, but also lacked confidence to sustain the functioning of the Yenching School of Religion under Communist rule. Apart from securing funds from other Chinese churches, Chao subsequently sought financial support from the Church of England and its Diocese in Hong Kong—a British crown colony that was regarded as an "imperialist foe" by the CCP during the Cold War. Moreover, this article shows that the Hong Kong Anglican church played an important role in financially supporting the Yenching School of Religion largely because of the friendship between Chao and the Anglican communities, despite Chao's rejection of the funds from Hong Kong due to the opposition of the Chinese authorities. In addition to examining the church organisations' response to the regime change, this article also gives an account of how the CCP remolded Christian colleges in post-1949 China.

Evidence from extensive historical sources in English and Chinese has opened a window onto the relationship between the Anglican communities and Yenching University's School of Religion, and onto the inner world of Chao Tzu-chen after 1949.[1] The primary materials cited in this article range from the correspondence between Chao, his friends and colleagues, to a memoir of one of Chao's students, and to some Christian periodicals and newspapers published in China between the 1920s and early 1950s. In this article, I have significantly consulted Chao's correspondence held at the HKSKH Archives, which has not been fully utilised in scholarly enquiry so far. These materials offer a unique opportunity to show Chao's complex feelings in times of turbulent change, as well as the long-standing friendship between Chao and the Anglicans. Relying heavily on the HKSKH archive, this article provides a preliminary assessment of Chao's tragic experience in times of regime change, and offers a unique perspective on the role of the Anglican communities in Chao's decision-making regarding the functioning of the Yenching School of Religion between 1949 and 1951, after which sources become unavailable.

Studying Chao's thought and reaction to the Communist takeover of Christian colleges after 1949 is important to our understanding of the development of Christian history in the PRC. Chao became a Christian and was baptised in 1907 while attending Soochow University. In 1914, he went to the United States to study at Vanderbilt University, where he was later awarded a Master of Arts degree in sociology and a Bachelor of Divinity degree. Upon returning to China in 1917, Chao taught at Soochow University before serving at Yenching University as professor of religious philosophy from 1926 to 1952. Figure 1 is a portrait of Chao when he taught at Yenching. In 1948, the first general assembly of the World Council of Churches elected him as one of its six presidents (Wang 2009, pp. 1–3; Wickeri 2017, p. 8). Chao was widely recognised for his scholarship on the indigenisation of Chinese Christianity. His actions would become indicative of other Chinese Christians who confronted the state's socialist education policy.

In fact, there is a divide within the current scholarship on Chao's relationship with Communism. Some scholars consider Chao's adjustment to the new status quo as his political surrender to the CCP. Some of the literature published in Taiwan denounces Chao as one of the "Judases who betrayed Jesus". It also explains that Chao encouraged Chinese churches to join the patriotic movement because he wanted to ingratiate himself with Joseph Stalin (1878–1953) and seize the property of Christian converts (Zhongguo 1952, pp. 7–8). Conversely, some mainland Chinese scholars such as Tang Xiaofeng 唐曉峰 argue that his theological accommodation to the new Communist entity after 1949 was impeccable because he was a true patriot who stood firm against the kind of Christianity that had been contaminated by imperialism, hypocrisy, and exclusivism (Tang 2010, pp. 84–85). Yet, scholars from the other side of the debate, such as Philip Wickeri, Ying Fuk-tsang

邢福增, and Lam Wing-hung 林榮洪, are more critical of what they deem to be Chao's "capitulation" to Communism. They believe that the radical discontinuity of Chao's theological thinking could be attributed to Chao and other theologians' efforts to develop an indigenous Chinese theology that could cater to the needs of China—a country that had experienced socio-political upheavals from the nineteenth century (Wickeri 1988, pp. 244–46; Ying 2003, pp. 110–11; Lam 1994, pp. 320–24). In particular, it was Chao's wish to connect Christian faith with questions of personal salvation through Christ, social change and national reconstruction (Ying 2005, p. 243; Wickeri 1988, pp. 244–46). In the eyes of Chao, seeking common ground between Marxism and Christianity could be one of the solutions to these questions (Wickeri 1988, pp. 244–46; Ying 2003, pp. 110–11).

Figure 1. [32372610] Dr. Chao Tzu-chen wore a vestment robe during the Easter service at Yenching University, in a photo in all likelihood taken in 1939 or 1940. Box 419, folder 5894. Archives of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. Image courtesy of Yale Divinity Library.

Chao's post-war mentality has been examined by Philip Wickeri, who utilised the correspondence from the HKSKH Archives between Chao and Bishop Hall in his paper "Theology in Revolution". Wickeri primarily provides a linear, chronological description of Chao's unfortunate personal matters after 1945, without focusing on his ecumenical cooperation with foreign churches for his seminary-building project after 1949. It shows how Chao spoke of his loneliness, his melancholy, and his depression in the late 1940s, during which he was removed as Dean, experiencing financial difficulties and disagreements with Anglican clergymen who opposed intercommunion with the wider Christian fellowship at Yenching (Wickeri 2017, pp. 9–18). Chao's views on Communism were barely discussed in Wickeri's paper, except for Chao's concern about the incompatibility between Christianity and Communism, as a conflict between "the idea of continuity upon which science rests" and "that of discontinuity which Christianity holds as between sin and holiness, life and death, as well as man and God" (Wickeri 2017, pp. 19–20). Wickeri's paper ends with Chao suffering in an array of political movements during the 1950s, a scenario that Wickeri describes as "a tragedy of liberation" (Wickeri 2017, pp. 20–24).

Following in the footsteps of the above scholars, this article offers new insights into Chao's theological view on the relations between church and state during and after the 1940s. This article does not intend to study how the Anglican traditions impacted Chao's theological thinking, a widely discussed topic (Ng 2015, p. 167; Chen 2015, pp. 191–92).[2]

Instead, it sheds light on Chao's dilemma, as he was torn between reconciling Christianity with Communism when a large number of Protestant and Catholic churches were heavily criticised as "imperialists" because of their connections with foreign missions. This article moves beyond the current scholarship to reveal the incompatibility between Christian principles and Communist doctrines in the eyes of Chao by showing the divergent portrayal of the compatibility between Christianity and Communism, both in public and privately expressed. While qualifying Leung Ka-lun's 梁家麟 argument concerning Chao's total rejection of Communism (Leung 1998, pp. 98–99), this article points to the psychological conflict of Chao, as shown in his theological construction. It not only shares Winfried Glüer's argument that Chao could not fully accept Communism because of the incompatibility between historical materialism—Karl Marx's (1818–1883) theory of history—and his belief in God's surpassing presence beyond history (Glüer 1998, p. 295), but it also affirms the findings of Ying Fuk-tsang that Chao was convinced by Christianity's capability to rectify any deficiencies in the nation-building process of Communist China (Ying 2003, p. 219). This article goes further to point out the failure of Chao's attempt to foster a convergence between Christianity and Communism. It also builds on Wickeri's existing interpretation of Chao's belief as to why Christianity stood irreconcilable with Communism (Wickeri 2017, pp. 19–20). It does so by scrutinising the correspondence between Chao Tzu-chen, Tsai Yung-chun, and senior Anglican clergymen from the HKSKH Archives. In Chao's view, the lack of transcendence in Marxism and the CCP's growing control over Christian organisations made both incompatible.

Aside from studying Chao's theological transformation, this article makes a contribution to the history of China's Christian higher education after 1949. This article echoes Philip West's argument regarding the impact of China's political development on Yenching University—a foreign-run educational institution that was established after the Opium Wars—as exemplified in its remolding by the CCP (West 1976, p. 246). It also builds on Jessie Lutz's and Dwight Edwards' initial explorations of the demise of the Christian Colleges in China (Lutz 1971, pp. 473–84; Edwards 1959, pp. 340–43), and adds to the body of knowledge by elucidating how Yenching University's School of Religion, in spite of its survival following the incorporation of Christian colleges into government-run universities after 1952, was subsequently converted into a state institution—a theological college affiliated with the Party-State. Apart from discussing how the Communists remolded higher education institutions, as discussed by Jeremy Brown and Paul Pickowicz (Brown and Pickowicz 2007, pp. 1–18), this article also highlights the role of the Anglican churches in Chao Tzu-chen's intellectual process concerning the separation of the School of Religion from Yenching University. It builds on the finding of Xu Yihua 徐以驊, who argues that after 1949 the Yenching School of Religion came to the belated realisation that the School had to "relegate" itself to seeking financial support from local Chinese churches, but not from their foreign counterparts (Xu 1999, pp. 148–49). It does so by demonstrating the important role that the Anglican churches played in funding the Yenching School of Religion and supporting Chao's effort to seek financial assistance from foreign funds.

Beginning with an analysis of the earlier literature on the plight of Chao after 1949, this article examines how Chao Tzu-chen tried to think and act independently in his careful management of Yenching University's School of Religion after 1949. However, the political movements that Chao and many Christian leaders would face restrained Chao's freedom of speech and prevented him from raising funds from overseas, making Chao like a bird caged in a Communist pavilion.

2. Chao's View on the Correlation between Chinese Churches and Politics

Chao was a strong advocate of the indigenisation of Christianity in China. He suggested that Chinese churches should be independent and free from interference by their foreign counterparts. Throughout the 1920s, he supported the Chinese indigenous church movement, encouraging Chinese churches to be united without being separated by sectarianism—Christian principles and concepts adhered to by different Western denom-

inations after the reformation (Lam 1994, pp. 114–15, 125).[3] He believed that "judging by the local circumstances, Chinese converts should have the right to test, recreate, and adjust those Western institutions and organisations brought by missionaries" (Chao 1927, p. 3).

Nevertheless, the independence of the Chinese church did not mean terminating all the connections with the global churches and Western missionaries. According to Chao (Chao 1927, pp. 1–2), "as the forerunners who spread the gospel to the East, Western churches had the moral responsibility to assist their Chinese counterparts in developing their evangelistic enterprises" (Chao 1927, pp. 5–6). He therefore promoted cooperation between Chinese and Western churches, welcoming foreign missions to contribute to China's indigenous church movement (Chao 1927, pp. 5–6; Lam 1994, pp. 118–19). This could be achieved, for instance, by providing financial aid to the Chinese churches or by serving in different ministries of these churches (Chao 1927, pp. 5–6; Lam 1994, pp. 118–19). The congregations, irrespective of their nationalities, should welcome the development of Chinese churches based on knowledge, eligibility, and experience (Chao 1927, pp. 5–6; 1926, p. 2812). To foster exchange between Chinese churches and their Western counterparts, Chao himself also took part in different ecumenical gatherings outside of China (Sampson 2022, pp. 93–96). To Chao, although the power to manage Chinese church affairs had to be handed over to Chinese converts, foreign preachers were always their friends, and their contributions should be recognised (Chao 1927, pp. 5–6; Lam 1994, pp. 118–19). After the Second World War, Chao continued his efforts to advance ecumenical exchange. Figure 2 captures this genuine friendship and collaborative spirit between Chao and some prominent American scholars and missionaries in 1948.

Figure 2. [32378556] Postwar—Mr. George K. T. Wu 吳高梓 (1904–1993; first from left, General Secretary of the National Christian Council of China), Dr. M. Searle Bates (1897–1978; second from left, an American history professor at the University of Nanking), Dr. Frank W. Price (1895–1974; third from right, missionary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States), Dr. Chao Tzu-chen (second from right), Dr. Wu Yi-fang 吳貽芳 (1893–1985; first from right, president of Ginling College), discussed issues relating to Christian education in China and the forthcoming World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in July 1948. RG 11, box 398. Archives of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. Image courtesy of Yale Divinity Library.

While Chao maintained a close relationship with Christian denominations from the West, he took a negative view towards Communism—a political theory derived from Karl Marx in nineteenth-century Europe. Chao, who believed that social reforms should be implemented step by step, cast doubt upon Communism and found the revolutionary social reform as too radical. What upset him most was the fact that the Communists took a "utopian engineering approach", which adopted violent methods, suppressed individual

freedom, and regarded individuals as tools of revolutions (Ying 2003, pp. 96–97). To Chao, "a utopian world could not be formed within a short period of time, and the use of military and political power could not effectively help China to achieve genuine democracy" (Chao 1947b, p. 3). The radical approach adopted by the Communists not only failed to relieve people from disasters, but also caused chaos (Ying 2003, p. 96). Chao believed that the factional struggles common in revolutionary politics would slow down the progress of gradual reform in society (Chao 1947a, pp. 2–3). To resolve the problems faced by China, Chao believed that the reconstruction of Chinese morality and personality, instead of social revolution, was indispensable. The key issue was whether the personality of Christ could become the basis for the project of national salvation in this country. While the churches should redress the injustice suffered by the public (Chao 1947b, p. 4), genuine democracy could be achieved only when people accepted transcendent God and overcame their selfishness in everyday life (Chao 1947a, pp. 2–3). Another factor that discouraged Chao from supporting Communism was the latter's rejection of religion, as part of its atheistic conviction. Religion, in the Communist mindset, belonged to the "superstructure" built upon material, socio-economic reality (Ying 2003, pp. 97–98).

Communism's authoritarian traits made Chao feel worried about his safety. In a 1948 letter to his friend Bishop Ronald Hall (1895–1975)—an Anglican missionary bishop in Hong Kong and China—Chao already felt anxious about the negative consequences of the Communist takeover of North China. While he was sympathetic with the Communists, he worried that they would not be cordial to the kind of evangelical work to which he was committed. In the case of a radical change in Beijing and at Yenching University—an American-funded Christian university—he would leave Yenching given the chance. He once considered taking refuge at Hong Kong St. Paul's College—a theological college where Bishop Hall offered him a job to train the Anglican clergy in Hong Kong (Chao 1948). The increasing threats of Communism caused Chao to prepare for martyrdom following the CCP's advance on Beijing and their sweeping victory over Guomindang (GMD, the Chinese Nationalist Party) troops after 1948 (Chao 1949h, pp. 1066–68; Chao 1949i).

3. The Incompatibility between Christianity and Marxism

Following the Communist takeover of Beijing in early 1949, Chao Tzu-chen modified his political stance by taking a more positive view of Communism. Chao, who regarded the Communist victory as a reflection of God's judgement and a chance for a renewal of life (Chao 1949a, pp. 83–85), complained about the faults of the GMD—as a corrupt, oppressive political entity that failed to reform itself and to win the heart of the people (Chao 1949b, pp. 265–67). From Chao's perspective, the new regime led by the CCP could lead to efficient, responsible, and democratic governance. After attending the People's Political Consultative Conferences held in September 1949 and in early 1950, Chao showed his appreciation towards the CCP (Chao 1949g, 1950a). He had confidence in the Communists, who promised the toleration of religion in the new era (Chao 1949b, pp. 265–67). Judging by these friendly policies, Chao now criticised the West for "making a grave mistake in combating Communism and not bowing before God's judgement upon for social wrongs" (Chao 1950g). Moreover, he urged the Church in China to confess its "sins" and "short-comings". These wrongdoings ranged from seeking to save its own life by occasionally siding with reactionary forces, to not openly renouncing some prominent GMD figures—Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887–1975), Kung Hsiang-hsi 孔祥熙 (1880–1967), and Soong Tse-vung 宋子文 (1894–1971)—as the "Judases" of the Christian faith. He criticised Chinese churches for misinterpreting and misunderstanding the CCP's revolution, which was morally right and fair (Chao 1949i). In his correspondence with Bishop Hall in July 1949, Chao even showed his anger concerning the apathy of the churches in northern China because they were so "utterly mechanical" and so unable to adapt themselves to new conditions led by the People's Government—the new regime that Chao was wholeheartedly in support of and the best his generation of Chinese could wish for (Chao 1949f).[4]

Out of his admiration of the CCP's good work, Chao adjusted to the new political status quo by exploring whether Christianity was reconcilable with Communism after becoming Dean of the School of Religion of Yenching University in 1949. When the Communist troops were approaching Beiping in November 1948, Chao told his student Tsai Yung-chun 蔡詠春 (1904–1983) that the time for them had come to understand Marxism and to discover ideological similarities between Christianity and Marxism (Xu 1999, p. 142). In his letter to Bishop Hall in February 1949, Chao mentioned that people at Yenching were well and happy, and stated that Christianity had a "fighting chance" in China in the new political order. In the new era, during which a utopian world began to emerge, the gospel could not be revealed to be a living message without effecting individualisation in collective action (Chao 1949a). Therefore, Christianity must render "practical and concrete social service"—an indigenous action that met the socialist principles of the newly founded Communist regime—and must internally show real fellowship divested of its bourgeoisie disposition, attitude and outlook (Chao 1949d). In light of the political change in China, he thought that the School of Religion was in a unique position to be "prophetic" under God's guidance (Chao 1949d). Chao even made a radical supposition in his theological thought: one could be both a Christian and a Communist in China. He recalled seeing a worshipper in Communist uniform kneeling besides him, and this experience filled his heart with gratitude, leading him to understand that the Chinese were "a moderate, reasonable, practical and non-ideological people who did not see the incompatibility between Marxist-Leninist thought and Christian beliefs" (Chao 1949i). Based on Chao's optimism about the Communist takeover of China, it is not difficult for us to understand why Chao still insisted that the School of Religion should remain at Yenching University at Beiping and opposed any plan to relocate this theological school to other countries, despite facing uncertainties after the change of regime (Huang 1996, p. 78).

Another reason why Chao changed his stance on Communism was because of his pursuit for the indigenisation of Christianity in China. In the eyes of Chao, after 1949, Chinese churches had already become far less affected by foreign countries, as evidenced in the withdrawal of missionaries and foreign funds from China, successfully providing the demanded "self-governance" and "self-support". The remaining task for Chinese Christians to reform Chinese churches was to study how to put the concept of "self-propagation" into practice (Huang 1996, pp. 87–88). The study of "self-propagation" was what Chao was versed in. This could be the main reason why Chao began to examine how Christianity could be integrated into traditional Chinese culture after 1949, during which Communism was a dominant ideology in China. Tsai Yung-chun, Chao's student who was invited by Chao to teach at Yenching after graduating from Columbia University in 1949, also aligned with Chao's thought on "self-propagation", and had a very positive view on the future of China under Communist rule. Tsai not only assumed that supporting the government's religious policy would lead to a settlement favourable to the missionary enterprise in the new China, but also believed that the merger between Communism and Chinese culture would make Communism milder than it used to be in the Soviet Union, and especially more tolerant and liberal on religious issues. Tsai also thought that correlating Christianity with Marxism might foster the spread of the gospel, because the people's knowledge of Christianity could be enhanced at a time when Communism prevailed in China (Huang 1996, p. 79).

The factors mentioned above possibly explain why Chao made an outright statement in early 1950 about the possible reconciliation between Communism and Christianity. According to Chao, Chinese churches were contaminated by many ills imported from the churches in the West. He therefore suggested Chinese churches not only put aside Western cultural inheritance that had nothing to do with Christianity (Chao 1950i, pp. 133–34), but also foster the formation of a socialist theology. Christians could thus face the challenge epitomised by Marxism–Leninism, which was effective and correct from a scientific point of view (Chao 1950c, p. 182). Figure 3 shows Ningde 寧德 Hall—a place where the School

of Religion was housed between the 1920s and the early 1950s, and a testing ground that would foster the coexistence between Communism and Christianity in the eyes of Chao.

Figure 3. [32385515] Boxed sets of photographs—Looking at the south end of Ningde 寧德 Divinity Hall, through the cornices of Bashford and McBrier. This building housed Yenching University's School of Religion, and was erected in memory of Bishop William X. Ninde. This photo was taken in November, 1955. RG 11, box 424, folder 5946. Archives of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. Image courtesy of Yale Divinity Library.

Apart from being driven by his optimism and ambition, Chao planned to restructure the curriculum at the School of Religion, possibly also because he felt under pressure. In fact, from 1949, the Communist regime had begun to dictate curricular changes at universities by eliminating courses that were not acceptable to the CCP and by assigning many party members or cadres to teach classes (Lutz 1971, p. 455). In a letter to Tsai Yung-chun written in August 1949, Chao illuminated the pressure he felt from the government to teach in accordance with Marxist theory (Xu 1999, p. 142). Chao's optimism towards Communism, his desire to achieve self-propagation, and the pressure applied on him by the CCP led to his initial support for revisions of the curriculum at Yenching University's School of Religion. These included changes to the names of different subjects, apparently to avoid giving undue offence (Is Instruction Given in the Schools n.d.),[5] and also followed the instructions set by the new educational authorities by adding new courses on Communism. All theological students were required to study ideological courses such as "Principles of the New Democracy", "Historical and dialectical materialism", and "History of Social Changes" (Chao 1949g).

Chao also even asked his student Tsai Yung-chun—who accepted Chao's invitation to teach at the Yenching School of Religion after graduating from Columbia University—to spend a year studying Marxism during his doctoral training at Columbia (Tsai 1950). This request was totally unrelated to Tsai's thesis on the works of Cheng I 程頤 (1033–1107) and Cheng Hao's 程顥 (1032–1085) Neo-Confucianism in the Song era (Barbour 2000, p. 16). Tsai subsequently studied Christian social ethics with a Christian Marxist professor named Joe Fletcher (dates unknown). He learnt from Prof. Fletcher about some socialist and Communist concepts concerning doctrinal bases, historical developments, economic institutions, political institutions, and social institutions (Huang 1996, pp. 71–72). Before Tsai's return to China, Chao asked Tsai to buy books on Marxism and Leninism and critical literature for the School of Religion, and suggested eight different courses that he wanted Tsai to teach, including a course relating to Communism entitled "Dialectical Material-

ism", in addition to other courses such as "History of Christian Thought" and "History of Chinese Philosophy" (Tsai 1950; Huang 1996, p. 79).[6] The courses Tsai taught focused on the integration of Christianity into contemporary Chinese culture. Tsai wanted to teach students how to understand Marxism–Leninism and Mao Zedong's 毛澤東 (1893–1976) thoughts from a Christian perspective, and vice versa (Huang 1996, p. 79).

In a fashion similar to what other seminaries in China did after 1949 (Is Instruction Given in the Schools n.d.),[7] the School of Religion sent dozens of its teaching staff and students to Southwest and Central China to participate in the Land Reform Movement of the 1950s. Before their departure, Chao gave them a word of advice, asking them to "prioritise service over self-enjoyment" (Fang 1951). While observing how the Land Reform program was carried out by the CCP, professors and students were expected to learn from Maoism, and to reflect on economic inequalities and class struggles as a means of enhancing people's political awareness and smashing the landlord hierarchy (Yanjing 1951; Fang 1951).

Despite his overt endeavour to integrate Yenching's School of Religion into the prevailing order, Chao simultaneously offered some divergent portrayals of the incompatibility between Christianity and Communism in his private correspondence with Anglican friends in Hong Kong between 1949 and 1950. While discussing the English translation of his publications with Dean Alaric Rose, Chao stressed that "I can accept Marxism as a whole with only one addition which it lacks—namely a principle of transcendence" (Chao 1950f). Chao was anxious to see the correlations between Christianity and Marxism, and agreed with the idea of ideology and religion as growing out of social, economic, and political experience. But he also said that "what I am anxious to know is the whence of the experience of forgiveness and justification, of the grace of God, and of being made a new man in Christ." He believed that all these experiences were unlikely to come from "within the natural process" (Chao 1949e). He was also unable to reconcile the idea of continuity upon which science rested with that of the discontinuity that Christianity perceived between life and death, sin and holiness, and man and God. Materialism to him was nothing but neo-naturalism, which, in a scientific sense, Christianity could accept. However, in the sense of pure religion, which emphasised the incarnation and God's transcendence—a spiritual or practical condition of moving beyond physical needs and realities—Christianity pointed to the supernatural (Chao 1949e). According to Chao, in Christianity, there was a struggle in the transcendental world and a final fulfilment there, and there must be a trans-historical event at the final stage of all things (Chao 1950f). He therefore believed that while mysticism, pantheism (Buddhism and Taoism), naturalism, and immanentism (Confucianism) could be reconciled with Marxism, only Christianity, in its insistence upon a transcendental Lord and upon another world, stood as irreconcilable (Chao 1949e).

Chao further elaborated his argument by mentioning the consequences of the lack of transcendence in Marxism for society in 1950. He told Bishop Hall that he accepted the Communist world in which he lived, including "nearly all that Marx had to teach". He explained that he only used the phrase "nearly all" due to the fact that he could not come to terms with the lack of transcendence in Marxism—a political philosophy that broke down the "bourgeois idol" and denied a transcendent God, who was considered a violation of scientific truth (The Religious Teaching n.d.; Chao 1949e, 1950d). From Chao's perspective, the problems that Marxism brought to China were detrimental to an individual's personality or character development (Chao 1949e, 1950d), and were connected with Chao's earlier question: whether forgiveness and justice came from natural processes or from God (Chao 1949e).[8]

Apart from the doctrinal differences between Christianity and Communism, Chao also pointed out how the lack of religious freedom in the PRC caused Christian workers difficulties in marching in tune with the times. Chao's letter to Tsai Yung-chun in 1950 shows that the situation in new China had been full of contingencies and uncertainties. In an indirect reference to the state's control over religion, he stated that "the generation in which we live, with its growing schematisation and regimentation"—implying the polit-

ical influence on university curricula (Lutz 1971, p. 455)—"is one in which a devout religious person cannot feel comfortable" (Chao 1950g). Prior to Tsai Yung-chun's return to China, Chao worried that people like Tsai who had been in the United States for so many years would find it difficult to live in a world without much freedom. In such a world, where the fundamental values of life were threatened by the change of regime, Chao suggested Tsai be prepared to "find a shocking disillusionment", but at the same time to try to be himself and not be too anxious in adjusting his theology to the leftist thinking prevalent in the PRC—a country that offered a painful opportunity for creating a future for the Christian faith (Chao 1950g). Moreover, Chao not only advised Tsai to be prepared to find discrepancies between his conjecture and the real China (Chao 1950g), but also emphasised that one must be "on the alert all the time", to be "utterly faithful to truth and to Christ" (Chao 1950g). Chao's criticism of the incompatibility between Christianity and Communism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat via the CCP shows his ongoing, independent, critical theological reflection on the indigenisation of Christianity, which was still his primary interest, even after the change of political regimes.

Chao Tzu-chen did not express his concern about Communism in his publications after 1949. On the contrary, in his 1964 reminiscences, presumably written for the purpose of self-criticism, Chao criticised Yenching University and its School of Religion—the religious institute he once led—for their pro-American stances and for their attempts to introduce a religion that caused infinite harm to the Chinese (Chao 1964, p. 128). More seriously, Chao denounced God's love as "sentimental", "hypocritical", and "inauthentic", and denied the existence of important elements of central Christian concepts—eternity in Heaven, God's divine rule, Christ's kingdom on earth, and salvation through Jesus Christ (Chao 1964, p. 128). Chao also refused to meet his intimate confrère Bishop Ronald Hall, who visited Beijing with his wife in 1956 (Wickeri 2017, p. 20). In his publications, Chao did not mention why he underwent such a drastic change in his faith and his social contacts. But this could be attributed to an array of CCP-led political movements, starting from the 1951 Three Anti-Campaigns (*sanfan yundong* 三反運動) and the 1952 Five Anti-Campaigns (*wufan yundong* 五反運動)—political reform movements that aimed to get rid of corruption and the state's "enemies": "old" intellectuals, wealthy capitalists, and political opponents of the new regime (Hsü 1999, pp. 658–59). During these movements, Chao suffered a lot because of his alleged political "errors"—being a scholar who collaborated with the American "imperialists" and who was passive towards the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (Tang 2010, pp. 71–75; Wickeri 2017, p. 21). Perhaps what was more tragic was that Chao was reportedly deprived of his pastorship and placed under house arrest because of his insistence on the transcendence of Christian faith beyond anything worldly (*Zhongyang ribao* 1952). The poor experience Chao had in these political movements might force him to hide his concern about Communism and the CCP's governance.

4. Restricting Ecumenical Cooperation with Foreign Churches

Apart from the ideological incompatibility between Christianity and Marxism, another aspect that troubled Chao was the upkeep of his friendship with foreign church organisations. There are many examples showing Chao's nationalist, anti-foreign stance in crisis moments, such as his resignation from the World Council of Churches' presidency in response to the 1950 Stockholm Peace Appeal and to the council's condemnation of North Korea as an aggressor in the Korean War (Chao 1951g), as well as his criticism of the Americans' military "invasion" of the Korean peninsula (Chao 1950b) and their "cultural invasion" of China (Chao 1951a, pp. 2–5). As one of the presidents of the World Council of Churches, Chao refused to write a letter of appreciation and goodwill to Prince Prem Purachatra of Siam (1915–1981)—the editor of Thailand's English newspaper *Standard*—for the warm welcome the citizens of Bangkok had extended to the East Asia Christian Conference, which was regarded by some Chinese newspapers as a conference of anti-Communist, "reactionary Christians" (Chao 1949c). Chao tried to be cautious and explained that Christians in China who tried to be faithful to Christ and support

the new regime might be easily misunderstood as regarded their attitude towards Communism (Chao 1949c). Chao's alleged pro-Communist sympathies aroused international criticism and drew the attention of Dr. Willem Adolph Visser't Hooft (1900–1985), General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, who asked Bishop Ronald Hall in Hong Kong to clarify whether Chao was still a Christ-centric and orthodox theologian in China (Hooft 1949).

Chao's anti-imperial, nationalist stance can also be seen in his overt opposition against the practice of receiving funds from the West. In his articles published in early 1950, Chao lamented the "pessimism", "desperation", and "decadence" of those pastors who received American funds. In contrast with their counterparts who strove for independence from the West, these pastors who relied on foreign funds were just "muddling along", "like monks randomly chiming a clock" (Chao 1950h, p. 207). He therefore suggested that the best way to run and revive Chinese churches and seminaries was to prevent churches from accepting foreign funds (Chao 1950c, pp. 185–86; 1950h, p. 214). More importantly, he stated that Chinese churches were obliged to participate in the fight against foreign colonial presence in China. If these churches did not oppose imperialism, what they preached could not be Christian (Chao 1950c, pp. 185–86).

Yet, the private correspondence between Chao and the Anglican Church in Hong Kong in the late 1940s and the early 1950s provides us with a different angle for evaluating Chao's anti-imperial, nationalist stance shown in public. The divergent portrayal of Chao's thought appeared again in his public versus private expressions, as evidenced in his attempt to raise foreign funds from different parties for the Yenching School of Religion—the successor of Yenching University's School of Religion, which had officially been separated from the University in February 1951 (Chao 1951h) Prior to the amalgamation of Christian universities with their government-funded counterparts in 1952, the School of Religion, which had sixteen college graduates in December 1949, had already faced financial troubles—possibly an ongoing phenomenon caused by the inflation resulting from the civil war in the late 1940s. Initially, the university could seek government help (Chao 1949g), but the School's financial condition deteriorated after becoming an independent religious institute. Following the outbreak of the Korean War, the American government froze all funds connected to Chinese organisations in the United States from December 1950. The Yenching School of Religion immediately found itself in a serious financial crisis (Chao 1950e).

To ensure the school's survival, Chao sought assistance from Chinese churches. The School published a statement at Yenching University's Christian magazine entitled *En You* 恩友 (*Christian Fellowship Monthly*), openly confessing the School's dependence on American funds since the 1930s. While accepting government funds, the School promised to seek financial support from Chinese churches and to abandon its imperialist ties with the United States (Huang 1996, p. 83). It was the School's hope that it could become a nationwide, inter-denominational theological institute to train Christian servants—people who loved God, China, and the Chinese public—and to foster the indigenisation of Christianity (Chao 1951h, pp. 2–3). Despite the anonymous nature of the statement, it was likely that Chao had approved its release.

However, around four months before the publication of the School's statement in April 1951, Chao contradicted his earlier public refusal to accept foreign funds (Chao 1950c, pp. 185–86; 1950h, p. 214). Possibly realising that Chinese theological colleges and churches could not fulfill the demanded "self-support" under Communist rule, Chao privately sought financial assistance from the Anglicans in Hong Kong and Britain (Chao 1951b), a country which fought alongside the Americans against the Communists in the Korean War. The clergymen whom Chao contacted included the Right Reverend Ronald Hall—Bishop of Victoria, Hong Kong and South China—and Reverend David Paton (1913–1992), who served at the Diocese of Fujian and helped Chao secure the support of the Most Reverend Geoffrey Fisher (1887–1972), Archbishop of Canterbury (Paton 1951). In his letter to Bishop Hall, Chao mentioned that the School's staff and students could not

call on the local churches to strive for self-support while the School was happy to live comfortably with support from the Chinese government. They decided to "make an adventure of faith" by securing the Anglicans' support (Chao 1951b). Chao wondered if the British churches could support the Yenching School of Religion for three to five years, with a request for an annual amount of USD 7000 to 8000. That support would give the School time to stand on its own feet (Chao 1950e, 1951b; Paton 1951).

The Anglican communities in Britain and Hong Kong were happy to offer a helping hand to the Yenching School of Religion. In fact, before Chao sought economic assistance from the Anglicans for the School, in 1948, Bishop Ronald Hall had already made financial contribution via the Episcopal church in New York to Tsai Yung-chun's doctoral study at Columbia University for Tsai's preparation for teaching services at Yenching after his graduation (Chao 1948; Huang 1996, p. 65). After receiving Chao's request in early 1951, the Anglicans continued their support for Yenching. In his letter to Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher, Reverend David Paton emphasised that the churches of the West should do everything in their power to help their Chinese counterparts after the change of regime in China. To Paton, providing funds for the School headed by the two Anglican priests, Chao Tzu-chen and Tsai Yung-chun, who formerly belonged to the church pastored by Ronald Hall, would not only show British churches' willingness to continue the fellowship with their Chinese counterparts, but also contribute to theological education in China, where young educated Christian Chinese had to meet the intellectual challenges of the times after 1949 (Paton 1951). It was Paton's hope that the funds given by the older churches of the West could draw the Chinese churches' leaders to believe in the goodwill of the West and to ignore the CCP's accusation of "imperialism" (Paton 1951). Possibly being persuaded by Paton's point of view, the archbishop, despite worrying about Chinese churches' difficulties in receiving subsidies from abroad, agreed to provide financial support for the theological colleges in China, and asked Bishop Hall to follow up on this matter (Fisher 1951; Hall 1951). In February 1951, Bishop Hall successfully raised money from a theological foundation associated with St. Paul's College in Hong Kong, and decided to send HKD 1,000 through his Canton treasurer each month to Chao and Tsai (Hall 1951).

However, in the end, Chao was not given permission by the Chinese authorities to accept any foreign funds. Chao refused to accept the funds given by the Anglican communities, and would later return the money sent by Bishop Mo Yung-In 慕容賢 (1893–1966), claiming that the fund was not from Chinese sources. He explained that he and his colleagues felt that Christianity in China must "bear its own burden and create its own life through faith in Christ who lived righteously, suffered on the cross, and is now the Lord of our hearts and minds" (Chao 1951d). One month later, Chao, who hoped to raise about RMB 15,000,000 for the year between 1951 and 1952, reframed his request to Bishop Hall by seeking financial support from Hong Kong Chinese Christians, who could be classified as overseas Chinese and from whom the Chinese government might accept donations to mainland China. To raise funds in Hong Kong, Chao asked Bishop Hall to secure him permission to enter Hong Kong (Chao 1951c), but he postponed his trip because he was still waiting for the Chinese government's authorisation for his visit (Chao 1951f). The Chinese congregation in Hong Kong subsequently raised RMB 10,000,000, in two instalments, for the Yenching School of Religion (Chao 1951e). But Chao declined to accept the money again, claiming that as a patriotic Christian institution, the School could not receive this sum of money, which was of "dubious background" (Chao 1951e). In November 1951, Chao finally returned all the money to the Chinese churches in Hong Kong and asked them not to remit money to him again (Chao 1951e).

Chao's sudden withdrawal from raising funds in Hong Kong might well have been motivated by the same concern expressed by Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher—that the church in China might think it to be politically dangerous to receive money from Britain, and it would be impossible for any registered religious body to receive subsidies from abroad (Fisher 1951). In Chao's reminiscences, nothing is mentioned about his efforts to seek fi-

nancial assistance from the Anglicans in Hong Kong and Britain, except recalling how hard it was to raise funds from local Chinese churches (Chao 1964, pp. 125–26).

More clues are needed before I can comment on whether Chao's fundraising campaign aimed at the Anglicans was an act of heroic resistance or a suicide mission. Evidence does not show whether Chao understood the painful consequences of seeking foreign funds, but what Chao did was possibly a miscalculation, derived from his optimism towards the friendly relationship between Bishop Hall and the Communists. It could be inferred that Chao considered Hall—an Anglican Bishop who was sympathetic to China's Communist movement and believed the gospel would flourish under Communist rule (Huang 1996, p. 73; Chan-Yeung 2015, p. 101)—to be a figure to whom the CCP was well inclined. In fact, Bishop Hall, who in the 1940s began to think that the Chinese people might enjoy a better life under Communist rule, had become acquainted with CCP members such as Gong Peng 龔澎 (1914–1970), later an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, and Zhou Enlai 周恩來 (1898–1976), the later Premier of the PRC, through various relief and humanitarian works in which he engaged from the 1930s (Chan-Yeung 2015, pp. 101–2, 135–42). During China's war of resistance against Japan, Hall served as the President of the International Committee for the Promotion of Chinese Industrial Cooperatives—a position that enabled him to raise funds and allocate money to the CCP's Eighth Route Army for their wartime service (Li 2023). In response to Hall's generous help, Mao Zedong even wrote a letter to express his appreciation to Hall in 1939. Despite the antagonism between the PRC and the West during the Cold War, Hall and his wife were still invited by Zhou Enlai to visit Beijing in 1956, during which time Zhou treated them to dinner (Chan-Yeung 2015, pp. 135–37; Li 2023).

It was therefore perhaps due to the amicable relationship between Ronald Hall and the CCP that Chao Tzu-chen felt safe to seek financial assistance from Hall, his intimate friend and the senior clergy member who ordained him as Anglican priest in 1941. Unfortunately, in the 1950s, Chao's friendship with and affection for Bishop Hall was seen as collusion with "the imperialists" to destroy the Three-Self Patriotic movement, and as a result Chao was subjected to many struggle sessions and denunciation rallies (Huang 1996, pp. 87–91), violent public spectacles in Maoist China where people were publicly humiliated, accused, beaten and tortured. Although the CCP finally disapproved the transfer of foreign funds from the Hong Kong Anglican church to the Yenching School of Religion, Chao's attempt to secure foreign funds for his seminary-building project after 1949 demonstrates how he continued his efforts to advance ecumenical cooperation with other missionary organisations, irrespective of their nationalities.

5. Conclusions

This article argues that Chao Tzu-chen's self-contradictions in his public versus private expressions after 1949 signify his disillusionment with fostering the convergence between Christianity and Communism, as well as church–state relations. Chao, who tried to adapt to the new political status quo, adhered to many of his existing theological stances, particularly his pursuit of the indigenisation of Christianity for the self-propagation of Chinese churches. Believing the Communist victory to be a sign of God's judgement, Chao also tried to incorporate his practical theology into the Communist utopian world. This attempt not only served as an example of "making sense of the Christian message in local circumstances" (Schreiter 1985, p. 2), but also showed how the indigenous Christians selected some elements that they felt suited their needs (Kaplan 1995, p. 3). Nevertheless, his subsequent reflections on the essence of Communism and the termination of foreign funds to the Yenching School of Religion after 1949 led him to re-evaluate the feasibility of the convergence between Communism and Christianity. Chao's favourable impression of the Communists in the late 1949s and the early 1950s did not prevent him from thinking critically in his theological reflections, or from promoting ecumenical cooperation with foreign Christian organisations. First, despite his emphasis on the need of Chinese churches and theologians to be involved in the construction of a socialist theology, in his private corre-

spondence, Chao also highlighted the incompatibility between Christianity and Marxism, largely because of the transcendence of God. Second, Chao, who realised that Chinese churches and seminaries could not fulfill the demanded "self-support" under Communist rule, sought financial assistance from Anglican churches overseas for the Yenching School of Religion, while opposing Christian organisations' acceptance of foreign funds and stressing the School's increasing reliance on Chinese churches and the government in its path to become a self-supporting seminary. Chao's hope to reconcile Christianity with Communism was finally crushed as he, possibly under political pressure, overtly denounced his faith in his 1964 reminiscences (Chao 1964, p. 128).

Apart from qualifying some politically motivated arguments concerning their praise or condemnation of Chao's staunch allegiance to the PRC and of his extreme anti-imperial stance (Tang 2010, pp. 84–85; Zhongguo 1952, pp. 7–8), this article also confirms Winfried Glüer's and Ying Fuk-tsang's conclusions regarding Chao's view of the incompatibility between historical materialism and God's surpassing presence through history (Glüer 1998, p. 295), and his religious vision for Christianity's role in rectifying the deficiencies of the PRC (Ying 2003, p. 219). More importantly, this article supplements Philip Wickeri's finding regarding Chao's perspective as to why Christianity could not be reconciled with Marxism (Wickeri 2017, pp. 19–20). It further pushes his argument forward: the lack of transcendence in Marxism and the CCP's increasing control over religious freedom also dealt a blow to the convergence between Christianity and Communism.

Moreover, this article provides further insight into the important role that the Hong Kong Anglican church played in Chao Tzu-chen's seminary-building project following the merger of Yenching University with government-funded universities. It shows that the Communist takeover of China did not deal a blow to the friendship between Chao and the Anglican communities in the early years after the founding of the PRC. It was some senior clergies' hope that the funds provided by the Anglicans for the functioning of Yenching School of Religion could persuade Chinese Christian leaders to recognise the goodwill of Western churches, which showed their empathy and concern for the sufferings and uncertainties faced by their Chinese counterparts in turbulent times. Although their efforts were in vain because of the Chinese government's objection, the fellowship between Chao and his Anglican friends was unquestioned. This article supplements Xu Yihua's argument regarding the Yenching School of Religion's belated "relegation" to seeking financial support from churches in China after 1949. Foreign funds were still considered by Chao as one of the important sources of income required to foster theological education in the PRC, based on the long-standing friendship forged between Chao and the Anglican communities.

Another premise that this article offers in the field of Christian higher education after 1949 is the radical remolding of Yenching University's School of Religion and its successor organisation. While resonating with some scholars' research on how the rise of Communism in China put an end to Yenching University (West 1976, p. 246; Lutz 1971, pp. 473–84; Edwards 1959, pp. 340–43), this article also shows that the School of Religion at Yenching University—a liberal Christian institute—was swiftly converted into a government-controlled, socialist theological school, which served both God and the Party. Such a development compelled this institute to break away from many long-held principles of Christianity. My findings expand on Sigrid Schmalzer's argument that from the early PRC, many Christians, akin to the Soviet experience (Schmalzer 2007, pp. 253–55), were compelled to be loyal to the Party State and God. The CCP's inclusion of Christians in its remolding project echoes Douglas Stiffler's conclusion that in the process of establishing the Renmin (People's) University of China 中國人民大學 in Beijing in 1950, the CCP enlarged its recruitment campaign by extending its welcome to young intellectuals—including Christians (Stiffler 2007, pp. 302–8). Lastly, the remolding of Yenching University's School of Religion and its successor also served as examples of the CCP's removal of Chinese universities' corporate identities—an idea of higher education's autonomy—which represented "a stop on the path to the formation of a Chinese civil society", in the words of Ruth Hayhoe and Zhong Ningsha (Hayhoe and Zhong 1997, pp. 121–23).

This article ends with an epilogue on Chao Tzu-chen after 1951. The increasingly fervid political movement in the 1950s neither allowed Chao to express his concern about Communism nor enabled him to raise funds from the Christian leaders and congregations with whom he was acquainted. He was also removed from his clerical and teaching positions, and was alienated by others who did not want to be identified with him. This meant Chao was deprived of academic, religious, and also personal freedom, and finally not only became "a casualty of liberation", in the words of Philip Wickeri (Wickeri 2017, pp. 22–24), but also like "a bird caged in a Communist pavilion", as this article illuminates. According to Winfried Glüer, the political turmoil in which Chao suffered forced him to experience a long period of isolation, during which he claimed to have moved away from his Christian faith. It was not until Chao's rehabilitation after the end of the Cultural Revolution that he restarted his search for truth—such as transcendence, the universal order, and God—as evident in the letters he wrote in the last stages of his life (Glüer 2012, p. 196). Glüer's finding on the final years of Chao strikes the same note as the argument of this article, which highlights how Chao was faithful to his theological principles and his faith in the early years after the establishment of the PRC. Although Chao was rehabilitated by the government authorities and regained his honour a few months prior to his death in November 1979 (Wickeri 2017, pp. 22–24), such a remedy for unreasonable accusations and punishments was barely sufficient, and long overdue.

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Notes

1 Although the author is fully aware of the importance of the archival materials associated with Yenching University, restrictions imposed by COVID and funding, as well as access limitations to the archives at Peking University, made the use of the collections at Yale University and Peking University for my article impossible. While these archives may also shed light on Chao's emotions and views on the socio-political conditions in China, the Yenching materials held at these two universities largely detail the political changes and institutional development of Yenching University around 1949. Chao's letters at the HKSKH archives—materials that this article heavily relies on—offer unique aspects that other archives or sources do not. This is because they not only reveal Chao's complex feelings during the Civil War, but also reflect the long-standing friendship forged between Chao and the Anglican churches—Christian communities that have been understudied in the research on Chao in post-1949 China.

2 For example, Peter Ng argues that Chao started expanding his own liberal theology and paying more contemplative attention to the concepts of God, revelation, incarnation, and the Christian Church after encountering Anglicanism and European Christianity (Ng 2015, p. 167). Similarly, Chen Yongtao discusses the impact of the Anglican tradition on Chao's later theological thinking, as shown in his concern for ethics and morality, and his belief in the inseparability between religion and ethics (Chen 2015, pp. 191–92).

3 Driven by the formation of the National Christian Council of China in 1922, the movement's ultimate goal was to foster self-governance, self-support (financial independence from foreigners), and self-propagation (indigenous missionary work) amongst the church organisations in China (Lam 1994, pp. 114–15, 125).

4 In fact, Chao was not the only Christian at Yenching University who had good impressions of the CCP after the liberation of Beijing. Possibly impressed by the CCP's good work, some students from the School of Religion, as well as undergraduates of

Yenching and Tsing Hua Universities, went to the churches and church middle schools "out of a warm love for them and for their lord", in the words of Chao. Working on behalf of the new government authorities, these students comforted Christians with good news concerning the Communist takeover of the city and informed them of the good policies that safeguarded religious freedom. They also helped gather information from different Christian communities concerning their views on the political situation (Chao 1949h, pp. 1066–68; Chao 1949i).

5 For example, theology came under the head of "Religion", Church history under "history", philosophy of religion and ethics under "Philosophy", and liturgics and church polity under "sociology" (Is Instruction Given in the Schools n.d.).

6 These included "Comparative Religion", "Christian Apologetics", "Anthropology", "Christianity and Chinese Culture", "Modern Schools of Christian Thought", "Christian Ethics", and "History of Christian Thought" (Tsai 1950).

7 The Central Theological School of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui (Anglican-Episcopal Province of China), under the leadership of Bishop Shen Zigao 沈子高, prepared his students for the necessity of productive labour, if need be, and all students did a course in carpentry and other practical activities. such as mutual hair-cutting. At the same time, theological students would learn to live simply like the Communists (Is Instruction Given in the Schools n.d.).

8 Chao's wariness of Communism was warranted because there were similar concerns found in Christian circles after 1949. An anonymous Anglican student recalled feeling deeply disturbed and confused by the ideological correlations between Communism and Christianity. When attending a two-month leadership training conference of Christian Associations in 1949, this student constantly challenged and probed the attitude of his teachers who interpreted the origin of Christianity in the context of historical materialism—Karl Marx's theory of history. He was indoctrinated with the fact that the primitive mind, which later developed a supernatural explanation, could not explain the origins and causes of things according to natural scientific laws. In the eyes of the Communists, religion arose in the period of primitive Communism, but subsequently assumed other functions in later periods. Jesus Christ, who failed to understand the laws of social development, therefore leapt directly from a slave-holding society to Heaven, and ignored the final stages of history—feudalism, capitalism, and capitalism (The Religious Teaching n.d.). Despite its opposition to slavery, Christianity was accused of being exploited by feudal lords to allow them to exert their control over the public. Christians, who served the upper classes' interests and did not act on love (The Religious Teaching n.d.), were blamed for their refusal to recognise the existence of classes and other evil forces, such as the capitalists who would not repent and could only be removed as a menace (The Religious Teaching n.d.). The above concepts led this Anglican student to a very confusing conclusion that believing in a transcendent God was a violation of scientific truth, and religion was wrong in its basic faith and nature (The Religious Teaching n.d.).

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Article

Contingent Companion with the Cantonese: Uncovering a Hidden History of Written Cantonese Christian Literature in the Late Nineteenth Century †

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Abstract: This paper aims to uncover a hidden history of Cantonese Christian literature. Written Cantonese has been present since the late Ming dynasty in parallel to the emergence of a distinct Cantonese identity. Western missionaries, for the sake of evangelism, facilitated the development of written Cantonese in South China since the mid-nineteenth century. At that time, missionaries put a lot of effort into translating religious leaflets and booklets, the Bible, the book of prayers, and even Cantonese–English dictionaries. These works contributed to standardizing written Cantonese and indirectly helped to develop Cantonese identity. I will critically examine how Cantonese Christian literature declined for the sake of nationalism, as the first publication of *Heheben* 和合本 (Mandarin Union Version) in Protestant Christianity in 1919 represented the unification of the Church by using written Mandarin. After elaborating on the unintentional alliance of missionaries with Cantonese in the nineteenth century, in conclusion, I will make a brief comparison of Hong Kong Church in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which is inactive in the continuous written Cantonese movement in Hong Kong.

Keywords: Cantonese identity; Chinese Christian literature; *Heheben* (Mandarin Union Version); Western missionaries; written Cantonese

1. Introduction

The use of written Mandarin was first promoted by the nationalist May Fourth Movement for cultural enlightenment. By 1922, the Beijing Government further announced vernacular Mandarin as the national written Chinese. Its status continued in the People's Republic of China (PRC) since 1949. Parallel to the emergence of *Guoyu* 國語for nation-building, the first publication of *Heheben* 和合本 (Mandarin Union Version, MUV in short) in Protestant Christianity in 1919 represented the unification of the Chinese Church by using written Mandarin to translate the Bible. Other Chinese Christian literature followed. George Kam Wah Mak's book, *Protestant Bible Translation and Mandarin as the National Language of China*, has documented in detail the process of making MUV, "one Bible for one nation" (Mak 2017, p. 61). Based on his studies, I further examine in this paper how the vision of using the national language in Chinese Christian literature discouraged other local languages' publication, including written Cantonese. A few scholars state that written vernacular Chinese (白話), not limited to Mandarin, significantly contributed to the emergence of ethnolinguistic identities in Chinese communities (Snow 2004, p. 43). Regarding written Cantonese, interestingly, we can trace two contingent development periods to connect with local communities, i.e., Cantonese identity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and Hong Kong (HK) identity since the 1950s. In the first period, in the nineteenth century, the enthusiasm of missionaries' Cantonese translation of Christian

literature (as well as their linguistic works like dictionaries) indirectly contributed to the emergence of Cantonese identity. In the second period, since the mid-twentieth century, i.e., after 1949, written Cantonese has been well established in HK, even though it is not recognized as an official "written" language but in fact an official "spoken" language (Bauer 2018, p. 107). As a historian of regional studies of Chinese Christianities in South China, in this paper, I attempt to analyze a contingent companionship between Western missionaries and local people in normalizing written Cantonese in the late nineteenth century.

This paper aims to uncover a hidden history of Chinese Christian literature in Cantonese. Written Cantonese has a long tradition, dating back to the Ming dynasty (Leung 1997, p. 271). Significantly, Western missionaries indirectly facilitated the development of "Cantonese identity" by using written local vernacular language in South China since the mid-nineteenth century. At that time, missionaries strived to translate religious leaflets and literature, the Bible, the book of prayers, and even Cantonese–English dictionaries. These works contributed to standardizing written Cantonese and indirectly helped to develop Cantonese identity. I will critically examine how Cantonese Christian literature declined for the sake of nationalism, as the first publication of MUV in Protestant Christianity in 1919 represented the unification of the Church by using written Mandarin. After describing the unintentional alliance of missionaries with Cantonese people in the nineteenth century, in conclusion, I will make a brief comparison of Hong Kong Church's inactivity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the continuous written Cantonese movement in Hong Kong.

2. The Origin of Canton and the Imagination of Cantonese Identity

The growth of Canton[1] likely emerged from its long history as a trading port, as well as from the large-scale reclamation of the Pearl River Delta. As early as the Qin-Han period (221 BCE–220 CE), the city of Panyu番禺 (i.e., Canton) received ships from Southeast Asia and offered access to an interior transportation route from Guangxi province in the west to Hainan Island in the south. During the open-door policy of the Tang dynasty (618–907), in particular, Canton became a major international port in South China. Indian and Persian communities settled there, and Buddhist monasteries and an Islamic mosque were built there (Faure 1996, p. 38). In the period between the Tang and Southern Song dynasties (618–1279), Canton was a principal trading port (Xu 2011, p. 13; Zhao et al. 2002, p. 305). European trade was concentrated within the Thirteen Hongs 十三行 in Canton from 1755 to 1842 under the Canton System (Grant 2014, pp. 62–63). After the defeat of the First Opium War, Canton then was forcibly opened as one of five trading ports in China, as stipulated in the Treaty of Nanking (Bracken 2019, pp. 168–76). Paradoxically, as the principal trading port for long periods, it was hampered because of local politics among local lineages, local officials, the Qing court, and Great Britain. From the end of the Second Opium War (1856–1860) to the Republican China period (1911–1949), Canton contained British and French concessions in Shamian沙面. This allowed frequent interactions among Chinese and residing foreigners. Furthermore, a seaward location enabled Canton's frequent interactions with overseas countries, as evidenced by its long trading and labor emigration to Southeast Asia and the United States since the nineteenth century. This brief introduction to Canton is significant for understanding the spread of spoken Cantonese beyond the province of Canton itself, in locations including parts of Guangxi province, Southeast Asian countries, North America, and so on (Snow 2004, p. 68). In fact, Gina Anne Tam observes that there are different Cantonese dialects in different regions, e.g., Taishan dialect and Gaozhou dialect (Tam 2020, p. 21).

After briefly introducing the history of Canton as a trading port, I now give a short summary of the emergence of Cantonese regional identity. Current historians have pointed out that the Han Chinese are not merely distinguished by ethnicity but also assimilated through the formation of cultural identity (Liu and Faure 1996, pp. 1–2). Cultural identification is not consistent from top to bottom, as the interplay between the two is complex. This includes diverse imperial policies of cultural assimilation in different dynasties and

local adaptation of Han Chinese culture. Moreover, the fusion of identity is complicated by different ethnic group identities and the "stereotypes" by others (Ching 2006, pp. 28–29). This has led to regionally diverse manifestations of Han Chinese identity. In the case of Canton, the people of the province were historically portrayed as Sinicized Yue (粵 or 越), or barbarians in the eye of Han people, in the writings of the Han through Tang dynasties (206 BCE–907 CE).[2] However, in local genealogies compiled later during the Qing period (1644–1911), the major lineages of the Pearl River Delta would trace back to their ancestors' migration from *Zhongyuan* 中原 [central plains] in the Song and Yuan dynasties (960–1368) to avoid nomads' attack from the north (Siu 1993, p. 23). Even more complicated, there are different ethnic groups with different spoken languages in Canton, i.e., Punti 本地 (local and native inhabitants), the Hakka 客家 (*Kejia*, literally, guest inhabitants), Tanka 蜑家, Hoklo鶴佬 (*Helao*, also called *Fulao* 福佬) and also Teochew (*Teochiu*, *Chiuchow*, 潮州 [*Chaozhou*]).[3] Some of them claimed their originality from central plains, in order to affirm their authentic Han identity. Ching May-Bo remarked that in various historical contexts, there were different classifications defining Cantonese (*Guangdong ren* 廣東人), and definitions of "we" and "other" changed in accordance with the different political preferences of the time (Ching 2006, pp. 66–96; Faure 2007, pp. 38–50). In short, ethnicities were not static but changed depending on social mobility.[4] She further noted that the emergence of Cantonese cultural identity paralleled the emergence of nationalism in China. Based on nuanced studies of the emergence of a written vernacular (i.e., Cantonese), written local gazetteers (and literature), the development of *Lingxue*嶺學 [the School of South China], and local ethnic studies in Canton province, Ching examines how the Cantonese literati developed a fuzzy local Cantonese culture and identity from the 1820s to the 1940s. This project was concomitant with the penetration of a grand "Han", and afterward, the Chinese nationalist identity (Ching 2006).

3. The Origin of Written Cantonese

After an analysis of the locality of Canton and the emergence of Cantonese identity, in this section, I introduce the development of written Cantonese and how it relates to the development of Cantonese identity in South China. Before that, I first touch upon the political implications of the distinction between dialect and language.

There is difficulty drawing a border between the terms dialect and language. The distinction between them mostly comes from political and cultural factors (Trudgill 2000, pp. 4–5). In China, given that Mandarin (now called Putonghua) is the national language, the others are classified as dialects, including Cantonese. Victor H. Mair stated that using the term dialect gives it an inferior position vis à vis the national language (Mair 1991). In a linguistic sense, the criterion to distinguish the correlation between language and dialect is based on mutual intelligibility. In China, Mandarin, Cantonese, and other regional languages such as Hokkien, Hakka, and Shanghainese are mutually unintelligible and should be classified as languages under the Sino-Tibetan language family (Bauer and Wakefield 2019, p. 9).

Despite the mutual unintelligibility between spoken Mandarin and Cantonese, written Cantonese uses Standard Chinese characters.[5] However, it is used with Cantonese characteristics. To preserve the sounds with the Standard Chinese character set, written Cantonese incorporates unique Chinese characters, romanization, borrowing other Chinese characters with the same sound ("phonetic borrowing"), and lastly rediscovering ancient characters (Snow 2004, pp. 51–55). Lastly, as Jerry Norman suggests, Cantonese originated from the old southern Chinese, which has the most ancient and autochthonous elements of Chinese (Norman 1988, p. 210). This makes some Cantonese people proclaim that they are more "Han" among the Han than northern Chinese (Ching 2006, p. 76; Pan 1987, p. 35). In short, linguistically, it is not suitable to classify Cantonese as a dialect, compared to a language within the broader Sinitic language family (Bauer and Wakefield 2019, p. 9).

The development of written Cantonese was first attested by songbooks of local folk songs and narrative songs, i.e., "wooden fish books" 木魚書, "southern songs" 南音,

"dragon boat songs" 龍舟歌, and "Cantonese love songs" 粵謳 (Ching 2006, p. 123; Snow 2004, p. 80). Regarding genre and style of language, dragon boat songs were more vernacular than the other three (Snow 2004, p. 80). All these printed materials targeted a lower-class audience, particularly local women (Snow 2004, pp. 78, 81). According to Evelyn Rawski, a considerable population possessed enough literacy skills to read these popular entertainment materials (Rawski 1979, pp. 11–12, cited from Snow 2004, p. 79). The oldest remaining wooden fish book is *Huajian Ji*《花箋記》 [The Flowery Scroll], published in Canton in the early Qing dynasty (1713), but scholars now believe that was first published in the late Ming period (Leung 1997, p. 271; Snow 2004, p. 81, n. 50). It was about a love story of a talented young scholar with a young woman (Snow 2004, p. 81). Other wooden fish books had similar love stories, the history of kings and key officials, and Buddhist stories, which were like sung narratives (*Yuan qu*元曲) in the north in the Yuan dynasty (Ching 2006, p. 123). Apart from these Cantonese songs, Cantonese Opera粵劇 also contributed to strengthening the development of written Cantonese. The earliest extant manuscript was *Furong Ping*〈芙蓉屏〉 [Lotus Standing Screen] in 1871 (Ching 2006, p. 136). The earliest manuscripts of wooden fish books and Cantonese opera were mixed with literary Chinese, Mandarin, and Cantonese, a pattern called *Saam kap dai* 三及第 (Snow 2004, p. 60; Ching 2006, p. 136). From 1920 to 1936, Cantonese opera used solely Cantonese vocabulary (Snow 2004, p. 94). Apart from these, to enhance popular literacy, there were textbooks teaching written Cantonese. An early example is *Forty Chapters in Prose*《散語四十章》[6], published by St. Paul's College in HK in 1877 (Snow 2004, p. 91). At the turn of the century, more local literati wrote literacy textbooks in written Cantonese for women and children, e.g., *Rhyming Book for Women and Children* 《婦孺韻語》 (1912) by Lu Zijun盧子駿 and *Essentials for Women and Children* 《婦孺須知》 (1904) by Chen Zibao陳子褒(1862–1922). Chen Zibao, a well-known Cantonese literacy educator, wrote multiple Cantonese literacy textbooks for women and children (Snow 2004, p. 91; Ching 2006, pp. 157–60). To summarize, the presence of printed entertainment scripts and literary textbooks evidenced the gradual development and formalization of written Cantonese from the 1800s and was well established in the 1930s (Snow 2004, pp. 61, 98).

4. Written Cantonese Christian Literature by Western Missionaries in the Late Nineteenth Century

In the field of Christian literature translation in the nineteenth century, it is well established that the variety of Chinese used in translation gradually changed from literary Chinese (*Wenyan*)文言 to Mandarin官話 (the official vernacular language in the empire) and different local languages, before the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China in Shanghai in 1890, when a plan of making a standardized Mandarin Union Bible was formalized (Choi 2018; 2021, pp. 21–46; Mak 2017, p. 15; 2021, pp. 164–80). Early Protestant missionary translations were in *Wenyan* and Mandarin, possibly as they targeted Chinese literati, for example, those of Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) in the sixteenth century. Nonetheless, to access local people, early Protestant missionaries also committed to translating and publishing works in local languages in the nineteenth century. They preferred to print more Christian literature, prayer books, and the Bible to evangelize local people (Starr 2008, p. 399). In fact, most early Chinese Christians were from lower socioeconomic strata, with limited *Wenyan* literacy (Mak 2017, p. 51). Since Western missionaries commonly entered China in the province of Canton (either from Macau, Canton itself, or Hong Kong), they studied local vernaculars and wrote or compiled Cantonese dictionaries and other language textbooks for the quick adaptation of local languages by new foreign missionaries.[7] Considering linguistic studies, there is a prevalent trend to study Western missionaries' work in Cantonese and analyze the development and linguistic pattern of written Cantonese in the nineteenth century (e.g., Cheung 2021, pp. 25–57; Yoshikawa 2019, pp. 11–29). The missionary work significantly contributed to the formation and normalization of written Cantonese in the nineteenth century. In this section, I briefly discuss their work on the translation of Christian literature and the Bible in Cantonese.

The publication and translation of Christian literature in written Cantonese is loose and fragmented. Some characteristics of the corpus are summarized below, with reference to the work by Dyer J. Ball (1847–1919) in 1894, a missionary and an important Cantonese linguistic expert at the turn of the century, as well as to other resources (e.g., Ball 1894; Ching 2006; Kataoka and Lee 2022, pp. 139–43; Lai 2012, pp. 249–88; Yao 2018; You 2002, pp. 198–99). I counted forty-three texts published from 1847 to 1906, plus seven texts with no publication dates, i.e., fifty in total.[8] In general, they were mainly published during the 1840s–1890s. The themes of the written Cantonese publication have covered a wide range of Christian life, i.e., religious education and Christian doctrines (15 texts), Christian literature and stories (14 texts), Bible stories and teaching (11 texts), hymns (6 texts), and Book of Common Prayer (4 texts). Regarding the background of authors or translators, American Presbyterian missionaries (i.e., Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, PCUSA) in Canton played a significant role in publishing Cantonese Christian texts. They compiled or translated more than half of the mentioned texts in Cantonese (26 texts). In particular, several American Presbyterian women missionaries, i.e., Mary Ball Collins (b. 1833?), Lily Happer Cunningham (1853–1886), Harriet N. Noyes (1844–1924), Mrs. Noyes,[9] Mrs. Happer,[10] and Harriette Lewis (d.1933), participated in compiling or translating Cantonese Christian literature (20 texts). Some of their work probably targeted children and women. It can be understood that American Presbyterian women missionaries were actively involved in education for women and girls in Canton, e.g., 3 boarding schools for women and girls, and 21 day schools for girls in 1884, the largest provider of women's education among missions (Henry 1885, p. 209). Presbyterian women missionaries were possibly eager to publish more textbooks for their targeted students.

In contrast, the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in HK focused more on liturgy. They translated the whole or parts of the Book of Common Prayer (four texts). At that time, the bishop of Victoria diocese also took charge of the ministry in Canton province. This shows a characteristic of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer in China in the nineteenth century, where local dioceses translated their colloquial Book of Common Prayer (Starr 2008, pp. 32–48). However, when the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui中華聖公會 was established in 1912, the Anglican Church intended to unify its liturgy including language. The first united Book of Common Prayer produced in Mandarin was not widely used in the dioceses. In fact, since the end of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui in 1958, when it merged into the Three-Self Church, the Chinese United Book of Common Prayer, unfortunately, has not yet been published (Guo 2015, pp. 103–16). Lastly, the missionary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Rev. George Piercy (1829–1913), was also a significant contributor to Cantonese Christian literature, as he compiled or translated seven of the fifty texts. He was also one of the significant contributors to translating the Cantonese Bible in the nineteenth century.

Regarding the translation of the Bible into Cantonese, I give a summary mainly from the works of Daniel Kam-to Choi蔡錦圖and Kataoka Shin片岡新 (Choi 2018; Kataoka 2022, pp. 1–20). The first part of the Bible translated into Cantonese, i.e., the Gospel of Luke, used romanization by two missionaries, Christian W. Louis and Ernst Faber (1839–1899), from the Rhenish Missionary Society in 1867. This translation used Lepsius' Standard Alphabet, which was common for the romanization of local languages' Bible translation in China, e.g., Hakka (Choi 2013, pp. 517–18). After that, the missionaries adopted the local practice of written Cantonese, i.e., using Chinese characters to write Cantonese. *Reports of the British and Foreign Missionary Society* in 1870 mentioned a united translation of the New Testament in Cantonese by missionaries from a few mission boards. This is an important project as the Cantonese Bible could reach out to 14–16 million Cantonese speakers in Canton province. Moreover, a Cantonese Bible would help missionary efforts amongst the illiterate men, women, and children in mission schools, who were unfamiliar with written Chinese (British and Foreign Bible Society 1870, pp. 222–23). At that time, Cantonese people in general did not understand written Mandarin.[11] However, the previously mentioned prevalence of popular written Cantonese scripts demonstrated that written Can-

tonese was sufficiently prevalent for the large number of books published. Missionaries were therefore inclined to take part in the Cantonese translation project, with the first Cantonese Bible translation completed by PCUSA's missionary, Charles F. Preston (1827–1877), who first translated the Gospels of Matthew and John in 1862. In 1868, along with Piercy the Wesleyan missionary, and Adam Krolczyk (1836–1872) from the German Rhenish Missionary Society, Preston formed a united translation committee for Cantonese Bible work based on *Textus Receptus*, a recognized Greek text by the Protestant Church in the nineteenth century (Choi 2013, p. 510). It was the first cooperation among missionary societies for biblical translation in China, earlier than the united work setup for MUV established in 1890 (Choi 2013, p. 510, n.13). The Gospel of Luke and Colossians were finished in 1871, and in 1872, the Gospel of Mark and Acts of the Apostles followed. The translation of the New Testament was then finished in 1877. The Old Testament was fully translated in 1894, and the whole text was then subject to a series of revisions. The product, the first Cantonese Bible with both testaments, was finally published in 1907 (Choi 2013, pp. 510–14).

Apart from the written Cantonese version, since 1890 onwards, the CMS produced a romanized Cantonese Bible for Beihai 北海 station in Guangxi province (Choi 2018, pp. 530–32). As aforementioned, because of the close ties with Canton, some parts of Guangxi spoke Cantonese as their everyday language, alongside *Pinghua* 平話, a group of related varieties. After the series translation of individual books, the romanized New Testament and the Protestant Bible were published in 1913 and 1915, respectively, which were mainly compiled and translated by the CMS's missionaries, W. E. H. Hipwell and his wife (Choi 2018, p. 521).

Turning back to the publication of a Cantonese Bible, in Hong Kong, two revised versions of this Cantonese Union Bible were published in 1959 and 1997, respectively (Choi 2018, pp. 529–30). Nonetheless, the Cantonese Bible is not popular in HK despite most HK churches delivering a Cantonese service nowadays.[12] Most churches use the MUV (published in 1919) or revised MUV 和合本修訂版 (published in 2010) in Standard written Chinese, i.e., Mandarin. Apart from the Cantonese Bible, other Chinese Bibles in local languages fell to the wayside because of MUV's popularity to date in Chinese Christian communities worldwide, likely due to the greater intelligibility of Standard written Chinese for most.

5. Conclusions

In this paper, I have traced the origins of written Cantonese through the entertainment of the lower classes with reference to its historical and geographical contexts, with examples including songs of "wooden fish books", "southern songs", "dragon boat songs", and "Cantonese love songs" in Canton in the nineteenth century. To a certain extent, they reflect local popular culture and consolidate the Cantonese community, which eventually encouraged the formation of a Cantonese identity. For different purposes, I pinpoint that Protestant missionaries in Canton actively engaged with written Cantonese in the nineteenth century too. They produced Cantonese–English dictionaries possibly for new missionaries or foreigners learning Cantonese or for documentation of the Cantonese language in its time. Targeting locals, they translated religious leaflets and literature, the Bible, hymns, and the book of prayers for evangelization and enhancing church life. Moreover, some Cantonese Christian textbooks and literature would be used for Christian education at mission schools. Thus, I claim that these missionaries were contingent companions of developing written Cantonese with local people in the nineteenth century, as they enhanced the early development of written Cantonese by producing dictionaries, textbooks, the compilation and translation of Christian literature, and the Bible in Canton in the nineteenth century. As previously mentioned, the Cantonese Bible was marginalized after the publication of MUV in 1919, which is a unified written Mandarin Bible in the national language. MUV was a symbol to show "Chineseness" through the united efforts of the Protestant Church in response to Western imperialist powers in the May Fourth Movement (1917–

1921).[13] It made a dream of one Bible for one nation since 1890 come true, but it neglected local words and expressions (Mak 2017, pp. 21, 61–62).

The last remark is that although the use of written Cantonese in Christian Literature declined in the twentieth century, written Cantonese is/was alive in its own way. Influenced by the prevalence of Cantonese opera, written Cantonese was well established in the 1930s (Snow 2004, p. 98). While written Cantonese in Canton city declined after 1949; in contrast, it flourished in HK since the 1950s, because of the different sociopolitical environment (Bauer 2018, pp. 105, 110). Indeed, most in HK embraced written Cantonese as it moved into the HK cultural mainstream, as a kind of identification with a local HK identity (Snow 2004, p. 41). Unfortunately, the Church in HK is absent in this local written Cantonese movement. Apart from embracing the MUV compiled by Western missionaries and the Chinese Church in the heyday of nationalist sentiment in 1919, it is worth noting that the HK (Chinese) Church is also absent in the second stage of the written Cantonese movement in HK from the mid-twentieth century. This written Cantonese movement, where the Church is absent, links up with a new local culture and identity (Snow 2004, p. 7). It is likely because written Cantonese is associated with a vernacular local language for popular culture, which does not fit into the middle-class conventions of the HK Church. Alternatively, the HK Church is not aware of its role in the formation of an HK identity. In short, when the literacy rate increased in reading Chinese (written Mandarin), the HK Church adopted the MUV and printed Christian literature in written Mandarin. This significantly increased the circulation of their publication to a global Chinese audience. On the other hand, as I claim in this paper, the HK Church has not actively engaged in the written Cantonese movement in HK since the 1950s onwards, although spoken Cantonese is prevalent in HK Church worship. Although outside the scope of this paper, how spoken Cantonese worship shapes HK's social and political identity is a subject for further research.

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Notes

1 In this paper, I call 'Canton' 廣州 rather than the pinyin 'Guangzhou' because of its long usage. The British derived the English name 'Canton' from 'Cantão', which is the sixteenth-century Portuguese romanization of the Cantonese word (Yule and Burnell 2013, p. 127).

2 For example, in the sixth–seventh centuries, the classical Chinese description of Yue indigenous custom as "to cut their hair and decorate their bodies", and "they also cast bronze into large drums", which were the main key features to connecting with the community (Kiernan 2017, p. 104).

3 Both Punti and Tanka mainly spoke Cantonese. However, Tanka people dwelled on boats and were demeaned as a lower class, who mainly engaged in fishing and water transport. In addition to the above ethnic groups, there are aboriginals (e.g., Yao, She, and Zhuang) in the hills, who speak different languages.

4 Through the analysis of genealogy and ethnographical observation, Helen F. Siu and Liu Zhiwei have examined how the demeaned Tanka engaged in changing their ethnicity to Han for upward mobility (Siu and Liu 2006, pp. 285–310).

5 As written Chinese uses a character-based system, both written vernacular Mandarin (*Baihua*) and literary Chinese (*Wenyan*) use Chinese characters, also used by Cantonese.

6 The work was a translation of Section 3 of *Yü Yen Tzŭ Êrh Chi* 語言自邇集 by Thomas Francis Wade into Cantonese by John Shaw Burdon, the bishop of Victoria Diocese (in HK), who learned Mandarin before Cantonese (Kataoka 2019).

7 In compiling dictionaries, the first Protestant missionary to China, the LMS's Robert Morrison (1782–1834), compiled the first Cantonese–English dictionary, *Guangdong sheng tuhua zihui* 《廣東省土話字彙》[Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect], published in 1828. After that, two other LMS missionaries, John Chalmers (1825–1899) and Ernest John Eitel (1838–1908), wrote three Cantonese–English dictionaries, *A Cantonese Phonetic Vocabulary* (1855), *An English and Cantonese Pocket Dictionary: For the Use of Those Who Wish to Learn the Spoken Language of Canton Province* (1859), and *A Chinese Dictionary in the Cantonese Dialect* (1877)

(Ching 2006, pp. 149–51). Per Wong Man Kong, the last one written by Eitel was "the most extensive Cantonese–English dictionary" at that time (Wong 2003, p. 21). In addition, the first ABCFM missionary, Elijah C. Bridgman (1801–1861), edited the English-language book entitled *A Chinese Chrestomathy in the Canton Dialect* (1841). Another English-language book, *Questions and Answers to Things Chinese* (1850), by an unknown editor, included a Chinese-language section previously published in 1841: it had been edited by an unknown Chinese scholar and was entitled "Dialogues in the Canton Vernacular". Rounding out this body of language texts was *A Tonic Dictionary of the Chinese Language in the Canton Dialect* (1856), put together by ABCFM's Presbyterian printer Samuel Wells Williams (1812–1884) (Ching 2006, pp. 151–53).

[8] Of the seven texts published on unknown dates, six of them were mentioned by Dyer J. Ball's book in 1894 (Ball 1894). This attestation means they were likely published before 1894.

[9] Mrs. Noyes published two publications, i.e., *The King's Highway*《神道指正》and *The Safe Compass and How it Points*《指明天路》in 1886 and 1901, respectively. According to the length of service, I speculate she should have been the second wife of Henry Varnum Noyes (1836–1914), i.e., Mrs. Arabella Anderson Noyes serving the PCUSA from 1876 to 1916.

[10] It is difficult to identify Mrs. Happer, as there were three women married to Andrew Patton Happer (1818–1894) in the missionary records of the APM. Since I could not find the date of publication of *Children's Hymn Book*《讚美神詩》, I could not speculate who Mrs. Happer was.

[11] According to George Kam Wah Mak, the report of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1875 showed that Canton province preferred the Delegates' Version (literary Chinese) than the Mandarin Bible (Mak 2017, pp. 58–59, n. 136). See also, (General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China 1878, p. 226).

[12] Waves of refugees from the 1950s–1960s meant some local churches in HK from different denominations used Mandarin, Hainan, Hakka, Swatow, and other varieties to serve their congregations. However, after half a decade, most of these adopted Cantonese as their language, in lieu of their original varieties.

[13] The May Fourth cultural movement (1917–1921) was publicly acknowledged at the time to be an emblematic period of Chinese enlightenment that called for science, democracy, liberalized relationships, women's rights, and so on. It was triggered by the Beijing Government's failure to reclaim the former German concessions in Shandong after the First World War. This made student protest in Beijing with a strong nationalist sentiment (May Fourth Movement 2024).

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Article

From Singing "Out-of-Tone" to Creating Contextualized Cantonese Contemporary Worship Songs: Hong Kong in the Decentralization of Chinese Christianity

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Abstract: For over a century, Hong Kong Christians have sung Chinese hymns in an "out-of-tone" manner. Lyrics in traditional hymnals were translated or written to be sung in Mandarin, the national language, but most locals speak Cantonese, another Sinitic and tonal language. Singing goes "out-of-tone" when Mandarin hymns are sung in Cantonese, which often causes meaning distortions. Why did Hong Kong Christians accept this practice? How did they move from singing "out-of-tone" to creating contextualized Cantonese contemporary worship songs? What does this process reveal about the evolution of Chinese Christianity? From a Hong Kong-centered perspective, this article reconstructs the city's hymnological development. I consider the creation of national Mandarin hymnals during Republican China as producing a nationalistic Mainland-centric and Mandarin-centric Chinese Christianity. Being on the periphery, Hong Kong Christians did not have the resources to develop their own hymns and thus continued to worship "out-of-tone". With the decline of the old Chinese Christian center of Shanghai, the growth of Cantonese culture and Hongkonger identity, and the influence of Western pop and Christian music, local Christians began to create Cantonese contemporary worship songs. This hymnological contextualization reflects and contributes to not only the decolonization but, more importantly, the decentralization of Chinese Christianity.

Keywords: Chinese Christianity; contextualization; Hong Kong; Cantonese; contemporary worship

1. Introduction

In local movies and TV dramas, Hong Kong Christians are often mocked as singing "out-of-tone"—they are not "out-of-tune", but "out-of-tone". Most local Chinese Christians speak Cantonese; as of 2019, 98.6% of Chinese Protestant churches in Hong Kong held Cantonese services, and 92.7% of Chinese Protestants attended Cantonese services (Research Group on 2019 Hong Kong Church Survey 2019 香港教會普查研究組 2020, pp. 23–24). However, many traditional Chinese hymns were written to be sung in Mandarin. While both Cantonese and Mandarin are Sinitic languages and use written Chinese script, they are also tonal languages, meaning that a change in the pitch of a word causes a change in its core meaning (Yip 2002, p. 1). Cantonese has six tones (Chan 1987, p. 27), and Mandarin has only four tones. Therefore, when Mandarin hymns are sung in Cantonese, following the same musical melodies, the lexical tones of most of the hymn text are distorted. Such distortions make hymns sound unnatural and non-local to Cantonese speakers—Chinese, yet still foreign. It also sometimes creates unwanted meanings (Chan 1987). For example, when the word "Lord" (主, Cantonese romanization: zyu2), which should be pronounced in the second tone, is pronounced in the first tone to fit the music, "Lord Jesus" (主耶穌, zyu2 je4sou1) would be sung and heard as "pig Jesus" (豬耶穌, zyu1 je4sou1). The situation gradually changed by the end of the last century, when Cantonese worship songs became popularized. Hymns are central to many Protestant traditions' religious and liturgical lives; they are also important tools for evangelization and Christian formation; why did Christians in Hong Kong sing in an "out-of-tone" manner that often

leads to meaning distortion? How did they move from singing "out-of-tone" to creating contextualized Cantonese contemporary worship songs (hereafter, "Cantonese worship songs")? What does this hymnological contextualization in Hong Kong reveal about the evolution of Chinese Christianity?

To answer these questions, we first need a comprehensive historical study of the hymnological development in Hong Kong. Some earlier parts of the history are covered by David Sheng (2010) in *A History of Christian Hymnody in China* and Fang-Lan Hsieh (2009) in *History of Chinese Christian Hymnody: From Its Missionary Origins to Contemporary Indigenous Productions*. Andrew Leung (梁納祈, 2015), in *The Emergence of a National Hymnody: The Making of Hymns of Universal Praise* (1936), tells the story of the making of an important national hymnal that many mainline churches in Hong Kong still use today. However, these works adopt a Mainland China-centric approach; they generally accept the nationalistic assumption that emphasizes the Chinese as one people, which makes them fall short in narrating the history from a local perspective and considering local needs in their analysis. This approach is even more problematic when it is used to write about post-1949 Christianity in Greater China.

Some studies focus on the development of Cantonese contemporary worship since the 1980s. Adopting the definition by Lim and Ruth (2017, p. 63) in *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, I consider a "contemporary worship song" as music "geared for congregational singing", in contrast to "contemporary Christian music" (CCM), as a distinct genre "which steered toward concerts and albums and other forms of non-worship expression". This article focuses on contemporary worship songs. The master's thesis of Kwok-Hung Ko (2008), "The Development of Local Contemporary Cantonese Hymns (1980–1998)—Case Study of ACM", preserves a valuable record of the early stage of development of contemporary Cantonese worship in Hong Kong with the case of the Hong Kong Association of Christian Musicians (香港基督徒音樂協會, ACM). Bo Fang's (2017) "Worship Music Localization: A Case Study of the Revival Christian Church of Hong Kong" analyzes how praise and worship music was introduced to and localized in Hong Kong through globally connected Pentecostal churches. Yee-Lok Enoch Lam's 2002 Ph.D. dissertation, "Christian Musicking as Imagined Communities: Three Case Studies from Hong Kong", studies how contemporary worship contributes to the formation of multiple imagined communities among Hong Kong Christians. Joshua Ching-Yuet Kan's 2023 article, "Hong Kong Christian Songwriters' Dilemma: Juggling Sacred Music, Tonal Language, and Christian Faith", provides an excellent study on how Hong Kong Christian songwriters tackle the requirement of matching word tone and melodic contours when writing Cantonese worship songs.

While the above studies of traditional Chinese hymns and Cantonese worship songs are important, there is a lack of a comprehensive survey of the whole hymnological contextualization trajectory in Hong Kong in relation to broader Chinese Christianity. This article aims to fill this gap. From a Hong Kong-centered perspective, this article traces the hymnological development in Hong Kong from singing Mandarin hymns in an "out-of-tone" manner to creating contextualized Cantonese worship songs. Based on this survey, I argue that this hymnological contextualization not only contributes to and reflects the decolonization of Christianity in Hong Kong but, more importantly, the "local turn" and decentralization of Chinese Christianity, as it challenges the nationalistic Mandarin- and Mainland-centric form and understanding of Chinese Christianity.

This interdisciplinary research crosses and connects the fields of church history, hymnology, missiology, and Hong Kong study. The method is primarily historical. While the same phenomenon appears in the Catholic Church in Hong Kong, the scope of this study only covers Protestant Christianity. In the following historical sketch of hymnological development in Hong Kong, I focus on tracing the changes in songs used by Christians in Hong Kong. While recognizing that musicality is also an essential aspect of the contextualization of Christian music in Hong Kong, this study pays particular attention to the hymn text and the language used instead of the tunes, forms of music, or the general wor-

ship design and experience. I divide the history into six parts, focusing on post-1949 Hong Kong. North Point Methodist Church, a church that has undergone multiple worship renewals like many other Hong Kong churches since the 1950s, will be used to illustrate how the changes occurred in a local church's setting. Based on this historical survey, I discuss how the hymnological contextualization in Hong Kong helps us understand the greater trajectory of the development of Chinese Christianity in modern times.

2. A Historical Sketch of Hymnological Development in Hong Kong

2.1. Mandarin Hymnals Gaining Centrality (Before 1949)

Protestantism set foot in Hong Kong when Hong Kong became a British colony in 1842. At that time, the multiethnic and multilingual China did not have a national language. In Hong Kong, apart from Cantonese, other Sinitic languages like Teochew and Hakka were spoken by different groups of local people. To evangelize them, missionaries translated Western hymns into different Sinitic languages; sometimes they also wrote new lyrics summarizing Biblical messages and sang them with Western melodies. For example, Rev. John Chalmers (1825–1899) of the London Missionary Society (LMS) published a Cantonese hymnal Hymns for the Worship of the Lord (宗主詩章) in 1860 for the use of LMS congregations in Canton and Hong Kong (Hsieh 2009, p. 50). In 1873, the Hymn Book in the Swatow Dialect (潮音神詩), a Teochew hymnal, was published in Hong Kong by Rev. George Smith (d. 1891) of the Presbyterian Church of England for the growing Teochew-speaking congregations in Shantou and its hinterlands (ibid., p. 52). The primary concern of hymnal editors was to communicate the Christian message in the vernacular, and very often, they would keep the original melodies for translated songs. At other times, they used existing Western melodies so that missionaries would know the tune and be able to teach the congregation to sing. As such, the match between the musical melody and the lexical tones of the hymn text was almost always sacrificed.

During the Republican Era (1911–1949), Mandarin was promoted as the national language, and Mandarin hymnals were published and used throughout China. They include the famous Hymns of Universal Praise (普天頌讚, 1936), an ecumenical effort of six major denominations in China. These Mandarin hymnals gradually replaced vernacular ones. Back then, many denominations put their churches in Hong Kong under their South China districts even though Hong Kong was under British rule (Ying 2004, p. 30); Hong Kong churches thus adopted these Mandarin hymnals. Not knowing how to speak Mandarin, Cantonese-speaking Christians began to sing these hymns in their mother tongue in an "out-of-tone" manner. Many churches in Hong Kong still keep this practice today, as they are accustomed to singing songs from Mandarin hymnals in such a way.

The indigenization of Christianity in Republican China was largely influenced by nationalism and nation-building campaigns. The replacement of vernacular hymnals with Mandarin national hymnals paralleled the fall of regionalism and the rise of nationalism. According to Hong Kong sociologist Chun-Hung Ng (2002, p. 89), Hong Kong society at that time was basically an extension of South China society, and the collective identity of people in Hong Kong was more Chinese than local. Hong Kong cultural critic Loi-Fat Chiu (published under the pen name Yuet-Oi Cheung 2002, p. 221) suggests that pre-WWII colonial Hong Kong never established a cultural identity independent from China. Hong Kong church historian Fuk-Tsang Ying (2004, p. 193) further argues that before 1949, an independent Hong Kong Christianity did not exist. With this lack of localized Christian identity, Christians in Hong Kong naturally considered Mandarin hymnals good products of hymnological indigenization instead of asking for indigenized Cantonese hymnals.

2.2. A New Center of Production of Mandarin Hymnals (1950s–1960s)

During the Chinese Civil War in the late 1940s and early years after the Communist takeover of Mainland China, millions of migrants/refugees, including Christians, missionaries, denominations, theological institutes, and Christian organizations, moved to Hong Kong (Ying and Lai 2004). The number of Christians in Hong Kong rose from around

10,000 in 1942, to 53,917 in 1955, and 74,470 in 1958 (ibid., p. 145). A Hong Kong sociologist, Siu-Lun Lau (2018, p. 37), called this the "second laying of the foundation stone" of Chinese Christianity in Hong Kong. Among those who came were Christian musicians, publishing houses, and funding initially designated for the whole of China. These musicians and publishers continued to produce Mandarin hymnals for Chinese Christians in Hong Kong and the Chinese diaspora; many were reprints initially published during the Republican Era in Shanghai. For instance, former staff of the Shanghai-based Christian Literature Society for China (廣學會) established the Council on Christian Literature for Overseas Chinese (香港基督教輔僑出版社) in Hong Kong and continued to publish Hymns of Universal Praise. The Chinese Baptist Press (浸信會出版部) in Hong Kong continued the work of the Shanghai-based China Baptist Publication Society (中華浸會書局). In 1952, it reprinted the New Hymns of Praise (新頌主詩集), which was initially published in 1941 as the first national hymnal of Chinese Baptists (Hsieh 2009, p. 92). The Morning Star Choruses (晨星短歌), first published in the 1940s by The Alliance Press (宣道書局), also Shanghai-based, was reprinted in the 1960s in Hong Kong (ibid., p. 97).

New Mandarin hymnals were also produced in Hong Kong. A popular one was Youth Hymns (青年聖歌), which was edited by Rev. William Newbern (1900–1972), an American missionary who led the relocation of the Alliance Bible Seminary from Mainland China to Hong Kong. Between 1951 and 1981, he published Youth Hymns as a series of bilingual (English and Chinese) hymnals. Hymns included were mainly Western, co-translated into Chinese by Newbern and Richard Tung-Hung Ho (何統雄, 1920–2015). Although translated in Hong Kong, their translations did not consider the tonal issue for the hymns to be sung in Cantonese. In addition, unlike the Hymns of Universal Praise, no Chinese songwriter or lyricist was involved. As Calida Chu (2019, p. 232) comments, "Contextualization of Chinese hymnody was not Newbern's primary concern".

Mandarin hymnals were widely used by both local and migrant Chinese churches in Hong Kong during this period. The sample church in this article, the North Point Methodist Church, is a typical migrant church in Hong Kong. It was established in 1953 by missionaries and Christian migrants, mostly Methodists. Many of them were from Shanghai, including the founding missionary Dr. Sidney R. Anderson (1889–1978), who previously served at Moore Memorial Church in Shanghai. Unable to speak Cantonese and experiencing cultural and social barriers with local Cantonese-speaking churches, these newcomers established a new Mandarin-speaking Methodist church (Ward 1952). To help migrants feel "at home", the church built a service that closely followed the American Methodist worship tradition developed in Mainland China and used Hymns of Universal Praise in services as before.

During this period of political changes, Christianity in Mainland China was cut off from that in the Chinese diaspora, while Hong Kong experienced an influx of Christians and Christian resources. The influence of the old Chinese Christian cultural hubs like Shanghai declined, and Hong Kong rose as a new center of Chinese Christianity for the diaspora. However, in this phase of relocation and rebuilding, not much innovation was made in Chinese hymnological development. Christian migrants in Hong Kong, like most other newcomers, "still regarded themselves as Mainland Chinese immigrants rather than Hong Kong people" (Law 2018, p. 17). These Christian immigrants continued to reprint existing Mandarin hymnals and made new ones mainly by translating English hymns. As their target audiences were migrants/refugees in Hong Kong and the Chinese diaspora, who used Mandarin as their lingua franca, and many missionaries were still hoping and preparing to return to Mainland China, hymnological contextualization in Hong Kong and Cantonese was not on their agenda.

2.3. In Search of a New Voice (1960s–1970s)

In this embryonic period, several important internal and external factors paved the way for the later emergence of contextualized Cantonese worship songs. First, singing in Cantonese, although "out-of-tone", became widespread among Hong Kong churches.

With the rise of the second generation born and raised in a Cantonese-speaking society and the outreach of churches to local Cantonese-speaking people, the number of Cantonese speakers grew in many migrant churches. They started Cantonese services and began to sing "out-of-tone" like other Cantonese-speaking churches. For instance, NPMC began to hold Cantonese Sunday services in 1963 and sing hymns from Hymns of Universal Praise in an "out-of-tone" manner (Lam 2003, p. 56).

Second, Hong Kong Christian youth's encounter with secular Western pop music and gospel folks inspired them to make their own music in similar styles. The singing of English folk songs became popular among youth in the 1960s, and some Christian youth formed folk singing groups that mainly sang English gospel folk (Ho 2013, p. 67). For instance, in 1973, Youth for Christ (Hong Kong) (香港青年歸主協會) established the group "Joyful Sound" (歡樂之聲). In 1974, the influential youth ministry Breakthrough (突破機構) founded their folk song group (民謠小組) (Leung 2013, p. 15). In 1977, Good News Messengers (佳音使團) was established (Ying 2012, p. 8). A member of Good News Messengers retold that when invited to evangelical meetings and music-sharing events, they would perform two types of English gospel folk songs—those that were popular in the West and those that they wrote by themselves (Yeung 2020, p. 6).

Third, Taiwanese Christians's production of Mandarin gospel folk songbooks set the sample for Hong Kong Christian youth to write and sing their own songs in their own language. In 1971, losing the support of many Western countries, the Republic of China was replaced in the United Nations by the People's Republic of China. Anti-Western sentiment surged among colleges in Taiwan, and youth began to boycott Western music and raised the slogan "Sing our own song (唱自己的歌)". The "Campus Folk Song Movement (校園民歌運動)", which advocated the writing and singing of Chinese (Mandarin) folk songs, emerged in the mid-1970s and lasted until the early 1980s (Wong 2006, p. 60). Taiwan Christians produced Mandarin gospel folk hymnals, including Christ Is Lord Contemporary Hymnal (基督是主現代詩歌集, 1977) and Campus Joy Songs (校園歡唱, 1977) (Wen 2011). Both hymnals contain translated songs and original Mandarin songs. Before Cantonese worship songs were available, Christian youth in Hong Kong, including those in NPMC, widely sang these Mandarin songs (Lee 2021).

Fourth, the rise of Cantopop, which stresses the match between word tone and melodic contours, not only made singing "out-of-tone" strange in the ears of Hong Kong Christians but also stimulated Christians to create Cantonese worship songs. According to Hong Kong popular music legend James Wong (2003, p. 84), although Cantonese popular songs existed since the 1950s, until the end of the 1960s, they were generally considered artistically unrefined and of low culture. It was not until the Cantonese song "The Fatal Irony (啼笑因緣)"—the theme song of a popular television drama—became well-liked in 1974 that the age of Cantopop finally came (ibid., p. 94). The rise of Cantopop was the enlightenment for many young Christians who later became Cantonese worship song writers. Recalling the moments when they listened to Cantopop star Sam Hui (許冠傑)'s music, Calvin Chan (西伯) exclaims, "How did Sam come up with that?" and Corbet Ma (馬啟邦) calls Hui's Cantopop a "truly local sound" (Kan 2023, para. 20).

Last, the rise of local consciousness and eventually a Hongkonger identity made Hong Kong Christians want to find their own voice. During this period, postwar baby boomers who grew up and were educated in Hong Kong became youth. Rather than having a migrant mentality, they actively searched for their identity and sense of belonging in Hong Kong. They began to be concerned about the society they lived in and participated in waves of social activism, including the 1966–67 Riots. For Christian youth, how their faith and worship life relate to society and respond to social problems became a burning question, and the making of contextualized Cantonese worship songs was part of their answer.

From the 1960s to 1970s, Hong Kong Christians faced local demographical, cultural, and socio-political changes and were stimulated by developments in secular and Christian music around the world. Apart from adopting new music genres like gospel folks, they began to contextualize by singing hymns in Cantonese in an "out-of-tone" manner. How-

ever, this contextualizing attempt is only an intermediary—while the language and music were changed, the lyrics remained the same. Youth gradually found the old hymns unable to articulate and respond to social and personal issues they faced in this fast-changing and highly urbanized society. They soon embarked on the journey of self-theologizing—the "fourth self" to be added to the classical "three-self" formula, as suggested by missiologist David Bosch (1991, p. 451)—and began to create contextualized Cantonese worship songs.

2.4. From Cantonese Gospel Folks to Contextualized Cantonese Worship Songs (1980s)

Under the abovementioned influences, since the mid-1970s, a small group of Hong Kong Christians pioneered the creation of their own Cantonese worship songs, mainly in the form of gospel folk. Some started with rewriting Christian lyrics for pop songs. For instance, in 1977, Chi-Kong Siu (蕭智剛) wrote "Praise the Graceful Lord (主恩頌)", which borrowed the melody of Sam Hui's "Thousands of Layers of Longing (相思萬千重)" (Holyland Wonders 美地夢工場 2021). Soon, Christians began composing new melodies. At the "Night of Breakthrough '79 (突破之夜 '79)" variety show, Yee-Shing Chan (陳以誠) sang Cantonese songs that he wrote, including "How Can It Be Forgotten? (怎能忘記)" and "Breakthrough (突破)" (Yam 2021). A watershed moment for Cantonese worship songs was the 1980 "Hong Kong Contemporary Folk Writing Contest (第一屆香港現代民歌創作大賽 '80)" held by Breakthrough. It encouraged a generation of young Christians to participate and cooperate to create Cantonese worship songs (Ho 2013, p. 67). In 1982, Breakthrough released the cassette and hymnal of Come and Sing Hymnal 1 (齊唱新歌第一集), the first Cantonese hymnal in history with a match between musical melodies and the lexical tones of the Cantonese lyrics. In 1983, some musicians involved in the production of the hymnal established the Hong Kong Association of Christian Musicians (香港基督徒音樂協會, ACM). In 1985, another major pioneering organization in Cantonese worship, the City Song Association (城市旋律協會, CSA), was founded.

Cantonese contemporary worship presumes all the nine qualities of contemporary worship defined by Lim and Ruth (2017, pp. 2–3). The first two qualities, concerning language and hymn text, are particularly relevant here. First, Lim and Ruth state that "[f]or worship to be authentic… it had to be in the regular language of the people. The updating of worship language was the first and most critical domino that fell in the development that led to current forms of contemporary worship" (ibid., pp. 3–4). With the creation of Cantonese worship songs, Cantonese-speaking Christians could finally enjoy worship wholly conducted in their mother tongue. The second quality of contemporary worship is "a dedication to relevance regarding contemporary concerns and issues in the lives of worshippers" (ibid., p. 2). Many Cantonese worship songs written in the 1980s demonstrate high sensitivity to the social context. For example, "A New Song for the City (城市新歌)" (ACM, 1983) describes contemporary city lives. It mentions cottage areas, factories, and the Mass Transit Railway—the subway system in Hong Kong opened in 1980. "The Lord of Inventions (發明的主)" (ACM, 1984), a song on creation and providence, starts with a description of the construction of highways and the progress made in computer science. Furthermore, "Faith, Hope, and Love in Action (動力信望愛)" (ACM, 1986) describes the Christian commitment to serve and encourage the hardworking people in the busy city of Hong Kong.

Political turmoil in the 1980s, including the negotiation of Hong Kong's political future and the 1989 Tiananmen Incident, strengthened the Hongkonger identity and stimulated the creation of Cantonese worship songs that responded to political and social issues of the time. For instance, ACM released "Remembering Hong Kong in Storms (風雨念香港)" in 1984, the year when the Sino-British Joint Declaration that determined the future of Hong Kong was signed. And in 1989, ACM released "Mama, Don't Cry (媽媽不要哭)", which was inspired by students who joined the hunger strike at Tiananmen (Ko 2008, p. 21). In the same year, CSA included "The Call from China (中國的呼喚)" in its third album, which mourns the failure of the democratic movement and states that only God can bring true love and freedom to China—a missiological understanding towards

China that many Hong Kong Christians still hold today. Furthermore, in the 1990 album titled Resident Alien (異鄉人), CSA narrates the identity crisis of Hong Kong people; it also records the general social sentiment in the wave of post-1989 emigration in songs like "A Silent Goodbye (無言道別)".

2.5. Popularization and Challenges (1990s–2014)

After a decade of development led by pioneering parachurch organizations, Cantonese worship songs gradually entered church services in the 1990s. In the 1980s, Cantonese worship songs were generally only sung in fellowships. Hong Kong churches, largely evangelical, began heated discussions on whether contemporary worship songs were too secular and indecent to be sung in services or churches and whether the worship style was too Charismatic (Lo 1998). In the early 1990s, Cantonese praise and worship first started among Charismatic congregations (ibid.). As other churches began to see this genre's seeker-friendliness and attractiveness to youth, the controversy over Charismatic theology gradually faded, the local "worship wars" came to a truce, and more Hong Kong churches formed worship teams and held contemporary worship services (ibid.). By 1999, 61.5% of Hong Kong Chinese churches sang both traditional hymns and contemporary worship songs, and 13.1% only sang the latter (Wu and Liu 2002, p. 169). For instance, NPMC established its contemporary worship team in 1997 to lead the 9 a.m. service while continuing to hold its 11:15 a.m. service with traditional music and liturgy to cater to different needs within the congregation.

The increased need for Cantonese worship songs from the church led to the emergence of more parachurch Cantonese worship teams. They include the Crusade-affiliated The Worshippers (敬拜者使團, 1994, renamed One Circle 同心圓 in 2000), Amazing Grace Worship (基恩敬拜, 2004), and Playground Ministry (團契遊樂園, 2009). Songs they produced largely reflect evangelical theology and concern about urban Christian lives. In addition to making albums and songbooks, they constantly hold large worship meetings, play in evangelistic meetings, and train worship teams. They also conduct mission tours to serve global Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, North America, and Europe. To better serve Mandarin-speaking Chinese in the Chinese diaspora, they write Mandarin lyrics for some songs.

The development of contemporary worship in Hong Kong continues to be influenced by contemporary worship around the world. In 1993, some Taiwanese Americans established the Stream of Praise (讚美之泉, SOP) worship ministry in California. Their Mandarin worship songs quickly became popular in Hong Kong. Unfamiliar with Mandarin, many congregations sang SOP's Mandarin worship songs in Cantonese, and as a result, a new period of worshipping "out-of-tone" began. Only with mandatory school education and increased public education on Mandarin after Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, Hong Kong Christians were gradually able to sing Mandarin worship songs in Mandarin. It is worth noting that this rise in the popularity of Mandarin worship songs paralleled the rise of Mandarin pop music.

Furthermore, since the 2000s, Hong Kong churches have been hit by a new wave of the Charismatic movement from North America, South Korea, and Taiwan. Charismatic contemporary worship played an important role in this. Many Hong Kong Christians, especially youth, joined local or international Charismatic worship meetings held by worship teams like Joshua Band (約書亞樂團) from Taiwan, Hillsong, and Planetshakers from Australia, and IHOP from the United States. Through Charismatic contemporary worship, Charismatic theologies and practices were introduced into local evangelical and mainline circles.

Alarmed by the fact that Hong Kong churches were singing more and more Mandarin worship songs, some Hong Kong Christian musicians initiated the "Cantonese Worship Culture Restoration Movement (恢復粵語詩歌敬拜文化運動)" in 2010 and organized the group Cantonhymn in 2012. They observe that Hong Kong Christians unfamiliar with Mandarin find participating in worship that heavily uses Mandarin songs challenging.

They advocate that every Christian should have the right to worship God in their mother tongue, and more contemporary Cantonese worship songs should be produced (Worship Cyclone 敬拜風 2013, p. 11). Anthony Lee, convenor of Cantonhymn, states that "the frequent use of Mandarin songs in Hong Kong churches pulls our faith away from our culture", which is missiologically unpreferable (Xu 2017). Stressing the function of worship songs as down-to-earth evangelical tools and songwriters' role as missionaries, he encourages youth to write their own songs as users most familiar with the new generation (ibid.). Responding to the call or seeing the need themselves, some local worship teams that focus on making Cantonese worship songs were established, including Milk&Honey Worship (2013) and the Worship Nations (敬拜族/玻璃海樂團, 2014).

2.6. Cantonese Contemporary Worship Songs in the Post-Umbrella Movement Hong Kong (2014–)

In the 2010s, Hong Kong society experienced great political turmoil. Large-scale social movements like the Anti-Moral and National Education Movement (2012), the Umbrella Movement (2014), the "Fishball Revolution" (2016), and the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Protests (Anti-ELAB Protests, 2019–2020) occurred. The relatively apolitical Hong Kong Christian community found facing the new sociopolitical reality inescapable. Such a new reality impacted Cantonese worship songs in several ways. First, against the growing political and cultural influence from Mainland China, localism grew. Many Hongkongers, seeing Cantonese as their cultural identity symbol, called for the revival of Cantonese songs. Second, the rise of youth activism in society encouraged Christian youth to voice out. Rather than waiting for existing worship teams to release new albums and singing translated songs by foreign worship teams, more and more Christian youth began to write their music and form new Cantonese worship teams.

The third impact of the recent social movements in Hong Kong on Cantonese worship songs is that an increasing number of pieces show concern about current affairs. Facing a city torn apart in political struggles, One Circle released "Love Your Enemies (愛仇敵)" in 2016. Mourning for the growing sociopolitical injustices and conflicts, in 2018, they released "Lamentation (哀歌)" and "Lamentation in the City (城裏哀歌)". Songs were even created based on movement slogans and visual symbols. For instance, the title of the song "Never Forget Why You Started (毋忘初心)" is a line Hong Kong activists often use to remind one another since the Umbrella Movement. Written by HeArtz in August 2019, when many areas in Hong Kong were covered in tear gas, the imagery of "smoke" runs through the song "Heterotopia (璀煙)". A common theme during this period is the hope for justice and the passing of darkness. For example, in 2018, Worship Nations released "Your Justice Come (願你公義降臨)", which references Amos 5:24. Amidst the Anti-ELAB Protests, in August 2019, ACM released the album Hope (黑暗中的盼望), featuring the song "Darkness Must Pass (黑暗終必過去)". A clear example of experience-led contextual exegesis is found in Raw Harmony's (2020) "Passover (逾越)", when the lyricist reads Exodus in light of the social movements and pandemic: "May the blood of the lamb be a sign on us and lead us through death, storms in lives, illnesses, and disasters". (My translation.) Even music videos demonstrate a higher level of contextualization. In the past, most Cantonese worship song music videos only showed the lyrics, some natural scenes, or the band playing the music. In contrast, some recent music videos of songs that show a concern for society feature protest symbols like anti-tear gas masks and the Lion Rock, as well as protest sites like Pacific Place in Admiralty and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. These visuals in Cantonese worship music videos further strengthened the connections between the worship songs, Hong Kong people, and current sociopolitical concerns.

2.7. Summary

This section surveys the hymnological contextualization in Hong Kong from the arrival of Protestantism in 1842 to the present day, focusing on its post-1949 developments. Since Mandarin became the national language of Republican China, Mandarin hymns be-

came widely used in Hong Kong churches under the influence of nation-building campaigns. After 1949, with the migration of Chinese Christians from Mainland China and the concentration of Christian resources in the city, Hong Kong grew into a production hub for Mandarin Chinese hymnals for the Chinese diaspora. The 1960s and 1970s were the embryonic period for worship reform as Cantonese became increasingly recognized even in migrant churches and as young Christians came into contact with contemporary developments in Western secular and Christian music. In the 1980s, thanks to the creativity of new Christian musicians and groups like the ACM and the CSA, Hong Kong witnessed the emergence of contextualized Cantonese worship songs. Many songs written during that period responded to current affairs and popular sentiments. From the 1990s to the early 2010s, contemporary worship became widely accepted by Hong Kong Christians. Worship teams within- and para-church were established, and many new Cantonese worship songs were written in response to the increased needs. Lastly, during the last decade of sociopolitical unrest, many Cantonese worship songs with strong social concerns were created, representing a highly contextualized voice by Hong Kong Christians.

3. From Hymnological Contextualization in Hong Kong to the Decentralization of Chinese Christianity

After providing the above historical sketch of the hymnological contextualization in Hong Kong, the following analysis situates this process in the development of Chinese Christianity. As Hong Kong was once a British colony, the lens of decolonization seems to be a natural choice. Indeed, the making of Chinese hymns and contextualized Cantonese worship songs contributed to the general decolonization of Chinese Christianity from Western influence, especially in their highlighting of indigenous experience in their theologizing efforts, and in their involvement of Chinese and Hong Kong cultural elements in their musicking. However, this point could be demonstrated in the case of many other Chinese hymns and hymnals. For me, the uniqueness of this case lies in the transition from singing traditional Mandarin hymns in an "out-of-tone" manner to creating Cantonese worship songs—a phenomenon that happened mainly within the boundary of Chinese Christianity. It is thus a perfect case to illustrate what I call the decentralization of Chinese Christianity—that the contextualization of Christianity in the local Hong Kong context reflects and contributes to the diversification and decentralization of Chinese Christianity. It should be noted that decentralization does not mean the absence of centers, as in the case of distributed networks. Rather, it means the presence of multiple centers without one single core. This analysis will be elaborated in two parts: the centralization of Chinese Christianity during the Republican Era and its decentralization with growing contextualization in Hong Kong.

3.1. The Centralization of Chinese Christianity during the Republican Era

The first part of the above historical survey revealed two forms of centralization of Chinese Christianity during the Republican era. Geographically, as Mainland China gradually opened for missionary activities, the influence of Chinese Christian communities in Hong Kong and overseas decreased, and Chinese Christianity became increasingly Mainland-centric. More specifically, while regional centers like Beijing, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, and Chongqing existed, Shanghai grew to become the national and even global center of Chinese Christianity. The city's foreign concessions, legal system, banking and financial facilities, transport and communication networks, as well as its central location in coastal China, made it stand out from other Chinese cities. Many national organizations and denominational churches moved or built their headquarters in Shanghai, and the city developed into a central hub for information exchange, decision-making, and resource provision for global Chinese Christianity. For instance, the four Mandarin national hymnals described above were all first produced in Shanghai by Shanghai-based publishers. While regional centers shared the burden during the Sino-Japanese War, Shanghai quickly regained its centrality when the War ended.

Linguistically, Chinese Christianity became more and more Mandarin-centric during the Republican Era. This is exemplified by the creation of Chinese national hymnals like the *Hymn of Universal Praise* (1936). These creations benefited the church and mission work in several ways, and Christian communities generally supported these efforts. Standardization by including the best translations raised the overall standard of Chinese hymns. It promoted hymnological indigenization by including hymns composed and written by Chinese. It encouraged ecumenism and cooperation among missions, denominations, and churches and achieved more efficient use of resources. It also helped less developed regions by providing readily available worship resources. The oneness in singing, in turn, strengthened solidarity and ecumenical spirit among Chinese Christians, and it contributed to the forging of a new Chinese Christian identity, a Chinese Christianity, and a Chinese nation independent of Western dominance (Leung 2015, p. 35).

Nevertheless, the use of these Mandarin national hymnals has limitations and problems. It fell into the trap of nationalism that prevailed back then and defined peoples, cultures, and experiences according to the newly invented nations. The emphasis on building one unified Chinese Christianity sacrifices diversity in experiencing, understanding, and expressing faith. It goes against the vernacular principle proposed by missiologist Lamin Sanneh (2003, p. 69): "The language of Christianity is the language of the people". Instead of just one Chinese language, there are at least ten main Sinitic languages (Chappell 2015, pp. 14–15). They use different terminologies, rhyme differently, and, most importantly, contain different lived experiences, cultures, and histories. Singing Mandarin hymns in Hong Kong was not too much of a problem when Hong Kong was still socially and culturally an extension of South China. However, as Hong Kong gradually separated from other parts of China politically, culturally, and socio-economically after 1949, the limitations of using Mandarin hymnals in Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong churches became increasingly apparent. Not only did local Christians find Mandarin hymns linguistically "out-of-tone", some also found these hymns theologizing unfamiliar experiences in another language. This "otherness" of Mandarin hymnals hindered local Christians' worship, their expressions of faith, and their mission to the local society.

The political implication of making national hymnals is even more troubling. Establishing a national language while suppressing the use of other languages is very often a tool for state-building and colonization, including internal colonization, especially for authoritarian and imperialistic regimes. From this lens, replacing vernacular hymnals with national ones constitutes a denial of local voices and experiences. On the one hand, translating Western hymns into Chinese and including hymns written by Chinese and in Chinese style were giant steps towards Christianity's indigenization. On the other hand, the creation of these Mandarin hymnals became part of the center-periphery-making process. They aided the making of a Mandarin-centric faith and nation and further marginalized non-Mandarin-speaking Chinese and their religious experiences, including those in Hong Kong.

3.2. The Decentralization of Chinese Christianity through Relocating to and Contextualizing in Hong Kong

As Christianity in Mainland China, with its major center in Shanghai, was largely cut off from worldwide Chinese churches since 1949, it lost its central position in theologizing, and Mainland China ceased to be the resource center in the global Chinese Christian community. Meanwhile, under the circumstances of the Cold War, the British colony of Hong Kong replaced Shanghai as the transport, financial, and information center in the Far East and in the Chinese diaspora. Many Christians, missionaries, missions, and Christian organizations relocated to the Colony, which initiated a shift in the center of gravity of Chinese Christianity. Continuing a lot of their previous work in the old center of Shanghai, they rebuilt a new center of Chinese Christian resources in Hong Kong to serve migrants/refugees and the wider Chinese diaspora. For instance, many missions and denominational churches made Hong Kong their regional center for personnel and resource

allocation, and some theologians restarted bible schools and seminaries to train pastors and missionaries. Additionally, some publishing houses reprinted Christian books and Mandarin hymnals previously published in Mainland China. At the same time, as many Mainlanders and Christian leaders followed the Nationalist Government and migrated to Taiwan, the primate city of Taipei also grew into a center for global Chinese Christianity. However, it did not become as influential a center as Hong Kong due to Cold War politics, its geographical separation from the Mainland of China, and restrictions imposed by the Nationalist Government. The development of coexisting Chinese Christian centers in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Taipei during the Cold War is one reason why I call this process "decentralization" rather than a simple "relocation". How Taipei developed into a Chinese Christian center after 1949 deserves another thorough study.

With the separate developments between Hong Kong and Mainland China since 1949, Chinese Christianity in Hong Kong gradually underwent a new wave of contextualization in the local Cantonese language and the society of Hong Kong, especially when the city transitioned from a migrant society to one with a growing Hongkonger identity. As such, this new Chinese Christian center transformed from a copy of the old center to a re-contextualizing one. When the local born and raised generation took up the baton from migrant leaders, they brought in new experiences; interacting with the new context, they re-theologized and created new expressions of Chinese Christianity that are particular to Christians in Hong Kong. This "local turn" of Chinese Christianity in Hong Kong first appeared in language, then in its theological concerns. This intentional "local turn" also means that the resources produced would no longer fit in other Chinese Christian contexts. Eventually, the turn became a challenge to the notion of one Chinese Christianity, forged by earlier generations of Chinese Christian indigenous movement leaders.

This "local turn" is exemplified in the making of contextualized Cantonese worship songs in Hong Kong. At first, congregations sang Mandarin hymns in Cantonese in an "out-of-tone" manner. Then, new Cantonese worship songs responding to local concerns emerged in the 1980s. Turning to the local means that this branch of Christianity does not seek national influence; it aims to diversify rather than unify. If the *Hymns of Universal Praise* is a national hymnody that echoed the nation-building effort of the Chinese state and Chinese nationalist sentiments in the Republican Era, the rise of Cantonese worship songs challenges the imagination of a homogeneous Chinese nation and the hegemonic motive behind it. While the renowned Cantopop lyricist and scholar Yiu-Fai Chow asserts that Cantopop "question[s] rather than confirm[s] Chineseness", (Chow and de Kloet 2013, p. 5), I suggest that the same is true for Christianity in Hong Kong. To question does not necessarily mean to negate; it can also mean to enrich, expand, and queer—intentionally leaving open and inviting unorthodox answers. As Enoch Lam (2022, p. 207) argues in his dissertation, local Hong Kong Christians' musicking in different languages, Cantonese, Mandarin, and English, do lead them into multiple coexisting local and global imagined communities.

The decentralization of Chinese Christianity, furthermore, happens at the micro-level in Hong Kong. The above historical sketch of worship song development shows a gradual shift from a top-down to a bottom-up model. The production of hymnals was dominated by a small circle of church music scholars and theologians. However, since the 1980s, some worship ministries and Christian musicians, many without formal theological training, have joined to supply Cantonese worship songs. In the recent decade, various small-scale worship teams have produced an increasing number of songs. Articulating faith in the vernacular and bringing in local bottom-up experience, Hong Kong Christians theologize by making Cantonese worship songs. Instead of only singing a faith crystalized by Western or Mainland Chinese Christians, they finally join in worship with their own voices—that they can sing their own faith in their own context, in their mother tongue, and in the right tone.

4. Conclusions

In *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West*, Lamin Sanneh (2003, p. 24) argues that "indigenizing the faith meant decolonizing its theology". While the creation of Chinese hymns helped decolonize the Christian faith brought to China by Western missions, standardization through the creation of Mandarin national hymnals again ignored language and cultural differences within the invented nation and reinforced a new center-periphery power structure. The relocation of the Chinese Christian resource center to Hong Kong around 1949 and the subsequent creation of contextualized Cantonese worship songs in Hong Kong since the 1980s broke such domination. In the process, a new imagined community that embraces a new collective identity—the Hongkongers—re-theologizes with new local experiences. The creation and singing of these Cantonese worship songs by Hongkongers and those who identify with this identity, including overseas Hongkongers, in turn, forge and reinforce this collective identity and community. Therefore, this article argues that the making of Cantonese worship songs contributes to and reflects the "local turn" and thus decentralization of Chinese Christianity from a Mandarin-centric and Mainland-centric one to one that articulates more diverse experiences by Chinese Christians worldwide.

Migration and political separation since 1949 gave Chinese Christianity the time, space, and soil to contextualize in Hong Kong. Today, the environment is changing again. The growing exertion of Chinese state power in Hong Kong since 1997, including the implementation of policies to further promote Mandarin in Hong Kong, the incorporation of Hong Kong into the newly invented "Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macau Bay Area", as well as the direct enactment of the National Security Law by Beijing, all made Hong Kong more like the Mainland. The status of Cantonese, Hong Kong culture, the Hongkonger identity, and Christianity in Hong Kong are facing different degrees of challenge. In this "Post-National Security Law Era", how will Hong Kong Christians contextualize their faith in Cantonese worship songs? Will Hong Kong remain a major center of Chinese Christianity? How will the current wave of emigration from Hong Kong impact the further decentralization of Chinese Christianity? These are important questions for future research.

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Article

Accommodation and Compromise in the Contact Zone: Christianity and Chinese Culture in Modern Hong Kong Literature

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Abstract: Situated in the unique historical context of Hong Kong—a contact zone between East and West—this study explores how Christianity's introduction through British colonialism and missionary efforts has intertwined with and influenced Chinese cultural traditions. By examining selected works of Xu Dishan and Chen Zanyi, this study reveals the dynamic negotiations of identity and values between these two cultural and religious traditions. These literary works not only depict the complexities of cultural hybridity but also provide insights into the evolving nature of cultural identity in Hong Kong, illustrating how global religions and local traditions can merge and transform each other. This study contributes to understanding the intricate dance of religious exchange, conflict, and compromise in Hong Kong's cross-culture setting, suggesting that such literary explorations can bridge Christianity with the socio-economic, cultural, and historical fabric of Chinese society.

Keywords: contact zone; Chinese theology; Hong Kong literature; cross-cultural encounter

1. Introduction

Hong Kong has historically been a significant contact zone between the East and the West, largely due to its colonial past under British rule from 1842 to 1997 (Tsang 2003). This unique position facilitated the exchange and fusion of Eastern and Western cultures, making the city a vibrant hub for cultural hybridity. This intersection of cultures has fostered the city's unique identity, distinguishing it as a place where Eastern and Western elements coexist and influence each other.

Christianity was introduced to Hong Kong in the early 19th century, primarily through British colonization and missionary efforts (Smith 2005)[1]. This introduction marked the beginning of a complex interaction between Christianity and Chinese culture. In a predominantly Confucian society, Christianity presented a new way of thinking, and over time, influenced various aspects of Hong Kong society, resulting in a unique blend of Chinese cultural traditions and Christian values. Hence, the colonial past of Hong Kong significantly shaped its cultural and religious discourse, creating a unique blend of East and West, the coexistence of traditional Chinese beliefs and Christian values, reflected in various aspects of culture, including literature, art, and religious practices.

In the 1990s, a movement known as "Sino-Christian theology" (漢語神學)[2] emerged within Hong Kong's Chinese theological community, specifically the Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre (道風山基督教叢林 Lai 2001). It focused on a contextual interpretation of Christian theology based on Chinese philosophical and cultural precepts. This movement aimed to develop a Christian theology and culture through the historical, intellectual, and social resources and experiences of Chinese culture, striving to create a Christian theological culture imbued with Chinese intellectual and cultural characteristics (Starr 2016). Over the decades, Sino-Christian theology evolved from a purely religious movement into a multifaceted cultural striving, as in the case of Confucianism, giving rise to a diffuse community

with a common faith but without a clear clerical system and becoming integrated into existing academic, educational, and cultural institutions. Pan-Chiu Lai and Jason T. S. Lam have curated a valuable and timely anthology titled "*Sino-Christian Theology: a Theological Qua Cultural Movement in Contemporary China*", which showcases the work of some prominent Chinese thinkers. These individuals have successfully integrated the study of Christian theology into the humanities and social sciences at major universities (Lai and Lam 2010). However, research on religious literature has not been the focus of this movement.

The present study responds to the Special Issue Expressions of Chinese Christianity in Texts and Contexts' core intent and core value proposition, opposing the notion of "Chinese Christianity" as a singular entity, a simplification that overlooks intra- and interchurch exchanges across doctrinal and liturgical lines. I aim to position the reciprocal dynamics of Chinese–Christian interactions at the forefront of scholarly discourse, drawing upon fresh available archival sources. Hence, this study selects Hong Kong literature—a less frequently examined body of expression—as the focal point of its analysis. Specifically, the accommodation and compromise between Christianity and Chinese culture, as reflected in modern Hong Kong literature, reveal a dynamic interplay in which the identities and values of both traditions are negotiated. This study explores how modern Hong Kong writers incorporate, challenge, and reinterpret Christian themes within the framework of Chinese cultural practices and beliefs. It uses these writers' works to examine the encounters and correlations between expressions of Christian and Chinese social, economic, cultural, and historical forces, as well as those between Christianity and other existing Chinese religious and spiritual traditions. It posits that such literary works not only depict the complexities of cultural hybridity but also offer insights into the evolving nature of cultural identity in postcolonial Hong Kong, illustrating the nuanced ways in which global religions and local traditions can coalesce and transform each other.

2. Theoretical Framework

The concept of the "contact zone", as articulated by Mary Louise Pratt, refers to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths in the contemporary world. Pratt's theory emphasizes the interactive, improvisational, and often contentious nature of these encounters, in which individuals and groups of different backgrounds and hierarchies come into contact and influence each other in complex ways (Pratt 2012).

The notion of the contact zone is uniquely appropriate in analyzing Hong Kong, a city distinctly positioned at the crossroads of Eastern and Western cultures due to its colonial past and its present role as a global financial center. This framework allows for an exploration of how Christianity and Chinese culture are negotiated, particularly in the literature of Hong Kong, highlighting the processes of accommodation, resistance, and adaptation that characterize their interaction. Through this lens, this study seeks to understand how modern Hong Kong literature serves as a fertile ground for examining the intricate dance of religious exchange, conflict, and compromise in a postcolonial setting, how these literary works, in their confrontation in the contact zone, interilluminate—that is, dialogize—each other.

In Hong Kong, almost no utterance exists in isolation but is always in dialogue with others—past, present, and future. We will learn from Bakhtin's term "inter-illumination". Inter-illumination describes the process by which various voices, discourses, or points of view within a text or between texts illuminate each other (Bakhtin 2010). This interaction enables a deeper exploration of themes and narratives, allowing readers to gain insights that might not be evident when texts are considered in isolation. Based on these theoretical frameworks, this study uncovers a highly unique thread that has been virtually unexplored before. It involves an analysis of selected works from Xu Dishan (許地山) and Chen Zanyi (陳贊一)[3].

This line of confrontation and interaction decipherable in these two writers' works is unique and significant in that both authors are among Hong Kong's most important Christian writers working in two different periods of the 20th century. Xu Dishan (1893–1941 许地山) was a prominent Chinese writer, scholar, and educator known for his contributions to literature, religious studies, and cultural exchange between Christianity and Chinese culture. Around the age of ten, Xu Dishan joined the Protestant church in Fujian. At that time, he received a traditional Confucian education and studied English with a British missionary. Xu learned to combine faith in religion with sincere respect for it. In 1917, Xu Dishan received a church scholarship to enter Yenching University[4]. Under the education of this famous missionary university, he and several of his classmates later became famous Christian writers in modern China (Elia 2019). In 1920, he earned a Bachelor's degree in Chinese Literature. During those years, Xu Dishan participated in many religious groups, including the Beijing YMCA (Robinson 1986).

Although primarily associated with mainland China, Xu's connection to Hong Kong is significant due to his role in the broader context of the cultural and religious exchanges between the East and the West. In 1934, under the initiative of Sir William Woodward Hornell (1878–1950), the University of Hong Kong began the reorganization of its Chinese Department, inviting Xu to serve as the department head. Xu's move to British Hong Kong to teach became a sensational event among the city's academic and cultural circles. Xu has long been acclaimed as a pioneer of Hong Kong's local culture. Liu Yazi[5] (1887–1958 柳亞子) even remarked that Hong Kong's culture was "single-handedly developed by Mr. Xu (Hou 2009)". His literary works, characterized by their exploration of Christian themes in Chinese society, contributed to the cultural dialogue between the Christian and Chinese traditions. His stories and novels, addressing issues of faith, morality, and the human condition, resonated with readers in Hong Kong, a city known for its multicultural and multireligious fabric. During his time in Hong Kong, Xu wrote only two short stories, Yu Guan (玉官) and The Gills of an Iron Fish (鐵魚底鰓), with the former eventually becoming an indispensable classic in the study of Chinese Christian literature (Riep 2004). His work paved the way for a unique literary tradition in Hong Kong that reflects the city's complex cultural and religious landscape.

Xu died in Hong Kong in 1941, but his exploration of Christian themes in the context of Chinese culture continued to influence Hong Kong literature and inspire local writers and intellectuals to engage with similar themes. Even within the specific category of the Chinese Christian literati to which he belongs, Dr. Chen Zanyi (original name Chan Waikeung 陳偉強), a Hong Kong pastor, stands out. In an era when "excellent Chinese literature flourished, yet outstanding Chinese Christian literature did not (Wen 1994)", Chen was recognized for his distinctive and productive contributions. He was born into a commercial family during the British colonial period in 1960s Hong Kong. His parents did not adhere to Christianity but instead followed traditional folk beliefs common in the Chinese society of Hong Kong, with an ethical code that integrated Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Chen, through his independent exploration, decided to become a Christian in his adulthood. Initially enrolling at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in Chinese Language and Literature, he later moved to the Division of Religion and Theology after earning his Bachelor of Arts with honors[6]. Since the 1990s, Chen has been diligently working toward the development of a public culture of Christianity, publishing over thirty works, including novels, hymns, poetry, and essays. His main genre is the short form, specifically micro fiction, as represented by his four independently published collections *Orange and Tangerine* (橙與桔 Chen 1993), *A Bit of Reason* (一點道理 Chen 2000), *Death Death* (死亡死亡 2002), and *Variations of Chen Zanyi's Micro Fiction* (陳贊一微型小說變奏 Chen 2014), which together comprise nearly a hundred short stories.

The relationship between Chen and Xu can be figured not just based on their sequential creation of a body of literature with distinct Christian themes in Hong Kong. It also involves the successors' conscious and profound inheritance and reflection on the cultural heritage of the predecessors. Therefore, compared with the weak or ambiguous connec-

tion in some studies, Xu Dishan and Chen Zanyi's stories are very suitable materials for the adoption of inter-illumination. As a scholar of Chinese theology, Chen is particularly known for his expertise in the study of Xu's religious thought, even completing his Ph.D. with the thesis "Christianity Meets the Chinese Religions-A Case Study of Xu Dishan (基督教與中國宗教相遇: 許地山研究 2002)". Positioned in the rapidly evolving context of Hong Kong and keenly aware of the trends in the development of the Chinese theological movement, Chen endeavors in his literary works to perpetuate Xu's religious stance characterized by peace, tolerance, and non-aggression. At the same time, he attempts to address the unresolved issue in Xu's work: how Christianity can be adapted to Chinese culture and society.

The next section presents a detailed discussion of how the literary works of these two writers represent the opposing forces of accommodation and compromise between Christianity and Chinese culture. The analysis focuses on the recurring themes in their works that illustrate the interaction between Christianity and Chinese culture, such as redemption, suffering, moral dilemmas, and family dynamics. In particular, the characters and narratives that embody the fusion of and conflict between these two cultures are examined. In instances of the fusion of Christian and Chinese elements, the implications of such syncretism for the identity, tradition, and cultural continuity of Hong Kong are fleshed out.

3. Xu Dishan: Colonization and Legitimacy

The spread of Christianity in China in the late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a significant period of religious and cultural exchange, influenced by historical events and social changes. During this period, the nature of the Christian missions in China was shaped by the treaties that followed the Opium Wars, which opened China to foreign missionaries and evangelical activities from the West. In the early 20th century, China became one of the key regions for Christian missionary efforts and saw a significant influx of overseas missionaries who were mostly well-educated and professionally trained in theology (Witek 2015). Under Nationalist rule, Chinese Christians experienced a relatively friendly political environment, which allowed homegrown Christian movements to expand. The Constitution of the Republic of China, as promulgated during this period, stipulated and protected the freedom of religion, a factor that contributed to the rapid increase in the number of Christian converts in China. Consequently, the period from 1900 to 1920 is often seen as the "Golden Age" of Christianity in China, marked by a significant expansion of the Christian community and influence across the country (Bays 1996). This period saw the rapid growth of Protestantism as foreign missionaries established schools and hospitals, contributing significantly to Chinese education and healthcare.

However, Christianity's association with Western imperialism led to a backlash against its expansion during the anti-imperialist movement of the early 1920s. This anti-Christian movement, part of a broader wave of nationalism and anti-foreign sentiment, was fueled by a variety of factors, including resentment toward the privileges and protections afforded to foreign missionaries under unequal treaties, as well as concerns over cultural imperialism and the loss of Chinese sovereignty (Liu 1989).

In contrast to peasant movements like the Boxer Rebellion[7], the anti-Christian movement was primarily initiated by intellectuals who advocated science, democracy, freedom, and equality and sought to replace violent confrontations with ideological disputes. Many writers and scholars joined this movement, contributing to a broad intellectual debate on the role and influence of Christianity in Chinese society. Hong Kong also became a focal point for the debates of this movement.

A prominent figure in the anti-Christian movement of the time was Xiao Qian (蕭乾1910–1999), a noted writer of modern Chinese literature and at one point the chief editor of Hong Kong's Ta Kung Pao (大公報). American Sinologist Lewis Robinson calls Xiao an "anti-Christian writer", particularly in his fictions, such as *Tan* (曇), Conversion (皈依), and Peng Cheng (鵬程). These works explicitly expose the imperialist use of religion to

poison the Chinese people and the corruption within the church, showing distinct "anti-religious" attitudes (Robinson 1986). In "The Monologue of an Optimist (一個樂觀主義者的自白)", Xiao claims that religion serves to extract national sentiment from the souls of Easterners with an invisible knife, supported by the gunboats of those who come from afar to proselytize. This fact motivated him to write novels exploring imperialist cultural aggression (Xiao 1998:149).

In contrast to many of his contemporaries, such as Xiao Qian, Xu Dishan displayed a markedly different stance amid the anti-Christian movement. In articles like "The Growth and Decline of Religion" (宗教的生長與滅亡 Xu 1922) and "What Kind of Religion Do We Want?" (我們要什麼樣的宗教? Xu 1923), Xu adopted a cautious approach toward the vigorous anti-Christian activities around him. He favored the rational analysis of religion's development, nature, function, and value.

Based on his experiences in and observations of the Christian church, Xu proposed that the religion needed in China should be (1) practical and easily integrated into daily life, (2) accessible not just to specific individuals but to the masses, (3) morally and emotionally robust, (4) embodying a spirit of science, (5) rich in emotion, (6) universal in nature, (7) life-focused, and (8) logical and reasonable (Xu 1923). Xu believed that Christianity suited the social needs of China at the time, particularly admiring its principles of equality, fraternity, and tolerance. Amid the vigorous anti-Christian movement, he saw the necessity for a more accessible and Sinicized interpretation of the Christian doctrine so ordinary people could understand and accept it. Thus, he wrote a series of literary works with religious themes. For example, his 1922 novel *The Vain Labors of a Spider* (綴網勞蛛), spanning mainland China and Southeast Asia, thematized forgiveness and reconciliation. The protagonist, Shang Jie, a devout Christian and former child bride, faces numerous trials, including physical and spiritual harm, abandonment, and the loss of her daughter's custody, yet her faith enables her to treat others with tolerance, calmly endure misfortune, and love humanity without complaint.

At the peak of the anti-Christian movement, Xu penned "Anti-Christian China" (反基督教的中國 Xu 1927), which explored the historical processes and reasons behind China's opposition to Christianity. By reflecting on China's own cultural and psychological landscape, Xu's articles identified the differences between religion and superstition and demonstrated the compatibility of science, humanity, and Christianity. In 1939, after arriving in Hong Kong, Xu once again responded to the anti-Christian movement with the novel Yu Guan. This extensive narrative depicts the clash between Christianity and Chinese society. For instance, in the novel, Xing Guan, a Christian character, and her family are seen by their neighbors as follows:

> "She has a lot of foreign power, and no one dares to mess with her. However, those who know her do not think highly of her…Her nephew used to be a pharmacist in the church hospital, and there is no one who does not regard him as an expert at making psychedelic potion and destroying idols (Xu 2005, p. 225)".

The perception of Xing Guan and her nephew by their neighbors encapsulates the conflict between the foreign (Christianity) and the local (Chinese beliefs). In this typical Chinese community where Western forces have intervened, people's respect mixed with disdain reflects a complex societal response to new religions and cultural practices, highlighting a fear of the unknown and the perceived threat to traditional values. Xing Guan and her nephew's identity and belonging are shaped by their association with Christianity, which both empowers and isolates them within their community.

However, after that, Xu's further writing neither reinforces the stereotypes of Christianity nor highlights the tensions between foreign religious influence and national identity nor does it fuel the rejection of a foreign religion. Instead, his work strives to elucidate what he sees as the true spirit of Christianity and how to foster a path of mutual negotiation and inclusive understanding. He believes that the conflict between Christianity and Chinese culture stems partly from the former's inflexible evangelism, notably its disrespect for Chinese traditions and national psyche. Given Christianity's opposition to the worship

of idols, it inevitably goes against Chinese gods and monuments of the dead. Another crucial issue is the lack of basic communication and understanding between the two, a theme that Xu emphasizes repeatedly in his work. Before encountering Christianity, the novel's protagonist, Yu Guan, like most people, harbors misunderstanding and even fear toward Christianity and its adherents.

> "When she saw foreigners, she was always afraid. She was afraid of foreigners cutting off her hair to make spells, afraid of foreigners taking her eyes to make medicine. She was afraid that foreigners would throw psychedelic potion bombs on her body, make a cross on her forehead, and commit blasphemy and insult her ancestors (Xu 2005, p. 226)".

However, after becoming widowed and losing her financial support, Yu Guan is forced to work as a nanny for a female missionary, through which she discovers the approachability and respectability of Western missionaries. Sheltered by the church, she manages to retain her late husband's assets. Her son receives education in a mission school and even gets a chance to study abroad. Learning to read from missionaries and converting to Christianity, she becomes a "Bible woman" capable of reforming thugs. Although she never fully severs ties with Chinese traditional culture, even privately worshiping ancestors and keeping both the Bible and the I Ching (易經)[8], her dedicated service to the church remains unaffected. Yu Guan's life reflects how the conflict between Christianity and Chinese culture can be diminished through enhanced communication and understanding.

This literary example offers a profound exploration of the cultural and religious tensions that can arise when Christianity is introduced into a deeply Confucian and traditionally polytheistic society like China's. Through the narrative journey of the protagonist, Yu Guan, the text delves into the misunderstandings, fears, and eventual reconciliation between these seemingly disparate worlds. Despite her conversion and dedication to the Christian faith, Yu Guan maintains connections to her Chinese cultural heritage. This blending of beliefs symbolizes the possibility of a harmonious coexistence between Christianity and traditional Chinese practices, suggesting that faith and cultural identity are not mutually exclusive but can enrich each other.

Xu emphasizes the need for Christianity's indigenization in China and its integration with traditional and contemporary realities. Here, he echoes the intellectual elites who stood at the intersection of two cultures and endeavored to reconcile traditional Chinese values with modern concepts introduced by Christian missions and Western influence. Xu's education and work history, which combine Chinese and Western elements, are the result of various cultural forces. As such, his understanding of Christianity cannot be extricated from the unique interpretative context that grounds it. He seemed to appreciate the moral and ethical dimensions of Christian teachings, particularly their emphasis on compassion, love, and the transformative power of faith. However, he also appeared critical of the institutional aspects of the church and its dogma, suggesting a more personal and individualized approach to spirituality. Xu's work reflects a blend of admiration for Christian ethical principles and a desire for freedom and flexibility in religious practice, indicating a thoughtful engagement with the faith rather than an outright acceptance or rejection. It represents the integration of Chinese and Western cultures on the level of faith, reflecting both the challenges of Christianity in confronting Chinese culture and the proactive pursuit of the Chinese culture for renewal through Christian cultural elements.

4. Chen Zanyi: Practicality and Applicability

Chen Zanyi has long been engaged in the study of Chinese theology, Christianity, and Chinese literature. His master's thesis in theology, "An Indigenized Perspective on the Descriptions of Nature in Chinese Christian Hymns (從本色化角度看華文聖詩對大自然的描寫)", argues that Chinese Christian hymns should not rigidly adhere to the text, words, and symbols of the Bible, but should be expressed in the traditional symbols of Chinese culture. The essence of this argument is that faith needs to be lived and expressed in ways that are meaningful to the local community. By integrating traditional Chinese cultural

symbols into Christian hymns, the practice of Christianity in China can become a more inclusive, respectful, and effective ministry. He developed his argument further. In his doctoral dissertation, an in-depth exploration of Xu Dishan's literary works, emphasizes that "Chinese Christians must inevitably confront Chinese religions unless they choose to sever themselves from Chinese culture and society, and even from their compatriots and relatives (Chan 2002)". His work focuses on the cross-border dialogue between Christian doctrine and Chinese tradition, with the cross of faith positioned horizontally in Christian theology and vertically in Chinese culture, intertwining religious thought and literary creation. His Christian novels portray the relationship between Western religious beliefs and traditional Chinese consciousness in the Chinese society of contemporary Hong Kong not as a binary opposition but rather as exhibiting a degree of "adhesion".

At first glance, this stance does not appear to be fundamentally different from Xu's. However, the social context in which Chen Zanyi writes has undergone significant changes relative to that of Xu Dishan. By the late 20th century, after half a century of conflict and integration, Christianity has become an inseparable part of Hong Kong culture. After 1997, with Hong Kong becoming a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, it shed its label as a British colony. Thus, in creating Christian literature, Chen could set aside the heavy historical burdens that Xu reckoned with throughout his life. Chen's works downplay the debate on the legitimacy of Christianity in Chinese society and primarily adopt an inculturation paradigm. Hong Kong is more often seen as a highly developed modern city and financial center, where the main issue is no longer whether the introduction of foreign religions would exacerbate the crisis of national extinction under colonial rule. Instead, the focus is on how religion can be adapted to contemporary human living conditions while expressing the universal truths of Christianity as succinctly and understandably as possible in a fast-paced urban society.

Many of Chen's contemporaries tend toward the harangue, such as the Chinese American female writer Shi Wei (施瑋), whose work *The Apostate* (叛教者) pays homage to monumental epics like *The Divine Comedy* and *Paradise Lost* through hundreds of thousands of words. By contrast, Chen's Christian fiction shows the opposite tendency toward minimalism, embodying the principle of "less is more". This approach emphasizes the balance and tension between the volume of the text and its aesthetic appeal. As Jason Lam, a Hong Kong theologian points out, "Theologians, in constructing theology using biblical narratives, have an additional layer of consideration compared to literary critics, as they cannot think solely from a textual theoretical perspective (Lam 2007)". Instead of identifying primarily—or only—as a literary writer, Chen often approaches issues from the perspective of a clergyman, exploring how religious doctrine can be applied to the daily lives of Christians and advocating the saving of the reader's time above all. Since the publication of his first collection of Christian fiction *Orange and Tangerine* in 1993, he has taken a unique path that does not rely on volume or word count to succeed. Except for a few special cases, most of his stories are concise and clear, not exceeding a thousand words. He has consistently used the fewest words to express his deepest concerns, focusing on how to bridge the gap between the religious practices of Christians and the Chinese and how to rationally resolve the contradictions between Christianity and Chinese folk traditions. Through literature, he seeks to provide more accessible and artistic expressions. The diverse religious world depicted in his writings adheres to a widely circulated Christian maxim: "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity".

This maxim has been widely cited to demonstrate the theological freedom and religious tolerance of Christianity. Yet, simultaneously, it also presents an unresolved question with no definitive answer: What exactly constitutes the "essentials", and what falls under the "non-essentials"? Chen's micro fictions exhibit a steadfast adherence to the principles at the root of theology—the truths of Christianity and the fundamental ethics centered around God, without compromise.

Within the traditional Chinese cultural framework, especially among the Han people, religious faith typically did not play a pivotal role in determining choices for marriage un-

der ordinary circumstances. However, some Christian denominations, especially conservative and traditional ones, teach adherents not to marry non-Christians (pagans), based on interpretations of parts of the Scripture, notably certain passages from 1 Corinthians, which are understood to encourage Christians to marry fellow believers to avoid religious disagreements. Chen adopts this stance, maintaining that marriage among orthodox believers is God's teaching and should not be violated lightly. The *Orange and the Tangerine* exemplifies his views on marriage, telling the story of Lian Ai, a Hong Kong woman who remains single due to her religion's expectations and stringent requirements for marriage, reflecting a deep belief in marrying within one's faith to uphold Christian values.

However, in terms of the specific ways of following God and interacting with non-believers, Chen, much like Xu, opts for a path of tolerance, gentleness, and non-extremism. He fully acknowledges the heterogeneity of personal experiences, prioritizing the metaphysical essence of religion over the attention to the physical norms of rituals. This is reflected in his literary stance, which does not flaunt the identity of a Christian believer nor condescend to, arbitrarily scrutinize, and judge non-Christians' behaviors. While insisting on the orthodox transmission of Christian theological history, he also strives for practical breakthroughs by integrating the merits of different religions within the living environment and mindset of Chinese culture.

Chen simultaneously acknowledges the "path of inclusivity", premised on respecting others' beliefs and established lives, and concedes that it is "quite challenging to resolve the contradictions between Christianity and Chinese religions on a rational, theoretical level (Chan 2002, p. 162)". Christian faith acknowledges only one true God, advocating monotheism. The Bible explicitly states that only God is worthy of worship, denouncing all other gods or idols as false (Exodus 20, pp. 4–6). The Second Commandment specifically prohibits the making and worship of idols, emphasizing the pure worship of God without the interference of any idols. Idolatry—the worship of and reliance on fictitious deities or objects instead of the true God—is seen as a deviation from faith and a betrayal of God. This stands in stark conflict with long-standing Chinese practices of ancestor worship and family rituals. Despite Xu's portrayal of the protagonist Yu Guan as a devout Chinese Christian, Chen comments about the character, "Her enlightened selfless service did not resolve the issue of ancestor worship (Chan 2002, p. 163)".

To address this unresolved issue, Chen explores how to reconcile the behaviors of families that are not restricted by the Christian prohibition on idolatry and how to overcome cultural dissonances to harmonize the contradictions between Christian and non-Christian identities in familial relationships. He leans on Confucian culture's core value of filial piety to elucidate the relationship between God, individuals, and ancestors. Chen teaches Chinese moral philosophy in various theological seminaries in Hong Kong, using Confucian classics as materials, and he instructs congregants to honor their parents. This is reflected in his micro fictions that depict Christians participating in Chinese religious ceremonies, such as tomb sweeping, vigil keeping, and burning paper money, where such acts, stemming from respect for one's elders, are exempt from doctrinal criticism.

For example, in the novella *Preaching at the Funeral* (佈道會), which features a finely crafted plot with an unexpected ending, the believer Xiao Yi wishes to conduct her father's funeral through Christian rites. Because the church's denial, grounded in its policy against conducting Christian funerals for non-believers, Xiao Yi turns to Pastor Ma for assistance, and Pastor Ma consents. When questioned by Deacon Ho about his reasons for going against the policy, Pastor Ma responds, "I went to hold a preaching session for a non-believer relative (Chen 2002, p. 195)".

In this story, Xiao Yi is a character who represents a believer's struggle to reconcile personal religious convictions with her original family. Pastor Ma's decision to assist Xiao Yi is a pivotal moment in the novella, showcasing a nuanced understanding of religious duty that transcends strict adherence to policy. Deacon Ho's questioning of Pastor Ma's motives introduces a critical voice within the religious community, representing those who prioritize doctrinal purity over compassionate practice. This internal conflict within the church

highlights the ongoing struggle between tradition and adaptation, doctrine and compassion, that religious communities face. The unexpected ending, where religious rites are performed for a non-believer, serves as a powerful narrative device that challenges the reader to reconsider the essence of religious practice. It prompts questions about the purpose of religious rituals: Are they meant to be exclusive, reserved only for the faithful, or can they serve a broader, more inclusive role in society? This literary example is particularly illuminative of how individual beliefs and institutional policies can clash yet also find resolution through empathy, understanding, and a flexible interpretation of religious teachings.

In another short story, "Faith and Doubt (信與不信)", the Christian Shen An's old uncle Ah Xiang passes away suddenly in his sleep. Ah Xiang's 83-year-old wife expresses to Shen An the desire to hire a medium to contact her husband's spirit for any last words, but she does not have enough money. Shen An immediately offers a thousand yuan for this purpose. When questioned by his wife, who knows he does not believe in spirits, Shen An simply responds, "Because she believes (Chen 2002, p. 78)". This narrative, through its straightforward storytelling, addresses the complexities and negotiations between the legacies of Chinese cultural thought and the Christian religious system introduced later on, focusing on their transformation and reconciliation.

In the story "Nostalgia (思念)", Mr. Li, a recent theology graduate, visits Sister Zhou Nianci, whose father has just passed away. Seeing the father's portrait in Nianci's home, Li remarks disapprovingly, "You know, our religion does not allow idol worship. When people die, they are unaware of anything, you know?" She obediently puts away the photo frame, but after Mr. Li takes his leave, she takes out her father's portrait again and promises that she will never let Mr. Li visit her home again. After leaving the Zhou family, Mr. Li visits the seminary teacher Pastor Zhao's home and also finds on display a large photo of his wife who passed away three years earlier, with flowers placed in front of the portrait. The following conversation ensues:

"However, she's dead. She cannot see the flowers".

"You are right".

"So why do you put lilies in front of her picture?"

"When you've really loved, you'll understand (Chen 2002, p. 92)".

These examples highlight the conflict between the Christian injunction against idolatry and the traditional Chinese practice of honoring deceased relatives, illustrating the challenges of reconciling religious doctrine with cultural customs. When Chinese Christians face ancestral rites, Chen attempts to gradually diminish their original religious significance while highlighting their ethical meaning. He employs an ethical model akin to Simone Weil's concept of "the love of God", suggesting a practical path for Christian practice that transcends religious differences through love. According to Weil's theory, the love for God is not merely about loving God directly. God's love for us is not the reason for which we should love him. God's love for us is the reason for us to love ourselves. How could we love ourselves without this motive (Weil 1997)?

Reviewing Chen Zanyi's micro fiction novels with the theory of Weil, people's commemoration and worship of their beloved dead stem from the deep love they shared. Since humans are created in the image of God, human existence itself is the existence of love. This mutual love among people does not contradict the love of God; instead, it aids us in seeking the origin and object of love. Chen's Christian micro fictions evolve from the tenet of "accepting each other according to one's own views and circumstances (Chan 2002, p. 163)". to understanding and connecting opposing sides from a rational and principled perspective, ultimately achieving a localized interpretation based on "in all things charity". Beyond its literary significance, this approach can also be seen as a metaphor for the fluid crossing and redefinition of intangible boundaries, such as religious belief and ethnic culture, while also concerning the religious and cultural identities of Hong Kong's traditional Chinese community amid changes and the reshaping of identity in times of transition.

5. Conclusions

The examination of the inter-illumination between Christianity and Chinese culture in modern Hong Kong literature, particularly through the works of Xu Dishan and Chen Zanyi, highlights the nuanced and complex processes of accommodation, negotiation, and compromise. These literary expressions not only demonstrate the practicality and pragmatism with which Christian elements have been integrated into Chinese culture but also underscore the rich tapestry of cultural hybridity that characterizes Hong Kong's unique identity. The contact zone of Hong Kong, a product of its colonial past and its role as a global financial hub, has fostered a fertile ground for the emergence of a distinct literary discourse that bridges East and West, ancient and modern, global religions and local traditions.

This study's insights into the dynamic engagement between Christianity and Chinese culture through literature suggest an evolving narrative of cultural identity in colonial and postcolonial Hong Kong. It posits that such literary works serve as a microcosm of the broader cultural and religious dialogues occurring within society, illustrating how global and local forces can coalesce and transform each other. The colonial background, the unique East-meets-West dynamics of the city, and the social changes over the decades play crucial roles in shaping the narrative and thematic structures of their literature. Especially through the comparative analysis of Xu Dishan's and Chen Zanyi's works in the past half century, this study reflects the complexity of this dialogue, providing a process from conflict to reconciliation, from tradition to innovation.

As Hong Kong continues to navigate its beliefs and identity, the role of literature in shaping the discourse around Christianity and Chinese culture becomes increasingly significant. Future research should extend beyond the contributions of Xu and Chen to explore a wider array of authors and periods, further illuminating the diverse ways in which Christianity has influenced Chinese literature and culture. Such exploration will enrich our understanding of the multifaceted relationship between religion and identity, contributing to broader discussions on inter-religious dialogue and the shaping of cultural identities in times of transition and change. This expanding body of work will continue to highlight the importance of cross-cultural encounters, not only in the realm of literature but also in the ongoing construction of societal values and norms in Hong Kong and beyond.

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Notes

1 The Church of England, as part of the worldwide Anglican Communion, was introduced to Hong Kong in the mid-19th century following the British colonization in 1841. The establishment of the church was closely tied to Britain's imperial and colonial ambitions, serving not only as a religious institution but also as a vehicle for cultural and educational influence. Hence, Christianity in this study primarily to the Church of England.

2 As Joseph Tse-Hei Lee's introduction, Sino-Christian Theology is described as a contemporary intellectual movement within Chinese academia, primarily involving scholars known as "cultural Christians" who engage more in theological research and interfaith dialogue than in religious conversion. This movement aims to integrate the study of Christian theology into the humanities and social sciences at major universities. It is characterized by its early stage of development and is not static or monolithic, comprising researchers from various disciplines studying Christianity without religious commitment, Christian intellectuals not affiliated with any institutional churches, and practicing Christian scholars applying their theological knowledge to serve the church and society. Diversity is a key feature, with varied conceptual insights, theological orientations, and methodologies among cultural Christians. The movement represents an effort to promote theology as a new academic discipline and way of thinking rather than merely as a tool for evangelization, indicating a significant step toward theological professionalism in China.

3 Currently, the literary works of Xu Dishan and Chen Zanyi have not been officially translated into English; therefore, all references to Chinese materials are based on the author's personal translations from the original Chinese texts.

[4] Yenching University was founded in 1919, resulting from the merger of several smaller colleges in Beijing. It was established with the support of American Protestant missions and was modeled after American liberal arts colleges, aiming to combine Western and Chinese educational philosophies.

[5] Liu Yazi, born in 1887 and passing away in 1958, was a prominent Chinese poet and patriot whose work spanned the late Qing dynasty, the Republican era, and into the early years of the People's Republic of China. Known for his fervent nationalism and deep commitment to social and political reform, Liu played a significant role in the modern Chinese literary movement.

[6] The biographical information about Chen Zanyi in this article is based on author's multiple face-to-face interviews with Chen and his wife in Hong Kong between 2017 and 2018.

[7] The Boxer Rebellion, also known as the Boxer Uprising or Yihetuan Movement, was an anti-imperialist, anti-foreign, and anti-Christian uprising that took place in China between 1899 and 1901, towards the end of the Qing dynasty. It was initiated by the Militia United in Righteousness (義和團), known as the "Boxers" due to their practice of Chinese martial arts, which Westerners referred to as Chinese Boxing.

[8] The I Ching, also known as the "Classic of Changes" or "Book of Changes" in English, is an ancient Chinese text and one of the Five Classics of Confucianism. The I Ching is a divination system, but it is also much more than that. It has been used throughout Chinese history as a source of philosophical insight, offering wisdom on how to live in harmony with the natural and social order.

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Article

Contextualizing Transnational Chinese Christianity: A Relational Approach

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Abstract: In recent years, the number of Chinese Christian organizations in Europe has grown considerably compared to other overseas Chinese community organizations. They can mobilize transnational networks and resources to expand religious space in host societies and form a highly visible social force. Although the rise of early Christianity in the Western world has been considered an outcome of inherent religious strength, especially in terms of its central doctrines and religious ethics, this article suggests that in the diasporic Chinese world where Christianity constitutes a non-indigenous religious tradition, social relatedness based on native place, family, and kinship ties provides a more useful context for understanding its dynamic expansion and cross-regional transmission. Drawing on anthropological fieldwork conducted in Europe among overseas Chinese Christian traders and entrepreneurs, this research seeks an alternative framework for understanding the religious-cultural dynamics of Chinese Christianity in the context of transnational migration.

Keywords: Chinese Christianity; social relations; transnational migration; migrant adaptation; Europe

1. Introduction

Historians of Sino-Western interaction in modern times have tended to prioritize the agency and mobility of Western missionary groups. Early Western Christianity first followed missionaries to the southeastern coastal provinces of China, and this foreign religion was adopted and localized by Chinese agents (Cao 2010; Chow 2021; Dunch 2001; Lee 2003; Liu 2022). Historically, Chinese Christians' contributions to the world Christian mission have been limited, and the Chinese mainland has been a "harvest field" (*hechang*) and recipient of the missionary activities of overseas churches and church organizations. Overseas Chinese diaspora communities, compared with communities within China, tended to be more receptive and agentive in dealing with Christianity (Cao 2013; Yang 1999; Zhang 2018; Zhu 2009). This religious-cultural phenomenon is more pronounced in Southeast Asia. The Chinese congregations and Christians have long sought to express the faith in a culturally "Chinese" way in Southeast Asian societies where Christianity is not mainstream (DeBernardi 2020; Liu 2021; Su 2010; Zhang 2018). Although traditional religions based on Confucianism and folk beliefs still dominate the Chinese religious landscape, the proportion of followers of traditional Chinese religions has shown a downward trend, while the proportion of Chinese Christians has increased rapidly (Zhang 2015).

This research seeks to put the current rapid development of Chinese Christianity in Europe into a social relational context by focusing on its role in negotiating a sense of place and a moral discourse on family, marriage, and social relations in the Chinese diaspora. Unlike the traditional theological approach that takes contextualization mainly as a mission strategy and views contextualized Christianity as a desired outcome of the evangelical process (see Wang 2007), we understand contextualized Christianity as lived religious

experience and practice. This article relies primarily on oral narratives, and the data collected consists of two parts. From 2014 to 2019, we conducted in-person field research in Europe, mainly focusing on Chinese Christian diasporic communities in France and Italy. Field research involves participant observation on Chinese Christians' religious practices in church settings and in their everyday lives. In addition, we conducted informal interviews, both with church leaders and members, to understand their immigrant experience and religious interpretations in specific social contexts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the church activities moved online, which enabled us to observe from a distance how Chinese Christians in Europe understood and responded to the global health crisis.

This study finds that Chinese (Protestant) Christianity has taken root in contemporary Europe, and its relatively autonomous religious space has only limited intersection with local churches and Christians in Europe. According to various estimates from insiders of Chinese immigrant churches, there are about three hundred Chinese churches in Europe. Chinese churches in France are mainly composed of Wenzhou immigrants, and are concentrated in Paris, a commercial center. There are twenty Chinese churches in the greater Paris area, with tens of thousands of believers who are mainly ethnic Wenzhou immigrants. Chinese churches in Italy are dominated by migrants of Wenzhou and Qingtian origin. Counting circa thirty to forty thousand believers, Chinese Christians in Italy have opened over eighty congregations, ranking first in Europe. In Rome alone, about ten percent of the forty thousand Chinese people in the city are Christians. One of the most significant differences between these Chinese Christians in Europe and in North America is that most of them are not new converts but were already believers before arriving from China. While there are similarities and differences in the adaptation strategies of Chinese Christians in France and Italy, tensions exist between them and secular European society. This study sets out to explore the transnational and trans-local dynamics of Chinese Christianity in Europe and hopes to shed light on the multiple Chinese expressions of Christianity in the diaspora.

The case of Chinese Christianity in Europe has important theoretical significance for understanding both the propagation mechanism and local adaptation of global Christianity. The rapid development of early Christianity is often considered an outcome of the superiority of its religiosity, mainly reflecting in its central doctrines and religious ethics (Stark 1996). As Rodney Stark states, "I believe that it was the religion's particular doctrines that permitted Christianity to be among the most sweeping and successful revitalization movements in history. And it was the way these doctrines took on actual flesh, the way they directed organizational actions and individual behavior, that led to the rise of Christianity" (Stark 1996, p. 211). Along this line of historical explanation, the revival of Christianity in post-Mao China has been understood as primarily a liberating force amid a stifling political atmosphere, owing to the unique advantage of this non-traditional religion (Yang 2005). However, this emphasis on inherent religious strength might not always necessarily apply to the study of Chinese communities where Christianity constitutes a non-indigenous religious tradition. This investigation draws on anthropological fieldwork conducted in Europe among overseas Chinese entrepreneurs to seek an alternative conceptual framework for understanding the transnational spread of Chinese Christianity.

2. Place-Based Networks in Congregational Spaces

Migration and sojourning were essential means of economic success for coastal Chinese people during the reform period. In the age of global migration, diasporic Wenzhou Christian merchants and traders have cultivated trans-local connections between their ethnic communities in Europe and their hometown in China. They have also built transnational ties between China and the European continent as well as among the European countries where they reside, conduct business, and practice their religion. Today, Wenzhou businesspeople are almost the best-known group of Chinese merchants in the world, running family-owned businesses such as garment factories, restaurants, and cafes, and retailing or distributing businesses of low-end light industrial products such as clothing, shoes, hats, fabrics, glasses, and lighters between China and Europe, as well as throughout

the European continent. Almost all the lay church leaders we met during our fieldwork in Europe had family businesses, and some business elites traveled back and forth between Europe and China to engage in international trade.

For Chinese Christian merchants, their economic and religious lives intersect in the context of secularity in Europe. Kim-Kwong Chan (2012) has vividly described the combination of faith and local business practices in the Wenzhou Christian merchant community in Europe:

> The Wenzhou merchants dominate the merchant groups in Europe, and the churches among this group are established more by Wenzhouese with roots in China than by mission agencies overseas. They convert their fellow merchants who share similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Their church model is almost the exact replica of what it is like in their home churches in Wenzhou. Hymn books and Bibles are brought from China. Even though they may live at or next to historical or contemporary centers of Christianity, their church life and activities seem to be thousands of miles and hundreds of years apart from their fellow Christians in their host countries. These churches seem to be more a global extension of the Wenzhounese church in China than a local expression of Christian faith by migrant Chinese.

We have made similar field observations. Chinese churches, especially those in France and Italy, resemble Zhejiang churches in China in the aspects of their atmosphere and congregational model. Zhejiang-style cuisine, for example, is usually served after the Sunday services, including pigskin jelly, braised duck head, and braised duck tongue. God's word is shared either in dialect form or in Mandarin Chinese, especially among the first generation of Christians. Church Christmas celebrations are full of Chinese elements. Lanterns, oil-paper umbrellas, ancient fans, and traditional ethnic costumes, bought and transported from China, are used in Christmas performance programs. These similarities intensify their place identity by constructing an imaginary homeland for these uprooted overseas Chinese Christians.

Chinese Christians in Europe live in an acquaintance society like that in China. Being brothers and sisters in the family of Jesus Christ, along with the networks built on kinship and geographic ties, they have close connections and become each other's support in their economic practices. Wenzhou people seldom raise business funds through bank loans. Instead, well-developed private lending systems, established based on acquaintances, are popular among Wenzhou people. After migrating to Europe, they maintain this same way of raising business funds in the diaspora. Young Chinese immigrants receive their first business start-up funds from wedding cash gifts (*hongbao*). Hosting a wedding is not just a ceremony but also an opportunity to raise funds in the acquaintance society. The cash gifts received by a new couple will be returned with the same amount or more when the gift-giver or one of their family members gets married. With such a "borrow-return" process, wedding cash gifts therefore become a transformed way of private lending. Before their wedding, a new Chinese Christian couple will usually drive to places across the immigrant-receiving country to send their wedding invitations in person. They believe their place-based acquaintance networks are broader and more robust than those of non-Christian Chinese immigrants because their networks are not just constructed through geographical ties but also through their same religious affiliation.

These Christian merchants apply the same principle of reciprocity when doing business as they do when doing religion in the diaspora, which is especially reflected in the way of raising funds to purchase church properties. It is not uncommon to see several Chinese churches in Italy raise money to help another Chinese church purchase a church property, and this church later raises money to help those churches back when they need money for purchasing new church property. For the first generation of immigrants who do not have enough capital accumulation, such mutual help among co-ethnic Christians makes it possible to establish as many immigrant churches as possible in the diaspora in a relatively short time.

Sharing pastoral resources is another important aspect of mutual help in religious practice among European Chinese Christians. When a Chinese pastor or a Chinese Christian celebrity from abroad is invited to a Chinese church in Europe to preach, Chinese Christians in other churches are invited to attend, and this invited pastor or Christian celebrity will usually go to several Chinese Christian churches in Europe to preach to as many people as possible. It is worth noting that although invited Chinese pastors may come from China, North America, and Southeast Asia, many Chinese Christians in overseas Wenzhou/Zhejiang churches admit that they prefer someone who has a background from Wenzhou or Zhejiang, either having served in a Wenzhou/Zhejiang church before or having knowledge of how a Wenzhou/Zhejiang church looks like and operates, since there is a consensus that overseas Wenzhou/Zhejiang churches in Europe are different from other overseas Chinese churches. Local pastoral resources are also shared among Chinese churches in immigrant host countries. Part-time preachers take turns preaching in different Chinese churches in Italy, making it possible for first-generation immigrants, who are busy with their secular businesses, to have enough pastoral resources to establish churches even in a place without any pastoral resources.

With the development of communication tools, Chinese Christians in Europe extended physical congregational spaces to virtual congregations to expand their transnational and trans-local networks. WeChat, a popular messaging, and social media app among Chinese people, is widely used among overseas Chinese immigrants. Chinese Christians in Europe establish church WeChat groups as extensions of their congregations to conduct religious practices in their everyday lives. Almost every Chinese church in Europe has its own WeChat group, in which members sing hymns, read scriptures, share Christian resources and personal testimonies, and even deliver audio sermons on non-Sunday days. It is a common scene that Chinese Christians listen to hymns sung by church members via WeChat while working in shops and factories. The religious connections between church members are not limited to the church activities organized in physical congregational spaces but are also strengthened and expanded in their everyday interactions in WeChat groups.

Virtual congregations are not only based on each physical congregation but also across borders to link Chinese Christians worldwide through their geographical ties in China. Weiping, a Christian from the small village of YS in Zhejiang province, participates in a WeChat group called "YS church online group." He says,

> Most of the people in YS have migrated to Europe, such as Italy, Portugal, and Spain. The participants in the YS church online group were in the same church in China before migration. After migrating to Europe, we devote ourselves to business, and it's hard for some of us to participate in church activities. There are no Chinese churches in some places in Europe. That's why some of us didn't go to churches for more than ten years. Several years ago, we started to organize this WeChat church group for YS immigrants. Some YS people in China also participate in it.

In the YS church online group, in addition to individuals' prayers and worship, there are organized Sunday services no different from those in physical congregations. For each Sunday service, they clearly list the worship hymns, the name of the preacher, the topic and outline of the sermon, and the responsive prayers in the weekly schedule. The time of Sunday services—5 p.m. Chinese time, 10 a.m. European time (for most European countries), and 9 a.m. Portuguese time—is written in the WeChat group notice, reflecting the transnational religious virtual networks constructed through geographical ties across borders.

In addition to WeChat church groups, Chinese Christians in Europe also like to share their "spiritual gains" on their WeChat Moments to connect to other Christians, especially Christians from Zhejiang province around the world. They post photos and videos of their local churches' activities along with words of worshiping God, displaying their Christian identity in public and communicating with other Zhejiang Christians without geographical restrictions. Around Christmas, WeChat moments of overseas Chinese Christians are filled

with photos and videos of church Christmas celebration activities from Christian friends, relatives, and fellow-townsmen around Europe and even across the world, evoking a sense of "sharing the moment though being miles apart" (*tianya gong ci shi*). Junjie, a Chinese Christian from Wenzhou in Italy, told us that almost all his WeChat friends are Christians. He likes using WeChat Moments because "it allows us to communicate with (Chinese) pastors and Christians around the world. Sometimes we start chatting below a post of WeChat Moments, knowing each other's recent situation and spiritual gains." The church communities established through WeChat meet the social needs of Chinese Christians in Europe and fulfill their religious needs in daily life, providing an intimate social network for them to integrate their Christian faith with their connections to their homeland, especially with their hometowns in China.

3. At Home in Diaspora: Family Ties and Cultural Belonging

The remarkable development of Chinese Christianity in an increasingly secular Europe is closely related to its trans-local and transnational ties to hometowns and the home country. This point needs to be examined in the framework of the contrast between Chinese and Western civilizations with regard to the relative importance of the family. As Robert Bellah (1970, p. 78) pointed out, the family occupies a central place in Chinese civilization; in contrast, contemporary Western societies, based on traditional Christian civilization, are the most distant from the family among known social formations. Chinese sociologist and anthropologist Xiaotong Fei (1992, pp. 60–70) used the concepts of "differential mode of association" and "organizational mode of association" to express the difference between Chinese and Western social relationship models and emphasizes the central position of the family in Chinese social relationship circles and moral systems. C. K. Yang (1970) made a more detailed distinction between Chinese and Western views of civilization and religion by highlighting the sanctified traditional Chinese notions of state and family. Yang defined the form of religion in Chinese society as a decentralized or diffused religion, distinguishing it from the institutional religions in Western society. Yang also pointed out that the function of diffused religion operates through the family system and the imperial political system of Chinese society. At the family level, every traditional Chinese family is seen as a religious altar. This diffused form of religiosity, which permeates China's indigenous cultural tradition, subtly shapes the beliefs and social practices of Chinese Christians today.

Confronted with the common assumption of "one more Christian, one less Chinese", Chinese Christians often understand the diffuse practices of faith and customs in Chinese tradition (marriages and funerals, ancestor sacrifice, feng shui practice, etc.) through rationalization and de-religionization, so as to achieve the integration of the Christian soul with the Chinese spirit and ensure that Chinese identity does not conflict with the principles of Christian faith (Constable 1994). The boundaries between Chinese tradition and Christianity are not definite or fixed. Theologian Alexander Chow (2018) argues that Confucian understandings of filial piety have the potential to construct a public theology that engages the family and the church in a way that underscores mutuality and reciprocity. Therefore, Chinese family and kinship cultures may also constitute part of the central doctrines and religious ethics of Christianity.

In real-life situations, the reconciling of the contradictions of the two beliefs and cultural systems is often seen among Chinese Christians in Europe. For instance, Lifen, a Chinese Christian in Italy, changed to use the Gregorian calendar rather than the Lunar calendar to celebrate her birthday after migration. She told us,

> Right on the day of my Gregorian birthday, I had a dream in which I saw a creature with the face of a lion, the nose of a dragon, and the body of a human, similar to the statue that we usually put in front of a palace and temple in China. It challenged me and asked me why I changed to use the Gregorian calendar. I know it's Satan. I said, because we use the Gregorian calendar to celebrate Jesus

> Christ's birthday too. I also sang a hymn to glorify how powerful Jesus Christ is, and then the creature disappeared.

Although it seems to reveal a compromise of Chinese culture to Christianity in Life's story, a sinicized "religious vision" indicates the integration of the two symbolic systems. This integration is also reflected in the willingness to accommodate one culture to another. Take funeral rituals as an example. In Christianity, the body is in an inferior position to the soul. Once the body is dead, the soul leaves the flesh—the temporary dwelling place—to be together with God. A coffin, therefore, is usually put in a corner of a church during a funeral. Different from this practice, Chinese Christians in Europe attach importance to the body, considering the dead as the most honorable (*sizhe wei da*) according to traditional Chinese culture. They put the coffin in the middle of the church during a funeral. However, red colors, including red flowers and red ribbons, are used to decorate the coffin. This is at odds with traditional Chinese funeral customs, in which a red color is never used, since it symbolizes joy and auspiciousness. Given that death is deemed going back home to be with the Lord, Chinese Christians in Europe use red colors in funerals to indicate their understanding of Christian doctrines.

Christian belief also helps overseas Chinese Christians justify why they preserve certain Chinese traditions when it comes to mate selection, marriage, and family relations. Not a few Chinese Christians in Europe follow the Chinese tradition of "parental orders and matchmaker's words" (*fumu zhi min, meishuo zhi yan*) in the selection of a marriage partner. By paralleling God preparing Eve for Adam, Chinese Christians in Europe often believe such an "assigned" partner is the best choice for them. They believe self-selected partners are not always ideal from a Christian perspective, given the high divorce rate and cohabitation rate in Europe.

Chinese Christians in Europe value their Chinese identity and promote the traditional Chinese values that are consistent with Christian doctrines. For example, respecting parents, as a principle of filial piety in Confucianism, is in line with the teachings of the Bible. The Missionary Center of the Chinese Christian church in Italy, as a result, prints the sentence "Respecting parents leads to longevity" (*xiaojing fumu de changshou*) together with "Believe in Jesus to receive eternal life" (*xin yesu de yongsheng*), "The end of the age is drawing nearer" (*mori geng jin*), and "The Second Coming of Christ is soon" (*yesu kuai zai lai*) on a van that they use to evangelize their faith.

Chinese Christian identity is often passed down from generation to generation in highly controlled community and family environments. Chinese Christian parents in Europe attach great importance to their children's Mandarin learning. Sunday school is always conducted in Mandarin Chinese. Churches find ways to transport Bibles with *pinyin* from China and urge younger generations to learn the Christian faith in the Chinese language. Some churches run Chinese language schools, in which they use the same textbooks in elementary schools and middle schools that they would in China and hire Chinese language teachers from China, providing the younger generation the opportunity to be educated in a Chinese way. Although some Chinese Christian youth in Italy are more fluent in Italian, they prefer using Mandarin in prayer, since Chinese churches, according to them, are a place where people use Mandarin to share God's words, and Christian belief is narrated in Mandarin most of the time both in churches and families. Languages can be a decisive factor in constructing identity among immigrants. The preference for the use of Mandarin, in this case, contributes to shaping a diasporic imagination and strengthening cultural belonging among Chinese Christians in Europe.

A preacher in Rome, when talking about the Chinese language school run by the church, was proud of his Chinese identity and linked the pride of being Chinese back to the development of China:

> My feeling of being an immigrant for thirty years is, if our motherland is not powerful, no matter how rich an immigrant is, he/she is always looked down upon by others. Our overseas Chinese immigrants will be empowered only if China is powerful. See, since several years ago, there have been Chinese signs

> here and there at train stations and airports in Italy. Only Chinese immigrants sent their kids to our Chinese language school, but now, a lot of Italian people send their kids here to learn Chinese too! I believe in the future, with the development of China, Chinese will be a world language like English. At that time, our younger generations will be able to use Chinese to preach to people all around the world.

Chinese Churches in Europe are immigrant organizations that develop as a unit of individual Chinese merchant families and that often shapes the church's evolvement on a household-by-household basis. This "home" is not only an overall metaphor but also a solid node with real socio-economic functions and social mobilization capabilities embedded in a transnational Chinese ethnic enclave economy. This structural feature also determines its global adaptability, complementing the entrepreneurial spirit of the Wenzhou people. Wenzhou people's migration chains are based on family and kinship ties. Thus, family is the basic driver of their lives in Europe both when conducting business and running churches. The operation and development of Chinese Christianity in Europe borrows from the Chinese immigrant family and family business model, while family businesses provide the necessary material to support the various functions of the churches.

Chinese church networks often spread throughout many EU countries as people migrated and their individual businesses expanded. To a certain extent, Chinese immigrant churches are like the many overseas Chinese chambers of commerce and native-place groups, expressing the unique cultural identity of their home country and strengthening its emotional and institutional ties with the motherland. However, Chinese churches play a role as a civil society organization with more mobilization and integration capabilities in the diasporic community at this stage, and its cross-regional social integration ability appears to surpass that of other clan organizations or hometown associations. It is not unusual to hear about chaos reported by the media and overseas Chinese communities, such as the establishment of more than a dozen vice presidents of an overseas chamber of commerce, which has led to severe infighting among Chinese voluntary organizations. Chinese immigrant churches offer another possibility—a community full of mutual trust that seeks to integrate faith and migrant life. This congregational structure allows for better integration of groups that had left their homes in pursuit of economic interests. They encourage charity and altruism. Church leadership is expected not only to give back to their communities of origin but also to organize frequent religious and social activities that reflect all-round care for the diasporic Chinese community.

In European Chinese communities, lay Christian immigrant leaders can control and mobilize a large amount of socio-economic and human resources. They have lived in Europe for decades and have economic strength and a good social reputation in overseas Chinese communities. Their churches serve as a bridge for the Chinese immigrants to adapt into the host society, shaping the development trajectory and future of transnational Chinese Christianity. Such church leaders are enthusiastic about philanthropy and are committed to establishing positive working relationships with Chinese embassies and consulates as well as with other Chinese official institutions abroad. Immigrant Chinese church leaders have been quite visible in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction activities after earthquakes and floods affected China. Some leaders organized their churches to transfer funds and relief materials through Chinese embassies and consulates to disaster areas, reflecting their close emotional, social, and economic ties with China and a strong desire to gain official recognition from the Chinese state.

Immigrants face much greater socio-economic life and work pressures than ordinary locals. Chinese churches in Europe provide newcomers with moral authority and emotional support, compensating for the psychological vacuum that immigrants face and strengthening immigrants' indigenous homegrown Christian faith. Chinese churches express their strong desire to integrate into the new society in a Chinese way, rather than being wholly assimilated or Westernized by the culture of the host society. They often deliberately distance themselves from the mainstream Western church systems to maintain their unique identity. This commitment to Chinese place identity is particularly prevalent

among the first generation of immigrants. For most Chinese immigrants, Europe is a place to do business, while their notion of home and emotional belonging remains connected to China. Chinese Christians, too, pay great attention to consolidating their independence from mainstream European society. They are keen to acquire places for church meetings in Europe to have a spiritual "home" in a foreign land. Although they are on the cultural fringes of European society, they always have a sense of self-confidence based on the culture and beliefs regarding their origin and keep a certain distance from the prevailing secular European culture. The "home" of the church provides a safe and supportive social space for immigrant Chinese Christians. The extensive networks of Chinese churches and church organizations throughout Europe enable these highly mobile immigrants to quickly gain a sense of belonging and identity at home in the diaspora.

4. Moralizing about Marriage, Family, and Social Relations in Diaspora

While maintaining their own national, regional, and local cultural uniqueness, diaspora Chinese immigrants also strive to consolidate and legitimize their existence and economic interests in foreign lands at the socio-cultural level. The majority of Chinese people in Europe are first-generation immigrants. They have a stronger sense of identity with the motherland than overseas Chinese in other regions do (e.g., Southeast Asia or North America), maintaining closer transnational economic, trade, emotional, cultural, religious, and charitable ties with China. Although religious belief is not a prerequisite for joining overseas Chinese business groups, transnational business circles formed based on a network of common beliefs and trust enable group members to obtain various advantages and privileges in trading, financing, and credit accounting. The conservative Christian faith can provide a set of moral discourse and order that restricts social behavior, reduces the risk of untrustworthiness, and continues a family economic model with "small commodities, big wholesale market" as the main characteristics in its global dispersion by strengthening the bond between immigrant individuals and their families and communities (Fei 1986). Christianity thus morally facilitates the embedding of the traditional Chinese family economy in the global market economy by effectively resisting the cultural influences of secular European societies that immigrants regard as morally corrupt.

Under the profoundly conservative Christian family models, second-generation immigrants are emotionally and morally tied to their diaspora communities (Cao 2013). This is especially the case for young women. Few female immigrants from Wenzhou intermarry with non-Chinese people. Many prefer a spouse originally from their hometown. Chinese churches place great emphasis on marriage and family stability, without which one can hardly start individual entrepreneurial initiatives. Only church members who have no premarital sex are allowed to perform wedding ceremonies in church. Divorce is considered highly immoral, and even remarriage after divorce is considered adultery. One Wenzhou woman in Italy told us that she left the Chinese church since she was not allowed to receive Holy Communion after remarriage. This Christian conservatism manifests the patriarchal morality of Chinese immigrant families and becomes embedded in male-dominated Wenzhou immigrant churches. Members of immigrant churches often lash out at the sexual laxity of European society and European Christianity's tolerance of divorce, abortion, and homosexuality. This is particularly evident in France, where second-generation Chinese, influenced by their conservative Christian parents, often become hostile to mainstream social and cultural values expressed in the secular French education system.

The conservative attitude is also reflected in the way through which they organize church services. A gender-separated seating arrangement during church services is a taken-for-granted practice in Wenzhou churches (Cao 2010). Wenzhou immigrants brought this tradition to Europe and have kept it in their church services. They explain it as the practice of Sinicization of Christianity. Traditional Chinese culture promotes a conservative idea of opposing intimacy between men and women—"men and women should not touch each other when giving or receiving an object" (*nan nü shou shou bu qin*). A gender-separated seating arrangement practice, in line with the Chinese tradition, reduced local hostility

toward Western religion when Christianity was first introduced to China. Though the perceptions of gender relations are much more open in contemporary China, avoiding intimate contact between men and women (if they are not relatives or couples) is still considered a way to maintain marriage and family stability. Wenzhou immigrants, as a result, keep such a gender-separated practice in church to distance themselves from secularized Europe.

As Fei Xiaotong commented on Chinese traditional rural society: "Talking, laughing, and showing emotion and affection openly occur only in groups composed of people of the same sex and age. Men get together only with men, women with other women, and children with other children. Except for matters of work and reproduction, people of different sexes and ages maintain considerable distance" (Fei 1992, p. 86). Work and reproduction are closely intertwined among Zhejiang immigrants in Europe due to the family/kinship-based migration chain and business model. Ethnic churches are the essential public space outside the family and work for Chinese Christians to express their emotion and affection in public. The distance between men and women, as well as conservative Chinese gender ideology, are embedded in this public space and strengthened by repetitive religious activities and rituals.

The conservative view of gender and sexuality can be found in Chinese Christians' business practices in Europe. Chinese Christians usually claim that their economic practices to be not so different from those of non-Christians. Both Christians and non-Christians are keen to seize profitable opportunities. However, providing massage services, which is one of the popular jobs among non-skilled new Asian immigrants, is not encouraged and even forbidden among Chinese Christians in Italy. Both traditional Chinese culture and Christian morality contribute to a conservative ideology on gender and sexuality among Chinese Christians, shaping their moral rules in economic practice. Skin-to-skin touch, which is unavoidable in massage services, has sexual implications and is deemed taboo in Chinese Christians' economic practice.

Furthermore, Chinese Christians' critique of the secularization of European society extends to their understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chinese church leaders often start with the secularization of Europe, which they feel more personally, to understand the reasons why Europe has been hit hard by the pandemic and the high mortality rates suffered by Europeans. This is in line with their long-standing understanding of Europe's need for a spiritual revival to counter its secularizing trend.

On the other hand, due to their common merchant background and maintaining a certain spatial distance from their home country, they rarely make critical remarks on the current situation in China. Rather, they often regard the rapid development of China's economy as "God's work" to achieve a different direction that allows them to go to the world to preach the gospel (Cao 2012). Many of them no longer expect to permanently return to China in the future but only express "long-distance nationalism" in the diverse places they have taken root (Anderson 1998). Engaging in church charity in the host society is an essential way for Chinese believers in Europe to demonstrate their sense of community, moral identity, and social mobilization.

At the height of the pandemic in Europe, Chinese churches took practical actions to practice their faith and help improve the international image of overseas Chinese people, especially of Chinese businesspeople. When the whole nation of Italy lacked masks and other epidemic prevention materials, many ethnic Chinese churches began to donate masks, medical clothing, gloves, and so on to police stations, medical personnel, and those in need. In the words of some Chinese believers, their own "modest strength can transmit great love and salvation to European society," and "the church's donation is attached to the divine love from Christ." These philanthropic outreach efforts carried out during the pandemic have gradually weakened the ethnic enclave model of Chinese churches and developed into a more inclusive cosmopolitan style of global religion.

In this process of adaptation and inculturation, the second generation of bilingual Chinese act as a bridge between the Chinese church and mainstream European society.

Every summer, Chinese Christian churches in Italy organize the younger generation to participate in Christian short-term missions both in China and Italy, aiming to tell "the good news of the Gospel" to more people and to strengthen the religious commitment of the youth. They have traveled to small villages in Yunnan, southwest China, where they can apply cultural intimacy to share the gospel with their peers in China. They have also been to Matera, the filming place of the movie "The Passion of the Christ," sitting in front of an Italian church in groups to sing beautiful hymns in Chinese and Italian, giving Christian-themed souvenirs to local Italian people and tourists from all around the world.

For these immigrant Christians, long-term and stable church participation allows them to fully build a sense of belonging, mutual trust, and emotional support in transnational migration and movement, as well as a sense of social and material security. This sense of community affiliation is generated by Christian fellowship through creating a faith-based collective life. A faith-based moral community tends to attract and unite ordinary Chinese merchants more effectively than other overseas Chinese organizations do. Folk religious forms, such as Buddhist halls and popular temples, lack a systematic and clearly articulated moral discourse. They thus lack global expansion potential because they are constrained by emotional ties formed around geographically embedded kinship and local knowledge. Business and hometown associations, on the other hand, are prone to developing into an elite "circle culture" (*quanzi wenhua*) full of fierce internal competition for power and fame (Wang 2017, p. 136).

Discussions on immigrant religions in Europe usually take the secularization of Europe into account. Scholars have summarized it as "believing without belonging" (Davie 1994) and "belonging without believing" (Casanova 2006), indicating a decline in both institutional religion and personal religiosity. The tensions between immigrant religious communities and mainstream society are salient. A highly sinicized and localized Christianity provides a moral discourse and value system that is adapted to a globalized market economy for the Chinese diaspora communities. While lamenting the moral degeneration and gradual departure from Christian faith of Europeans, these immigrant churches seek to position themselves as the new center of global Christianity. They gradually developed a unique Chinese understanding and imagination of the Christian civilizing project, as well as a hierarchical spatial-moral relationship.

5. Toward a Relational Approach to Understanding Transnational Chinese Christianity

Christianity does not constitute a universally and inherently homogeneous meaning system as Christian doctrinal narratives often posit. Indeed, the plural form of Christianity denotes the importance of attending to multiple modes of contextualization in time and space. Historical and theological studies of Christianity in China have constructed contextualization as a process of interactions between Western missionaries and local Chinese in showing how Christianity took root in modern China. Such understanding of contextualization tends to assume Christianity as a foreign religion by highlighting "the interaction between the Gospel and the Chinese context, between missionaries and the Chinese converts, between mission strategies and the Chinese response" (Wang 2007, p. 8). By focusing on the rising Chinese Christian presence in contemporary secular Europe, this study not only contributes to recent scholarship that sees Christianity as a Chinese religion but treats Chinese Christianity as a new agent with the potential of remaking Sino-Western relations.

Recently, in continental Europe, the number of overseas Chinese organizations with a Christian background has grown considerably compared to other overseas Chinese voluntary organizations, and they are widely distributed throughout the continent. They can mobilize transnational religious and social resources to hold large-scale public events, expand religious space in the country of residence, and form highly visible social forces. The use of existing cultural and religious resources to recreate place-based ties, networks, and identities overseas and to serve the commercial interests of their own ethnic groups is not unique to Chinese people in Europe. Immigrant religion provides a spiritual and

moral resource for overseas Chinese immigrants' lives and constructs a parallel world to symbolically sustain transnational business practices. Christianity is a viable resource for constructing such community cohesion and trust, and it also provides a highly controlled autonomous space for effectively reconstructing the social ties of the Chinese hometown and strengthening the economic production mode of individual entrepreneurial families. Here, native place-based association and social trust in Chinese society intersect and reinforce each other with the sinicized Christian context. This is in sharp contrast to the generalized social trust pattern under the influence of Western Christianity. In the face of cultural assimilation pressures from secular European societies, conservative Christian morality and values seem to provide an additional layer of sacralization for the social trust network of fellow Chinese people based on geography and kinship.

When talking about the intrinsic cohesion of Chinese Christianity, it is necessary to recognize the existence of power competition in the social circle of Chinese churches in Europe. Some of the differences and conflicts are a continuation of the domestic inter-church or intra-church struggle back in China that predated their arrival in Europe, while others are complex rivalries between overseas Chinese business families. However, most of these disputes and schisms existed only within the first generation of lay leaders in the immigrant churches and, to a large extent, did not affect the extensive religious participation of ordinary laity in the Chinese church. This split in leadership has, in some cases, unexpectedly led to founding and proliferation of churches (Cao 2013, p. 89). While Chinese immigrant churches may have performed a similar social and cultural function to Chinese business organizations and Chinese hometown associations in practice, they constitute a far greater public space for ordinary people than the latter do. Clan associations and hometown associations are premised on having shared blood ties or geographical ties with the same surname, while chambers of commerce and cultural associations mainly accommodate the social needs of overseas Chinese leaders and elites.

Compared with other overseas Chinese community organizations, the cohesion of Chinese Christianity is more reflected in the cross-generational transmission of faith, values, and belonging through immigrant churches' Sunday schools and youth ministry as well as their training and cultivation of youth leaders and workers. By contrast, overseas folk religions and guild-style Buddhist organizations tend to be actively present only among first-generation immigrant groups and are less attractive to second-generation Chinese immigrants. This reflects the lack of cultural metaphors and atmospheres of traditional Chinese families in the organization and the tendency towards religious individualism in larger European society (Lü 2017).

This research also helps us understand the patterns and mechanisms of transnational and trans-local transmission of Christianity, especially the complex reasons for the recent rise of Chinese immigrant Christianity in the Western world and its inherent diversity. In *The Rise of Christianity*, Stark argues that the core doctrines and the accompanying values of religious morality, love, and charity played the ultimately important role in the rise and spread of Christianity in the Western world because "central doctrines of Christianity prompted and sustained attractive, liberating, and effective social relations and organizations" (Stark 1996, p. 211). This interpretation, based on Western religious norms and historical context, presupposes the "universal moral principles" of a "Western organizational mode of association" (Fei 1992, p. 79) and may not work in traditional non-Western contexts of social relationships.

The rise of transnational Chinese Christianity in Europe provides an opportunity for understanding the contextualization and local adaptation of global Christianity. Unlike the default acceptance of the Christian-centric organizational mode of association in the West, this paper has highlighted the transnational dynamics of localization that inspired the spread of a sinicized Christianity overseas. The sense of hometown and motherland rooted in indigenous cultural traditions, along with the construction of local place identity and moral discourse, fuels the cross-regional spread of overseas Chinese Christianity. This indigenous cultural logic speaks to the differential pattern of trust that runs through the

practice of Chinese sociality in modern times. In a similar vein, the narrative of repaying the "gospel debt" of Europeans, which was popular in Chinese immigrant churches at the beginning of the 21st century, may be understood as the symbolic extension of this differential pattern of sociality outside the Chinese household and society. "Giving back" to Western missionaries to China by way of assuming the responsibility for sinocentric global evangelization reflects, to a certain extent, the establishment and maintenance of reciprocity and mutuality emphasized by traditional Chinese values.

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