Special Issue: CHURCH, STATE, AND COMMUNITY IN EAST ASIA

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Church, State, and Community in East Asia: An Introduction
by Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, Ph.D.

Abstract
In East Asia, the complexity of church-state relations can be better understood if one takes into account the involvement of local community in negotiating with the state over sacred and secular matters. This article argues that the church, state, and community were not independent variables, but constantly negotiated with each other over the control of religions, religious institutions and rituals. When the state was strong, the church and community participated in the formation of the state power. As the state power declined, the church and community reverted to their original independence and crossed the boundaries between sacred and profane in order to claim political, social and economic influences.

This collection of essays, which grew out of a panel entitled “Church, State, and Community in Imperial East Asia” at the New England Conference of Asian Studies in 2002, presents several in-depth case studies of the interaction between church, state, and community in China, Korea and Japan. These case studies share the same premise that the church-state relationship is an integral part of politics in traditional and modern East Asian societies. At the centre of the discussion is the relationship between state power and religion. In recent years, Anthony C. Yu has addressed this complicated relationship between state and religion in China and called for more attention to the state control of religion during the imperial and contemporary eras. Commenting on this subject in the 2002 Venerable Master Hsüan Hua Memorial Lecture, Yu states, “there has never been a period in China’s historical past in which the government of the state, in imperial and post-imperial form, has pursued a neutral policy toward religion, let alone encouraged, in terms dear to American idealism, its ‘free exercise.’ The impetus to engage religion, on the part of the central government, is for the purpose of regulation, control and exploitation whenever it is deemed feasible and beneficial to the state (Yu, 2003).” As in other parts of East Asia, the imperial states of the past and modern states have continuously pursued a policy of engaging religions as long as these religions supported the state. This special issue expands on Yu’s argument by saying that the complexity of church-state relations can be better understood if one takes into account the state-society relations and the involvement of local community in negotiating with the state over sacred and secular matters. It argues that at least in East Asia, the church, state, and community were not independent variables, but constantly negotiated with each other over the control of religions, religious institutions and rituals.

In general, how did the state in East Asia use religion to legitimize its rule and regulate religious activities at the grassroots level? What role did religion play in reinforcing state ideology and in contributing to the state’s interpretation of legitimate power? How did religious communities respond to the state’s policy of using religion for political control? This collection of papers addresses these questions in the historical context of traditional and modern East Asia. The cases under study range from Song China, Goryeo Korea and medieval Japan to late imperial China and Korea as well as contemporary Hong Kong. All the articles are primarily concerned with the ways in which the state employed religion to claim legitimacy, established political leadership and expanded into society, and in which some marginal communities, in turn, employed religious discourse and resources to strengthen their negotiating position in the competitive arena of politics. The findings and insights of the following articles provide the readers with a wealth of information on this topic of great importance in the field of East Asian studies.

Two themes concerning church, state, and community relations can be discerned in the articles. The first theme concerns the state takeover of the church and community. In Song China, Goryeo Korea and medieval Japan, the powerful state appropriated Buddhism for the purpose of “regulation, control and exploitation.” Faced with a mighty state, the Buddhist communities and institutions had no choice but to cooperate with it. As the state used Buddhism as an instrument of political and ideological control, it had transformed Buddhism into a native religion and integrated it into the existing political and social structures. As a result of this development, Buddhism played a major role in the state-building process, especially when the dynastic founders sought to use Buddhist ideas to define the legitimacy of the state, and to regulate, control and exploit the local communities. Therefore, the Buddhist takeover of China, Korea and Japan should not be seen only as an example of religious transmission, but as a major component of the expansion of the state in East Asia.

The second theme concerns the ongoing negotiation between church, state, and community over sacred and secular matters. In East Asia, the church, state, and community were interdependent. When the state was strong, the church and community participated in the formation of the state power. But as the state power declined, the church and community reverted to their original independence and crossed the boundaries between sacred and profane in order to claim political, social and economic influences. In other words, the church and community were not passive recipients of the ideological conformity that state authorities decreed and imposed on them. On the contrary, they were active agents who negotiated with state authorities and thereby contributed to the ideas justifying the state’s claim to legitimacy.

At the grassroots level, religious beliefs and rituals that people shared with their neighbors gave them a personified image of what their political rulers should be like. What further complicated the situation was the impact of preexisting internal conflicts that had shaped the interaction between church, state, and community. In this framework, the role of local agencies lies at the heart of the matter. To illustrate this point, one should look at the conflicts involving...
Christian missionaries and indigenous converts in late imperial China and Korea. In China, armed with the Bible and the gun, both Catholic and Protestant missionaries not only undermined the power of the imperial government but also provided Christian converts with additional political resources with which to struggle against the established elite at the local level. The Taiping Uprising (1845–1864) is a good example of a disillusioned Chinese scholar employing Christian resources to challenge the imperial state and create a Taiping Christian kingdom on Chinese soil (Spence 1996; 1998). There are many such examples of politically marginal communities using conversion for protection and self-empowerment, as shown in several recent studies of Christianity in rural China (Lee, 2002; 2003; Sweeten, 2001; Lutz and Lutz, 1998; Tiedemann, 1991; Laamann, forthcoming in 2005). This struggle for power is a key to understanding the dynamics of church, state, and community relations in East Asia.

By addressing these thematic issues, the first two articles apply a top-down approach to investigate the nature of state power and religion in imperial East Asia. Sem Vermeersch presents a very insightful comparative study of the state’s control of Buddhism in Song China and Goryeo Korea. Vermeersch argues that Buddhism was an integral part of the state-building project because it enabled the Chinese and Korean rulers to justify their rise to power and claim legitimacy. After emerging from a long period of civil war, the Chinese and Korean dynastic founders were desperate to claim legitimacy and gain popular support. As Buddhism was a dominant religion in China and Korea at that time, the imperial rulers not only subscribed to Buddhist teachings and rituals but also used Buddhism to define their political images and portray themselves as virtuous Buddhist rulers. To further institutionalize Buddhism as the official religion of the state, the rulers began to control Buddhist institutions. They oversaw the translation and interpretation of Buddhist scriptures and the training of the monks. Even as the Chinese and Korean rulers acted pragmatically to use Buddhism as a political instrument, their policies advanced the Buddhist interests and contributed to the rapid expansion of Buddhism at the grassroots level. Ronald K. Frank studies the interaction between different Buddhist groups and independent daimyô domains in late medieval Japan. By examining a wide range of anti-religious policies, Frank argues that repressive measures employed by Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu to control religious communities had been presaged by similar policies in the domains of daimyô throughout the sixteenth century.

Ma Zhao and Lydia Gerber focus on Qing China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They employ a socio-historical approach in examining relationships between church, state, and community. When the power of the Chinese imperial state was declining, the government was extremely concerned with the erosion of its imperial authority in the face of the Catholic and Protestant expansion into the interior. Ma Zhao explores the anti-Christian campaign in 1784–1785 within the wider contexts of political culture and bureaucratic reform in China during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor. Ma argues that Qianlong exploited the anti-Christian campaign to reinvigorate the imperial bureaucracy at the provincial and county levels. Through a study of several anti-Christian disputes in the post-Boxer era, Lydia Gerber shows that in those peripheral areas where there was little government control and Confucian influence, the Chinese elite and local communities did not hesitate to exploit Christian missionary resources for political survival.

When the state was weak, incompetent, and could not deal with internal and external crises, the church took advantage of the situation to advance its religious, social and political agendas. In that context, John R. Stanley and James Jin-Hong Kim look at the dynamics of the Protestant missionary movements in China and Korea at the turn of the twentieth century. Focusing on the American Presbyterian mission education in Shandong province, John R. Stanley investigates a number of attempts by Chinese Christian educators to claim more power and play a more active role in the development of the Christian mission education. James Jin-Hong Kim discusses the career of Horace G. Underwood and his approach to evangelization and church-state relations in late nineteenth-century Korea. While Korea was facing the Japanese imperialistic intrusion, Underwood hoped to use Protestant Christianity to reform and modernize Korea, to make the church more important to the Korean state, and to support Korea against the Japanese aggression. His contributions made him a legendary figure in the modern history of Korea.

Chan Sze-Chi looks at a totally different world at a different time, that of Hong Kong after its return to China on July 1, 1997. Chan captures the dynamics of church-state relations in Hong Kong by comparing the role of Catholic and Evangelical Christian churches in the popular struggle against the implementation of Article 23 of the Basic Law in the summer of 2003 (Article 23 of the Basic Law was proposed to prohibit individuals and political organizations in Hong Kong from conducting subversive activities against the Chinese central government in Beijing.). Although the Beijing leaders and the Chee-hwa Tung administration successfully co-opted a significant number of Evangelical church leaders, they failed to have the Catholic Church under control, which has constantly challenged the political Establishment in post-1997 Hong Kong. The challenges that the Catholic Church currently poses to the Beijing leaders and the Tung administration have to do with its alternative interpretations of political authority and state-society relations, its campaign for the poor in society, and its mobilization of ordinary Catholics in political struggles.

The concluding essay by Thomas O’Sullivan presents a critique of the history of church-state relations in the West and throws light on the differences between Western ways in which such relations are conceptualized and the ways they are seen in East Asia. By studying the Christian Church’s explanation of its relationship to the secular power, O’Sullivan stresses that a key to understanding the dynamics of church-state relations in Europe and America is the distinction between religious and secular authorities. This distinction has become one of the most enduring features of

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Western civilization and continued to shape the interaction between religion and politics in the contemporary world.

This vast array of topics resists easy categorization. Considered together, however, they clearly illustrate the highly complex nature of state power and religion in East Asia, and vividly portray a world of pragmatism and opportunism in the interaction between church, state, and community. One refreshing aspect of this special issue is the efforts of several contributors to view the subject matter not solely from the perspectives of the state and religious communities but also from the aspect of power struggles within particular societies. The appropriation of Buddhism by political leaders in the newly established Song dynasty in China and Goryeo dynasty in Korea is a good example. Another strength of this collection is the balance of national and local concerns. The articles, instead of elaborating on the religious policies of the central governments in China, Korea and Japan, clearly elucidate the multiplicity of local experiences and interests and their role in determining the course of interaction with the state over religious matters.

What emerges from this special issue is an East Asian world deeply affected by the ambiguous nature of state power and religion. The church, state and community have continuously crossed the socially-constructed boundaries between sacred and profane to claim power and influence in the competitive arena of national and local politics. As Ivan Ivekovic correctly points out in his study of the dynamics of church-state relations in the Mediterranean world, religion is the most enduring instrument for claiming legitimacy and popular support and has always been used and abused by ambitious rulers for political ends (Ivekovic, 2002). This, he claims, is true even in the most liberal democratic countries promoting religious tolerance and total separation of church and state. In the United States of America, since the September 11 terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush has reassured his constituents that the War on Terror is firmly rooted in his Christian faith. This use of September 11 as a pretext to pursue an aggressive foreign policy and to defend the US military interests around the world is a classic example of linking the legitimacy of a state to divine will, as supposedly expressed in a single moment in human history – in this case, “the moment history has given us [the Bush administration] to extend liberty to others around the world (Didion, 2003: 81–86; Lincoln, 2002).” Given the importance of religion in global politics at the beginning of the twentieth-first century, this collection of essays should provide the basis for re-conceptualizing the dynamics of church, state, and community relations in East Asia from the past to the present.

ENDNOTES
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2. By definition, the term “state” refers to all forms of actual and aspiring public authority in Song China, Koryo Korea and late medieval Japan.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Buddhism and State-Building in Song China and Goryeo Korea
by Sem Vermeersch, Ph.D.

Abstract
This article explores the nature of state power and religion in Song China and Goryeo Korea by studying the state appropriation of Buddhism and the integration of Buddhism into the ideological, political and social order. It argues that Buddhism was an integral part of the state-building project in that it enabled the Song and Goryeo rulers to justify their rise to power and claim to legitimacy. The Chinese and Korean rulers acted pragmatically to secure the political support of the Buddhist establishment. However, their pre-Buddhist policies advanced Buddhist interests and contributed to the rapid expansion of Buddhism at the grassroots level. By examining the development of Buddhist institutions in the wider contexts of political, social and economic changes in Song China and Goryeo Korea, this study has probed more deeply into the inner dynamics of Buddhism in imperial East Asia than have many current studies. It has also gone beyond the dichotomy of Buddhism-versus-Confucianism to explore the negotiation of power between Buddhist monks and Confucian rulers from a comparative perspective.

The founding of the Goryeo dynasty in 918 heralded an era of stability and new power relations in East Asia. It was one of the first and the longest-lasting (918–1392) states to emerge from the shadows of the Middle Kingdom after the collapse of the Tang dynasty (617–907). Before the Mongol invasions of China and Korea, a relative equilibrium was achieved in which China and her neighbouring countries claimed more or less equal status (Rossabi ed., 1983). Yet if one looks at the current stage of scholarship on this period of East Asian history, one learns that the power of Song China far exceeded that of the other states. The Northern (960–1127) and Southern Song (1127–1276) dynasties appeared to be more powerful and advanced in terms of their overall population, cultural accomplishments and economic development than the Khitan Liao (947–1125), Tangut Xi-Xia (1038–1227) and Goryeo Korea. This interpretation, however, has been due to a lack of primary sources concerning the history of these states and a widespread perception that these states were located at the “periphery” of Song China. While these states merit attention in their own right, a closer look at their history will also throw light on the dynamics of Song China. When the Song state was founded in 960, its basis was far from secure. It was only in the next few decades that Song China gradually became a regional power. In building the new empire, the founder Song Taizu (r. 960–976) undoubtedly looked to previous Chinese dynasties for inspiration, and he was also most likely inspired by what had worked and failed to work in the neighbouring countries.

Given the lack of references to cultural contacts with Goryeo Korea in the early Song sources, one does not know the extent to which Taizu took into account what had happened in Goryeo Korea, a state founded forty-two years earlier than the Song. Nonetheless, a comparative study of the state-building process in both countries reveals the importance of Buddhism as a political ideology and the nature of state power and religion in imperial East Asia. Drawing on my extensive research on the history of Korean Buddhism, this article explores the interactions between Buddhism and imperial states in Song China and Goryeo Korea (Vermeersch, 2001). How did the Chinese and Korean emperors use Buddhism to define their political images and legitimise their rule in the state-building process? How was Buddhism gradually integrated into the fabric of the dynastic state? How did Buddhist institutions develop and change in both countries?

For a long time, it has been taken for granted that Buddhism was more dominant in Goryeo Korea than in Song China. Yet the early Song emperors were no less fervent in their support of Buddhism than the Goryeo rulers. The lack of scholarly attention to the importance of Buddhism in Song China has to do with the widespread misconception that Chinese Buddhism entered a period of continuing decline following its apogee in the Tang dynasty. Many scholars like Peter Gregory, Daniel A. Getz, and Huang Chi-Chiang have corrected this misconception by evaluating the role of Buddhism in Song China, but their works mainly concentrate on Buddhist doctrines rather than its impact on politics, economy and society in the Song period.1 As with other world religions, Buddhism is a social and political construction that has to constantly define itself in relation to specific contexts. This article seeks to examine the development of Buddhist institutions in the wider contexts of political, social and economic changes in Song China and Goryeo Korea, and to address the nature of state power and religion at that time. In so doing, this study has probed more deeply into the inner dynamics of Buddhism in imperial East Asia than have many current studies. It has also gone beyond the dichotomy of Buddhism-versus-Confucianism to explore the negotiation of power between Buddhist monks and Confucian rulers from a comparative perspective.

I. Buddhism versus Imperial Rule
Historically, the Chinese emperors derived their legitimacy from the Confucian idea of the Mandate of Heaven, but there were some exceptions. The founder of the Wei dynasty, a non-Han ruler, used Buddhism to legitimise his authority. When Empress Wu Zetian was in power from 655 to 705, she employed Buddhism to subvert Confucianism. The most famous Han Chinese emperor who sought political legitimacy through Buddhism would however be Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (r. 502–549), who was severely criticized by Confucian scholars for ransomimg himself to a Buddhist temple, a symbolic gesture showing the superiority of Buddhism to the imperial system. However, Andreas Janousch argues that the story of Emperor Wu highlights the complexity of Buddhist rulership in imperial China. What appears to be a humble act of submission was not the whole story. Emperor Wu tried to mould the Buddhist monks according to his needs, and imposed a bodhisattva ordination.

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ritual on the monks in which they saw the emperor as a bodhisattva and therefore had to be ordained by him (Janousch, 1999).

Despite his Buddhist fervour, Emperor Wu was also keen to revive ancient Chinese customs and institutions. One can perceive a distinct blurring of the boundaries between Buddhism and Confucianism: the ancient Chinese sage-king paradigm became almost interchangeable with the cakravartin, the ideal Buddhist king who implemented the dharma.

Like Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty, Taizu, the founder of the Song dynasty, showed a strong interest in Buddhism. Even though the mythologization of Taizu by Confucian scholars makes it difficult to discover the man behind the image, his policies indicated a positive disposition towards Buddhism. One of his first acts was to rescind the ban on Buddhist worship issued by the preceding Later Zhou dynasty (951–960) (Huang, 1994, 147). The Later Zhou state had attempted to suppress Buddhism by reducing the number of monks, confiscating bronze images for recasting, and demolishing temples, but it had been toppled by one of its generals, Zhao Kuangyou, who later became Emperor Taizu of the Song dynasty. More than tolerant towards Buddhism, Taizu went much further than the Tang rulers in promoting Buddhist interests. Whilst acknowledging and patronising Buddhism, the Tang rulers had treated it as but one religious system amongst others, which they supported only in so far as it conformed to the political rhetoric that represented the emperor as the Son of Heaven. Buddhism, in short, had been firmly controlled by the state, and any aspirations to independence had been swiftly blocked. The Tang rulers had preferred Taoism to Buddhism, whereas Taizu explicitly put Buddhism first and implemented policies favourable to the growth of Buddhism. Some pronouncements by his successors suggest that all three teachings (Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism) were to be treated as equal, but in fact until the late eleventh century, all the Song emperors showed an overwhelming interest in Buddhism.

Taizu probably drew inspiration from the state of Wu-Yue (907–978). Located in present-day Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces, Wu-Yue was a prosperous state. Many of its emperors were disciples of Buddhist masters and sponsored various Buddhist projects (Shih, 1992; Welter, 1993). Eminent Buddhist priests active at the Wu-Yue court, notably Zanning (919–1001), played an important role in negotiating the surrender of Wu-Yue to the Song government in 978 (Welter, 1999, 30; Dahlia, 1987, 146–80). In these negotiations, Taizu had to ensure Zanning that the newly established Song government was receptive towards Buddhism, and that the Buddhist institutions could maintain the same status and influence under the Song. After the end of the Wu-Yue kingdom, Zanning continued his ‘political career’ as an advisor to the Song emperors, apologist for the religion and administrator in charge of Buddhist affairs nationwide.

Although there were strong political motivations behind Taizu’s decision to recruit eminent Buddhist monks such as Zanning into the government, it is simplistic to interpret Taizu’s pro-Buddhist policies as merely pragmatic as Huang Chi-chiang has argued. Taizu was clearly influenced by Buddhism from an early age: there are numerous stories about his association with Buddhist monks for some years in his youth when he wandered around the country. Most of these stories are possibly apocryphal, functioning as auguries that describe how these monks saw him in a future ruler. However, it is significant that his mother and wife also happened to be praying in a Buddhist temple when the news came that he had become the new emperor. Clearly, Taizu welcomed “Buddhist” approval of his new dynasty. According to prophecies circulated in 963 and 966, the sixth-century-thanumature Baozhi predicted that twenty-one rulers of the Zhao clan would reign for 799 years. The prophecies were taken seriously. In 980, his successor and younger brother Taizong (r. 976–997) founded a new temple in the capital of Kaifeng to store the mumified body and silver staff of Baozhi, and in 982 he gave a posthumous title to Baozhi after seeing Baozhi’s apparition in the palace. In this newly established state, then, appealing to Buddhist prophecies to justify their claim to legitimacy and consolidate their power proved an irresistible attraction for the founding emperor and his brother.

Throughout his reign, Taizu spent an impressive amount of resources on promoting Buddhism. He sent a group of 157 Chinese monks to retrieve more Buddhist scriptures from India, and set up a government bureau supervising the translation of these scriptures. Even before the arrival of the scriptures, however, he set in motion the project of carving the entire canon of Buddhist scriptures, commentaries and rules on printing blocks. This grand printing project, known as the Kaibao tripiṭaka, lasted from 971 to 983.

It was the first time such a large-scale printing project was ever undertaken in world history, and it was a milestone in the development of the Buddhist canon. Because the emperor had the final say in deciding which scriptures were orthodox and which ones were spurious, the printing project enabled Taizu to establish himself more firmly as purveyor of the orthodox version of Buddhist texts, thereby creating a stronger association between emperorship and the ‘right dharma.’

In addition to the printing project, Taizu allowed himself to be identified with a cakravartin, a universal monarch whose authority was commensurate with his ability to spread Buddhist law. Whereas the cakravartin originally referred to the secular counterpart of the Buddha, who reigns in the spiritual world, Taizu, and especially his younger brother Taizong, now arrogated some of the power normally reserved for the Buddha. When Taizu asked Zanning, the leading priest of the time, whether he should bow to the Buddha, Zanning is said to have replied, “The present Buddha need not bow to the Buddha of the past.” In Song China, then, religion and politics were closely linked to each other. While employing Buddhism to legitimise their rule, Taizu and Taizong often crossed political and religious boundaries, presenting themselves as guardians of the Buddhist religion and imperial state.
The early Song emperors went so far as to control the Buddhist monks. Taizu, for example, forbade the casting of new bronze images. He allowed those temples that had not been destroyed by the Later Zhou dynasty to exist, even if they did not have official status, but forbade the re-construction of those temples that had been demolished. He reinstated an examination for postulants to the monk-hood to test their quality and reject those not deemed sufficiently serious about their vocation (Chikusa, 2000, 367–73). Some Song emperors even took it upon themselves to personally examine the senior Buddhist monks’ knowledge of the scriptures before granting them any important titles and positions.12

While these examples give the impression that the Song emperors acquired their political legitimacy through Buddhism, it is important to look at these church-state relations in their proper historical context. If one reads the sources with a Buddhist frame of reference, one will support the notion that the Song emperors were devoted Buddhist rulers. However, as the dynasty progressed, the main audience for their legitimising strategies was officiodem. The emperor had to prove himself capable of running the empire, while government officials viewed his support for Buddhism as an aberration. In the dynastic order, Buddhism constituted just one element to which the emperor directed his attention, albeit an important element. As an ideology, Buddhism was a very powerful instrument in spreading the image and power of the emperor across the empire. The plaques bestowed on the officially registered monasteries always reminded worshippers of the benevolence of the emperor (Huang, 1989, 302–5). Many temples served as halls of remembrance for the imperial lineage and displayed the portraits and sculptures of deceased emperors and empresses (Ebrey, 1997, 42–92). With the emperor’s blessings, the temples not only allowed commoners to worship the Buddha and the emperor but also provided a point of contact between the rulers and the subjects.

Let us now shift our focus to the importance of Buddhism in the state-building process in Goryeo Korea during the reign of Taejo (r. 918–943). Before he usurped the throne, Wang Geon, posthumously known as Taejo, was a general in the kingdom founded by Gung-ye, one of the three rival kingdoms on the Korean peninsula following the collapse of the Silla state in the late ninth-century. Based in the north, Gung-ye’s state closely identified with the ancient state of Goguryeo, and after his rise to power, Wang Geon continued this strategy, choosing the name “Goryeo” for his state in honour of Goguryeo.

Wang Geon’s family established a stronghold in Gaeseong prefecture. As with many local strongmen in the last few years of the Silla dynasty, Wang Geon acted almost independently from the centre. Another distinctive feature of his political career was his close association with Seon (Chan/Zen) Buddhism. Wang Geon grew up in a predominantly Buddhist environment. In politics, Gung-ye, Wang Geon’s overlord, saw himself as a bodhisattva with supernatural power and wrote his own sutras. The most important Buddhist connection in Wang Geon’s rise to power was the prediction made by the Seon monk, Doseon (827–898).

However, this augury was made on the basis of the environment in which Wang Geon was living. Provided that he made a few alterations, Doseon said, the resident terrestrial force was such that it would produce a future ruler (Rogers, 1982–83). It was a Buddhist monk, not a geomancer, who made the prediction on the basis of geomantic principles (fengshui). After his accession to the throne, Wang Geon became the dynasty’s founding father (Taejo), but continued to show considerable favour to Buddhism. Unlike Taizu in Song China, Taejo did not have to rescind any anti-Buddhist policies. He actually dampened overzealous support for Buddhism. In one of the policy injunctions to his successors, Taejo attributed the fall of the Unified Silla kingdom (668–935) in part to excessive temple building. He forbade the construction of any new temple and required abbots to be appointed by the state. This decision was undoubtedly based on economic and political considerations, and it was also justified in terms of geomantic reasoning – building temples randomly would affect the harmony of the terrestrial forces, which had conspired to bring Wang Geon to power. Therefore, the government only permitted the construction of temples in a limited number of locations selected by Doseon.13 Interestingly, Taizu in Song China had applied the same geomantic argument to justify the reversal of his predecessor’s anti-Buddhist policies. According to one legend, the Later Zhou dynasty fell because the destruction of images “greatly harmed the blessings of the earth and grain [gods].”14

Although Taejo used Doseon’s geomantic theories to restrict temple construction, this approach proved to be counter-productive in the long run. Soon it was argued that new temples were needed to replenish and aid (biho) the dynasty. In that case, the geomantic theory could just as easily be used to justify the construction of more temples. Apparently Taejo recognized all existing temples and only built new ones in the new capital. He was particularly concerned lest too many officials and strongmen build their private temples. By donating land to these private temples, families could get tax-free status for their land.

Taejo expressed his devotion to Buddhism in all the writings attributed to him. His first injunction attributes the success of his dynasty to “the power of Buddha.”15 This belief re-emerges in a prayer-text he composed for the completion of Gaetaesa, a temple built to commemorate the final victory over his archenemy Later Baekje in 936. The prayer text was a thanksgiving to all the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, heavenly kings, sea and water spirits etc, in which Taejo vowed to recompense their favour by transmitting the Buddhist teaching and spreading compassion.16 The third and last extant piece of his writings, an epitaph for an eminent monk, throws light on his personal relation with the monks. It expresses the ruler’s sadness at the passing of his Buddhist mentor, and records his pledge to cultivate the karmic bond between the ruler and his Buddhist preceptor throughout the dynasty.17 Taejo invited many monks to court, and discussed with them how to use Buddhism to strengthen and pacify the country. Through his interactions with monks, he portrayed himself as a Buddhist disciple. There is no evidence that Taejo ever arrogated any superior status to himself vis-à-vis the
monks. Instead, he stuck to a clear distinction between the secular and religious realms. Taejo was of course more than just a Buddhist disciple. Although he is never explicitly identified as a cakravartin or Buddhist ruler, there are clear elements in his policies that appeal to the cakravartin ideology.18

In contrast to Song China where the emperor had a final say in administrating secular and religious matters, Taejo and his successors in Goryeo Korea were willing to acknowledge their limited knowledge of Buddhism, their commitment to Buddhism, and their gratitude for the Buddha’s intercession in securing the dynasty. This does not mean that their role was completely passive in this scheme: in fact, they had the very important task of protecting the religion. Epitaphs for eminent monks frequently reminded the reader that in the “latter days of the law”, the law had been entrusted to the king for protection and safeguarding. In other words, because of the confusion and decadence that were supposed to occur in this period, even within the monastic community, it was up to the king to ensure that the Sangha was pure and practiced the true dharma.19

One last thing to be mentioned about Taejo’s Buddhist rulership is its visual expression. Like the Song dynasty, the Goryeo rulers sought to give tangible expression of their devotion to Buddhism by building two types of temples. The first type were the so-called bibo-sa (remedial temples), which were built in reward for the monks’ assistance to the dynasty. The second type were memorial temples, mainly located in or near the capital. Every deceased king was designated a memorial temple, in which a statue or picture of the king was placed. His son or another relative who had succeeded him to the throne came to this memorial temple to pray for the deceased king on his memorial days and during some specific festivals. Remarkably, the statue of Taejo was recently discovered near his tomb west of Gaeseong, the capital of the Goryeo dynasty. It had been buried there after the Joseon dynasty abolished the temple.20 We do not know how exactly the statue was used, but according to the Song descriptions of imperial statues, the image would have been placed in a separate hall within the temple precinct as the focus of veneration. Images of the founder of the dynasty were also placed in other temples across the country. Besides these portraits, statues were also made to illustrate Taejo’s previous lives, including one of his incarnations as a temple attendant.

Another way through which Taejo enforced Buddhist rulership was to compile a complete collection of the Buddhist canon in China and Korea after the eleventh-century is the case of the Goryeo tripitaka, a Buddhist tract written by Emperor Taizong. The tract was included in the Chinese Buddhist canon and often printed in China, but it was later lost in China. The compilers of the Quan Songwen had to refer to the Goryeo tripitaka to retrieve this work.22 That this particular tract was preserved in Korea suggests that the legacy of Buddhist kingship remained stronger in Goryeo Korea than in Song China, where after the eleventh-century a Confucian revival obliterated the Buddhist agenda of early Song emperors.

II. State Control of Buddhism

In China, the official legislation on Buddhism served as a political instrument to reduce the number of monks. Viewed from a Confucian perspective, Chinese officials regarded conversion to monk-hood as an act of treason against one’s parents, who would lose their bloodline and prospect of care in their old age, and against the state, which would lose its subjects and thus tax income and corvée labour. It is against this background that the Later Zhou state attempted to impose strict quotas on temples and monks. Initially, Taizu did not alter these principles but merely refrained from taking any drastic punitive action. Right after his accession and on special occasions, Taizu authorised mass ordinations. Throughout his reign, however, the government tried to impose strict quotas regarding ordination numbers. In 967, Taizu required those devoted Buddhists wishing to become monks to be tested on the sutras, after which the Board of Sacrifice (sibu) would give them certificates.23 In 973, a firm quota was set on the number of monks to be ordained in each prefecture. When the register of monks reached one hundred, the new decree stipulated, one new monk could take the examination to be ordained. That is, the ordination quota was set at one per cent of the total number of the monks in each prefecture.24 In the examination, the candidates had to recite 300 pages of Buddhist texts fluently.25 Local government officials rather than Buddhist monks supervised the examination procedure. Nonetheless, the examination system was rife with abuse as the problem of officials selling the certificates to raise money soon resurfaced. This problem can be discerned
in the available census figures. At the beginning of the Song dynasty, the census counted 67,430 monks, slightly up from the figure of the Later Zhou dynasty (Chikusa, 2000, 368). By 1021, the figure had increased six-fold to 397,615 monks and 61,240 nuns. The dramatic increase in the numbers of monks and nuns suggests that the quota system was not enforced effectively. What made the situation worse was that the officials circulated contradictory regulations on the quota system. Some sources say that 1,000 monks could be ordained every year, but others say as many as 8,000 could be (Chikusa, 2000, 368). According to Zanning, between 976 and 982 more than 170,000 new ordinations took place. When the local officials were attentive to the pro-Buddhist signals from the central government, they probably decided to go with the flow by issuing as many ordination certificates as possible.26

In Goryeo Korea, the government imposed restrictions on the number of ordinations according to different criteria. First, people from certain areas and social sections were excluded from the monk-hood altogether, such as the border provinces, and those villages (byojesang) and boroughs (bugok) populated by base people (cheoimin), the lowest social status group apart from slaves. This official policy reflected the existing social and political structure in Korea. Furthermore, an additional restriction was imposed, allowing only the fourth, and in some cases the third, son in each household to become a monk. In effect, it was a widespread habit among the royal family and Goryeo elites to have the fourth son ordained. The lack of knowledge about the demographics in Goryeo Korea makes it difficult to assess whether these policies were more restrictive than those in Song China. What is known is that there were more members of the elite and less commoners who became monks in Goryeo Korea than in Song China. However, it is most likely that the state failed to enforce these restrictions: examples can be found of families where more than one in three sons ordained. Towards the end of the Goryeo dynasty, some of the lower echelons of the elite flouted the restriction on the first three sons, and throughout the dynasty many commoners lived at temples in a half-mono-half-lay status.27

In China, the Song government compiled several volumes of law codes, most of which contain chapters about legislation on Buddhist monks. The purpose of these laws was to define the legal status of the monks and their rights, privileges and duties. With detailed information about the official procedures on how to obtain and keep the status of monk, these laws showed that local officials ought to be informed of all that happened inside temples, and had the right to ‘defrock’ the culprit or mete out other punishments in cases of infractions of the correct procedure, falsification of documents, and crimes committed by the monks.28 It is not known whether a similar code existed in Goryeo Korea, but the Treatise on Law from the Goryeosa reveals that laws and decrees concerning the status of the Buddhist monks were frequently issued by the state. These laws were designed to regulate the public behaviour of monks and could be understood as attempts to impose decorum. Laicisation was sometimes threatened, but seldom if indeed ever carried out.

III. The Creation of State Buddhist Institutions

The Song dynasty continued the tradition established by preceding dynasties of instating a special bureau to deal with monastic affairs. In theory, the Bureau of Monks’ Registration (Zuoyou Senglusi), staffed by monks, was in charge of governing “all the monks of the empire” but in practice, it only dealt with strictly religious matters such as the carrying out of religious rituals and organizing the printing and translation of sutras. The examination of monks and the appointment of abbots to state temples were administered by the state. At the beginning of the Northern Song dynasty, the supervision of monastic affairs was under the Court of State Ceremonies and in the Southern Song, this duty was transferred to the Board of Sacrifice. Besides these government institutions, the Department of the Secretariat or the Chancellery was responsible for the appointment of abbacies and other important religious positions.29

Three important features of the institutional history of Buddhism in Song China are worthy of attention. The first feature concerns the complexity of the system. Those monks working for the Bureau of Monks’ Registration were divided into five ranks, each subdivided into left and right.30 The role of these monks was largely ceremonial but the ways in which they were selected and promoted by the state were as complicated as those of officialdom. The second feature concerns the active involvement of the early Song emperors in the appointment of monk-officials. Initially, there was no adequate system for the selection and promotion of monk-officials. It was only after the prefect of Kaifeng requested official permission in 1003 to personally examine a number of monks about to go on a foreign mission that emperors started to examine those monks seeking government positions.31 Of all the Song rulers, Zhenzong (r. 997–1022) and Renzong (r. 1022–1063) most frequently summoned monks to the palace for interviews.32 As a result, a system based on seniority and academic accomplishment was created for promoting monks, and a selection test different from the ordination examination was instated.30 The Song emperors also controlled the appointment of abbots at major state temples. As the bureaucracy began wielding more authority in the late eleventh-century, the emperors had less input where the selection of monk-officials was concerned. The final feature concerns the importance of the lower level of government. Throughout the Song dynasty, local authorities played an important role in recommending monks for official positions, especially abbacies of public temples. Abbacies of public temples (shifang siyuan) open to monks of all Buddhist lineages and schools were often determined by the other local temples or by influential local officials.34

The bureaucratic system supervising Buddhist communities in Goryeo Korea was similar to the Song system. At the beginning of his reign, Taejo created the Bureau of Monks’ Registration, but it was not until the end of the tenth century that the Bureau began to take shape (Vermeersch, 2001, 228–40). By that time, all the monks intending to move beyond the rank and file had to take a placement test. This was a regular event to be held frequently throughout the dynasty, and as
such the Goryeo monastic examination was more fully institutionalised than the irregular testing of monks in China.

Another difference between Chinese and Korean Buddhist institutions was that the selection examination during the Goryeo dynasty was an oral test or a debate on certain topics. The most skilful and knowledgeable debaters were given a rank that qualified them for the abbacy of a temple or for a senior position in the Bureau of Monks’ Registration. The jury that made the final decision was often though not exclusively chaired by a scholar-official. Upon getting the initial qualifying ranking, a monk had the opportunity to be promoted to five different ranks, and the promotion was usually made by royal decree or instruction. After attaining the highest rank, a monk could then be appointed royal preceptor and eventually state preceptor. None of these titles was conferred in Song China. The Goryeo system was more elaborate and comprehensive than the Song system. The Song ranks were only relevant to the staff at the Bureau of Monks’ Registration, but the Goryeo ranks were used for any appointment in Buddhist institutions, which in turn allowed the Korean rulers to have much more effective control over the appointment of abbots than their Chinese counterparts. In Korea, almost all the important temples were organised into a system of remedial temples, whose abbots were often appointed by the king or influential officials, although temples sometimes had the right to appeal.

V. Conclusion

This article has explored the nature of state power and religion in Song China and Goryeo Korea by studying the state appropriation of Buddhism and the integration of Buddhism into the ideological, political and social order. As far as Song Taizu and Goryeo Taejo were concerned, Buddhism was an integral part of the state-building project in that it enabled them, as rulers, to justify their rise to power and to consolidate their power. On the surface, these two emperors acted pragmatically to secure the political support of the Buddhist establishment, and their post-Buddhist policies sought to regulate Buddhist teaching, practices and institutions. However, no matter how questionable their motives were, they also advanced Buddhist interests and contributed to the rapid expansion of Buddhism at that time. Even if they were not genuine Buddhists, they were convinced that only by defining their leadership within the Buddhist worldview could they consolidate their power.

By comparison, Goryeo Taejo went further than Song Taizu in dedicating the success of his dynastic enterprise to the action of the Buddhhas (and other spirits and deities). Taejo made his own position if not subservient to, at least dependent on the Buddhist religion. The Song emperors, on the other hand, approached Buddhism from a position of strength. While supporting the construction of temples and taking instruction in Buddhism, the Song rulers had supreme authority over the Buddhist monks. One explanation lies in the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the respective dynasties. In Goryeo Korea, winning over influential temples was a key to Taejo’s success in integrating the three rival kingdoms into his new dynastic state. After the end of the military conquest in 936, Taejo ruled over what was essentially a confederation of local power-holders. Honouring influential Buddhist monks and bestowing them with titles and abbacies allowed him to establish at least a symbolic foothold on the central power in those provinces not yet under his direct control.

In Song China, the Buddhist monk Zanning, whose ideas were very influential at court under the first two emperors, “argued for a full acceptance of Buddhism within the administrative structure of the Chinese government.” Although Zanning had the ears of the emperors, his proposals never fully materialized and the Chinese Buddhist bureaucracy remained weak. The system of appointing serious monk-aspirants was seriously diluted in the late eleventh-century because of the sale of ordination certificates. The system of promoting monk-bureaucrats and temple administrators never developed into a full-fledged working system. In Goryeo, on the other hand, the institutionalisation of Buddhism went much further, as if Zanning’s ideas were wholeheartedly carried out. The system enabled the Goryeo dynasty to be closely identified with Buddhist aspirations throughout the country.

Let me end this article with the story of the Goryeo monk Jijong (930–1018). In 968, on a trip to China, Jijong met with Zanning in the capital of the then still independent Wu-Yue kingdom. Jijong had taken the Goryeo monastic examination in 954 and was known to be the first graduate of the examination. After his return from China, Jijong became the first monk to have obtained all the ranks of the monastic bureaucracy in Goryeo Korea. One can only speculate about what Jijong had told Zanning about the Goryeo monastic examination system, and how these two Buddhist thinkers exchanged ideas about the role of monks in their respective countries. Jijong’s encounter with Zanning was part of the wider cross-cultural interaction between Goryeo Korea and Song China. It was through such interaction that Buddhism continued to shape the political, social and religious order in both countries.

ENDNOTES

1. Gregory and Getz, eds., Buddhism in the Sung. The only Western-language study that addresses the central government policy on Buddhism in the Song dynasty is Huang Chi-chiang, “Imperial Rulership and Buddhism in the Early Northern Sung,” in Brandauer and Huang, eds., Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China, pp.144–87. However, there is a considerable body of literature on this subject in Chinese and Japanese. A good example is Chikusa Masaaki, Chūgoku Bukkyō shakai shi kenkyū [Studies in the Social History of Chinese Buddhism].

2. In 967, Taizu decreed that Buddhist monks should always take precedence over Taoist monks at the imperial court. Zhipan, Fozu Tongji [General Account of the Buddha] (hereafter FZTJ), T.2045, vol.49, p.396a. On the Song preference for Taoism, see Weinstein, Buddhism under the T’ang. Of course, some later Tang emperors were fervent patrons of Buddhism.


4. In 998, Emperor Zhenzong wrote that Buddhism and Confucianism differ in their external trappings, but that the meaning (dao) is the same. FZTJ, p.402a.
5. Huang Chi-chiang’s view that Taizu’s attitude towards Buddhism was half-hearted is not entirely convincing. His argument is based on the story of Taizu’s attempt to burn a Buddha relic to see whether or not it changed colour. When it did not, Taizu saw it as a miracle. Yet the story does not indicate why Taizu wanted to burn the relic. Indeed, Taizong repeated the very same experiment with the same result. Huang, “Imperial Rulership and Buddhism,” p.146.


7. FZTJ, p.393a.

8. FZTJ, p.407a and p.401c.


11. This statement is problematic because Zanning only joined the Song court after Taizu’s death. For a discussion of this problem, see Welter, “A Buddhist Response,” 31. This response is not original because the Northern Wei rulers used the same argument to avoid showing submission to the Buddha or Buddhist monks. Zanning probably quoted a historical precedent rather than making a doctrinal statement.


14. FZTJ, p.393b.

15. GRS, 2: 15a.


19. This was of course a contentious issue. The Renwáng jìnqing states that the scripture is to be entrusted to the king, not the whole dharma. See Vermeersch, “Representation of the Ruler,” pp. 226-8.


22. Although at least one Song offprint (dated 1108, now in the Sackler Museum of Harvard University) remains of this text from the first Song tripitaka, otherwise it didn’t circulate in China. This paragraph is based on my unpublished paper “Ancestor Worship and Buddhist Politics: A New Look at the Origins of the First Goryeo Tripitaka,” presented at the Harvard Korea Colloquium on May 17, 2003.

23. FZTJ, p.396b.

24. Chikusa, Sô-Gen Bukkyô bunkashi, p.371. Quoted from Xu zizhi tongjian changbian, p.14. According to Zhaoling ji (Quan Song wen), the initial decree states vaguely that one [extra?] monk could be “released” for every 70 to 138. This is followed by a clearer decree, which stipulates that for every 100 monks, one new monk can be ordained every year. Quan Song wen, vol. 1, p.151 and p.159.

25. FZTJ: 400a. In 986, Taizong set the amount of pages to be recited at 300. However, this number could fluctuate. In the south, where there were more monks already, stricter conditions were imposed. See Huang Qijiang, Beisong Fojiandong luoguo [Essays on the History of Buddhism in the Northern Song], p.36.


28. For the translation of one of these law codes, see W. Eichhorn, Beitrag zur rechtlichen Stellung des Buddhismus und Taoismus im Sung-Staat. Übersetzung der Sektion “Taoismus und Buddhismus” aus dem Ch’ing-yüan t’iao-fa shih-lei (Ch. 50 and 51).

29. Xie and Bai, Zhongguo sengguan zhidushi [History of the System of Monastic Offices in China], pp.158–70.

30. To be more precise, these were not ranks, but offices. In the Song bureaucratic system, job titles were often an expression of personal rank, which had to be followed up by a job assignment. If this did not happen, the office (personal rank) was only an empty title. See Xie and Bai, Zhongguo sengguan zhidushi, pp.158–70.

31. FZTJ, p.402c; Huang, “Imperial Rulership and Buddhism,” p.155 and p.176, n.56.


33. The only clear reference to this senior exam is an imperial communication for 1056, indicating that besides monks who had been ordained more than forty years, younger monks could take an examination in order to be qualified for the office. See Xu Zizhi tongjian changbian [Universal Mirror to the Aid of Government, Continued and Enlarged], p.109, 4a. However, other evidence suggests that the examination had never been an effective policy. See Huang, “Imperial Rulership and Buddhism,” p.182, n.89.

34. In theory, the local monks’ registry had to convene abbots to decide vacant abbacies. See Eichhorn, “Beitrag zur rechtlichen Stellung des Buddhismus,” p.38. In practice, local magistrates often proposed monks with whom they were familiar. See Huang Chi-chiang, “Elite and Clergy in Northern Sung Hang-chou,” in Gregory and Getz, Jr. (eds.), Buddhism in the Sung, p.301.


36. This does not necessarily mean that monks were at the mercy of the administration. To the contrary, it helped the pro-Buddhist rulers to make sure that eminent monks were not thwarted by local bureaucrats.


38. Ibid., pp.272–74.


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A Battle for Minds: Regulating Buddhism in Sixteenth-Century Japan
by Ronald K. Frank, Ph.D.

Abstract
The article examines some of the idiosyncrasies of church-state relations in the Warring States (sengoku) period in Japan. “Church” means the formal and informal organizational structures binding ordained and unordained religious practitioners of various forms of Buddhism, while “state” refers to the more or less formalized administrative apparatus of independent daimyô domains (rather than the remnants of the old imperial state). It argues that traditional power holders tried to prevent any spontaneous large-scale group activities amongst commoners, religious or otherwise. By examining a wide range of anti-religious policies, it shows that repressive measures employed by Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu to control religious communities had been presaged by similar policies in the domains of daimyô throughout the sixteenth century.

In the temple chronicle of the Myôhôji, a small Buddhist temple in the shadow of Mt. Fuji, the entry for the year 1553 appears to be rather typical at first glance. The abbot recorded an unusual summer draught, and mention was made of the fortunes of war affecting this particular corner of eastern Japan. Yet the last sentence of the entry for that year deals with a very peculiar edict indeed. In the words of the abbot,

Lay priests, Shintô practitioners as well as peasants are all greatly distraught, since all those who had a master and failed to report this fact will have to pay a fine.1

An edict to this effect had been issued by the ruler of Kai province2 where the temple was located earlier that year. Although the Myôhôji was part of network of temples belonging to the prominent Nichiren sect whose members had gained fame as troublemakers throughout the land, technically it was still subject to the laws of Kai. Furthermore, the province was ruled by none other than the great daimyô Takeda Shingen (1521–1573), and he had on many occasions made it clear to everybody who was listening that no one, high or low, cleric or layman, could hope to escape the new order he had established in his domain. The abbot of the Myôhôji had thus every reason to take note; he must have known only too well that Shingen had the will and the resources to actually enforce the laws he made.

In this Shingen was a rather typical representative of the class of newly emerging semi-sovereign rulers of many of the “Warring States” that made up the political landscape of sixteenth-century Japan. These sengoku daimyô were in the process of defining their positions as legitimate bearers of “public authority” (kôgi). As such they were intent on transcending the limitations of being a mere landed warrior-aristocrat with a retinue of enfeoffed vassals and becoming instead the head of a (however miniature) state with political, economic, administrative, and not least judicial powers not circumscribed by any higher authority.3

A major part of this process, indeed a crucial one, were the legislative efforts of many daimyô which constituted, in the words of Katsumata Shizuo, “a declaration of independence”4 from the moribund shogunal government in Kyoto. A characteristic feature of daimyô legislation was the fact that, apart from regulating the behavior of retainers, edicts and law codes were designed to apply to all inhabitants of the domain. The daimyô thus laid claim to control over a territory rather than over a group of people defined by status, occupation, or personal affiliation and vassalage.

Needless to say, the power of a daimyô grew to the extent to which he managed to limit and to circumscribe the freedoms and privileges of individuals, groups and institutions in his domain. Freedom of action was achieved by limiting the freedom of other potential actors. Of concern in this regard were of course first and foremost fellow warriors, especially those with long standing roots in a given locality. However, challenges could arise from non-warriors as well. Peasants and townspeople alike had become accustomed to a measure of self-administration and freedom of spatial as well as social mobility that resisted incorporation into a rigid administrative mechanism. Of all the potential threats to a daimyô’s control that of fellow warriors was perhaps the most tangible.

But a more insidious challenge could always come from a different sector, one that we hasten to classify as “elite”, namely the Buddhist clergy. Of all potential actors on the political scene of Sengoku Japan they alone were accustomed to a degree of economic and institutional independence on the national level that could effectively thwart attempts to incorporate them into regional polities. More importantly Buddhist sects not only frequently resorted to violent means to achieve their own political goals5, they could and frequently did provide an ideology for mass actions by commoners. In fact, perhaps the most important development in medieval Japanese Buddhism was the emergence of religious communities in which there was little discernible distinction between lay practitioners and ordained clergy. Buddhist monasteries, on the other hand, could be important allies in a daimyô’s quest for legitimacy, since sponsorship of religious institutions had been a hallmark of wise and benevolent rule. Lastly, many daimyô themselves were devout Buddhists, Takeda Shingen and his adversary Uesugi Kenshin are the most famous examples. Thus it is tempting to assume that there were incentives for them to use their power to promote one sect at the expense of others. However, as we shall see, restrictive measures were as a rule not justified on doctrinal grounds. All of these factors had an impact on how daimyô were trying to rein in and regulate Buddhist institutions and practitioners. It should be mentioned that attempts to regulate clergy were made as early as the eighth century. The Taiho Code of 702 contains a whole section of “Regulations for Buddhist Monks and Nuns” consisting of 27 articles.

In the following we shall explore some aspects of that regulatory process in the domains of Eastern Japan, most notably those of the Takeda, and their neighbors to the north and south, the Uesugi and the Imagawa, respectively.
I. Regulators and Regulated

The Imagawa had been military governors (shugo) of Suruga and Tōtōmi provinces since the early Muromachi period (1336–1573). Imagawa Ujichika (1473–1526) issued one of the earliest domain law codes (bunkokuho), the Imagawa Kana Mokuroku in 1526. The house faded into relative obscurity after the unsuccessful attempt by Ujichika’s son Yoshiimoto (1519–1560) to occupy Kyoto in 1560 that resulted in the partial occupation of the Imagawa domain by Takeda forces.

The Takeda had been in charge of Kai province for generations when Takeda Harunobu, the future Shingen, ousted his father Nobutora in 1541. Ironically, the rather obscure Nobutora would outlive his famous son and his equally famous host in exile, Imagawa Yoshimoto. Shingen proceeded to become one of the most successful and famous sengoku daimyō, extending his domain over several provinces and issuing a domain law code, the Kōshū Hatto that was partially inspired by that of the Imagawa.

The emergence of the Uesugi as the actual rulers of Echigo province is a classic case of what has been called gekokujo – “those below overthrowing those above” – a term used to describe the social upheaval of the Sengoku period. In this particular case, the deputy military governor (shugodai) of Echigo, Nagao Kagetora (1530–1578) “inherited” not only the domain of his former lord but also his illustrious family name. The last of the shogunal deputies of the East (Kantō kanrei), Uesugi Norimasa, “bestowed” both upon Kagetora (the future Uesugi Kenshin) in 1561. A contemporary and famous adversary of Takeda Shingen, Kenshin would become in the imagination of later generations the peace-loving antidote to his bloodthirsty neighbor Shingen. Although no comprehensive law code for the domain was issued, the surviving edicts from the Uesugi archives shed some light on the position of Buddhists in a domain ruled by a lay monk.

Most practicing Buddhists in sixteenth-century Japan subscribed to the notion that theirs was the age of mappō, the “End of the Law (dharma)”. This eschatological concept about the decline of the teachings of the Buddha and consequent inability of people to reach enlightenment through their own efforts (jiriki) had been widespread since the late Heian period (794–1185). Echoing the tendencies already inherent in the doctrines of both the Tendai and the Shingon school of Buddhism, a succession of great Buddhist masters of the Kamakura (1185–1333) and Muromachi (1336-1573) periods had emphasized new paths to salvation and created a number of schools that would dominate the religious landscape of late medieval Japan. Even more strongly than the established schools of Tendai and Shingon, Nichiren (Lotus), Jōdo (Pure Land) and Shin (True Pure Land) Buddhism stressed the concept of reliance on an “outside power” (tariki) in order to obtain enlightenment. In the age of mappō faith in the saving grace of the Buddha Amida or the Lotus Sutra came to be considered the most reliable path to salvation.

Needless to say, stressing the efficacy of one way over all others held the potential of developing concepts of heresy, intolerance, and sectarian strive. This was especially apparent in Nichiren’s emphasis on the Lotus Sutra and in Rennyo’s (1415–1499) interpretation of Shin Buddhist doctrine, the basics for the Ikkō (Honganji) sect. In addition, these new sects openly renounced many tenets of monasticism, such as celibacy. Pure Land and Shin Buddhism thus not only blurred the line between laity and clergy in general, but openly endorsed the maintenance of lineage amongst their leadership. Individual itinerant religious practitioners (hijiri) were part of a movement (known as Yugas- ha or jishū) that linked salvation with absolute obedience to the head of the order, thus imbuing religious authority with very concrete secular power. These “Protestant” characteristics of late medieval Japanese Buddhism, an accessible doctrine based on faith, few ethical constraints, and extreme sectarianism made for a dangerous mix in an age where “those below [were] overthrowing those above”. Intriguingly followers of both the Lotus and the True Pure Land sect often stressed the concept of personal effort (jiriki) in trying to overcome the “outside power” (tariki) of their overlords (Berry, 1994, 43–44). Another pun-like irony was perhaps less apparent to contemporary observers. Just as the idea of the “end of the law” (mappō) was central to popular Buddhist doctrine, Buddhist institutions and communities of believers where confronted with the beginnings of a new kind of law, albeit a very secular one, designed to limit their independence.

II. Immunity and Succession

Buddhist temples in sixteenth-century Japan were presented with challenges and opportunities that were not too different from what samurai and commoners were facing in an “Age of Warring States”. The breakdown of the administrative system centered on the courts of emperor and shogun had led initially to loss of sponsorships for established temples. However, daimyō could and frequently did support large Buddhist institutions, even outside their domains. Both the Imagawa and the Takeda, along with many other houses, were acknowledged as patrons of the Myōshinji, an important Rinzai Zen monastery in Kyoto (Colcutt, 1981, 128). The Takeda, along with their archenemies the Uesugi were also on the list of sponsors for the even more illustrious Daitokuji, head temple of the Rinzai Zen branch school of the same name. It would appear that sponsorship of nationally known Buddhist centers became an important step in obtaining or maintaining political legitimacy for daimyō.

On the other hand, large temple networks and individual temples could potentially capitalize on the political turmoil by enhancing and consolidating their land holdings and translating that economic power into military and political might as well. Most temples had enjoyed rights of immunity for centuries and had thus become landlords in their own right, protected at times by large formations of warrior monks. Furthermore, state support for the established schools such as Tendai and Shingon had been diminished since the fourteenth century, when the shogunate had begun to actively promote Zen and Shin Buddhism in part to limit the political power of the established temples and the impact of spiritual threats against the capital. It is conceivable that especially Tendai and Shingon temples would try to turn this situation to their advantage and find the severance of relationships

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with a central government beneficial to their aim of consolidating their land holdings. A sense of urgency and crisis among the large Buddhist establishments arose from the competition from Lotus or Ikkō sectarians, whereas the breakdown of the centralized political order might present an opportunity to capitalize on long standing privileges.

Daimyō such as the Imagawa, Takeda, and Uesugi addressed both sets of “Buddhist” issues in their legislation. One the one hand, they were trying to control established temples and to incorporate them into the fiscal and administrative structure of the domain. On the other, they were concerned about curbing sectarian violence as a threat to public order and about establishing a working mechanism to police the actions of adherents of Buddhist sects. Daimyō regulations of Buddhist clergy thus had an institutional and administrative police the actions of adherents of Buddhist sects. Daimyō regulations of Buddhist clergy thus had an institutional and fiscal dimension as well as an administrative and penal one.

There were many regulations dealing with issues of immunity from certain forms of taxation and from interference of daimyō officials in matters of internal temple administration. Article 22 of the Imagawa Kana Mokuroku of 1526 states:

> As to immune lands, there should be no changes. But the proprietors tend to hinder the punishment [of criminals]. The lord has to carry out the punishment immediately after being informed by the authorities [about the crime]. Although this regulation already exists for several years, some proprietors continue to be negligent, therefore it is recorded here once again.

Although this regulation dealt with all immune lands, the provision specifically applied to temples. Rather than just confirming existing privileges, however, the law was indeed trying to circumscribe the discretion of holders of immune land by requiring them to take action against criminals who might have taken refuge on their estate. Discretionary judicial privilege was thus in effect turned into an obligation to render justice according to domain standards.

Traditionally, the concept of immunity from official action had most commonly implied exemption from assessment through land surveys and thus in effect freedom from land-based taxation. A document signed by Takeda Nobutora, Shingen’s father guarantees the Kōsaiji temple the following privileges:

- Item: That the samurai chamberlain shall not enter.
- Item: That the land steward (jitō) and county assessor (daikan) shall do likewise.
- Item: Trespassing on mountains and forests shall be punishable.
- Item: No correspondence with monks shall be allowed without consent of the abbot.
- Item: Foot soldiers shall not enter.
- Whosoever violates these regulations shall be punished.

This regulation affirms all elements of regular immunity privileges (jūnyūken). Although the date is not recorded, it was clearly issued before its author’s ouster as daimyō in 1541. Communications to temples by his successor Shingen, however, as a rule mentioned only exemption from specific taxes, thus implying that general rights of immunity were no longer recognized by the daimyō. By mid-century all cultivated land as well as buildings in the domain were subject to taxes unless specifically exempted.

The same was true for the Imagawa domain. The 1526 code had already abolished all immune land within the provincial capital of Sumpu. The Supplementary Code (Imagawa Kana Mokuroku Tsuika) of 1553 clarified the daimyō’s (Imagawa Yoshimoto) position on immunity privileges once and for all:

> It is henceforth forbidden that priest might give temples to people they claim to be their pupils, without checking the knowledge and ability of the person in question. However, the concrete circumstances have to be taken into consideration.

By the time the second Imagawa code was issued in 1553, there already existed an official for Buddhist temples (tera bugyō) who appointed qualified candidates as abbots of “protection temples” (kiganji) that were supposed to pray for the well-being of the province. Such a position was apparently a profitable sinecure, since such temples were endowed with taxable land by the daimyō. It should not be forgotten that as landlords temples were of course recipients of taxes as well as taxpayers. Article 18 made clear that abbots of such temples were little more than civil servants:

> It is very high-handed and unlawful for abbots of protection temples to change their way of life without proper reason and give their temple to other people. If a monk neglects his duties and therefore returns to worldly life, the temple is to be confiscated and the official for temples shall deal with the matter. A qualified abbot shall be appointed.

In the Uesugi domain the tendency appears to have been to charge all established temples with offering prayers for “peace and security of the state” (kokka azenn). When in 1560 an edict offering tax relief for residents of the provincial capital was published, its first article stated:

> As for the dues from temple and shrine land, even though people from the city are exempted from them, [the temples and shrines] shall not be negligent in prayers for the peace of the state, regular religious ceremonies, repairs, etc.

This regulation is illustrative of yet another measure designed to subordinate temples to the authority of the daimyō. By controlling the temple’s access to dues payable by its peasants, the daimyō could effectively control the purse strings of a hitherto autonomous economic entity in his domain. It should not go without mention, however, that in controlling the flow of tax revenue to temples the daimyō was following a precedent established by central authorities since the Heian period. Recognition and circumscription of propri-
etary rights of temples had been a point of contention between them and the shogunal government, especially with the onset of the Muromachi period. While secular powers would often emphasize their desire to protect a temple’s assets and assure receipt of dues, religious institutions quite justifiably saw the matter as an encroachment upon immunity rights.

It would appear, then, that a sengoku daimyō’s policies towards temples closely mirrored the measures directed at the independence of vasalasses. Individually powerful warriors in the Imagawa, Takeda, and Uesugi domains saw their autonomy as landlords greatly diminished by limitations on their immunity privileges. Land holding became more and more conditional on the rendering of service, military service in the case of samurai and “prayer service” in the case of temples. The daimyō tried to control his vassals’ and temples’ access to the wealth their land provided and even interfered in matters of succession and inheritance. It could be argued that in doing so a daimyō would enhance his legitimacy by following a precedent established by central authorities.

III. Mobility and Security

As necessary as these measures were with regard to the administrative and fiscal coherence of the domain, no daimyō could ignore the considerable threat to internal stability by elements that were notoriously hard to control, namely itinerant religious practitioners and sectarian adherents. Religious squabbles had the potential to destabilize a domain, while individuals with no fixed residence or status posed a very concrete security risk. Measures to control their movement and to curb sectarian violence had to take into consideration the fact that for the most part they were directed at adherents of widely popular beliefs. For the time being, most daimyō lacked the power to deal with manifestations of religious fervor the way Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi would towards the close of the Sengoku period.

That the problem was ubiquitous is amply illustrated by the sheer amount of rules and measures directed at Buddhist “trouble makers”. The following is an early example:

Item: Gatherings are prohibited for all times in accordance with the command of Lord Takaoka.18

Item: To revive any particular sect without due cause is a frivolous act.

Item: Those who do not report large gatherings of either lowly peasants or sect members shall be punished.

Item: In case of a religious quarrel or insurrection, those who report it shall receive the house of the culprit as a reward.

Item: Negligence by officials in the past has almost led to ruin, if therefore in the future associations with any sects are not reported and hence not known, this will be detrimental to the country (kuni) and against the law. Any official guilty of this shall be demoted for his entire life.

Item: If a sect is discovered on immune land under official jurisdiction, house and land shall be given to the informer after the steward (jiō) has been told of the matter.

The above articles shall be followed to the letter by everybody, down to the very last child, nobody may infringe upon these regulations. It is thus ordered. 19

This edict was issued in Echigo in 1521. The concern with sectarian activities can be explained by the close geographical proximity of Kaga province, a Honganji stronghold. It should be noted that no attempt was made to outlaw membership in a religious order. Rather, the author Nagao Tamekage, Uesugi Kenshin’s predecessor as de facto daimyō of Echigo, was concerned that potentially dangerous activities and affiliations with popular sects (read: Honganji) should be reported. By mid-century the police powers had been better organized, as this edict suggests:

Item: On the day of the Buddhist town festival, people crossing the Eastern small bridge must be reported to the authorities.

Item: People who shall not cross [bridges and river fords]: All sorts of priests, actors, blind singers and outcasts (hinin) shall not be allowed to receive a permit.

The above are regulations concerning the passage over bridges, the number of people crossing these has to be diligently reported, and if by any chance there should be an offender amongst them, he has to be singled out. It is thus ordered.20

This regulation clearly seeks to limit the freedom of movement of those able to exert considerable influence over the minds of a potentially large audience, either by means of preaching a religious doctrine or by performing. No specific sect is mentioned, “all sorts of priests” are equally suspicious. While it was obvious that wandering folk might actually be agents in the service of some neighboring domain, the tone of the edict is indicative of the general tendency to view spatial mobility as almost as undesirable as social mobility. Itinerant priests could perhaps be dangerous agitators or even spies, but they were definitely not the kind of subject the daimyō desired: registered taxpayers. Furthermore, a landed aristocracy relies on the labor of peasants. When there is a shortage of working hands as is likely in times of warfare, non-economic measures are often used to bind peasants to the land. The existence of organizations that would make it easy for a peasant to abscond undetected is consequently highly undesirable from the point of view of the lord. Buddhist sects, especially the Lotus and Honganji schools devoted to a doctrine of equality, made it easy for people to shift in and out of the status of clerics and were thus by definition subversive of the existing order.

As “renouncing worldly life” became a convenient and often used escape route for mistreated peasants, debtors, and criminals, the issue caught the attention of daimyō legislators. Thus the Takeda code of 1547 expands the regular “order to return people” (hitogeshi-rei) in the following manner:

If somebody incurred debts and wanders around the land after having renounced worldly life or simply absconding, his guilt should not be considered minor. Somebody who gives shelter to him has to be held responsible for the debts.21

Joining a religious order to escape any worldly obligation was thus in violation of secular law. Furthermore, joining an order did not erase obligations incurred previously. Curiously enough, however, the same code contained provisions that appear to prohibit the opposite, namely the entering of itinerant priests into relationships of obligation with a secular counterpart. Thus article 52 makes it illegal for unaffiliated Shintō and Buddhist priest to “have a lord”. It states further that violators will be prevented from wandering around the

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Regulating Buddhism in 16th c. Japan / Frank

The rationale behind this rule is quite obviously two-fold. It prevents people from switching their allegiance from one lord to another by way of “renunciation”, and it prevents lords from acquiring work force or military personnel “off the books”, thus enhancing daimyō control over samurai and commoners at the same time. This is also the reason for the curious levying of fines quoted at the outset. This measure was clearly in full accordance with the law of the land. Shingen did indeed have a propensity for turning security concerns into fiscal benefits. His most ingenious invention was a “marriage tax” for Buddhist clergy. According to this regulation, monks who were not celibate, or rather people joining a religious order while continuing to be married were assessed an annual fine. Needless to say, this measure was directed primarily against followers of the True Pure Land and the Lotus sect, both of which had renounced monasticism.

The Takeda are, however, also renowned for having been early patrons of perhaps the most itinerant order of Pure Land Buddhism, the Jishū or Yugyō sect. Its founder Shinkyō (1237–1319) was apparently corresponding with the Takeda family, among others. This sponsorship continued throughout the Sengoku period, in part due to the precedent set by the shogunal court and in part due to the location of Zenkō-ji temple network in Shinano province, a territory conquered by Shingen early in his career.

Buddhist clerics in Sengoku Japan were nevertheless likely to encounter obstacles to their freedom of movement and restrictions on how, when, where and to whom to preach. Daimyō regulations were designed to separate itinerant practitioners from the rest of their subjects to the extent that that was enforceable. Although the regulations are outwardly directed against the obvious culprits, namely people refusing to “fit in”, it must have been clear to everyone involved that the goal of policing their actions was ultimately unobtainable. The real aim of these laws was thus once again a larger measure of control over both vassals and subjects, whose loyalty might be compromised by “dangerous doctrines”.

In any event squabbles between adherents of Pure Land Buddhism and those of “the Nichiren thugs” (in Shingen’s words) would continue for the time being regardless of the laws laid down by lay priests bent on absolute power.

IV. Conclusion

The sengoku daimyō present a transitional stage in the process of establishing state control over religious institutions. Policies intended to limit the power of temples were adopted by the Ashikaga shoguns early in the Muromachi period. Some of the measures taken were comparable to what sengoku daimyō would attempt later on. In fact, the most successful daimyō appear to have copied policies of the shogunate (e.g. the elimination of toll barriers) as well as those of the temples (land surveys). Consistent implementation of such measures on the national level remained beyond the reach of the likes of Shingen and Kenshin. They shared the aspirations of the Ashikaga shoguns regarding Buddhist religious institutions, which would eventually be realized only by their Tokugawa successors.

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ENDNOTES

1. Myōhōjiki, Tenbun 22. For the original text see Takeda shiryōshū [Collection of Takeda Sources], Shigo and Harunori, eds., p. 55.
2. Present day Yamanashi prefecture.
3. For the purposes of this article, “Sengoku” refers to the time period 1467–1590. John W. Hall’s classic typology of the daimyō distinguishes three developmental stages for this time period. See John W. Hall, “Foundations of the Modern Japanese Daimyō,” in Hall and Jansen, eds., Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan. While acknowledging the continued validity of Hall’s observations, I apply the term “sengoku daimyō” to the rulers of independent domains both prior to and during the unification period in the late sixteenth century.
5. The followers of the True Pure Land (or Shin) school distinguished themselves as particularly unruly since their takeover of an entire province in the late 15th century. Their “League of the Single-Minded” (Ikkō Ikki) was perhaps the best known mass movement of pre-modern Japan.
6. Present day Shizuoka prefecture.
7. Present day Niigata prefecture.
9. The roster of sponsors included even Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who would later become known as the great unifiers of Japan. For a complete list, see ibid., 127.
11. Adolphson sees in the land surveys conducted by Shingen temples in the late fourteenth century a direct precursor of similar daimyō policies 150 years later. See ibid., 326.
12. Original text in Ishii Susumu et al., eds., Chūsei seiji shakai shisō [Medieval Socio-Political Thought] (hereafter CSS), vol. 1, p.197.
14. CSS, 205.
15. Ibid., 198.
16. Ibid., 204.
18. Nagao Yoshikage (1459–1506) was shugodai of Echigo and ancestor of Uesugi Kenshin.
20. NKS, Doc. No.3387.
22. See Thornton, Charisma, p. 18.
23. Present day Nagano prefecture.

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The Anti-Christian Campaign and Imperial Control in Eighteenth-Century China

by Ma, Zhao

Abstract
This article looks at the anti-Christian campaign in 1784-1785 within the wider contexts of political culture and bureaucratic reform in China during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor. It argues that Qianlong exploited the anti-Christian campaign to reinvigorate his ruling machine and to enforce his control over the imperial bureaucracy. The significance of this campaign lies not only in the light that it throws on the interactions between the Chinese imperial state and Catholic communities in the eighteenth century, but also in the ways in which the state continued to work out new mechanisms in response to problems facing the upper and lower levels of government.

By looking at the anti-Christian campaign (1784–1785), this study explores the dynamics of imperial control in eighteenth-century China. More than half a century ago, Bernward H. Willeke argued that the fear of foreigners drove the Qianlong Emperor (reign 1735–1796) to launch a two-month campaign against Catholic missionaries and Chinese converts across the empire (Willeke, 1948). Yet it remains unclear to us why Qianlong extended the campaign for another eighteen months, long after the missionaries were expelled from China. Drawing on unpublished materials at the First Historical Archives in Beijing, this research argues that the campaign was dictated by Qianlong’s agenda of “preserving peace and sustaining prosperity” (chiiying baotai).

Qianlong saw the poor performance of the imperial officials in the course of the anti-Christian campaign as symptoms of bureaucratic demoralization and administrative deterioration. Underlying this view of governance was the idea that the state’s commitment to political stability and economic prosperity was closely linked to effective control over popular religious activities. As Philip A. Kuhn, Jane Kate Leonard, John Watt and Robert J. Anthony point out, the Qing government performed a mix of financial, security, and ideological functions. Put together, these functions defined the government’s strategic agendas. The maintenance of political and social stability was the top priority over other issues (Kuhn, 1990, 30–48; Leonard and Watt, 1992, 1–7; Antony and Leonard, 2002, 1–26). While the bureaucratic power of the imperial government was thinly spread across the empire, Qianlong was concerned about the fact that the country would be jeopardized in the long run by incompetent officials. Viewed from this perspective, Qianlong exploited the anti-Christian campaign to reinvigorate the government institutions and to enforce his control over the bureaucracy. The significance of this study lies not only in the light that it throws on the interactions between the imperial state and Catholic communities in eighteenth-century China, but also in the ways in which the state responded to problems facing the upper and lower levels of government.

I. The Anti-Christian Campaign

On the evening of the twenty-seventh day of the eighth lunar month of, a small boat carrying four Italian Franciscan missionaries arrived at Baijia Wan near the borders of Hubei and Shaanxi provinces. A quarrel broke out suddenly between the boatmen and people on the shore. An assistant brigade commander (shoubel) and his soldiers passed by this scene during their routine inspection. When the soldiers approached, people involved in the quarrel ran away. The soldiers were surprised to find four Italian Franciscan missionaries on the boat (Willeke, 1948, 22). These missionaries were sent from Macao to look after the Catholic communities in Shaanxi province, but they were arrested on the way.1

The four missionaries were immediately taken to Wuchang, the provincial capital of Hubei. The officials failed to extract any information from them because the missionaries could not say a word in Chinese except “China,” “Beijing,” “Christianity” and “we cannot understand Chinese.”2 The language barrier made them look suspicious in the light of the current political climate in China. Three months before the arrival of the missionaries, a Muslim uprising broke out in Gansu province and spread to neighboring Shaanxi province. Though the uprising was suppressed and most of its leaders were executed, the imperial government continued to search for fugitive rebels, believing that some rebels hid themselves in the mountainous terrain along the provincial borders. That the missionaries were found in Hubei province, a region adjacent to Shaanxi, seemed to be a coincidence, but Qianlong and the governor-generals suspected that “as soon as the Westerners learned about the uprising, they had sent these missionaries to establish contacts and exchange intelligence with the Muslim rebels.”3 This security concern reveals a sense of crisis that preoccupied the minds of Qianlong and his senior officials (Willeke, 1948, 166).

It is hard to know whether Qianlong and his senior officials understood the doctrinal, ritual and institutional differences between Islam and Catholicism. The archival materials reveal the Chinese officials’ biases towards these two religions. The officials disparaged Islam and Catholicism because none of them were native Chinese teachings like Daoism and Confucianism. Both religions were propagated and practiced either by foreigners (European missionaries and merchants) or among the non-Han Chinese (Muslims). By comparison, Islam was considered to be more politically subversive than Catholicism because there had been three major Muslim uprisings in the eighteenth century: the Da Xiao Hezhuo rebellion in Xinjiang (1756–1760), the Su Sishisan uprising in Gansu (1781–1783), and the Tianwu uprising in Gansu and Shaanxi (1784) (Lipman, 1998).4 After all, the Kangxi Emperor (reign 1662–1722) banned Catholicism as a heterodox religion because of the Rites Controversy and most of the missionaries were expelled from China in the late seventeenth century.

Despite the lack of evidence, the investigation of the four missionaries continued. The officials discovered a Chinese
The Anti-Christian Campaign in 18th c. China / Ma

letter in the missionaries’ luggage and found several Chinese Catholics’ names and their addresses. They immediately went to look for these Catholics. Amongst those arrested, some people had provided the missionaries with food and lodgings and acted as their travel guides. Through interrogations, officials learnt about the background and reasons for the missionaries’ visit to China. It was reported that in Xi’an, the provincial capital of Shaanxi, some Chinese Catholics had bought several houses from a retired district magistrate in 1782 for constructing a church. After the church construction in April 1784, two of the converts went to Guangdong province to ask the missionaries to visit the Catholic community. In Guangzhou, they met the Chinese priest Peter Cai. In 1782, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda in Rome sent twelve missionaries to Macao. After their arrival at Guangzhou in early 1784, the missionaries stayed with Francesco Giuseppe della Torre, a missionary of the Congregation of St. John the Baptist and known to the Chinese as “Duo Luo” or “Luo Ma Dang Jia”, who was in charge of the correspondence between the European missionaries at the imperial court in Beijing and the Vatican in Rome (Willeke, 1948, 19–20). At the request of the two Chinese converts, Francesco Giuseppe della Torre and Peter Cai agreed to send four Italian Franciscan missionaries to Shaanxi province. When the Chinese officials sought to search for other people involved in the Catholic mission, another incident took place in Shaanxi and drove this campaign to its climax. Bi Yuan, the provincial governor, successfully captured the Chinese Catholics who rebuilt the church and invited the foreign missionaries to visit the area. After arresting two Chinese Catholic merchants in Hunan province, Bi Yuan ended the investigation. Qianlong suspected that more foreigners were hiding in Shaanxi and ordered Bi Yuan to conduct another investigation. Bi Yuan arrested Bishop Magni, an Italian missionary living in Shaanxi for twenty years, during the second investigation. Magni confessed that Francesco Giuseppe della Torre had sent ten missionaries to different provinces in China. For the first time, Qianlong and his senior governors learnt about the Catholic Church hierarchy with several Chinese appointed as “bishops” and “priests.” Qianlong was alarmed by this extensive Catholic nationwide network and called for more arrests of foreign missionaries and Chinese Catholics. Within ten months, the government arrested nineteen foreign missionaries, several hundred Chinese priests, lay leaders and converts in sixteen provinces. Most of the missionaries were later released and expelled from China. The Chinese Catholic leaders were exiled to the frontier and the ordinary converts were forced to abandon their religion.

II. “Preserving Peace and Sustaining Prosperity”

Given the small numbers of foreign missionaries and Chinese Catholics, why did Qianlong launch the nationwide anti-Catholic campaign? The answer lies in the change of political climate during the last few decades of Qianlong’s reign. Qianlong’s reign was characterized by territorial expansion, rapid economic development and population growth. When reflecting on his accomplishments in 1780, Qianlong wrote,

“I will be in my seventies this year on. ... If the empire under my rulership has not achieved prosperity (quansheng), the people should at least be well off (xiaokang). My rule is popular, our territory is expanded, the imperial power is widely recognized and my subjects are enjoying their lives. Previous dynasties were troubled by warlords, foreign aggressors, powerful vassals, imperial matrilineal kinsmen, eunuchs, treacherous officials... Today we see no sign of these problems... My achievement is truly remarkable.”

Qianlong maintained a strict control over the imperial bureaucracy. From a reading of his correspondence with the provincial officials throughout the anti-Christian campaign, one gains an impression that the imperial bureaucracy still operated in an efficient manner. On October 8, 1784 (Qianlong 49.8.24), Qianlong sent an edict to Techeng’e, the Governor-General of Huguang, and ordered him to arrest two Catholics there. Upon receiving the edict on October 15 (Qianlong 49.9.2), Techeng’e reported to Qianlong three days later that he had captured one of the Catholics. Eight days later, on October 26 (Qianlong 49.9.13), Qianlong received another report and issued another edict to Techeng’e on the same day. No matter how far away the provincial capitals were from Beijing, the provincial officials had to respond to the imperial edict in less than three days. However, Qianlong was not satisfied with the overall performance of the provincial officials in the campaign and identified a number of administrative problems in the imperial bureaucracy.

The first problem was the erosion of imperial authority in the countryside. To effectively control the vast empire, Qianlong created a complex surveillance system at all levels. Missionaries entering China were subject to the surveillance of the Hong merchants in Guangzhou. As with the majority of the population, Chinese Catholics were put under the mutual surveillance system (baojia) (Hua, 1988). The baojia system, however, failed to control the activities of the missionaries. Prior to the anti-Christian campaign, Francesco Giuseppe della Torre housed several foreign missionaries in Guangzhou. The Chinese Catholics from Xi’an traveled with the Italian Franciscan missionaries across half of China before they were arrested. This extensive Catholic networks indicated a lack of state control in the countryside.

The other administrative problem was the inefficiency of the provincial governors in arresting the Catholic missionaries and the key Chinese converts. Throughout the anti-Christian campaign, Qianlong had to put pressure on the governors. In late 1784, Qianlong ordered Mingxing, the provincial governor of Shandong, to arrest two foreign missionaries in that province. After the first two months of the investigation, Mingxing arrested a handful Chinese Catholics and did not find any missionaries. Qianlong criticized Mingxing for his failure to find the foreigners and ordered him to conduct another investigation. Under the imperial pressure, in early 1785, Mingxing arrested Bishop Atto Biagini and Bishop Crescenziano Cavalli, both hiding at the home of the local Chinese converts. On another occasion, Qianlong ordered Yade, the provincial governor of Fujian, to arrest Peter Cai who allegedly arranged the Franciscan missionaries to travel to the interior. After many
months of investigation, Yade captured another foreign missionary but failed to find Peter Cai, who had fled to Macao in September 1784 and gone to India (Willeke, 1948, 26).

Similar problems appear to have prevailed on lower levels of the administrative apparatus. Qianlong never trusted the yamen runners and continuously warned the provincial governors to beware of these sub-district officials who helped the Catholic missionaries and Chinese converts to escape. Because of the administrative problems, Qianlong decided to exploit the anti-Christian campaign to reinvigorate the government institutions. The more aggressive the campaign, the more promising outcomes it would yield.

III. Conclusion
At the beginning of the anti-Christian campaign in 1784, the Qianlong Emperor was worried that the European missionaries had come to support the Muslim rebels in western parts of China. Though there was no connection between the Catholic movement and Muslim rebellions, Qianlong was surprised to discover an extensive Catholic network across the inland provinces. What worried him most was the utter failure of the imperial officials to police and control the Catholic communities. He was worried that these incompetent officials could jeopardize the Manchu Empire in the long run. Because of this concern, the anti-Christian campaign quickly evolved into a war against the imperial bureaucracy, and those officials who failed to capture any Catholic missionaries and Chinese converts were severely punished. Only by situating the anti-Christian campaign in the wider context of imperial politics can we understand the complexity of church-state relations in eighteenth-century China.

ENDNOTES
1. Zhupi zouzhe [Imperial Palace Memorials] (hereafter ZPZZ), First Historical Archives of China, Beijing, Doc. No. 9258–038, QL 49.8.9 (Emperor Qianlong Year. Month. Day). The missionaries were Giovanni da Sassari, Giuseppe Mattei da Bientina, Luigi Landi da Signa and Giovanni Battista da Mandello, see Willeke, 1948, 22.
3. Qianlong Shangyu dang [The Imperial Edicts of Qianlong] (hereafter QLSY), First Historical Archives of China, Beijing, Doc. No.703, QL 49.8.2.
4. These Muslim rebellions were named after their leaders in the Qing official documents. For details about the Muslim rebellions in eighteenth-century China, see Lipman, 1998.

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The Role of German Missionaries in Post-Boxer North China
by Lydia Gerber, Ph.D.

Abstract
Through several case studies of anti-Christian violence in North China, this article examines various patterns of political interaction between German Protestant missionaries and Chinese local elite during the first decade of the twentieth century. In these cases, the Chinese officials used the Lutheran Berlin and Weimar missions to empower themselves, which in turn, allowed the German missionaries to play an active role in the competitive arena of local politics. This article argues that the anti-Christian sentiment was highly situational and varied in time and place. In those peripheral areas where there was little government control and Confucian influence, the Chinese elite did not hesitate to take advantage of missionary resources for political survival. It was these pragmatic concerns rather than ideological considerations that dictated the interaction between Chinese elite and Christian missionaries in the post-Boxer era.

This article examines various patterns of political interaction between German Protestant missionaries and Chinese local elites during the first decade of the twentieth century. Drawing on unpublished archival materials from the Berlin and Weimar missionary societies in Germany, it reconstructs four incidents of disputes involving German missionaries, Chinese district officials and rural communities around the German leased territory of Jiaozhou in Eastern Shandong. In these incidents, the Chinese officials used the Lutheran Berlin and Weimar missions to empower themselves, which in turn, allowed the German missionaries to play an active role in the competitive arena of local politics.

This analysis of the German Protestant missionary involvement in local politics departs from the existing literature on the subject. Previously, scholars like Paul A. Cohen and Lü Shiqiang have interpreted the outbreak of anti-missionary and anti-Christian violence as an ideological response to cultural imperialism from the West (Cohen, 1978, 543–90, 572ff.; 1984, 52–55; Lü, 1966). Popular hostility towards Christian communities was often presented as a righteous action in defence of Confucian orthodoxy. John King Fairbank once described the tensions and conflicts between Christian missionaries and Chinese gentry as of such natural animosity as that between “cats and dogs” (Fairbank, 1986, 125). There were plenty of reasons for such animosity. Armed with the Bible and the gun, the Christian missionaries were perceived by the Chinese scholar-officials and gentry as a threat to their authority. Under the protection of treaty rights, the missionaries directly challenged the Confucian principle to “guard against heretical beliefs” and made the Chinese elite appear to be incompetent in front of the foreigners. This article argues that the anti-Christian sentiment was highly situational and varied in time and place. In those peripheral areas where there was little government control and Confucian influence, the Chinese elite did not hesitate to use missionary resources for political survival. It was these pragmatic concerns rather than ideological considerations that dictated the interaction between Chinese elite and Christian missionaries in Eastern Shandong during the post-Boxer era.

I. German Imperialism and Protestant Missions in Eastern Shandong
In November 1897, the German marines seized a small bay in Shandong under the pretext of ensuring that reparations were paid for the murder of two German Catholic missionaries in the province. In the early 1890s, the German government had been considering to occupy the bay for building its first marine base in East Asia in order to expand into the interior of Shandong. In the spring of 1898, the German government signed the Sino-German Treaty that allowed the Germans to lease an area of 540 square km for 99 years, to construct a railway to Jinan, the capital of Shandong province, and to exploit coalfields along the railroad. The leased territory itself consisted of small market towns, fishing villages, mountain dwellings, including the famous Daoist temples in the Laoshan Mountains that contained roughly 150,000 inhabitants in about 250 individual settlements. Upon their arrival, the Germans built the city of Qingdao and established a garrison. The treaty also established a 50 km-wide belt surrounding the leased territory as a demilitarised zone. The district cities of Jiaozhou, Gaomi, and Jimo were located in the zone, from which all Chinese troops had to be withdrawn. In an area deeply affected by the German invasion and the Boxer Uprising, the withdrawal of Chinese troops proved to be highly problematic. The German excursions into the demilitarised zone and beyond created diplomatic tensions between both countries. Although the German forces could protect the railway against the Boxers and local bandits around the zone, they did not protect hundreds of Chinese civilians who lost their lives in the intense warfare of 1900.

After the Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1905), the German government was concerned with the Japanese military presence in Shandong and the rise of anti-foreign sentiment among the Chinese. To avoid confrontation with the Chinese, the German government dissolved the garrisons in the demilitarised zone in 1906 and gave up the plan to expand into the interior of Shandong. Instead, the Germans created the “model settlement” of Qingdao to promote German influence in northern China. The founding of the elementary school system in the German leased territory and of the Sino-German University in 1908 was an important part of this endeavour. The fact that after the 1911 Revolution, many of the Manchu government officials fled to Qingdao and stayed there points to the successful establishment of the German model-settlement. But the Japanese occupation of Qingdao in 1914 brought an end to this policy.

Founded in 1824, the Lutheran Berlin Missionary Society initially began evangelistic work in Guangdong province in 1884 and came to Eastern Shandong after 1898. These German Lutheran missionaries were motivated “to offer the best the West has to offer to the Kaiser’s new subjects in China.”

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Their primary goals were to convert Chinese and to establish Lutheran congregations in Shandong. As time went by, the Lutheran mission founded several schools in the area and a small dispensary in Jimo. Financial constraints forced the home board in Berlin to confine their work within the leased territory and the demilitarised zone, but the superintendent of the Lutheran mission in Shandong, Voskamp, continuously expanded the missionary activities into the interior, and at the outbreak of the First World War, the Lutheran mission had about 1,000 converts.

Another mission active in Eastern Shandong was the Weimar Missionary Society, a joint Swiss-German missionary enterprise founded in 1884 by the liberal German Lutherans and members of the Swiss Reformed Church. The main goal of the Weimar Missionary Society was “to spread Christianity to the highly civilized nations of the East (i.e. China, Japan and India) in appreciation of the elements of truth already present in their culture.” Its German section, particularly its home board in Berlin, actively supported the German government to move into Qingdao after the Sino-German Treaty of 1898. But, under the leadership of Richard Wilhelm, the Weimar mission adopted a totally different mission strategy. It refrained from baptizing Chinese converts and founding native congregations. Neither did it hold any religious instruction sessions nor celebrate Christian holidays in the boys’ school. Instead, it actively supported a thorough Confucian training in the mission schools and promoted Confucianism in China and Germany.

Though divergent in their evangelistic approaches and openly critical of each other, the two German missions had a few things in common. The German missions did not have the financial support that the American and British missions had in Shandong. At a theological level, unlike their American and British counterparts, the German missionaries considered a purified Confucianism to be a viable basis for Christianity and therefore, favoured cross-cultural dialogues with Chinese scholars. Politically, the two German missions were dissatisfied with the German government’s policies towards China and socially, they did not fully integrate with the German community in Qingdao. It is against this background that the following incidents of disputes will be examined in detail. The first two cases took place in the demilitarised zone. The third case occurred in a village in the leased territory and the last one took place in a city outside the realm of German influence.

II. Jimo Incident (1901)

In July 1901, an anti-tax riot broke out in Jimo, a district city in the demilitarised zone surrounding the German leased territory. Yuan Shikai, the provincial governor of Shandong, increased taxes to raise funds for the Boxer indemnities. The district of Jimo had not paid taxes to the provincial government for centuries and all of a sudden, tax collectors asked for an amount of about 10 cents from each family. People refused to pay their dues and protested against the district government. Within days, more than 100,000 farmers surrounded the yamen and looted the houses of several tax collectors. They threatened to kill the district magistrate named Wang and then went to Qingdao to apply for German citizenship. After hearing about the anti-tax riot, the prefectural government in Laizhou sent forty soldiers to rescue Magistrate Wang. To ensure his safety, Magistrate Wang took four members of the gentry as hostages but this tactic immediately put him at odds with the local elite and tensions remained unresolved.

Magistrate Wang decided to create a religious case involving German missionaries and Chinese Christians (jiào’àn). The German diplomats were known to be willing to defend the interests of their citizens and missionaries. As soon as Wilhelm Lutschewitz of the Berlin Missionary Society in Jimo declared himself in danger, Magistrate Wang believed that the German troops from Qingdao would arrive in a few days. In the next two days, Magistrate Wang visited Lutschewitz in person, hinting that Lutschewitz was in danger because of the riot and therefore, he should call for the German troops. Lutschewitz, however, remained neutral throughout the riot. Having failed to engage the German troops, Magistrate Wang released the hostages. He died of apoplexy shortly after the riot. The district of Jimo paid no taxes for another year and the prefectural officials were grateful that Lutschewitz had not made the Jimo incident a diplomatic crisis by calling in the German troops.

III. Missionaries as Educators in State Schools

Local unrest in the demilitarised zone during the Boxer Uprising led to the dispatch of the German troops into Eastern Shandong. The German troops were stationed in the district towns of Jiaozhou and Gaomi until 1906. Even though this was a clear violation of the Sino-German Treaty governing the German leased territory, the Qing government failed to get the German troops to withdraw after the Boxer Uprising. Without the support of the imperial government, the local Chinese could not secure any compensation for damages caused by the German troops.

In this volatile situation, the Chinese local government employed the age-old tactic of “using the barbarians against the barbarians (yìyì zhǐyì”). All the German Catholic and Protestant missionary societies in the area were invited to teach at the newly established modern district schools. One of the Protestant missionaries was Richard Wilhelm of the Weimar Missionary Society, who had succeeded in persuading the German troops to end their retaliatory incursion into Gaomi in November 1900 and earned the respect of the people. In October 1902, Wilhelm took over the administration of the district school in Gaomi. The Berlin Missionary Society and the Society of the Divine Word (S.V.D.) each began teaching “Western subjects” and German language at district schools in Jimo and Jiaozhou at the end of 1903. This arrangement was in place until the summer of 1912. As teachers at these government schools, the missionaries became quasi employees of the Chinese state and members of the local gentry. They were invited to take part in public events and ceremonies commensurate with their status.

To a large extent, this policy of yìyì zhǐyì was beneficial to the Chinese local government. The German missionaries were no longer seen as dangerous outsiders and potential trouble-
makers. Bounded by the Confucian rituals, the missionaries had to meet the gentry on a regular basis. Common courtesy required them to discuss any disputes between Christians and non-Christians with the district magistrate before making any public appeals. While this kind of informal meeting did not guarantee a peaceful settlement of such disputes, it sent a powerful message to those Christian adherents in search for protection.

The strong missionary presence helped control the German troops in the demilitarised zone. As potential witnesses with strong ties to the German diplomats and foreign media, the missionaries were the best watchdogs that the Chinese local government could find to police the German troops. Clearly, there was a political consideration behind the decision to employ the German missionaries to work at the government schools. This point is proved by the fact that the local officials never employed the American Presbyterian missionaries in the area and the Chinese graduates from Dengzhou College, a Presbyterian mission school, near Yantai because the American missionaries did not have access to the German troops or other security forces.

The Sino-German cooperation at the district level did not last for long. Japan’s victory over Russia in 1905 had affected the balance of power between China and the West and the Chinese perception of Westerners. After 1905, local officials were more concerned with the threat of Japan than that of Germany. When the German military abandoned its barracks in Gaomi and Jiaozhou in 1906, the Chinese officials were no longer interested in cooperating with the German missions. In 1908, the district magistrates of Jimo and Gaomi did not employ the German missionaries to teach at the government schools. The change of political climate in northeast Asia indeed had an impact on the mission-state relations at the grassroots level.

IV. Guye Case (1901)

After the end of the Boxer Uprising, it was very clear to the Chinese in Eastern Shandong that the German troops were there to stay. Rural unrest in the hinterlands of Qingdao made it difficult for the German missionaries to travel to the countryside. In 1901, large numbers of villagers came to ask the missionaries in Qingdao to establish churches in their communities. The village elders bought stacks of the New Testament and catechisms and expressed interest in learning about the Christian message. These villagers sought to be affiliated with the Christian missions in order to show that they were not involved in the Boxer Uprising.

After purchasing the Christian pamphlets, most of the village elders never returned to the German mission compounds. The only exception was the village of Guye, where the Christian sympathisers eventually persuaded Adolf Kunze of the Lutheran Berlin Missionary Society to establish a mission outpost there. They offered their ancestral hall for use as a school and chapel and promised to arrange living quarters for the Chinese preacher. Kunze was moved by their sincerity and sent a Chinese evangelist to Guye. One and half years later, the Chinese evangelist reported that the whole village was about to convert to Christianity. But only the village leader and one farmer were baptized in 1903. In the summer of 1905, the Christian village leader died and was buried according to the Christian rites. The whole village attended his funeral. At the funeral, the missionaries were very impressed by the hospitality of the villagers. When a member of the home board from Berlin visited Guye in 1905, all the village elders came to welcome the guest at the church and stayed throughout the lengthy service. Yet no one was baptized in 1905. When the Lutheran mission considered closing the chapel, several villagers came to the evangelist for religious instruction. But there was no baptism until the outbreak of the First World War. In 1909, Adolf Kunze visited Guye and met the new village leader. The village leader accompanied Kunze to nearby villages, all of which were under an inter-village alliance with Guye. The leader of Guye was the head of the inter-village alliance. On that occasion, all the other village leaders attended a church service in Guye and asked Kunze for special prayers to end the drought in the area. Kunze obliged, asking God for rain and for the conversion of the people in Guye. Nevertheless, even though it actually rained the next day, conversions did not follow.

Why did the people in Guye continue to keep the church in the village? Why were they so courteous to the German missionaries but refused to be baptised? There are three explanations for the non-conversion of villagers in Guye. The first explanation concerns the community’s intention to maintain a good relationship with the German administration in Licun. The German officials made religious neutrality one of their policies. Though a former missionary himself, Mootz, the senior German administrator in Licun, was not in favour of the German missionary expansion into the interior. Instead of looking after the German Protestant interests, he donated money for rebuilding local temples and holding traditional Chinese festivals. Because Licun was very close to Guye, the villagers heard about Mootz’s lack of support for the German missions. The fact that the German judge made a decision favourable to non-Christians in a lawsuit involving a Christian farmer in Guye in 1910 reinforced the popular perception of Mootz. To keep the Chinese evangelist in Guye was a gesture of maintaining some sort of relationship with the German establishment in the area. But, with the decline of German power in Eastern Shandong after 1905, there no longer was any interest in affiliating with the Lutheran Berlin Missionary Society.

The second explanation concerns the community’s desire to have an elementary school in the village without financing a teacher. The villagers were far more interested in helping their children to acquire literary skills at the church school rather than receiving proper instruction in the Christian doctrine. The third explanation has to do with the community’s desire to invite the Christian God of those powerful Germans to be the spiritual guardian of Guye, a manner comparable to worshipping deities at village shrines and temples. This popular perception of Christianity probably arose from the close association between the Bible and the gun in the German missionary movement.

The final explanation concerns the power relations between Guye and neighbouring villagers. The German...
missionaries noted that in many parts of the German leased territory, the local Christians liked to be accompanied by a missionary when they marched through the neighbouring villages. Each chapel often displayed a German flag and pictures of the German Imperial family. By displaying a close connection with the Lutheran Berlin Missionary Society, the village leader in Guye could enhance his authority within the inter-village alliance. While asking the German mission to stay at Guye, the villagers tended to have a political agenda that was different from the religious concerns of the missionaries. This political feature of the German missionary movement in Eastern Shandong, similar to that in late nineteenth-century South China, led to a decline of interest in the German missions. The change of political climate after the Russo-Japanese War witnessed a change of attitude among the Chinese elite towards Christianity. When the Chinese elite came to terms with German imperialism in Eastern Shandong, they had to learn how to survive in the new political environment. This pragmatic concern dictated their interaction with the German Protestant missions in the region. The Chinese officials who took advantage of the German missionary resources in the competitive arena of local politics were as pragmatic as the Chinese Christians who employed conversion as a strategy of survival. For the German missionaries, cooperation with the Chinese elite brought in large amounts of resources but did not lead to large numbers of conversions. The change of political climate after the Russo-Japanese War (1905) led to a decline of interest in the German missions. Wilhelm Lutschewitz of the Lutheran Berlin Missionary Society finally realized that the Chinese gentry had virtually no interest in Christianity. This realization came as a shock to Richard Wilhelm who believed that his relationship with the gentry had been based on a deep personal and emotional bond.

VI. Conclusion

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the German missionaries in China were more than proponents of an alien creed. Under the Sino-German Treaty, they could move freely in the interior and were not subject to Chinese laws. In the remote areas where there was little government control, some local powerbrokers did not hesitate to exploit missionary resources to enhance their positions. Because of the dual identities of the Christian missionaries as spiritual teachers and political agents, it is clear that conversion offered material advantages for the poor and empowered the politically marginalized communities.

As shown in these case studies, the end of the Boxer Uprising witnessed a change of attitude among the Chinese elite towards Christianity. When the Chinese elite came to terms with German imperialism in Eastern Shandong, they had to learn how to survive in the new political environment. This pragmatic concern dictated their interaction with the German Protestant missions in the region. The Chinese officials who took advantage of the German missionary resources in the competitive arena of local politics were as pragmatic as the Chinese Christians who employed conversion as a strategy of survival. For the German missionaries, cooperation with the Chinese elite brought in large amounts of resources but did not lead to large numbers of conversions. The change of political climate after the Russo-Japanese War (1905) led to a decline of interest in the German missions. Wilhelm Lutschewitz of the Lutheran Berlin Missionary Society finally realized that the Chinese gentry had virtually no interest in Christianity. This realization came as a shock to Richard Wilhelm who believed that his relationship with the gentry had been based on a deep personal and emotional bond.

ENDNOTES


2. The rule that no Chinese were allowed to live within parts of Qingdao reserved for Westerners was abolished to accommodate these wealthy Chinese officials.


5. In Gerber’s Von Voskamps, chapter 2 and chapter 3 explain Wilhelm’s missionary goals and methods, and discuss his ability to deceive the home board about his evangelistic work in Qingdao.

6. Richard Wilhelm. This work describes Wilhelm’s path from German theologian to German Confucianist. A more detailed analysis of Wilhelm’s missionary work in Shandong and his relationship to his home board can be found in Von Voskamps, Gerber, pp. 73–103 and pp. 174–96.


8. These events were reiterated in several of the Berlin Missionary Society’s publications. See, for example “Anfangsarbeit eines Missionars – aus einem Privatgebuch von Lutschewitz,” Das Evangelium in China (1902), pp. 70–89, especially pp. 86–87. The archives of the Berlin Missionary Society have the German translation of a letter by Daotai Cui Zhongsheng, expressing his own gratitude as well as that of Governor Yuan Shikai to Lutschewitz. The translation is undated and included in Lutschewitz’ annual report for 1901, which arrived in Berlin on January 9, 1902. Stationsakte Tsino, Bd. 1, unnumbered sheet. The Berlin Missionary Society Archives (hereafter BMSA), Berlin Germany.


10. The arrangement described here is probably based on a memorial by the future governor of Shandong, Yuan Shikai, dated July 1899. In this document, Yuan suggested the local officials in Shandong to take a more active role in preventing anti-missionary violence. The solution found by the district magistrates in the demilitarized zone was highly effective. For a description of the ideas presented in Yuan’s memorial, see Imperialism and Chinese Nationalism, Schrecker, pp. 112–14.


12. Wilhelm himself did not move to Gaomi but had other missionaries from the Weimar Mission stationed there to teach German and “Western subjects”. However, he repeatedly visited Gaomi and was received as an honored member of the local gentry.


14. Richard Wilhelm’s report to the Qingdao Gouverneur Jaeschcke regarding German violence against Chinese villagers during a military expedition directed against the Boxers in November 1901 had indeed made an impact. It motivated Jaeschcke to end the military expedition and provide Wilhelm with funds to relieve the suffering of Chinese villagers. Wilhelm’s passionate account of the events was only published by the home board in excerpts, and all the details concerning the extreme cruelty of the German troops were removed. Richard Wilhelm to Kind, 26 November 1900, DOAM Akte 236, Bl. 159 f. printed (in parts) in ZMR 1901, pp. 59–61.

15. The Berlin Missionary Society prevented a termination of their involvement in the district school by asking the German consul in Jinan to intervene on their behalf. The local mandarin, who had originally sent two teachers and a member of the local gentry to persuade the missionaries to leave the schools, called on the missionaries on his way back from Jinan. He told the missionaries that he had gone to great pains to convince the reluctant provincial supervisor of schools (xueba) that the future support of the missionaries was urgently needed. Lutschewitz, “Erster Halbjahresbericht 1908,” Stationsakte Tsino, Bd. 2, BMSA. Wilhelm, on the other hand, had expected that his friendship with the Gaomi elite would lead to his continued and increasing involvement in the school reforms in the district. It came as a severe shock to him, that in spite of personal friendships, the anti-foreign sentiment in Shandong was directed against him. He eventually terminated his involvement in Gaomi after the 1911 Revolution.


21. Glüer, “Unsere Mission in Schantung”, in Jahresbericht der Berliner Mission 1907, pp. 192–224, especially p.196. Mootz used to be a missionary for the Basel Missionary Society in Guangdong province. His interest in the modern liberal theology and his lack of engagement in missionary work had led to an investigation into the nature of his beliefs. Mootz left the mission to work as a translator and then an official for the German colonial government in Kiautschou.


23. Yu Ke argues that the German missionaries raised the national flag on all mission properties. Yu Ke, “Jiduxinjiao zai Zhongguode lishi yu tongxue,” Weihaiwei Zhongguo Erman Zuwu Fuwu Ziyuan Zhuanji, p.139.


27. Because Richard Wilhelm had refrained from proselytizing, he was willing to attend the Confucian rituals. In 1906, he was awarded a Chinese rank in recognition of his peace-keeping mission in November 1900. He was convinced that his missionary approach was well received by the Chinese gentry.

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Mission Education as a Community Effort in Early Twentieth-Century North China
by John R. Stanley, Ph.D.

Abstract
This article looks at the dynamics of the Protestant missionary education in North China at the turn of the twentieth century. Focusing on the American Presbyterian school system in Shandong province, it investigates a number of attempts by Chinese Christian educators to claim more power and play an active role in the development of the Christian mission education. It argues that the American Presbyterian missionaries completely depended on their Chinese colleagues to administer the mission school system. As the 1910s came to an end, there were more opportunities for Chinese workers to take up administrative positions in the mission schools. To a large extent, there was a gradual process of devolution of power within the mission school system. It was in this process that Chinese staff had acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to run the schools on their own.

Mission education constituted an integral part of Christian missionary movements in modern China. The early twentieth-century witnessed intense power struggles between the Christian missionary enterprise and Chinese Republican state over control of education, as scholars such as Jessie G. Lutz and Yip Ka-che have shown (Lutz, 1971, 1988; Yip, 1980). Much attention has been given to the impact of Christian mission education on China’s modernization in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Leung, 1993). Historians either praise or criticize the ways in which Christian missionaries shaped the development of modern educational institutions in China. Some scholars have focused on the ways in which mission education contributed to the anti-footbinding campaign and therefore, empowered Chinese women in a patriarchal society (Yung, 1999). What is missing in the scholarly literature, however, is the important role that Chinese educators played in the day-to-day management of primary and secondary school systems within the Christian missionary enterprise. A closer look at the Chinese contribution to the advancement of mission education will not only throw lights on the relationship between Chinese Christians and their missionary patrons, but also contribute to our understanding of the dynamic process of “education building” in the early twentieth century.

This article focuses on the Weixian (Wei-hsien) school system, one of the most successful educational systems of the American Presbyterian mission in Shandong province, North China. Between 1900 and 1920, student numbers rose from 756 to 2,415, making up 31% of the total student population in the primary and secondary schools of the Shandong Mission. This study seeks to explore the internal operation of this Christian educational enterprise and the interactions between foreign missionaries and Chinese workers. It does not suggest that the American Presbyterian missionaries completely devolved power to the Chinese administrators within the school system, or that they wanted this to happen outside of evangelistic work at any point in the future. With usually only one missionary assigned to manage the whole school system, the Presbyterian missionaries had little time to fully devote to the educational work, a fact which missionaries themselves constantly alluded to in their correspondence. Therefore, much of the day-to-day running of the schools was left to the Chinese staff, although the missionaries retained control of the top decision-making apparatus.

Beginning with a brief analysis of the school Superintendent in the American mission, this study discusses the role of Chinese administrators and educational staff, as well as the unofficial Chinese movements within the system, including Chinese students’ activities and the expansion of educational activities undertaken by Chinese staff outside the mission system. The period under study is from 1900 to 1920 when the major expansion efforts in the mission school system took place.

I. The American Presbyterian Educational System in Shandong

The American Presbyterian country school system began in the 1880s but its student body was minuscule compared with later years. At this early stage, missionaries played the primary role in running and coordinating the system on the ground. By 1890, however, the school system had grown considerably with about 1,000 pupils recorded in 1895. Because of the increase in the number of students and the limited amount of time each missionary could give to their work, the quality of the mission schools started to decrease. To ensure uniform quality in the system, the missionaries appointed Li Shi-huo, a Chinese Presbyterian, as “Superintendent of Country Schools” to take charge of the boys’ country school examinations and to “unify them and get them in better shape.” In 1891, the missionaries considered Li’s work to be a great success, and the system remained decentralized. This, however, gave rise to varying levels of academic standards.

In 1891, the administrative role of the Superintendent was enhanced. Li Shi-huo was now given the job of ensuring a uniform quality of studies and materials used in the schools. With greater power given to a layperson such as Li, the missionaries had trouble convincing the Chinese pastors of their need for a Superintendent. They did not give much explanation for this difficulty, but one can assume that the Chinese pastors felt any field the missionaries had control of would devolve to them, if to anyone at all. In any case, by 1892, the missionaries reported that Li’s work had “vastly improved” the efficiency and quality of the country schools. Unfortunately, no records have been found from the Superintendent about what his work would have actually entailed, and whether or not he, as opposed to some other force at work, was indeed responsible for the improvements. The work of the Superintendent changed little in the following years with much of the control over the schools remaining in the hands of the missionaries.
Two years later, in 1894, however, the number of day schools became too great for the missionaries to take a primary role in their running. The missionaries thus increased the role of the Superintendent and hired a second individual from Dengzhou College, a Presbyterian mission school, to lessen their workload. As Weixian Boys’ High School became prominent as the primary preparatory school for the College, there was a need for a more efficient system of advancement. With the withdrawal of the missionaries from the hands-on work of examining the country boys’ schools, the responsibility for choosing candidates for advancement fell largely to the two Chinese Superintendents in charge of examinations. One should note, however, that while they were charged with the general running of the system, final decisions of advancement were still made solely by the missionaries.

In 1898 the missionaries brought the day schools under the control of one individual to further improve the efficiency of the school system. They noted that a disjointed system could not ensure the same level of scholarship, but if the primary responsibility lay with one missionary, they could create a system with uniform standards of scholarship. In the past, 49 schools were divided among two or three missionaries. Now the system, extending over a 500 square mile area, came under the control of Frank Chalfant. The new responsibilities entrusted to him included making recommendations for teachers and school directors and enforcing the system’s regulations. Because of the increased workload, Chalfant looked to the Chinese Superintendents for more administrative assistance than had previously been asked of them. During the Boxer Uprising in 1900, the missionaries abandoned the station and retreated to the coastal cities until 1901 when they were permitted to re-enter the interior of Shandong. Upon their return, the missionaries sought to expand the school system. To accomplish the goal, they hired Ralph Wells, a professional educator, to take charge of the educational work.

In 1907, after the school system had gradually recovered from the Boxer Uprising, the position of Chinese Superintendent was restored. As before, he worked under the general oversight of a foreign missionary and was responsible for visiting and conducting the examinations in the primary day schools. Ralph Wells was brought in specifically to run the school system. Prior to his appointment, foreign missionaries had retained much control over the school system. But Ralph Wells was more concerned with running Point Breeze Academy in Weixian and making improvements there rather than travelling around the countryside and overseeing the country school network. The responsibility to supervise the country schools was therefore left to the Chinese Superintendent. In his report of 1912, Wells stated, “the actual supervision of the schools has been carried on by an efficient school inspector, a good deal of time has been spent conferring with him.”

The Chinese Superintendent was also asked to look after student life and the material conditions of the school. There was indeed, then, a transfer of some administrative duties from the educational missionaries to the Chinese staff.

One should note that the Chinese Superintendent was only in charge of running the boys’ country schools. The girls’ country boarding schools were still overseen directly by the missionaries. However, when girls’ day schools were formed and expanded in 1907, a Chinese female Superintendent was appointed.

Devolution of power to the Chinese mission staff was not the only issue during the first decade of the twentieth century. By 1910, the Chinese Superintendent had been a part of the station’s school system for many years and gained much administrative experience. They had also cultivated contacts outside of the religious sphere, and had established close connections with local government schools and inspectors. The Chinese Superintendent continued to maintain a close relationship with the heads of government-run schools. They often shared information and visited each other’s schools, hoping to improve the standards of their own institutions. This inevitably impacted the views of education and the form that work took. In the case of local schools, some of the former Chinese Superintendents established private schools outside the missionary system. But those local schools within the missionary system instituted new teaching methods, one of which was to break up elementary and intermediate pupils, and to establish higher primary schools for intermediate pupils. A departure from the missionary approach of teaching all intermediate and elementary pupils in the one-room schoolhouse system, the creation of higher primary schools was indeed a step forward and later adopted by the missionaries themselves on a limited scale.

A certain degree of devolution of power to the Chinese Superintendent was underway to ensure the academic quality of students brought future success in higher education. However, the Superintendents were only one way to ensure the system’s success. The missionaries, presumably with the Superintendents, looked at all the day schools under their supervision and chose an individual they felt to be the best teacher. For example, in 1915, a Chinese teacher was chosen and freed from his duties so that he could visit all the country schools and spend a period ranging from one day to one week at each school. He would attend all the classes and introduce new teaching methods to country teachers. In the areas where he felt the local teachers were deficient, he would teach the class himself under the observation of the teachers in question, and then discuss the different teaching techniques with them. The objective of this programme was to introduce better teaching practices to the country schools and improve the performance of rural students. Soon after it began, in 1916–1917, this programme of itinerant teaching was replaced by a new banner system in which Chinese Superintendents would grade all the schools on a 1000-point scale based upon their teachers’ and students’ work, the condition of their equipment and buildings, and the health of their students. Upon reaching 800 points, a school would receive a “red satin banner” and be given the title of “standards.”

The Chinese colleagues were only asked to administer the elementary schools, and were largely kept outside all major decision-making bodies. In 1913, however, an important move was made with the appointment of a Cooperation Committee consisting of five members, including Chinese...
and missionaries. This new organization set up an Educational Committee to take up the general oversight of the station’s educational system. The Committee appears to have taken direct control of the country primary schools so that Ralph Wells and Madge Mateer, one-time head of the girls’ country schools, could concentrate on the management of the Christian high schools and evangelistic work.

The first major accomplishment of the Cooperation Committee was to reform the girls’ country schools. All but two of the girls’ country boarding schools were transformed into day schools. This move helped create 34 new girls’ schools and 2 boarding schools serving as co-educational intermediate schools. Combined with the move towards co-education in the lower primary schools, there was new hope that a larger proportion of daughters would be able to obtain an education. Although Madge Mateer was not immediately won over to the new plans, she was surprised at the success of the schools on her first inspection tour in 1914. While acknowledging the small number of pupils taking advantage of the new co-educational policy, she was heartened by the educational push being made in the country districts.

The influence of the Cooperation Committee was not only felt at the elementary level but was also noted at the high school level in matters concerning the finance and curricula of Point Breeze Academy and Wen Mei School. Prior to the 1910s, both schools had a rather informal funding policy. However, with the involvement of the mission’s Educational Committee and the station’s Cooperative Committee, a more formal structure of tuition was put into place.

In 1912, the Educational Committee proposed a self-supporting educational system requiring all pupils in the boarding schools to pay the full boarding cost. At the 1913 mission meeting, this proposal was accepted. However, the Cooperative Committee of individual stations formed a special committee to decide how much financial aid the mission should give to students who could not afford such an expense. With this in mind, fees in Wen Mei School were raised to 26,000 large cash per student (approximately 26 Mexican silver dollars per student), beginning with the fall semester of 1913. Point Breeze Academy quickly followed suit and in 1914, introduced tuition fees for the first time. The new fees were equal to the full payment of the student’s expense on food. Only a few students could afford the full tuition fees, but 32 out of the 89 students paid some percentage of the tuition over the full boarding cost required by the mission. To help the students pay for their boarding costs, the Academy instituted a work-study programme for “worthy students of good character.”

Another area that came into prominence in the early 1900s was the addition of English to the curriculum at Point Breeze Academy. There had never been much debate among the missionaries, as they took the same view as their brethren in Dengzhou College that all teaching had to be done in Chinese so as not to de-nationalize the students. In 1911, the American Presbyterian West Shandong Mission resolved that the question of introducing English as an academic subject would be left to the individual Middle School principals, but that the introduction of an English course should not interfere with the current curriculum. In 1913, the Cooperation Committee used its weight to push the introduction of English into the Academy’s regular curriculum rather than allow it to be left as an optional subject. As the curriculum was enlarged to include English as a regular subject, the length of study was extended from two to three years. The introduction of English into the curriculum was gradual but quickly extended throughout the three class years.

Underlying these changes was the increase of Chinese involvement in the school system. Although the American missionaries did not always sanction all the educational proposals made by their Chinese colleagues, they did not criticize or oppose Chinese efforts to open new schools and improve the academic standard of students. One can see an “unofficial role” that the Chinese staff played in the Christian school system. If there had not been Chinese input, the system would not have been so successful.

In 1889, for the first time, Chinese Christians took steps themselves to establish new schools within the Presbyterian mission field. While we do not know if they finally succeeded or the extent to which the missionaries were involved in this project, it is important to note their determination to establish schools for their children without waiting for the missionaries to do so. In the highly literate Chinese society, it was common for local communities to take independent action to establish private schools for their children as shown in Stig Thøgersen’s study of village schools in Zouping, Shandong (Thøgersen, 2002).

II. The Chinese Contributions to Mission Education

Although the missionaries had nominal control over these Chinese Christian schools, we do not know how these Chinese Christian founders and teachers ran the schools. What is known is that without a central organizing and supervising force, there arose once again the problem of keeping a uniform level of scholarship. In the 1890s, the introduction of Chinese Superintendent indicates that with the increase of school numbers, the Chinese teachers were actively involved in the decision-making process on the ground. It was through the enforcement of examination and school regulations that many of these Chinese Christian schools initially outside missionary control had been gradually integrated into the American Presbyterian missionary enterprise. The day-to-day operation of these schools, however, remained in Chinese hands. This shows that local Chinese Christians increased their control over mission education during the last decade of the Qing Dynasty.

This Chinese Christian initiative to construct boys’ and girls’ schools for Chinese students continued throughout the 1910s. After the 1911 Revolution, a major national reform of the school system in 1912 provided the broader framework for educational change in Shandong, for example the introduction of compulsory education and the coeducation of boys and girls, but not all aspects of the reform were implemented locally (Thøgersen, 2002, 59–60). Nevertheless, greater impetus for people in Weixian to found modern schools was noticeable. While many schools were founded along the old-style
educational model, a significant number of the Chinese Christian schools sought to become part of the American Presbyterian mission school system. As Ralph Wells noted in 1915, those self-supporting schools begun by the local population in the countryside were applying to the Presbyterian mission to be “recognized as Cooperation Committee schools.” Once accepted, these local schools would continue to act on a self-supporting basis and would be able to send their students to the boys’ high school in the American Presbyterian Weixian station. In order to be accepted into the mission school system, the Presbyterian missionaries required local teachers and managers to be Christians and the schools to follow the regulations and curriculum set by the Cooperation Committee. These schools would be allowed to have pupils sit for the admissions examinations for the high school in Weixian, but the missionaries would send the Chinese Superintendent to visit them on occasion. Students graduating from these schools would receive the same certificates as the rest in the mission school system, and local teachers would also be able to take advantage of the periodic teachers’ institutes at the mission station and find resources. Indeed, these Chinese local schools had much to gain from affiliating with the Presbyterian mission. It is however unclear whether the local girls’ schools were integrated into the mission school system.

The Chinese contribution to the mission school system can be seen in the story of Pastor Liu Guang-zhao who founded the Anqiu Normal School south of Weixian with his wife. It opened with thirty-one students from the government and mission schools. The attendees signed up for a nine-month course after which each was given a certificate. The school was basically self-supporting with funds coming from students, local officials, and “one or two foreigners.” The students came from the mission school system. They, for one reason or another, could not attend or finish the full course at the Wen Mei School and only had a primary school education. The purpose of this school was not solely to replenish the teaching force of the Presbyterian primary schools, but also to provide more teachers for the government schools. Serving as a training institute for schoolteachers, the Anqiu Normal School quickly expanded by opening a primary day school for training purposes, and employed three government teachers to raise its quality. What Pastor Liu had achieved was remarkable. Without his efforts, there would not have been enough schoolteachers for either the mission or local school systems. By 1914 almost half of the female teachers in the government schools were trained at the Anqiu Normal School. What surprised the missionaries was the fact that these teachers only had a general primary education with one year additional training at Anqiu. By 1918, thirteen teachers in the girls’ country schools came from the Anqiu Normal School, and twenty-three were graduates of the Wen Mei School. Although Pastor Liu’s institution was not designed to supplant the mission station’s teacher-training programme, the education it provided was important for the local government girls’ schools.

With the success of the Anqiu Normal School, the benefits of this kind of training institution became obvious. The only reason for stopping the missionaries from opening a similar school for men was lack of space. It was only after the relocation of the College of Arts of the Shandong Christian University from Weixian to Jinan in 1917 that the missionaries decided to found the East Shandong Bible and Normal School to train primary schoolteachers and male evangelists. This study would not be complete without a discussion of students’ involvement in shaping the policy of the newly affiliated local schools. After the 1911 Revolution, students throughout China were becoming more actively involved in politics and ensuring their needs to be met in schools. This eventually blossomed into the May Fourth Movement (1919–1921). The growth of student activism in national politics had an impact on students at the local level. In Shandong, the students at the high school level appeared to be very active in voicing their concerns to the missionaries. For example, in the fall semester of 1908, some students protested against the school’s cook and demanded his removal, threatening to leave the school otherwise. In 1912, Ralph Wells resolved this problem by allowing the students to supervise the cooking department, and the students elected a committee to run the new cooking department with their teachers serving as advisors. Wells believed that the students would benefit from this experience, and later introduced the same arrangement in the Wen Mei School. The high school student movements did not end with this small victory. While the students were allowed to run the kitchen, they also protested against the Chinese Classics teacher. Although not as forceful as those against the cook, their protests entailed a refusal to attend his class such that Ralph Wells was forced to take action against the teacher by asking him to resign. The teacher soon left the school. In 1914 too, the students decided to adopt a new school uniform without inducement from the teachers or other school officials. In addition to this, the students began to take a greater interest in athletics without official encouragement. Because of student insistence, the missionaries had to introduce uniforms and athletics into the school, although they tried to avoid propagating the militaristic nature of these rituals and practices. Clearly, the students exercised a certain degree of influence in the school.

III. Conclusion

Through a case study of the American Presbyterian school system in Weixian, this article provides a fresh perspective on the contributions of Chinese staff to the development of the mission education. In the past, scholars have criticized Christian missionaries for not involving Chinese staff in educational work. However, this study has shown that at least in Weixian, the Presbyterian missionaries completely depended on their Chinese colleagues to administer the mission school system. As the 1910s came to a close, there were more opportunities for Chinese workers to take up administrative positions in Weixian. In many high schools, the Chinese were appointed as principals throughout the 1920s. To a large extent, then, there was a gradual process of devolution of power within the Weixian school system at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was in this process that Chinese staff acquired the necessary skills and knowledge to run the schools on their own.
What happened to the Weixian mission school system during the turbulent period of the 1930s and 1940s? Despite the Japanese invasion of North China in the mid-1930s, the American Presbyterian missionaries and their Chinese staff continued to run the schools. But after the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941, the Japanese Imperial Army captured all foreign nationals in Shandong and placed them in the Civilian Internment Camps. The Weixian School Compound was taken over by the Japanese forces. It was turned into an internment camp with barbed wire around its walls and admitted its first internees in March 1943. Through its gates passed approximately 1,200 internees, the most famous being Eric Liddell, a Scottish Presbyterian missionary and the 1924 Olympic champion. Although it had a checkered past as an American mission station and a Japanese internment camp, the Weixian School Compound was changed into a state-run educational institution after the Communist Revolution of 1949. The old mission school compound is a living testimony of the long history of cooperation between American Presbyterian missionaries and local Christians in the creation of one of China’s modern school systems. Today on the old mission school compound stands the No. 2 Middle School, a preeminent educational institution in the city of Weifang, and many contemporary schools in Shandong can trace their history back to their Presbyterian roots.

ENDNOTES


3. After 1900, the school was rebuilt and renamed the Point Breeze Academy. Its Chinese name also changed at that time.


6. Before 1907, there was no reference to the position of Chinese Superintendent in the missionary correspondence.


8. In his report for the year 1913–1914, Ralph Wells stated, “This year as in former years I have had charge of the Point Breeze Academy and the fifty-two Boys’ Country Schools in the Wei-hsien district. Sixteen hours a week during the autumn term and seventeen during the spring term have been given to teaching which together with the station treasurer, the management of affairs in connection with the Compound Gate and membership on the University Property Committee and other committees have kept my time fairly occupied.” See “Personal Report for Year 1913–1914,” no date was given, Weixian, RG82/8/8/20–8, PHS.

9. Unfortunately, the names of Chinese educational and evangelistic staff at the Weixian Station were never mentioned in the missionary correspondence. “Personal Report of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph C. Wells to the Shantung Mission for the year ending August 31, 1912,” RG82/4/2/20/8, PHS.

10. In the report for the Weixian station for 1914, the new role of the superintendent was noted. “The material equipment of the schools is gradually being improved, and the inspectors [we assume there is more than one at this point] are gathering material for a comparative chart to use at our next institute, to show the sanitary conditions, lighting, ventilation, condition of the walls, floors, desks, seats, blackboards and other equipment.” See “Report for the Wei-hsien Station for the year ending July 11, 1914,” RG82/8/8/20–2, 22, PHS.


12. “Report for the Wei-hsien Station for the year ending July 11, 1914,” Weixian, RG82/8/8/20–2, 22, PHS.

13. Ibid.


16. The sources do not indicate how many Chinese were present on the Cooperation Committee, but there seems to have been at least two. The sources also do not mention the exact number of Chinese members on the Educational Committee. The Seventy-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (1914): 154, PHS.

17. After 1900, particularly after 1911, education became a status symbol and many parents found that education allowed their daughters to secure a better marriage. Therefore, there was strong support for education for girls at the local level. In Weixian, it was the local communities that introduced girls’ education. “Wei-hsien Quarterly Station Letter,” 26 January 1914, Weixian, RG82/8/7/102; J. A. Fitch to A. J. Brown, 6 April 1914, Weixian, RG82/8/7/43; “Report for the Wei-hsien Station for the year ending July 11, 1914,” Weixian, RG82/8/8/20–2, 22–23, PHS.

18. The policy at that time was to ask students to pay whatever they could afford. Then, the mission stations or other sponsors would pay for the rest of the educational expenses.


21. “Report of the Wei-hsien Station for the year ending August 20, 1913,” Weixian, RG82/6/2/20–2, PHS.


23. The question of introducing English into the school system followed the protests in the Arts College in which one of the students’ demands was that English language instruction be introduced. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Shantung Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, October 1911 (Weixian: Shantung University Press, 1911): 12, PHS.

24. One should note here that the Weixian station was very much ahead of its time in allowing Chinese staff members to participate in the running of its schools through the Cooperation Committee. The American Presbyterian Shandong Mission did not form its own Cooperation Committee until 1913. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Shantung Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1913 (Weixian:
38. “Annual Report of the Point Breeze Academy to the Shantung Mission for the year ending August 31, 1912,” RG82/4/2/20/2, PHS.
39. Ibid.
40. The Seventy-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (1915): 148, PHS.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Bible versus Guns: Horace G. Underwood’s Evangelization of Korea
by James Jin-Hong Kim, Ph.D.

Abstract
This article has presented a critical overview of Horace G. Underwood’s missionary career. In particular, it focuses on Underwood’s approach to evangelisation and church-state relations in late nineteenth-century Korea. While Korea was facing the Japanese imperialistic intrusion, Underwood hoped to use Protestant Christianity to reform and modernize Korea, to make the church more important to the Korean state, and to support Korea against the Japanese aggression. His contributions made him a legendary figure in the modern history of Korea. His innovative mission strategy based on a long-term vision helped transform Korea into a success story of evangelisation in the global history of Protestant missionary movements.

There has been growing interest in Horace G. Underwood’s (1859–1916) evangelization of Korea in recent years; the publication of his collected letters in 2002, for one, has enabled scholars to evaluate his role in the Christian evangelization of Korea (Choi, 1992; Kim, 2002). Horace G. Underwood represented the maturation of a Protestant missionary movement that had begun in earnest with William Carey’s pioneering work in India (1761–1834) in the late eighteenth century. By the time Underwood arrived in Korea in 1885, therefore, the Protestant missionary enterprise had been active in proselytizing among local communities in Asia and Africa for nearly a century. Underwood could look to missionaries such as Carey, Adoniram Judson (1788–1850), Robert Morrison (1782–1834) and Hudson Taylor (1832–1894) as models, even as he developed a long-term vision for the evangelization of Korea and laid the foundation for Christianity’s inculturation in Asia. Certainly, the majority of Protestant missionaries in Asia and Africa during the heyday of the Christian missionary movement from the 1860s to the 1920s relied on the political and military resources of Western powers. In contrast, Underwood not only relied on local Christians to spread the gospel message and trained large numbers of Korean church leaders; he also laid the groundwork for a Christian Korea through the nurturing of its future leaders. Indeed, Underwood’s approach was an alternative to the mission strategy that Joseph Tse-Hei Lee has termed that of “the Bible and the gun” (Lee, 2003).

Clearly, then, Underwood’s legacy is of great importance for scholars interested in the spread of Christianity in Korea as well as the history of cultural interactions between Korea and the United States. This article will discuss Underwood’s missionary career in the wider context of a global Christian movement by examining his approach to church-state relations in Korea under foreign—especially Japanese—imperialistic intrusion.

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there had been a few isolated missionaries such as John Eliot in 1631 evangelizing the American Indians, the Protestant global mission had its roots in the Pietistic evangelism and ideal of the “Benevolent Empire” that existed in Euro-American churches of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century. Given this orientation, Protestant missionaries interested in China, Korea and Japan faced many challenges and much tension between church and state, between rival churches, and within the churches themselves.

One challenge that missionaries had to deal with was the fact that they operated within two states—the one from which they came and the one governing their respective mission field. The next challenge was the ongoing competition within the field, whether between Catholic and Protestant churches or among rival Protestant denominations. Another challenge was that the local church belonged to native Christians with whom missionaries had to interact and negotiate religious and secular matters. Moreover, missionaries’ association with the Western powers conveyed the idea that they were patrons of foreign imperialism to native communities. Thus, when missionaries stood up strongly for the welfare of local Christians, their evangelistic work was seen as contributing to the phenomenon of Western imperialistic intrusion of local society.

Let us explore these issues by taking a closer look at the early Jesuit and Protestant missionary pioneers in East Asia. Francis Xavier, Matteo Ricci, William Carey, Adoniram Judson, Robert Morrison and Hudson Taylor have three things in common. First, they fully engaged in an attempt to understand native languages and cultures on a “two-way-traffic” basis; second, they demonstrated a strong spirit of inter-denominational cooperation; and third, they were deeply conscious of the political, social and cultural practices beneficial to local societies (Koyama, 1975, 70–75). A central message underlying William Carey’s “Five Legacies” for mission or Adoniram Judson’s “Advice to Missionary Candidates” is the exhortation “not just [to] become familiar with but to engage in a two-way-traffic understanding.” Carey translated and distributed The Bible in 35 native dialects across India. He also urged missionaries to respect non-Christian cultures and to train native ministers as early as possible. Judson shared the same opinion. He wrote in 1832, ‘let it be a missionary life. That is, commit for life, and not for a limited term.... Beware of prematurely judging native Christians and/or non-Christians upon arrival. Disappointment, disgust, lack of contextual understanding, and close contact with those formerly seen only from a distance can combine to dishearten or prejudice you altogether.’

Judson also dedicated much of his life to compiling an English-Burmese dictionary, thereby paving the way for future missionaries to Burma. Carey and Judson in turn may have been aware of the experiences of Francis Xavier (1506–1552) and Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), both of the Jesuit mission. Xavier believed that in order for Christianity to take root in Asia, missionaries had to reach the natives on their own terms—speaking, reading and writing in local languages, behaving like locals and even becoming part of their society. He once even attempted to use the word Dainichi (“the great sun”), a word referring to a sacred being in Japanese Buddhism, to describe the Christian God.

Succeeding Xavier in China as the chief architect of the Jesuit mission strategy, Matteo Ricci entered the Ming Empire in 1583 and spent the rest of his life acquiring a good knowledge of the Chinese language and culture in a way few Westerners have achieved (Spence ed., 253). In his most famous Chinese work, Tiantzu shih-yi (The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven), Ricci’s main concern was to engage in dialogue with the Confucian literati by identifying those elements in Chinese culture that might be compatible with Christianity. He wrote, “I make every effort to turn our way the ideas of the leader of the sect of literati, Confucius, by interpreting in our favor things which he left ambiguous in his writings. In this way our fathers gain great favor with the literati who do not adore the idols (Rule, 1986).” While Xavier reached out to people from all walks of life, Ricci took a top-down approach of evangelization and proselytized among the scholars.

Horace G. Underwood admired early Protestant and Catholic missionaries in Asia, as well as their mission methods. Following the footsteps of Carey, Judson, Morrison, Xavier and Ricci, Underwood took a keen interest in the Korean language and culture. In his scholarly work, The Religions of the East Asia, Underwood argued that there was great potential for Christianity to take root in Korea as Confucianism and Buddhism had done earlier. Moreover, he noted that because Confucian ideology in Korea strongly discouraged Buddhism and at the same time, had lost its appeal in the eyes of women and young people in particular, there was a spiritual vacuum especially in and around the capital city of Seoul. Many Koreans often reached out to popular Buddhist cults and shamanism, asking shamans to allay their sense of fear. Based on his research, Underwood stressed the need for education and urged Christians to avoid presenting God simply as another supernatural spirit with the ability to inflict or take away fear, pain and suffering. Instead, he sought to demonstrate Christian love through a concern for the ordinary people and active involvement in social change (Underwood, 1908b, 81–86, 90).

Equally important to Underwood was his belief in inter-denominationalism. In early nineteenth-century America, the idea of the “Benevolent Empire” with its focus on missionary zeal generated a strong inter-denominational spirit, and led to the creation of important missionary institutions such as the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM), the American Bible Society and the American Sunday School Union. Although this inter-denominational spirit declined considerably as a result of North-South hostilities following the American Civil War, Underwood firmly believed in it. As a Reformed Church pastor sent by the American Presbyterian Mission Board, he worked closely with Henry Appenzeller, a former Presbyterian who later joined the Methodist mission. Underwood was also instrumental in bringing a group of young missionaries from the Southern Presbyterian Churches to Korea in 1892. This kind of inter-denominational spirit helped Underwood gain approval from his Presbyterian Mission Board to work with...
missionaries from other denominations when he encountered strong opposition from fellow Presbyterian missionaries for having founded a secular college in Seoul (Educational Committee, 1915, 11).

Underwood’s passionate concern for the interests of local communities can be discerned in his identification with the Korean people. As with late nineteenth-century China, Chosôn Korea was in a dilemma, torn between the need to modernize in response to foreign imperialism and the desire to maintain its traditions despite entrenched hunger and poverty. Violence erupted with the Tonghak and Jeungsan movements as the Taiping and Boxer rebellions had in China. Underwood, himself only in his twenties, believed that young adults ought to be given hope through modern education. In February 1886, less than a year after his arrival in Korea, he founded an “educational” orphanage that later became the Kyung-sin High School, an important centre of learning for many Korean Christian leaders. His close association with the Korean people reminds us of Hudson Taylor’s identification with the Chinese. In 1865, Taylor wrote *China, Its Spiritual Needs and Claims* and founded the China Inland Mission (CIM). He went so far as to say that as much as possible, CIM missionaries should regard themselves as Chinese rather than as foreigners in China (Broomhall, 1982). Evidently, Underwood’s commitment to the Koreans was as strong as Taylor’s to the Chinese.

**III. Horace G. Underwood and Inculturation of Christianity**

Despite the efforts of Xavier, Ricci, Carey, Judson, Morrison, Taylor and other missionaries, Christianity remains very much a minority religion in China, India, Burma and Japan today. In China, the Rites Controversy (1610–1742) undermined the Roman Catholic mission. A century later, the Taiping and Boxer rebellions posed setbacks to the Protestant mission there. The same can be said of the history of Christian missions in India. When William Carey arrived in India, the sub-continent was already under the power of Western guns as a colony of the East India Company. It is probably not surprising that even today, most Indian Christians come from the “untouchables” rather than from the other castes. Although Burma did not become an official British colony until 1885, it had been subject to British attacks since the early nineteenth century. Today, about 5% of the Burmese population are said to be Christian, but under the current military regime, it is against the law to publish Bibles and other religious materials there. In these cases, there was a close connection between Christian missions and Western military expansion, and this connection ultimately hindered the inculturation of Christianity in these countries in the long run (Lee, 2003, 60).

In Japan, Christianity failed to take root for different reasons. Many American missionaries such as Guido Burveck, James Ballagh, Captain L. L. Janes, and Dr. W. S. Clark contributed to the development of modern education in Japan. Yet their efforts to meet the immediate needs of Japan in modernization were challenged by Uchimura Kanzo’s Non-Church movement and Masakisa Uemura’s Independent

Theological Seminary movement at the turn of the twentieth-century. In 1911, the Japanese government required all schools to practice Shinto worship. The church and missionaries did not have the power to resist. In 1912, Japan organized the so-called “Three Religions Conference” promoting dialogue among Shintoism, Buddhism and Christianity. Although the large number of Christian elite schools is responsible for educating 13% of the entire Japanese population today, less than 1% (approx. 0.6%) is Christian. Most of Japanese Christians are intellectuals of individualistic and liberal faith. However, Protestant Christianity has flourished in South Korea where Protestants dominate the overall Christian population (more than 10 of the 13 million Christians are Protestant). Horace G. Underwood and other missionaries like Henry Appenzeller, Samuel Moffett, John Ross and John McIntyre clearly sowed the seeds of church growth in contemporary Korea. What were the most significant contributions of Horace G. Underwood among the three?

Before answering this question, it is important to reconstruct the global and inter-Asian contexts in which Underwood worked. As a relative latecomer in the Protestant global missionary movement, Underwood could learn from the experiences of many earlier missionary pioneers in different parts of the world and develop his own missiological approach. Upon his arrival in Korea, he would also build on the successful—if indirect—evangelistic works done by earlier missionaries in the region. In 1873 (some claim 1874), a couple of Koreans encountered John Ross and John McIntyre of the Scottish Presbyterian mission in Manchuria and were converted to Christianity. They spread their new faith among friends and relatives when they returned to Korea. In 1879, three of them traveled to Manchuria to be baptized by Ross and McIntyre, and held Bible study meetings regularly on their own. In 1882, So Sang-yun, a former member of the Korean literati, helped Ross and McIntyre translate the Bible into Korean, and in 1885 (possibly earlier), he and his brother built the first Protestant church in Korea without the direct involvement of foreign missionaries. Around that time, another Korean had already completed the translation of *The Gospel of Mark*. Korea was not a blank slate but a self-initiated vital mission field when Underwood first set foot on its soil. These Korean Christians assisted Underwood with the propagating of Christianity.

Another important element affecting Underwood’s mission was the change in the East Asian political climate. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, Japan sought to take over Korea and to undermine Chinese dominance in northeast Asia. With the country’s sovereignty at peril in the face of Japanese imperialism, the ruling elite of Korea established a favorable relationship with Western powers by tolerating Christianity and showing deference to the missionaries. Political instability and foreign threats indeed afforded Christianity a unique opportunity to expand into Korea. After Japan’s annexation of Korea in 1910, Christianity was tolerated because of its connection with Western powers. As a result, Christianity became a subversive challenge to the Japanese colonial authorities and this in part explains its growth and appeal in Korea. Under the cover of the Church,
Koreans struggled against Japanese colonialism throughout the early twentieth century. In this hostile environment, Underwood presented the Bible as an alternative power to the gun, thereby allowing many Koreans to understand patriotism and Christianity in mutual terms (Kim, 2001, 278).

Yet, it was his long-term vision of inculcating the Christian gospel in Korea that distinguished Underwood from other missionaries in the field. Instead of focusing on winning converts as quickly as possible, Underwood sought to lay the foundation for a Christian Korea that, in the long run, would be capable of participating in the global community with an independent, mature understanding of the gospel message. Peter Schineller defines “inculturation” as “the incarnation of [a given religious or philosophical message and its life application] in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs, and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about ‘a new creation’ (Schineller, 1990, 6).” Enabling the gospel to shape the native culture from the inside out—without itself getting lost in syncretism—poses a huge challenge. Considering that Nestorian Christianity had merged with Buddhist teaching and practices in Tang China, the nature of “Asian Christianity” is difficult to define even today. Underwood may have had an intuitive understanding of the task stemming from his own cross-cultural upbringing as an immigrant in America. What was important was his emphasis on training a large body of highly educated Christians, who would become future leaders in every sector of society and initiate the process of cultural transformation from within. To this end, Underwood established the YMCA and Yonsei University with funds from his brother.4

As the founder of the Korean YMCA, Underwood included two Japanese senior officials in the Board of Trustees, even though he whole-heartedly supported the Korean Independence Movement.5 He was criticized in some circles for their inclusion but stood firm in seeing beyond national as well as denominational lines. In the long run, the YMCA trained many key figures of the Korean Independence Movement including his own foster son, Kim Kyu-sik, who later served as the President of Korea and in other official capacities for the Korean interim government.

In founding Yonsei University, Underwood envisioned the inclusion of a business school even though commerce was considered to be the lowest profession in Confucian Korea. He foresaw that when Korea became independent, it would face the challenges of urbanization and industrialization posed by the Western world. He sought to prepare young Koreans for these challenges to become capable and ethical leaders in the business world. Underwood died six months before the University opened on April 7, 1917, but his foresight made Yonsei the alma mater to many Korean leaders, and a major centre of social consciousness and political activism. Because Underwood saw education as a partner in the Christian renaissance of Korea, he believed in maintaining the highest standards of academic and moral excellence for Christian educators, pastors and workers, as well as for education in general. He also pushed for the admission of non-Christians into mission schools and colleges while upholding Christian values at the same time. He even promoted native folk culture and supported its artistic expression. He published the first Korean hymnal in 1894 and included seven hymns written by Korean composers and writers. After all, his vision was to establish a Christian Korea in the true sense of inculcation rather than to establish churches in Korea. He did not limit himself to the creation of isolated Korean Christian enclaves. Instead, he sought to transform Korean culture as a whole on Christian terms.

IV. Conclusion

This article has presented an overview of Horace G. Underwood’s approach to missions. His innovative mission strategy based on a long-term vision helped transform Korea into a success story of evangelization in the history of Protestant global missions. Nonetheless, the Korean Church today faces a number of problems. In 1993, Horace G. Underwood III, a grandson of Underwood and former president of Yonsei University, commented on the contemporary Korean church at a seminar for Christian leaders. In his opinion, the Korean church was strong in its zeal to pray, to spread the gospel and to study the Bible, as well as in its obedience to tithe and its ability to establish large churches (27 of the world’s 40 largest churches are in Korea). Yet, the church tended to separate life and faith in everyday life (i.e. most Korean Christians were Sunday Christians), lacked interest in social justice, and engaged in interdenominational rivalries and intra-/inter-church conflicts. Many Christians also emphasized material blessings, and unwittingly admitted a syncretism of faith and folk shamanism into the Christian life. As the common saying went, church pastors are “shamans in Western clothes”. Underwood III concluded that unless Korean Christians reached out to society and kept an eye on political, social, economic and cultural affairs, Korea would never possess a Christian culture despite its large church memberships.6 Clearly, these are problems Horace G. Underwood had warned against and worked to prevent, but not all missionaries had shared his concerns. In an effort to encourage local pastors, many missionaries had lowered academic standards and ordained pastors with little proper training in Biblical knowledge, theology, church leadership and even general humanistic learning. Indeed, of the more than 300 theological seminaries in South Korea today, less than 20% are institutions accredited by the Ministry of Education.

If these problems hinder the progress of the most successful case of Protestant global missions in the twenty-first century, one can imagine the difficulties in other parts of Asia. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the missiological approach of Horace G. Underwood towards Korea and Christian missions in general. Underwood promoted inter-denominational and inter-national cooperation, respected Korean cultural heritage, and showed a strong sense of social consciousness. Most importantly, he never lost sight of his long-term vision for Korea’s ultimate transformation into a Christian nation. As Underwood lay on his deathbed on October 12, 1916, his last words were, “I think, I think, I could...

ENDNOTES
3. Underwood and Appenzeller first met at the Inter-Seminary Alliance Conference at Hartford, Connecticut and within two years went to Korea together. See A Modern Pioneer in Korea, Griffis, p.71.
5. Underwood had stood in guard of the Emperor Kojong through the night the Japanese assassinated Empress Min in 1895. Since then, Underwood often took great risk to his own life and mission to support the Korean Independence Movement against Japanese colonial authority.

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Church-State Relations in Post-1997 Hong Kong
by Chan, Sze-Chi, Ph.D.

Abstract
Throughout the British colonial era (1842–1997), church-state relations constituted an integral part of Western institutions in Hong Kong. After 1997, both Catholic and Protestant churches in Hong Kong have been faced with tremendous pressures to identify with the Beijing-supported Chee-hwa Tung administration. This article seeks to capture the dynamics of church-state relations in Hong Kong by comparing the role of Catholic and Evangelical Christian churches in the popular struggle against the implementation of Article 23 of the Basic Law in the summer of 2003 (Article 23 of the Basic Law was proposed to prohibit individuals and political organizations in Hong Kong from conducting subversive activities against the Chinese central government in Beijing.). Although the Beijing leaders and the Tung administration successfully co-opted a significant number of Evangelical church leaders, they failed to have the Catholic Church under control, which has constantly challenged the political Establishment in post-1997 Hong Kong. The challenges that the Catholic Church currently poses to the Beijing leaders and the Tung administration have to do with its alternative interpretations of political authority and state-society relations, its campaign for the poor in society, and its mobilization of ordinary Catholics in political struggles.

As the last British colony in East Asia, the handover of Hong Kong to Mainland China in 1997 signified the end of British colonialism in East Asia. Hong Kong has developed into an Asian city with a pronounced Western influence, perhaps more so than any other city on the Pacific Rim. Given its British colonial legacy, Hong Kong provides a unique lens through which to study Sino-Western cultural encounter in modern China. The political, economic, social and cultural changes in post-1997 Hong Kong raise the question of the extent to which people in Hong Kong, with their strong Western values and institutions, can respond to pressures from the new political masters in Beijing. Such response can be viewed as a cultural reaction of the people in Hong Kong towards their age-old Chinese cultural heritage.

Throughout the British colonial era (1842–1997), the church-state relations constituted an integral part of the Western institutions in Hong Kong. After 1997, both Catholic and Protestant churches in Hong Kong have been faced with tremendous pressures to identify with the Beijing-supported Chee-hwa Tung administration. This problem is best illustrated in a series of events, such as the controversy over a Christian celebration of the National Day of the People’s Republic of China in 1996 and 1997, the founding of the Working Committee for the General Election of Hong Kong Protestants in electing some of the members for the first post-handover Legislative Council in 1998, and the controversy over the implementation of Article 23 of the Basic Law in 2003 (Article 23 of the Basic Law was proposed to prohibit individuals and political organizations in Hong Kong from conducting subversive activities against the Chinese central government in Beijing.). As an observer and, more importantly, a participant in these events, this article presents a personal reflection on the Catholic and Protestant responses to political and social changes in post-1997 Hong Kong. In particular, it offers a critical analysis of the involvement of the Catholic and Evangelical Christian church leaders throughout the debate about the implementation of Article 23.

I. Christianity between Revelation and Culture

It is a proper point of departure to say a few words about my conceptual framework of Christian systematic theology with respect to the ongoing interactions between Christianity and culture. The historical dimension is very important in Christianity. Christians believe that God revealed himself in the person of Jesus Christ, the son of Mary in first-century Palestine in the Roman Empire. From Jesus came a fast-growing religious movement called Christianity. A Christian theologian always evaluates the history of humankind in the light of this event. While the revelation of God shown in the life story of Jesus, known as the gospel, became part of human history, this revelation is believed by Christians worldwide to be above history, in that it transcends human existence and gives rise to an ongoing process of redemption lasting for millennia. In the Christian theological framework, this personal history of Jesus Christ is very unique and of tremendous significance for humankind.

As a historical religion, Christianity develops in specific time and space from this revelation. Although it is customary to denote Christianity in the singular to refer to a religious movement, Christianity is in fact a combination of various religious movements. On an empirical level, it is difficult to identify the difference between Christianity in its European, American, Asian and African contexts today and the revelation (the gospel) in the first century. Nor is it easy to understand the ontological “distance” between Christianity and a particular culture. What I mean by “distance” here is certainly metaphorical, suggesting that Christianity cannot claim itself to be fully equivalent to the revelation (the gospel) because it has always been manifested in specific historical settings. Even if one can understand the exact meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, one has to deal with the Christianity that arises from this gospel in a specific context. Rather than seeing it as a set of doctrines that remained unchanged from the past to the present, Christianity should be understood as a big stream of religious cultures that developed from what Rodney Stark calls “the obscure, marginal Jesus movement” into the dominant religious force in the contemporary world (Stark, 1997).

The development of early Christianity in the Middle East helps illustrate this point. Jewish Christianity that played a central role in the rise of Christianity in Palestine until the fifth century was very different from the Hellenized Christianity created by the Apostle Paul. When the Apostolic Council did not require the Christian converts to observe the Jewish Law or Torah, they created a religion free of ethnicity. This complete break from the Jewish Law was a key to the rapid expansion of Christianity among Hellenized Jews and Gentiles across the Roman Empire. In recent years, Andrew F.
Walls and Philip Jenkins have addressed the dynamics of Christian movements in Africa and Latin America (Walls, 2002; Jenkins, 2002). In China, there are indeed endless examples of native Christians integrating Christianity into the local society (Lee, 2003).

The appropriation of Christianity throughout human history has several theological implications for understanding the encounter between Christianity and Chinese culture, as well as the church-state relations in contemporary Hong Kong. The first implication is that whatever stream of Christianity is to be discussed, one should examine the ways in which the gospel interacted with a particular culture. Here, Christianity as a religion and the gospel are not identical. When the European and American missionaries preached their versions of the gospel to faith seekers, they inevitably introduced their versions of Christianity. The faith seekers would consider the Euro-American versions of the gospel and the missionaries as identical. In addition, they would reinterpret the gospel message according to their existing worldviews. This process of interaction would give rise to a gap between the new stream of Christianity and the gospel.

Equally important is the gap between Christianity and its manifestation in a cultural setting. This gap is not necessarily inversely proportional to the ontological distance between a particular stream of Christianity and the revelation. This gap arises when a particular ethnic community transforms Christianity into a native religion. In the course of history different streams of Christianity have become independent cultural entities. For example, Christianity gave rise to the Eastern Orthodox tradition, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. (Outside these three mainstreams are the minor independent subsidiaries of Syrian Christianity, Arabian Christianity, Armenian Christianity, Coptic or Egyptian Christianity, Ukrainian Christianity, etc.) Protestant Christianity is particularly interesting, for it was divided into various denominations based on ethnic boundaries and the broad spectrum of religious interpretations, such as the liberals, fundamentalists, Evangelicals, Ecumenical Christians, etc. In Hong Kong, the Evangelicals, Ecumenical Christians, and Roman Catholics actively engaged in the most conspicuous Christian activities.

When one examines the subject of Chinese Christianity, one is faced with the interactions between Christianity and Chinese culture. What one has to consider are the manifestations of major streams of Christianity, which have already gained some substantial following among Chinese. It is also important to be aware of the diverse experiences of Chinese Catholics and Protestants. When the Catholic and Protestant missionaries arrived at Hong Kong, they introduced the Euro-American versions of Christianity, the Chinese Catholics and Protestants subscribed to these versions of the Christian message. Underlying this story of Sino-Western cultural encounter in Hong Kong was a complicated process of multiple interactions. In view of this problem, this paper takes a critical look at the interactions between the Christian gospel, the various Catholic and Protestant church cultures, and Chinese culture in contemporary Hong Kong. As key players in this process of interaction, Hong Kong Christians are faced with the question of whether to adhere to the theological and politico-ethical positions of their church leaders. When they thought that the teachings of their churches were in conflict with the gospel, some of the conscientious Christians chose to distance themselves from the mainstream churches in order to side with the poor and the weak. To fully understand their personal struggles, it is necessary to explore the ways in which their churches in Hong Kong failed to speak out against all forms of political and social injustice.

**II. Catholic and Protestant Responses to Article 23**

The Hong Kong Special Administration Region (HKSAR) Government published its proposals to implement Article 23 of the Basic Law in September 2002, and introduced a National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill to the Legislative Council in February 2003. Article 23 of the Hong Kong Basic Law provides that the HKSAR Government “shall enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People’s Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies.” The proposals sparked intense debate among Christians in Hong Kong over the potential impact of the new national security provisions on human rights, especially the right to freedom of religion and freedom of expression and assembly. While the Catholic Church under the leadership of Bishop Joseph Ze-kiun Zen took a public stand against the legalization of Article 23, Evangelical Christian church leaders were far more concerned with the legalization of soccer gambling rather than this issue. On July 1, 2003, nearly one million protestors demonstrated against the Tung administration and called for freedom and democracy (Ching, 2003). On July 9, 2003, the HKSAR Government bowed to public pressure and withdrew the legislation of Article 23 for further discussion in the Legislative Council, but it had the legalization of soccer gambling approved in the Council. Why did the leaders of the Catholic Church and the Protestant denominations in Hong Kong adopt totally different approaches to these public issues? Why did they not create a united front to put pressure on the HKSAR Government? What do their different agendas tell us about church-state relations in contemporary Hong Kong?

**III. History of the Catholic Church and the Government in Hong Kong**

That the Catholic Church opposed the legislation of Article 23 represents a clear departure from its close association with the colonial government before the handover. Under British colonial rule, the Catholic Church was closely linked to the political Establishment in Hong Kong. The Church’s campaign against abortion, a major item on the Vatican’s social agenda, did not attract much attention in the predominantly non-Christian Chinese society and caused
embarrassment to the colonial government. The most scandalous event faced by the Church was the Jubilee School Incident (1978) when the Catholic Church suppressed a group of teachers and students at the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School through the appointment of a new and stringent headmistress, because of their criticism of the former headmistress for misusing school funds. The Hong Kong Catholic Diocese, under the leadership of John Baptist Wu Cheng-chung, the Bishop of Hong Kong, and the Department of Education of the British colonial government, shut down the school in May 1978. Outraged by the closure, the teachers and students organized a sit-in outside the Headquarters of the Catholic Diocese. During the month-long sit-in, Bishop Wu and the officials at the Department of Education never came to talk to the protestors, but strong public support for the protestors clearly embarrassed the Catholic Church and the colonial government. The Golden Jubilee Secondary School Incident was finally resolved with the colonial government calling for an independent inquiry headed by the then vice-chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, who considered the closure of the school to be a mistake and urged the government to help the affected teachers and students (Huang, 1978). That Bishop Wu ignored the Golden Jubilee Secondary School protestors caused mistrust between the Church and the public. The whole fiasco also showed that the Catholic Church remained a close ally of the colonial government throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Bishop Wu’s conservatism was comparable to the present Hong Kong Chief Executive Chee-hwa Tung’s insensitivity towards the Anti-Article 23 demonstrators on July 1, 2003.

Although Bishop Wu was consecrated as a Cardinal on June 28, 1988, he seldom showed up in public to comment on social and political issues. Nor was he involved in any form of political consultation with the Communist leaders in Beijing on the eve of Hong Kong’s handover. He did not sit in the Basic Law Consultation and Drafting Committees as Archbishop Peter Kwong Kong-kit of the Anglican Church in Hong Kong had done, although this probably had to do with the Catholic Church’s official position of not allowing priests to serve in any government and legislative bodies.

An interesting paradox of Cardinal Wu’s leadership was that he never suppressed progressive elements within the Catholic Church, such as the Catholic Youth Council, the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission as well as individual foreign and Chinese priests campaigning for the poor and the weak. The tolerance of political and social activism had more to do with the catholic spirit of the Church rather than with Cardinal Wu’s open-mindedness. However, there was a strong sense of traditional Chinese cultural intolerance and aversion to political participation within the Catholic Church. It is against this background that several Chinese priests are worthy of attention, the most prominent of these being Father Louis Ha, a well-known social and political activist in Hong Kong. In the spring of 1989, he publicly supported the pro-democracy student movement in Beijing and was one of the key founders of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China. After the Communist crackdown on June 4, 1989, he was increasingly marginalized within the Catholic Diocese. It was only until Bishop Joseph Ze-kiun Zen took over the church leadership in early 2003 that Louis Ha came out to play a more active role in the Anti-Article 23 campaign (Leung and Chan, 2003, 81–82). Another Catholic social and political activist is Father Luke Tsui, who publicly supported the Tiananmen Pro-democracy Movement in the spring of 1989 but later declared his support for the Beijing leadership in the years leading to the handover of Hong Kong.

The Vatican’s appointment of Father Joseph Zen as the Bishop of the Catholic Church has marked the beginning of a new era of church-state relations in Hong Kong. Bishop Zen has been highly critical of the HKSAR Government over a number of public polices, the most controversial of these being the HKSAR Government’s refusal to grant the right of abode to thousands of people from Mainland China. On January 29, 1999, the Court of Final Appeal, the highest court in Hong Kong, ruled that all Chinese citizens who are children of Hong Kong permanent residents born outside of Hong Kong have the right of abode in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), irrespective of whether their parents had already become permanent residents at the time of their birth. At the request of the HKSAR Government, however, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) in Beijing, overturned on June 26, 1999 the court ruling of January 29, and said that those who were born before one of their parents had become a permanent resident of Hong Kong did not have the right of abode in the HKSAR. The Hong Kong Government’s action to overturn the ruling of the Court of Final Appeal by appealing to Beijing for help completely violated the high degree of self-autonomy accorded to Hong Kong under the “One Country, Two Systems” model. The new ruling denied the right of abode in Hong Kong to thousands of people from Mainland China, and over 4,700 mainland-born children, each with at least one parent a Hong Kong permanent resident, faced deportation to China in early 2002. Those seeking the right of abode in Hong Kong launched a series of protests and hunger strikes to defend their right to live with their families. While Evangelical church leaders showed no sympathy and mercy for these children and their families, the Catholic Church strongly supported the protestors in defending their right of abode in Hong Kong. The Catholic Church’s position was based purely on humanitarian grounds.

Closely related to this issue was the dispute over the right of these children to public education. While waiting for the local court’s ruling on their right-of-abode appeals, mainland-born children in Hong Kong applied for admission to local public schools. The HKSAR Government called them “children-without-identity” and forbade them from enrolling in any school on the grounds that they did not have the right of abode in Hong Kong. Outraged by the Government’s decision, Bishop Zen, once again acting on humanitarian grounds, urged all Catholic schools to admit these children. This act of civil disobedience won him and the Catholic Church much applause from the public. The doors of Protestant schools, in stark contrast, remained firmly closed to these children at that time.
Obviously, Bishop Zen was different from Cardinal Wu in dealing with secular authority. Cardinal Wu was politically conservative and pro-Establishment by virtue of the fact that the Catholic Church did very well under the British colonial system. Before 1997, the Catholic Church had everything to gain from letting the status quo remain as it was and much to lose by rocking the boat. After 1997, new political realities probably forced the Church to redefine its relations with the state. In the new political climate, Bishop Zen has proven himself the right person for the job. His personal conviction, his charismatic style of leadership, and his genuine concern for social justice have energized the Catholic Church. In a recent Cable TV interview in the spring of 2003, Bishop Zen admitted that he had been influenced by Latin American liberation theology in his earlier days. This remark throws light on his concern for the poor and the weak, and his strong belief in the power of the Christian gospel in the struggle against unjust systems.

Although he may embrace certain elements of liberation theology, Bishop Zen was a very Confucian person with a strong belief in social harmony and non-violence. His reluctance to take part in the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Tiananmen Pro-democracy Movement on June 4, 2003 and the demonstration of July 1, 2003 against Article 23 illustrates this point. His concerns for stability and harmony, however, have not stopped him from campaigning for the poor through social action and standing up for what he believes to be right.

While Bishop Zen and some progressive clergymen have been actively involved in many public issues in recent years, there is little sign of political and social activism among the Catholic rank and file. The only exception was the Catholic Federation of College Students. One explanation of the considerable gap between Catholic Church leaders and ordinary church members is that the Church in Hong Kong has not yet become a progressive political and social force. Ordinary church members appeared to have supported Bishop Zen out of their respect for and obedience to the Catholic Church leadership. This hierarchical relationship between Bishop Zen and his church supporters bears witness to the impact of traditional Chinese culture, which requires that junior family and community members obey senior ones (Lee, 2003, 29, 83).

Without a long tradition of political and social activism within the Catholic Church in the Chinese-speaking world, the appointment of Bishop Zen makes one speculate whether his antagonism towards the HKSAR Government has to do with a shift of Vatican policy towards China. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Bishop Zen kept a low profile in the Hong Kong Catholic Church, and spent much time teaching at government-run Catholic seminaries in China. He was known to have greatly influenced the new generations of Catholic priests in China.4 Probably because of his popularity among Catholic leaders in China, the Vatican deliberately chose Bishop Zen for its fight against the Communist government in Beijing and its protégés in Hong Kong – an act akin, perhaps to how Pope John Paul II stood up to the Polish Communist state during the 1980s. What then seems to be the case here is the combination within the Catholic Church of anti-Communist sentiment and a highly centralized system which made it possible for Bishop Zen to mobilize church members in the most recent Anti-Article 23 campaign.

**IV. History of Protestant Churches and the Government in Hong Kong**

Although some mainstream Evangelical church leaders expressed their concern over the legislation of Article 23, they were far less active than their Catholic counterparts in defending the rights threatened by this Article. Instead, they expressed far more interest in the prosecution of an anti-gambling campaign. To explain their sense of political apathy and their obsession with moral issues, let us look at the ways in which external and internal forces have shaped the development of the Evangelical churches in Hong Kong.

The 1970s saw a resurgence of political and social activism among university students in Hong Kong. The entry of the People’s Republic of China into the United Nations and the Sino-Japanese dispute over the sovereignty of Diaoyutai (Senkaku) Island in the South China Sea sparked the largest Overseas Chinese student movement in North America and Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, the student movement that spread across all the universities and private colleges was initially pro-Communist, and had tremendous impact on compliant, middle-class Protestant churches. Some Maoist student activists followed the model of the Red Guards in mainland China and criticized their Christian classmates’ political apathy and compliant lifestyle. To criticize their lack of involvement in politics, some Maoist students invented the Cantonese slogan of the “Four-zi-isms” to ridicule all those college students who sought after houses, cars, wives and children. Under the pressure of those advocating the Four-zi-isms, many Catholic and Protestant university students reflected on the social dimension of their Christian faith.

Unfortunately, Evangelical students did not have a strong progressive organization to support them the way Catholic students had had the Catholic Federation of College Students. The Hong Kong Student Christian Movement was too feeble and liberal in its theological stand to show any concern for them. As a result, it took these students nearly a decade to establish themselves within different Evangelical student bodies. The irony was that the Evangelical students’ conversion to progressive social and political activism came only after the decline of the pro-Communist student movement.5

From 1983 to 1985, I was sent as a student counselor to all the local university campuses by the Hong Kong Fellowship of Evangelical Students, an Evangelical para-church organization specializing in the pastoral care of university and college students. Something I noticed was that throughout the 1980s, the focus of Evangelical student activism was on “social concern,” a new agenda deemed as equally respectable as evangelization. The dominant view was that social concern and evangelization were complimentary and far more effective in the propagating of Christianity.

The significance of the growth of social awareness among Evangelical students lies in the fact that after graduation,
many of them became church leaders, theologians, scholars and professionals, and continued to shape the social agenda of the Protestant churches. Some of them even played an active role in grassroots movements and founded semi-political organizations like the Christians for Hong Kong Society and the Christian Sentinels for Hong Kong.

The emergence of “social concern” as a new component on the evangelistic agenda, however, posed a challenge to mainstream Evangelical churches in Hong Kong throughout the 1980s. In particular, the publication of Olive Magazine by the Christian Association of Hong Kong University attracted much attention among local church leaders, students at seminaries and workers of numerous para-church organizations. Most articles published in Olive Magazine were highly critical of political apathy and the lack of concern for social justice among the Evangelical churches, especially when Hong Kong was faced with intense political pressures from Beijing and London after the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984.

Coinciding with the growth of social and political activism within the Evangelical church circle was the political maturation of Hong Kong before its handover to China in 1997. The majority of Evangelical student graduates, along with the rather progressive Ecumenical Protestant church leaders, participated in the local democratic movement that emerged in the years before 1997. Of these activists, the most notable one was James To Kun-sun, an active member of the Democratic Party of Hong Kong and a directly elected member of the Legislative Council. Three Evangelical churchmen are also worthy of attention. They are Rev. Chu Yiu-ming, Rev. Lo Lung-kwong, and Rev. Fung Chi-wood. Rev. Chu, a Baptist minister and Rev. Lo, a Methodist minister, used to pastor their respective congregations in the working-class district of Chai Wan on Hong Kong Island. Both of them have been active in campaigning for the poor in Hong Kong. As a student, Rev. Fung used to be a member of the Christian Association of Hong Kong University. In the 1980s, he played a leading role in the grassroots campaign against the construction of a nuclear power station along the border of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. He later joined the Democratic Party of Hong Kong and was directly elected into the Legislative Council in 1991.

As the case of another prominent figure, Rev. Kwok Nai-wang, shows, however, social activism could come at a price. A former pastor of a congregation of the Chinese Church of Christ, in the early 1980s, Rev. Kwok was the General Secretary of the Hong Kong Christian Council and publicly supported the local democratic movement. His commitment to political and social change did not attract much support from the mainstream Protestant church leaders. Archbishop Peter Kwong of the Anglican Church, for example, took a pro-China line and became a member of the Basic Law Consultative Committee and Drafting Committees. Because the mainstream Evangelical church leaders sought to appease Beijing by not supporting the local democratic movement, Rev. Kwok became marginalized within the Hong Kong Christian Council and was eventually ousted from the post of General Secretary in the late 1980s. Fortunately for the cause of democracy in Hong Kong, Rev. Kwok’s supporters decided to sponsor him to found the Hong Kong Christian Institute, a prominent non-governmental organization campaigning for human rights and freedom in Hong Kong and one of the key organizers of the giant demonstration against Article 23 on July 1, 2003 (Leung and Chan, 2003, 93–105).

The most severe challenge to the Evangelical churches in Hong Kong, however, was the pro-democracy movement in Beijing in the spring of 1989. As with the majority of the Hong Kong population, the Evangelical churches were very sympathetic towards the students and civilians in Beijing. Evangelical church leaders went so far as to found the Hong Kong Christian Alliance In Support of the Democratic Movement in China and elected Dr. Philemon Choi Yuen-wan, the director of the Breakthrough Organization, the largest Evangelical para-church organization in Hong Kong, as its Chair. That the Evangelical churches created an organization to campaign for the democratic transformation of China won much public applause for local Christians.

Nonetheless, their commitment to social and political changes in Hong Kong and China was short-lived. Because the Evangelical churches failed to articulate a new theological vision that overcame their denominational differences and vested interests, everything began to fall apart after the military suppression of the pro-democracy movement on June 4, 1989. The collapse of the Christian Sentinels for Hong Kong was a good example. Once very vocal in articulating democratic demands to the Chinese and the British governments, this organization fell apart and the majority of its core members took a low profile in political activities.

Another event revealing deep divisions within the Evangelicals took place in early 1996, when forty-seven notable church leaders suddenly issued a call for a Christian celebration of the National Day of the People’s Republic of China on October 1, 1996. These church leaders were from the conservative and progressive wings of the Protestant churches. Celebrating the National Day of the People’s Republic of China has been seen as a gesture of political loyalty to the Beijing leadership. The majority of the Hong Kong population has not yet forgotten the suppression of civilians in Tiananmen Square in June 1989, and many of them have refused to celebrate the National Day of the People’s Republic until the Beijing leaders admit their mistake in the Tiananmen Incident. The call for a Christian celebration of the National Day came as a great shock to ordinary Evangelical Christians and the public. Those church leaders in favor of the celebration failed to provide convincing theological justifications for their action and were severely criticized by ordinary Christians and the public.

The single notable churchman taking a brave stand against the pro-celebration camp was Rev. Chu Yiu-ming. It was truly an upsetting experience for him to denounce many of his former friends. Another well-respected Christian journalist, Mau Chi-wang publicly criticized the ugly tactics of the pro-celebration camp. However, the pro-celebration camp ignored criticisms from ordinary Christians and the public, and went ahead with their celebration of the National Day on October 1, 1996, even holding another one in October.

This incident greatly undermined the integrity of many Evangelical church leaders in Hong Kong, but did not stop ambitious church leaders from patronizing Beijing and the Tung administration after the handover of Hong Kong in 1997. In the spring of 1998, the HKSAR Government allocated to the Protestant churches seven out of the 800 available seats of a Special Electoral Committee, the purpose of which was to indirectly elect eight members to the first post-handover Legislative Council. The Special Electoral Committee, however, was clearly an undemocratic mechanism created by Beijing to stock the Legislative Council with their protégés, and drew severe criticisms from the public and abroad. The Catholic Church was also highly critical of this undemocratic mechanism and refused to fill the six seats allocated to it by the HKSAR Government. The executive committee of the Hong Kong Christian Council, in contrast, exploited this opportunity to cajole the Protestant churches into cooperating with the HKSAR Government, and called for a “general election” within the Protestant community to fill the seven seats. Under the support of the Hong Kong Christian Council, the “Working Committee for the General Election of Hong Kong Protestants” was founded with Rev. Lo Lung-kwong, the senior Methodist church leader mentioned earlier, as chairperson. Undoubtedly, the participation of the Protestant churches would not only enhance the political status of Rev. Lo, but also bestow on the Special Electoral Committee a semblance of legitimacy (Chan, 1998).8 The majority of the Protestant population, suspicious of Rev. Lo’s motives, refused to endorse his proposal based on their adherence to the doctrine of the total separation of church and state. Despite the lack of support, Rev. Lo went ahead to hold a “general election” in which only a small number of local churches came out to elect seven “Protestant representatives” to the Special Electoral Committee.

As can be seen, then, in less than two years after Hong Kong’s handover to China, a significant number of Evangelical church leaders had become fervent supporters of the Beijing leaders and the Tung administration that took office after 1997.9 These church leaders are highly pragmatic and inconsistent, seeking to become part of the new political Establishment in post-1997 Hong Kong. They have also shown an alarming willingness to disregard the commitment of traditional Protestant Christians to the total separation of church and state and the Christian call to fight for the poor and the weak, as seen in the fact that none of them supported those whose right of abode in Hong Kong had been denied by the HKSAR Government, in sharp contrast to the Catholic Church.

Since then, however, some Evangelical scholars and churchmen have expressed dissatisfaction with their leaders and in 1997, founded a new organization called the Society for Truth and Light to revise the agenda of social concern within Protestant circles. In the highly moralistic society of Hong Kong, the Society for Truth and Light mainly commented on social and moral issues and avoided direct political confrontation with the HKSAR Government. To date, they have only engaged in anti-prostitution, anti-gay / lesbian, and anti-gambling campaigns. In so doing, they have willingly or unwittingly acted in tune with the political agenda of the Government, as C. H. Tung and his officials view the promotion of morality as conducive to nurturing a submissive political culture in Hong Kong. Unsurprisingly, then, when a million of people demonstrated against the legislation of Article 23 and called for democracy and freedom, the Society for Truth and Light, as an organization, did not join in. Instead, they continued to campaign against the legalization of soccer gambling and distracted Evangelical Christians from participating in the Anti-Article 23 campaign. When they learnt that the soccer gambling bill had been passed, many of them simply sobbed.

V. Conclusion

Why did Protestant church leaders and theologians kowtow to Beijing and the Tung administration, whereas the leadership of the Catholic Church had chosen to be critical of the political Establishment in post-1997 Hong Kong? The 1980s and early 1990s saw a genuine expression of the Christian concern for social justice among the Evangelical Christians. In the name of social concern, many church leaders and activists sought to defy the inert middle-class culture that had characterized the Protestant churches. There was a widespread concern for the poor and the weak in Evangelical circles. It was therefore sad and ironic that these church leaders decided to withdraw from any form of political and social activism in the late 1990s. The change of attitude among the church leaders not only betrayed the Christian call to fight for the poor and the weak, but also disregarded the commitment of certain Christians to the total separation of church and state. These “kowtow Christians” who appeased the HKSAR Government by disregarding more pressing political issues betrayed adherence to a deeper underlying Chinese traditional culture of self-protection.10

On the contrary, the Catholic Church under the leadership of Bishop Zen has become the conscience of society. His concern for the poor and the weak, his reluctance to patronize Beijing and the HKSAR Government, and his wholehearted support for freedom and democracy in the Anti-Article 23 campaign have completely changed the pro-Establishment image of the Church. The Catholic Church leaders, especially Bishop Zen, are more willing than their Protestant counterparts to serve and identify with the voiceless majority of the Hong Kong population. It is this unique feature that makes the Catholic Church truly “the salt of the earth and the light of the world” in post-1997 Hong Kong.

ENDNOTES

1. “Article 23 of the Basic Law,” Centre for Comparative and Public Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Hong Kong. Available at http://www.hku.hk/ccpl/research_projects_issues/article23/

2. The widely reported number of 500,000 demonstrators on July 1, 2003 was an underestimation. The organizers of the Anti-Article 23 campaign did not include large numbers of people who joined the protest along the route of demonstration. See Frank Ching, “Hong Kong and the Limits of People Power.” Current History 102, no.665 (September 2003): 256–58.
3. For primary sources, see Baaowuxi jinxi zhongxue diaocha weiyanhui zaihou baogaoshu [The Hong Kong Commission of Enquiry into the Precious Blood Golden Jubilee Secondary School], Huang, and Jinxi shijian: Cong chuangxiang dao fengxiao [The Golden Jubilee Incident: From the Founding of the School to its Closure]. This incident was discussed in a special issue of Xueyuan [Undergrad], a newspaper published by the Hong Kong University Students’ Union. See also Xueyuan chuqiu [The History of Student Movement], pp.144–156.


5. While a student at the University of Hong Kong from 1977 to 1980 and an active member of the Christian Association of the Hong Kong University Student Union, an Evangelical student body, I noted that the change of political climate in Beijing following the collapse of the Gang of Four marked the end of a romantic Maoism among the leftist students in Hong Kong.

6. These leaders included Sit Poon-ki (SîTWYû), chairman of the Hong Kong Christian Council, Rev. Ng Shan-ho, leader of the Pentecostal Holy Church, Drs. Chow Wing-kim and Carver Yu Tat-sum, principal and vice-principal of the China Graduate School of Theology, Dr. Philemon Choi Yuen-wan, head of the Hong Kong Christian Alliance for the Support of Democratic Movement in China, Rev. Lo Lung-kwong, former Methodist pastor and current head of the Theology Division of Chung Chi College at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Rev. Kwok Nai-wang, Director of the Hong Kong Christian Institute, Raymond Fung Wai-man, the recently retired secretary of the Mission Division of the World Council of Churches, and Yung Wai-yip, chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Evangelical Students. What was most shocking was that Dr. Choi Yuen-wan and Rev. Lo Lung-kwong were the initiators of the event, and they had the tacit support of Li Kam-hung, chief editor of The Christian Times, the well-established Evangelical church weekly newspaper in Hong Kong. Rev. Lau Siu-hong, head of the Hong Kong Baptist Council, remained indecisive and planned to support this event, but he was reminded of the Baptist tradition of adhering to the total separation of church and state and decided to stay out of it. Rev. Siu Sau-wah, chief pastor of the North Point Alliance Church, the largest Evangelical church in Hong Kong, withdrew from joining the pro-celebration group.

7. On one occasion, I attended a private meeting in mid-August 1996 held by Prof. Sham Suen-yon, the former head of the Chung Chi College together with Mau Chi-wang and Tang Siu-ming, a specialist of the underground church movement in Mainland China, in which we questioned Rev. Lo Lung-kwong about his sudden turnaround to placate China. However, Rev. Lo did not give us a convincing answer.

8. I was very critical of Rev. Lo Lung-kwong’s attempt to organize a “general election” within the Protestant circle. “Mushi suowei heshi? [What should the clergy do?], Chan, p.9.

9. Dr. Choi Yuen-wan, for example, became a staunch supporter of the Tung administration and was appointed by C. H. Tung to chair the Youth Affair Committee of the Government.

10. The term “kowtow Christians” is a common phrase to refer to those church leaders who identify with the political Establishment in Hong Kong and the Communist government in Beijing during the post-1997 era.

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Religion and Secular Society: A Comparison of Eastern and Western Perspectives
by Thomas D. O’Sullivan, Ph.D.

Abstract
This article presents a critique of the history of church-state relations in the West, and discusses the differences between Western ways in which such relations are conceptualised and the ways they are seen in East Asia. By studying the Christian Church’s explanation of its relationship to the secular power, it argues that a key to understanding the dynamics of church-state relations in Europe and America is the distinction between religious and secular authorities. This distinction has continued to shape the interaction between religion and politics in the contemporary world.

The appearance of a journal issue specially devoted to essays about relationships between church, state, and community in East Asia prompts a little reflection on the differences between Western ways in which such relationships are conceptualized and the ways they are seen in non-Western cultures. Indeed, the issue of the relationship between religion and society seems for centuries to have had a very different character in the Western world than it does elsewhere – in East Asia, for example, or in the Islamic countries. The perennial question of the relations of “church and state,” of the relationship between the two realms “sacred and secular,” seems much less meaningful once we leave the Western context. Other societies have generally viewed human social experience in much more unitary terms. Three possible ways of explaining this difference come to mind.

The simplest, but in many ways the least satisfactory, would require that one adopt a thesis of Western exceptionalism. It is the sort of “explanation” that is very often heard on the popular or semi-popular level: the Islamic world never had a Renaissance; China never had a Reformation; India never had an Enlightenment. At the end of the day, I suppose, the Tarim Basin never had an Era of Good Feeling.

One highly significant characteristic that Christianity shared with Rabbinical Judaism was the fact that it began – in particular in the historical and never-forgotten circumstances of their origins and early development. As is well known, Christianity and Judaism (at least in the form that we would describe as Orthodox or Rabbinical Judaism) both arose among late Hellenistic Jewish communities in Palestine and in the Diaspora under Roman rule.

Before the Babylonian captivity, sacred and secular elements appear to have been rather thoroughly integrated in the society of Israel. The problematization of the monarchy reported in 1 Samuel 8 (Can Israel have another king besides God?), and the alternation on the throne of kings who practiced polytheism and/or iconic worship with kings who campaigned against both polytheism and idolatry in no way diminishes this integration, and may perhaps better be taken to illustrate it.

After the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Kingdom of Judah, however, Jews lived in drastically different circumstances. One of the most essential tasks of Judaism was resistance to the assimilation actively promoted first by the Babylonian and subsequently by the Seleucid authorities. The fact that the future of the Jews was for many centuries to be as a religious community rather than as a secular society living on its own land under a government of its own was finally established by the two wars that the Jews fought, unsuccessfully, against the Roman Empire. Whatever may have been the case in the distant days of David and Solomon, the Jews of late antiquity, of the middle ages, and of early modern times were deeply and inescapably aware of the fact that there was a government – and that the government was alien to them.

One highly significant characteristic that Christianity shared with Rabbinical Judaism was the fact that it began under Roman rule. From the very beginning, Christianity was an object of hostility on the part of the Roman authorities. Jesus Christ was of course put to death by the Romans and, according to tradition, so were most of the early leaders of the Church. The scriptural accounts of the Passion of Jesus, as well as the veneration of the early saints martyred under
Roman persecution, made it impossible for any member of the Church ever to forget the initial conflict between Christianity and the state power. With the passage of time, Christianity was legalized. Eventually the state became in some sense a Christian state. Nevertheless, it remained very clearly the successor of the Roman state, both professedly and in fact. This continuity was of great importance. Emperors like Constantine and Theodosius may have favored Christianity, but they were unequivocally the successors of persecutors like Marcus Aurelius and Diocletian. The world of late antiquity saw itself as an instance of a unique model: a society with a fundamental continuity of political institutions, but one in which the religious institutions were professedly new and fundamentally distinct.

In a sense, one could argue that the division of labor in late fifth and in sixth century Europe between Germanic kings (commonly Arian Christians, regarded as very dangerously heretical by the vast majority of their subjects), who with their ethnic armies wielded the power of the sword, and post-Roman civilian aristocracies in which the highest dignity to which Catholic Christians could normally aspire was that of bishop helped to perpetuate in the West this division between state power and religious authority.

The early Christian Church’s explanation of its own relationship to the secular power is summed up in the formula of Pope Gelasius I (494): “duo sunt quibus principaliter mundus hic regitur” (there are two [powers] by which this world is ruled). According to Gelasius, the clergy are to be subject to the ruling power in profane matters, kings and emperors to the priestly power in matters pertaining to eternal salvation. This formula expresses rather nicely the uneasy balance which, in one form or another, has predominated in the West ever since. The proponents of the Gregorian reform tried in the eleventh century to subordinate secular rulers to the moral (and, indeed, the political) authority of the papacy. In the sixteenth century the mainstream of the Protestant Reformation declared that the True Church was invisible, leaving whatever of Christendom might be visible under the control of princes and kings. But the eleventh-century papal reformers lacked the political clout to carry out their program—and Dante was not the only important Christian thinker of the high Middle Ages who rejected their position. And the Reformation of the sixteenth century was very far from being a monolithic movement; groups as theologically diverse as Mennonites and Gnesio-Lutherans stood up for what we would today call a church organization independent of royal control. It was really not until the beginnings of modern secularism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that any significant challenge to the Gelasian worldview appeared.

Militant secularists in modern times, whether among the adherents of the French Revolution, or among subsequent Anarchist or Socialist movements, have at times proposed the restriction or abolition of religious belief and practice, through the use of influence or force by political movements or state agencies. These moves have represented the only really serious attempts in the history of the West to abolish the traditional distinction between the two realms. And they have met with only very limited and temporary success. It seems that the distinction between the secular and the religious dimension of society is one of the most characteristic and enduring features of Western civilization. The United States of America illustrates this phenomenon more drastically, perhaps, than any other major country. In America one of the most religious societies in the modern world lives under the rule of one of the most secular governments in the West. It is a nice question whether the United States would have maintained so robust a commitment to the separation of church and state had it not been for the remarkable diversity of religions practiced by Americans. The question is moot.

The interesting thing, for our present purposes, is that this distinction between the two realms is specifically a phenomenon of Western history. It seems that we cannot convincingly claim to find parallel developments in non-Western cultures. It is obviously up to specialists in the histories of East Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East to provide authoritative interpretations of the distinctive characteristics of those societies. It will perhaps be appropriate, however, to offer a few hints here.

Islam began as an integrated movement that organized the lives of the faithful in the religious, political, and cultural spheres, and it seems that it was not really until the intrusion of European imperialism into the Middle East and North Africa in the nineteenth century that large numbers of Muslims were confronted with the problem of living permanently under a government dominated by non-Muslims. Turkey under Ataturk represented the first indigenous experiment with the notion of a secular state in any predominantly Muslim country.

East Asia has probably in the course of its historical development seen a somewhat more diverse mixture of influences than the Middle East, but continuity has been one of the most conspicuous hallmarks of that development. In China, already more than half a millennium before the time of Christ, Confucius and his followers rejected originality as a value, and defended their views about ethics, government, and education precisely by underlining the continuity or supposed continuity between their values and the culture of previous generations. The most far-reaching ideological innovation that appeared in traditional China, Korea or Japan was surely Buddhism. The Indian background of Buddhist thought made it initially in some ways quite alien to Chinese, Korean or Japanese thinking. In spite of occasional frictions, these professedly conservative societies were able to assimilate Buddhism into indigenous cultural complexes.

There are some interesting coincidences between the history of Buddhism in East Asia and the history of Christianity in the Mediterranean Basin and Europe. There was, for example a simultaneous “golden age” of translation: Saint Jerome and Kumarajiva were almost exact contemporaries. What we do not see in East Asia, however, is any parallel to the suppression of Greco-Roman paganism in the West. There was never, even when rulers were heavily influenced by Buddhism, a systematic, government-sponsored, and effective attempt to root out older indigenous religious practices.

The Western distinction between religion and secular
society lies, of course, predominantly in the area of concept. The Western world has been equipped with a theory of the distinction between church and state, a theory that is coherent enough to serve as an analytic tool – or, for that matter, as a political program. Other, equally sophisticated societies have not produced such a theory. Unfortunately, a coherent theory does not solve the problem of ensuring that religious bodies are actually free of inappropriate state interference, or that governments are free of inappropriate influence from religious authorities. Western experience shows that having such a theory may be a necessary, but it is not a sufficient, condition for a wholesome relationship between religion and secular society.

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