

Missionary Education

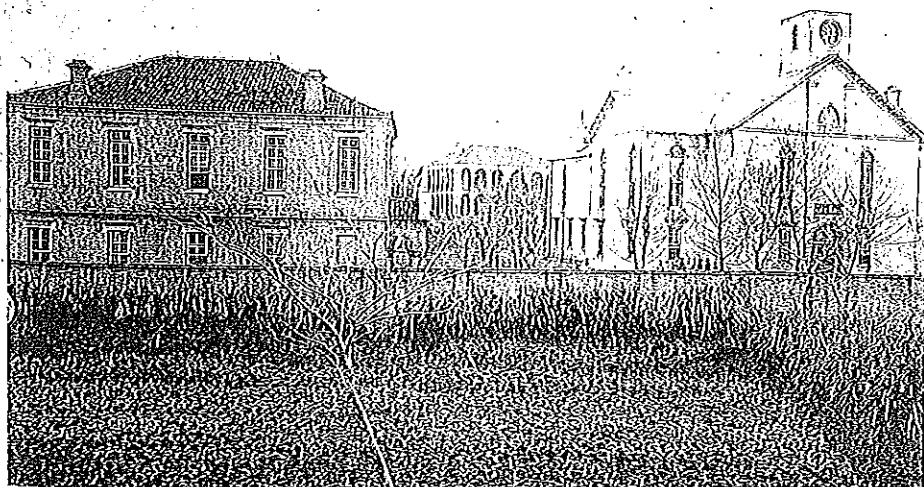
Chuànjiàoshì jiàoyù 传教士教育

Although their presence in China stretched back many centuries, the Christian missionaries' most productive period in the country lasted from the early nineteenth to the twentieth century. Missionaries were often the target of political and societal backlash, and their efforts at reform eventually shifted focus from evangelism to education.

Christian missionaries came to China as early as the eighth century, but the first extended presence there for the purpose of spreading Christianity on a permanent basis did not come until

the so-called Age of Discovery, when European nations sought to establish footholds in North America, Africa, South Asia, and East Asia. The first Europeans to travel to China by sea were the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century. In 1541, the Spanish Jesuit priest Francis Xavier (1506–1552) was sent to spread Christianity to Asia. He was followed later in that century by more Jesuits, including Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), the best-known Christian missionary to China from the sixteenth century, but other than maintaining a Christian presence, no substantial progress in spreading Christianity was made because of the competition between Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans. By the early eighteenth century, Christian missionaries were banned from China.

Kiukiang Institute, Central China Mission. The picture was taken from City Wall, between 1910 and 1915. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.





Miss Emily Hartwell,
standing, with eight Chi-
nese women in Fuzhou,
Fujian Province, 1902.
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Nineteenth-Century Uprisings

Protestant missionaries arrived in China in the early nineteenth century, and their first efforts at education came not to the Chinese, but to each other. Unlike the Catholic missionaries, who had been able to establish themselves because of their ability to learn the Chinese language, but who did not try to pass on their knowledge to future generations of missionaries, the Protestants not only learned Chinese for themselves but assembled dictionaries and basic grammar texts for their successors.

Although China had made diplomatic inroads to Malacca in the fifteenth century, by the late 1700s it was under Dutch control. The Christian missionaries worked with Chinese immigrants and workers in Malacca. One of the earliest missionary schools for Chinese was established in Malacca, where William Milne (1785–1822) taught Chinese converts and assisted Robert Morrison (1782–1834) with his translation of the Bible into Chinese.

The efforts of Christian missionaries were undercut by a general antifeigner sentiment by the Chinese government. Much of the antagonism stemmed from the unequal treaties 不平等条约 that opened certain Chinese ports to the Europeans and Americans to facilitate trade in favor of the Westerners. The treaty ports were forced upon China by the Europeans in the aftermath of the First Opium War 鸦片战争 (1839–1842), which was waged by

Great Britain against China in order to preserve opium trade with the Chinese. (China had tried to ban the import of opium because of the damage it was doing to the health of those Chinese who used it.) These feelings were aggravated in Chinese society by the missionaries' belief that they, instead of the Chinese elite, held the keys to salvation and stability. Educated Westerners, including missionaries, saw the Chinese as a materialistic culture that needed to be reformed; the Chinese saw the missionaries, whose presence was more powerfully felt after the Second Opium War (1856–1860), as simply another aspect of foreign intervention. This was reinforced by the Taiping Rebellion of 1850–1864, which was rooted in an extremist ideology that combined Christian belief with pre-Confucian utopian ideals; it resulted in the deaths of between 20 and 30 million Chinese.

During the Taiping Rebellion, Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全, a village teacher turned self-proclaimed "king" of recruited militants, attempted forcefully to reform Chinese society along Western cultural lines. The huge number of deaths he and his followers caused led the Chinese government to suppress Christian missionary efforts. After the rebellion the most successful missionaries were the French Roman Catholic missionaries. France was not considered by the Chinese government's foreign ministry (*tsungli yamen*, 总理衙门) to be as intrusive as other European nations, and agreements were made with France that permitted missionary activities as long as they

did not interfere with Chinese society; the French were charged with restricting their own missionaries in this regard. Missionaries were permitted to convert the Chinese to Christianity, but the names of those converted had to be reported to Chinese authorities. Christianity in China during the 1860s was tolerated but not encouraged.

In the late 1860s, Chinese sentiments against Christians were inflamed by rumors that Chinese children were being killed by the Europeans to make medicine. These rumors incited uprisings in Yangzhou 扬州 in 1868. Similar rumors led to the Tianjin Massacre 天津教案 of 1870, which resulted in the deaths of twenty-one foreign missionaries and dozens of Chinese Christians and led to a general decline in relations between the Chinese government and Christian missionaries.

The antiforeigner campaign of the Society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists 义和团, known to Westerners as the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1900), was an attempt by reactionary Chinese to expel foreigners and restore the emperor, as had been done in Japan during the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The Boxers' siege of foreign legations (including the embassies of Russia, France, Japan, the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Austria-Hungary) was defeated by an international force, and these eight nations forced the resulting Boxer Protocol 辛丑各国和约 on the Chinese government, demanding reparations of 450 million taels 两 of silver (one tael for each person in China). The 540 million Troy ounces of silver this represented would have a value in 1868 of nearly \$33 billion. The short-term result of the Boxer Protocol was a further weakening of control by the Chinese imperial government; a long-term result was the recognition by the Chinese that this government could not serve their needs, which set the stage for rebellion in the form of Chinese nationalism.

While the Boxer Rebellion was not antimissionary as much it was anti-foreigner, it did result in the deaths of nearly 19,000 Chinese Christians and over 200 Catholic and Protestant missionaries.

Twentieth-Century Missions

The activities of Christian missionaries in China increased in the early twentieth century, due in part to the rise in Chinese nationalism led by Sun Yat-sen 孙中山,

who had accepted Christianity while studying in Hawaii. In particular, efforts were made by Protestant missionaries to spread their work into China's interior. Although much of the education was provided through preaching in English and conducting meetings among converts, formal schools were being established to meet both the physical and spiritual needs of the Chinese Christians. Reviews of mission reports indicate that prior to 1916 the primary emphasis was on the evangelical efforts of Western missionaries, but after that date the majority of reports dealt with formal schools for boys, girls, and the disabled. By 1921 the Interior China Mission headquartered in Kaifeng 开封 in Henan 河南 Province had established day schools and boarding schools for boys and girls at both primary and secondary school levels. These, in addition to the separate schools for Chinese men and women, had enrolled over a thousand students by that time.

There was conflict between Chinese schools and missionary schools in the early twentieth century. While Chinese schools taught a generally standard curriculum, the schools run by Western missionaries focused on Christian religious education. These missionary schools were seen as heterodox, or unconventional, by the Chinese elite, although many of them recognized the value of Western science, technology, and other ideas. The conflict between the two types of schools was largely one of misperception: Because Chinese schools that taught from classic Chinese writings focused on Daoist teaching of "the Way," while the missionary schools taught a very different focus, the Western schools were seen as a threat to the stability of society. Ironically, it was the establishment of Chinese universities, not missionary schools, that would lead to intellectual challenges to governmental authority.

Nevertheless, the efforts of missionary educators continued to expand into the interior of China until the factional fighting between the Nationalist government and warlords in the more remote areas made the missionary activities too dangerous. All Americans, including missionaries, were ordered by the United States consul to leave China in 1927. Although many Americans complied, others remained and were joined by even more missionaries. Viola Humphreys (1887–1939), who had spent seven years in Kaifeng in the 1920s, returned to supervise missionary activities and schools there after she had attended college in Texas from 1928 to 1929. Her efforts included evangelism, schools for boys and girls, a kindergarten, and

a Goodwill Center, as well as health care assistance for students in her schools from a Chinese physician. Zemina Hare (1893–1941), an American Southern Baptist active in Kaifeng, directed the Women's Bible School there. The students at this school were adult Chinese women who had to read the Gospel of Mark in Chinese prior to admission. This encouraged development of literacy in a segment of Chinese society in which it had traditionally not been valued.

By the 1930s the Chinese government had established its own universities. Most of these national universities (*guoli*, 国立) were concentrated in the major city areas of Peking (Beijing, 北京), Shanghai 上海, Nanking (Nanjing, 南京), and Canton (Guangzhou, 广州). The various missionary groups in China by this time had also established their own colleges, some of which were located in these regions, but many of the missionary colleges were located in more rural areas. The focus of education was also different: While the national universities were specialized, the missionary colleges were established along British and American models of the liberal arts college, and a large number of their graduates became teachers in other missionary schools.

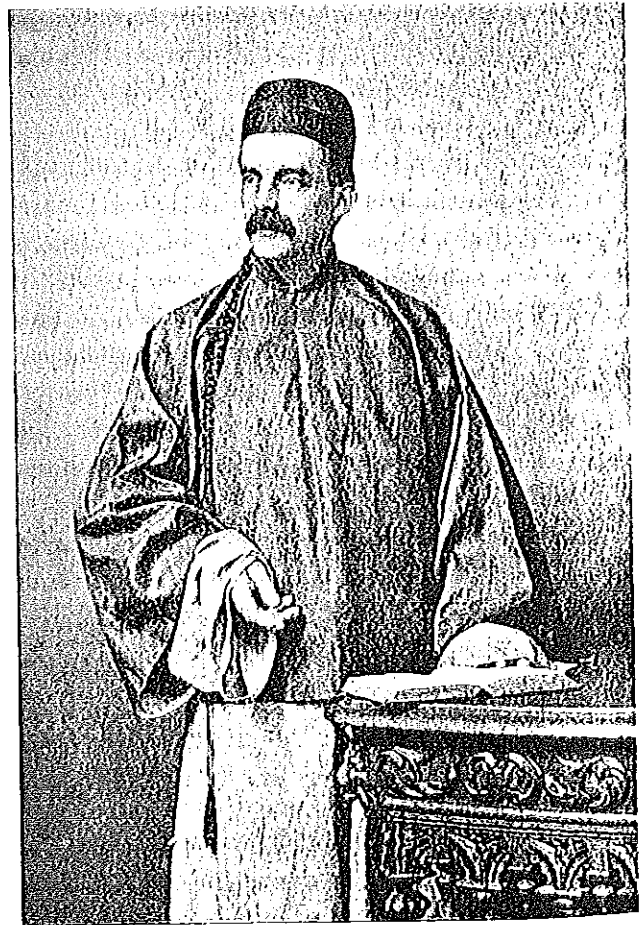
As the international situation deteriorated in China with Japan's invasion, conditions for foreigners in general, and missionaries in particular, deteriorated as well. The presence of foreign diplomats and clergy interfered with Japanese activities because these foreigners, under some degree of diplomatic protection, could serve as witnesses to the atrocities committed by the Japanese. One of the most heroic efforts of Western Christian missionaries in China was made by those who confronted the Japanese during their invasion and occupation of Nanking in 1937. During her second assignment to China, the American Wilhelmina Vautrin (1886–1941) founded Ginling College 金陵女子学院 in Nanking and worked with other Westerners to protect the citizens of that city. By establishing the Nanking Safety Zone 南京安全区, Vautrin and ten other Westerners provided an area of limited protection to the students in the college as well as hundreds of thousands of other Chinese.

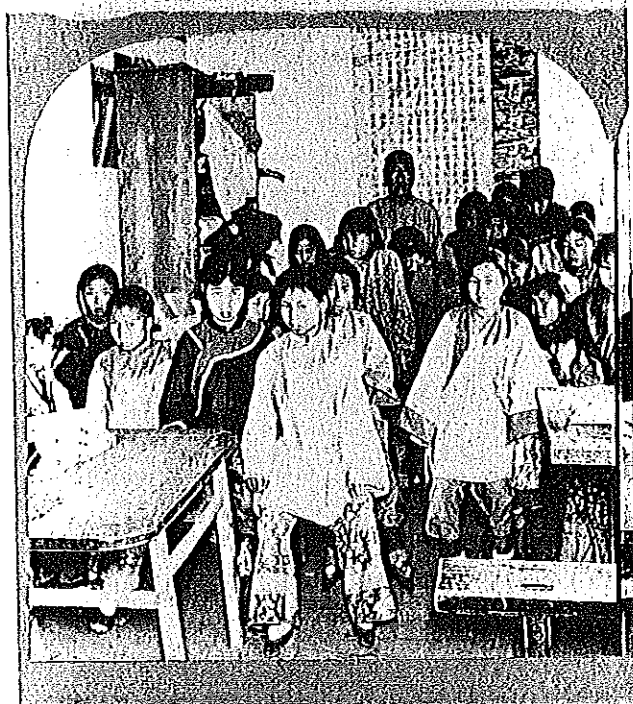
The disruption caused by the war with Japan and the Chinese Civil War set back missionary efforts and education, and the victory of the Communists over the Nationalists further hurt Christian evangelism and education in China. The worst of this occurred during the Cultural

Revolution (文化大革命, 1966–1976). Like the Boxer Rebellion, this was both an antforeigner and anti-modern movement that sought to implement the teachings and political thought of Mao Zedong (毛泽东, 1893–1976) on society. The end of the Cultural Revolution permitted a return to efforts by Christian and Islamic missionaries to bring religion and religious education to the People's Republic of China.

Within ten years both religions were active again, but Chinese Christians had begun to see themselves in a very different way. They viewed the evangelism of the past as a form of colonialism, and felt that the leaders of the Western churches had treated Chinese converts as less than equal. The Chinese government has appeared to take a supportive role in permitting religious activities, but this has, in fact, led to a greater separation from the Vatican and from Protestant leaders and doctrine in the West. It

A Protestant missionary wearing Chinese clothing to engage the hearts of the local population.





A Chinese school for girls Che-foo China c. 1902.
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is particularly difficult for Chinese Catholics because of the Chinese government's one-child policy, which is at odds with the Catholic prohibition on birth control and abortion.

Since Western missionaries began bringing religion and Western-style education to China in the early nineteenth century, China has changed drastically. Interestingly, many of the innovations brought by Christians, such as educating women and the physically handicapped and the liberal arts education, are now accepted as aspects of social justice under China's modern socialist system. Missionary schools had only worked with physically disabled

students, but China now claims that it also works with "intellectually disabled" students as well (although only about 1 percent of disabled students there receive special education). The focus of Christian (and Muslim) missionaries in China today is evangelism; over one hundred of them were expelled before the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

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