
Christian Missionaries and Modernization in China: The Evolution of meanings and Functions

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Abstract:

This article analyses the role of Christian missionaries in the Modernization of China. The paper will examine the historical developments of Christianity's arrival in China, and the function of Jesuit and Protestant missionary groups. Furthermore, it will indicate that although the primary purpose of all missionaries was to evangelize the Chinese heathen, this developed gradually as historical and cultural conditions in China and the West changed. How did the conditions for this development come about? In sum, there were three categories of factors influencing this development including the demands of the "Treaty system", and the new relations of the weakened Qing government with the Western powers; the Protestant theological-social disputes in the West over the impossibility of Evangelization of other people in the world; China's particular climate and catastrophic natural events such as drought, floods and the like. In contrast to Jesuits, Protestant missionaries replaced the policy of Vernacularization with that of Inculturalization; replaced the Bottom-up Conversion with Top-down Conversion and, more important, they replaced Modernization with Evangelization. In sum, the religious motives of the Christian missionaries, unwittingly, made Chinese society and the government more rational, and more secular. They contributed to the emergence of new regimes and movements and elites that eventually acted against the missionaries themselves. In this paper, the Weberian approach is used for analysis of actions and subjective meanings of Christian missionaries.

Key Words: China, Qing Dynasty, Modernization, Christian Missionaries, Vernacularation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The relation between religion and Modernization has always been the subject of debate among social theorists. Marx and Weber both analysed Modernization based on the formation of a bourgeois class. Moreover, Weber considered the mentality of this new emerging class to be primarily religious. According to Weber's model, various analyses of the role of religion in modernizing the religion-based social order have been formed in Eastern societies (Eisenstadt, 1971; Singer, 1966; Yoon, 2014). China is one of those societies that has attracted the attention of Max Weber. In his book *Religion of China*, he has analysed the structure of Confucianism and its relation to new rationality. Since then, there have been various analyses of the role of religion, especially Confucianism, in the Modernization of the Chinese social system (Cotesta, 2018; Wheeler, 2005). Nevertheless, some scholars have overlooked religion in China's Modernization (eg Dreyer, 1993; Tsai, 1986).

However, at the beginning of China's encounter with modernity in the nineteenth century, with the exception of traditional religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism or Islam, Christianity also had a relatively historical status, albeit very subordinate to others in Chinese society (Stark & Wang, 2015). Despite banning Christianity in China since the beginning of the eighteenth century, in 1810 in the Christian territories of Macao, Beijing, Nanjing, Sichuan, and Fujian, more than 210,000 Catholics, seven bishops and papal officials, eighty Chinese priests, and 23 foreign missionaries lived (Tiedemann, 2010: 115). However, Christianity in particular grew unprecedented from the middle of nineteenth century, and Christian missionaries have become one of the main agents for the rapid evolution of Chinese society. Missionary activities were so successful that Sun Yat-Sen, the first Chinese president at the beginning of the Republic (1912), was a Baptist and a product of missionary training.

In this article, the role of Christianity as a new religion in Chinese Modernization is discussed. The emphasis here is on the role of Protestant missionaries in Modernization of late Qing from the mid-nineteenth century. The missionaries first went to China for the purpose of "Evangelization", but later became one of the most important agents of "Modernization" in China. The paper attempts to indicate how the missionaries' mentality evolved, and how their initial motive for Evangelization became a passion for Modernization in later stages.

2. METHOD

Many answers have been given to the question of how Modernization is progressing. Marx and Durkheim emphasized structural and institutional changes, and Weber, in particular, in *The Protestant Ethics and The Spirit of Capitalism*, emphasized the subjective evolution of carrier groups. He specifically emphasizes the role of Calvinists' specific thought as a carrier group in the emergence of modern rationality and new emerging capitalism. This article follows Weber's approach. The fact is that missionaries at first came to China as carriers of Christian thought. Subsequently, as a result of changing objective conditions in both the West and China, they

tend to modern thought, and Modernization (and perhaps Westernization) replaced Evangelization.

Firstly, this article deals with the historical background of Christianity's arrival in China and then will indicate how the missionary groups have gone through the historical evolution. Studying this historical context is of vital importance because a significant part of the reaction of Chinese society, particularly the influential conventional elites, rooted in the same mental background of Christianity, especially the historical prohibition of Christianity, and its connection with colonial powers. It then deals with the objective conditions as well as some of the cognitive processes in the West in the nineteenth century that changed the attitude of the missionaries. In the following, the differences between the strategies of the Jesuit and Protestant missions are discussed.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA

Historians generally refer to the systematic influx of Christianity into China during the Tang Empire in the seventh century. The key point here is that the first Christians who came to China were not Europeans.

3.1 Tang period

Because of the rivalry between the Roman Church and the Eastern Church of Syria, the Syrian Church decided to geographically spread Christianity to the east, initially in the territory of Iran during the Sassanid Empire. Nestorian Christians were able to establish themselves as a religious minority in the Zoroastrian and Manichaean religious domain of Iran. In the sixth and seventh centuries, the Persian Nestorians began to spread Christianity in Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. The relations between the Tang and the Sasanians were good, and some Christian merchants were traveling along the Silk Road between China and Iran. Nevertheless, they were not missionaries (Bays, 2011: 8). The first missionary group led by the Allopen arrived in China in 635 in the Tang dynasty (907-618) (Ertl, 26). Emperor Taizong issued a decree, approving the teachings of Alopen for all, and allowed him to work throughout China. The first church was established that year. The outbreak of an internal uprising in 750 weakened the court and diminish Tang's early universalism, and lead to the indigenous elements gaining power. A kind of incompatibility with foreign religion emerged (Bays, 9-10).

3.2 Yuan period

Pope Inocent V, who viewed the Christian holy territory as being invaded by Muslim rulers, decided to establish contact with the Mongols. Between 1245 and 1253, the Pope sent two Christian missions to Mongols country under the Franciscans' leadership. However, both returned to Rome two years later and warned the Europeans of the Nestorian superiority in converting the Mongol's religion. In fact, the Nestorians were able to move from a religious phenomenon to a kinship one and to consolidate their position in the Mongol tribal affairs

(Tang, 2006: 18). Thus, by 1291, and after the establishment of the Mongolian Yuan Empire in China, non-Chinese Nestorians still had a monopoly on the promotion of Christianity (Bays, 12). The next major event is the two trips of Polo the father and his son Marco to China (The first trip was in 1265 and the second in 1275 to China) and staying there until 1291 (Tang, 2011: 44). Several Italian Christian businessmen accompanied these tourists. The residence of these merchants in some Chinese cities, such as Guangzhou, provided a context for religious activities (Ibid, 13). The Mongol empire's religious policy was tolerance toward other religions (Ibid, 126), thus the Roman Church attempted to send some Franciscan and Dominican missionaries to China in order to promote Christianity, and the result was nothing but competition between the Nestorian and Catholics. It is estimated that in 1305 there were about six hundred baptized in China. There is no evidence of minimal interaction between the Nestorians and other Catholics with Buddhists and Taoists. Meanwhile, Chinese religious traditions did not view Christianity as a theological and religious threat (Bays, 14).

The so-called "Renaissance" developments became the starting point for major changes in life systems in Europe in which the prosperity of commerce and the growth of science and mental transformation were of great importance. As a result, both Christianity was transformed within itself, and Europe's overall attitude to the non-European world evolved, resulting in relations later referred to as "colonialism" or "colonial modernity."

3.3 Ming period

Europe's internal developments, including the challenges of Protestants with the established Catholic order as well as the emergence of Spanish and Portuguese colonial powers, led to the appearance of "Jesus' Society" or Jesuits as a new religious order in 1540. The founder of this new order was Ignatius of Loyola (1554-1491). The primary goal was Jerusalem, but colonial expansion synchronized with the Jesuits move to India and Japan, and eventually to China. Portuguese sailors and businessmen particularly provided Jesuits with an appropriate opportunity in order to relocate, especially to East Asia (Bays, 19). This was due to the Padroado agreement between Portugal and Spain with the Vatican's mediation, which divided the non-European world, including the Atlantic and Pacific, into the influence of the two European powers. The US and the Philippines became the share of Spain, and Africa and Asia the share of Portugal. Merchants, silver makers, and missionaries aboard ships were scattered throughout the world. The missionaries settled in Japan in 1549, but their efforts to go to China failed for nearly 30 years until in 1583 Michel Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci were allowed to settle in a suburb of Canton (Guangzhou) to learn Chinese. Ricci established an urban Catholic mission in Beijing and in the late Ming Dynasty succeeded in converting some prominent scholar-officials to Christianity, but failed to convert the emperor to Christianity.¹ The

¹ The most famous figures are Xu Guangxi (1562-1633) and Li Zhizao (1565-1630) and Yang Tiangyun (1562-1627), known as the Three Pillars of the Christian Church in China. However, this style was not confined to the Chinese Jesuits. In India also Roberto de Nobili (1577-1656), founder of the Madurai mission, was adapted to the way of life of the indigenous and had no relation to the lower classes (Veer, 2014: 94).

Evangelization policy of the Jesuits was based on the formation of Christian communities which its basis was on family units not on individuals. Thus the result of their efforts was the formation of faithful families rather than Religious of Converts (Bays, 24). In the 1630s the Jesuit monopoly supported by Portugal was broken up, and various missionary groups supported by Spain, including the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the Augustinians, entered China. The conquest of Manchu in 1644 and the establishment of the King of Qing interrupted the activities of the Jesuits. The shakiness of the new kingdom court and the prevalence of alien phobia led the missionaries to be distrustful and to be deported to Guangzhou and Macao. The policy of Emperor Kangshi, who became a king in 1669, restored Christian missions. In 1692 he issued a decree regarding the tolerance of missionary activity (li, 55), and as a result, until 1701 thirty new missionary groups with nearly 140 members, including French Lazarians, arrived in China. As the conflict between the Jesuits and other European missionary groups over Ricci's "Accommodation Policy" increased, and the dispute was transferred to Vatican, the "Rites Controversy" began which eventually led Pope Clement XI (1649-1721) into the rejection of the Jesuits' Accommodation Policy in 1704². The Chinese Emperor also found that the Pope did not control the followers of the English Episcopalian Church as well as the new emerging Protestants of Germany, and the Jesuits' claim that "their order is the strongest order in Europe" (Elman, 2008: 35) was false. In 1724, with the change in the way the missionaries worked, the Emperor Yangon labeled the promotion of Christianity "Xiejiao"³ and banned it.

3.4 Qing period

Subsequent Chinese emperors continued the same practice, and Christianity was banned in China for 120 years from 1724 to 1840 and remained classified as banned and heterodox Sect. China-Europe trade relations reached a historic record at the beginning of the 19th century (Chen & Wang & yan, 4). At this new stage, Robert Morrison (1834-1782) arrived in Guangzhou in 1807. He was a Protestant, and from the London Missionary Society. In less than two years, he wrote a Chinese dictionary, working as an official translator for the East India Company. This position helped him travel to the coast of China, overshadowing his missionary role. He translated the Bible into Chinese with the help of William Milne (1822-1785) who joined him in 1813. Milne died in 1822 and Morrison in 1834, and the promotion of Christianity was still banned. By 1839, about fifty Protestant missionaries came to China, but only a few remained for a long time, converting only one hundred to Christians (Bays, 46). They did not have access to the millions of Chinese "unbeliever" or "astray" on the mainland. Gaining access to Chinese unbelievers or astrays became possible only with the outbreak of the first Opium War (1839-1842) and the setting up of the Nanjing Treaty between England and China in 1842. Similar treaties were concluded with the Americans in 1843 and the French in 1844. According to these treaties, the trial of foreigners in Chinese courts was banned;

². Given the widespread activity of the Jesuits in colonial territories, this problem was not necessarily confined to China alone. In India also there has been the controversy over the Malabar rites controversy (Veer, 94).

³. "Heterodox Sect" or "Evil Cu".

Christianity in China was legalized; Chinese coastal cities were open for foreigners' residence, trade, building churches, schools, and other elements of Christian identity; They were allowed to revive churches built before 1724. From 1842 to 1860, the Catholic and Protestant missionaries benefit greatly from a wide scope of action. More than twenty Catholic and Protestant missionary communities (seven American and fourteen British and from the rest of Europe), especially settled in Shanghai, and started doing activities in coastal cities of China. The most important event in this period was the emergence of the Indigenous-Christian Taiping movement (1850-1864) led by Hong Shiquan (Stark & Wang, 16-19). Western powers and part of the missionary groups were hopeful about the movement gaining power also about establishing "Christian government" in China. With the outbreak of the Second Opium War (1860-1858), the missionary groups gained the most important concession they wanted: full and free access to China's inland. It was unclear whether it would be accepted if Hong took over (Bays, 54). Furthermore, the Tianjin Treaty supported the peaceful activities of Chinese Christians. As a result of this treaty, for forty years from 1860 to 1900 missionaries, especially Protestants, formally and legally instituted religious and civic institutions, such as the establishment of churches, schools, and colleges, as well as the expansion of publishing and translation. Holding of three major formal and legal national conferences in 1877, 1890, and 1907, with a large percentage of missionary delegations from all over China (Bays, 70-71), demonstrates the success of missionary activities in the late Qing Dynasty⁴.

4. STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: TOWARD NEW ORDER

The transition from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century in the West was accompanied by widespread and varied structural changes in objective and subjective realms. The scientific, religious, and the industrial revolution are all part of this macroevents. These developments also affected other parts of the non-Western world, including China. However, in China, throughout this period, the Qing emperors had power. At the beginning of their reign, they banned the activities of Christian missionaries, but they collapsed while the missionaries had achieved spectacular accomplishments. The goals, methods, and the results of various missionary groups function, from the Jesuits to the Protestants, changed through a period of two centuries (from the middle of seventeenth century until the middle of the nineteenth century). What does provide the context for this transformation? At least three categories of factors can be identified:

4.1 Treaty system: Changing relations between China and Western powers.

⁴. In 1890, there were more than eighty-five thousand Protestant converts in China (Stark & Wang, 15). In 1904 this number reached 130,000 Protestants and more than 402,000 in 1920. The number of missionaries also increased from 1,500 in 1900 to 3445 in 1905, and 8,000 in 1927 (Chen & Wang & Yan, 5). Researchers see social discontent as a result of the economic and social consequences of a 300 percent increase in the Chinese population from 143 million in 1741 to 430 million in 1850 and land restrictions in China (Shankara, 1999: 86).

The Qing government was powerful enough at the beginning of its founding to prohibit the promotion of Christianity in China in the early eighteenth century, despite the desire of the Western powers (Li, 55). The historic continuation of the ban until the middle of the 19th century led to a negative mentality of Christianity, especially among the Chinese elite. Thus any attempt to promote Christianity, especially by Westerners, was strongly opposed. However, the Qing government weakened since the early 19th century and encountered numerous internal uprisings. On the other hand, new emerging powers such as England, France, and the United States had replaced Portugal and Spain and the Netherlands in East Asia. In particular, the growth of the British Navy in the form of the East India Company created completely new conditions (Robert, 2009: 37). Opium trade became a major issue between China and Britain. People began to use "foreign opium" extensively. In addition to threatening public health, opium also provoked a trade dispute between the two countries and it was silver removal (Dreyer, 1993: 55). The war of 1839 brought an end to the conflict, and as a result, a new framework was formed for relations between the Qing government and Western powers, referred to as the "treaty system" (Tiedemann, 2010: 297). The missionaries played the role of interpreter / translator for Western powers, especially England, in the ports and coastal areas of China. Under the "unequal" treaty system, the Qing government was forced to give many concessions to Western powers. Including facilitating the activity of missionaries, and allowing them to enter the mainland.

The missionaries had to collaborate with the colonialists in the new structural conditions and act within the framework of their plans⁵ because without such assistance, they would not be able to operate in China. For example, the East India Company initially viewed Morrison's religious beliefs as obstructing their activities. However, when he could serve as an interpreter for English ships, facilitating the activities of Morrison's missionaries and other missionaries became as part of British treaties and Qing government. As Elman said, "English politicians, Merchants and Evangelicals" used "religion" and "science" and "diplomacy" (and later "war") to articulate their goals for the reopening of China (Elman, 2008: 100). When that negative historical mentality caused by the banning of Christianity in China combined with the missionaries' cooperation with the colonists, it led to the emergence of anti-Christian movements in China, such as the Boxer Uprising, which naturally caused the missionaries to be more dependent on the Western powers, and also acting in the form of their new programs in China.

4.2 Scientific-theological evolutionism: Western cultural superiority

Why did the missionaries' attitude shift from Evangelization to Modernization? In addition to material conditions, an important attitudinal evolution in Protestant theology provoked this change. An important theological question in the seventeenth century was whether God really

⁵. The Missionaries, along with the Merchants and the Military, are considered one of the three *M* colonialism in China.

wants all human beings to become Christians? (Robert, 89). If God so wanted, he would have created them as Christians in Europe. If this is not God's will, then what would be the justification for the propagation of Christianity among non-Christians? This attitude was later linked to early nineteenth-century Critical race theory. In his book, *The Inequality of Human Races* (1853-1855), French thinker, Joseph Arthur de Gobineau divided humanity into three categories: white, yellow and black, and regarded civilization as the product of an Aryan white creative race that has not been combined with yellow and black races. He regarded the other two races as "inferior" and incapable of civilization, and considered the racial mixing as a cause of the civilizations "Degeneration" (Gobineau, 1999: 23-36). This "scientific theory" beside the "theological question" resulted in: all efforts to evangelize Africans and Asians by their racial inferiority were doomed to failure (Robert, 2009: 89). Accordingly, various ideas were raised about the "yellow peril" and the negative consequences of racial mixing and efforts to evangelizing Asians, and in particular the Chinese.

In fact, in the nineteenth century there was a powerful racial idea based on empirical and scientific evidence that consider modern civilization as a European race trait that its cultural features were non-transferable to other races. It also challenged the idea of Christianity that chanted human equality, and in the public sphere, missionary activities were perceived as "dangerous" or at least "useless". Although it is clear that those Protestant missionaries who went to non-Western areas to promote Christianity had passed on the idea that all human beings had the intellectual capacity to follow or disobey, they did not deny the superiority of Western civilization and culture. The cultural and civilizational superiority of the West over the non-Western world was an important part of nineteenth-century evolutionism, on the basis of which the future of the non-Western world was inexorably the past of Western world (Sanderson, 1990: 30-36). Veer explains that the Utilitarians and Protestant Evangelists, despite their differences of opinion, had a united moral world and agreed in humiliating indigenous culture (Veer, 2014: 92). In Shanghai, the missionaries were influenced by William Paley's (1805–1743) view of the "Combination of Theology and Utilitarianism" (Elman, 116). The missionaries in their mission areas were no longer merely seeking food and health care for needy people or educating the illiterate to read the Bible, but were working at a broader level for cultural change. In the 1890s important works such as "*Christian Missions and Social Progress*" by James Dennis were published demonstrating how missionaries were able to act as a social advancement actor by building schools and hospitals and social and agricultural services centers as well as changing the status of women in different parts of the non-Western world (Robert, 2009: 89). It was only during World War I that the moral and cultural superiority of the West became discredited, and the missionary and colonial relations were revealed (Ibid, 90).

4.3 China's Special Climatic Conditions: Disasters

China as well as the northern regions of India was highly vulnerable to climate conditions and has been constantly affected by natural disasters such as floods and droughts or contagious

diseases such as cholera and plague. In the drought between 1876 and 1879, nearly one million people died of starvation. In 1888, millions of people were displaced by the devastating flood. In 1899 the bridges and houses and roads were also destroyed due to the flood of the Yellow River (Chen & Wang & Yan, 6). This was at a time when the Chinese central government either did not have a special organization to provide assistance at such times, or because of weaknesses and inefficiencies, it was unable to organize such conditions.

On the contrary, the missionaries in these conditions were more prepared and motivated to go to the disaster areas of China and to help the people. In times of distress, the needy Chinese had more readiness to approach the missionaries than ever before, and their hearts were more ready to hear the sermon. Nutrition and health care, especially for women, were a first priority for missionaries. However, the presence in the affected areas introduced the missionaries to new dimensions of Chinese social status. Including China's backwardness in science and technology and the lack of infrastructure to deal with natural disasters. The repetition of natural disasters and its material and human disastrous consequences, and the re-exposure of missionaries to the weaknesses and inadequacies of the Qing government and the social structure of the Chinese community in order to assist people, cause them to propagate science and technology, establish some relief agencies, and encourage the government to undertake structural reforms. In other words, although the religious motivation was the primary incentive for the missionaries to help, the unintended consequence was their motivation to encourage the government to conduct Modernization.

5. DISCUSSION

Although the missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, had the same goal, and it was the evangelization of the non-Christian world, each had different ways of achieving that goal, with different results. This section deals with three general differences between the practices of the Catholic Jesuits of the late Ming and early Qing period with the Protestants of late Qing government.

5.1 Inculturation versus Vernacularization

The Jesuits affected by of Matteo Ricci made an attempt to promote Christianity through emphasising inculturation by considering the characteristics of indigenous culture and the study of non-Christian scriptures, and cultural fluidity. Their aim was "to fit themselves and their Christian message in the local culture" (Chu, 1). In China and Japan, they went so far as to say that Confucius's praise is not blasphemy, but merely another expression of civil duty and respect for his parents. Lee (2012) summarizes Ricci's three-step approach: focusing on the literati elite, adapting to the Chinese lifestyle, and integrating the religious message with Western scientific and technological elements (Li, 55). Ricci acted as a Confucian scholar, working on writing philosophical texts that could be a bridge between Christianity and Confucius (Robert, 2009: 39). Whereas the Protestants relied on "Vernacularization". Vernacularization required "knowing people, studying their culture, and translating the Bible

into the local language" so that their converts could read and understand the Bible (Ibid, 43). For this reason, some Protestant missionaries are today regarded as the first sinologists in the West, while the Jesuit strategy was largely concerned with understanding elite culture, and even when they began to learn Chinese, they learnt the language of the scholarly class not that of ordinary and humble people (Li, 54).

5.2 Top-down Conversion versus bottom-up Conversion

The Jesuits' idea was that by converting the elites of society to Christianity, especially the court officials, the way would be open for a comprehensive change of people and social groups. Ricci had formed an urban mission whose focus was on Beijing and the court, and he had even been allowed to stay in the court. Their strategy was to evangelise officials and elites indirectly by relying on science and technological achievements. They thought that changing the religion of the whole people was possible only with the help of the change of thinkers' and elites' religion (Li, 55). Thus, relying on astronomical findings, they took on the duty of making calendar at the Ming court and worked on mapping, watch making and glass making. Instead, the Protestants, though in some periods were working on "Top-down Conversion", they generally had relation with ordinary people. Sometimes they targeted their audiences' minds indirectly, including by assisting people with natural disasters such as floods and droughts⁶, and sometimes directly by translating and publishing Western religious and scholarly works. They did not endorse indigenous culture, and promoted religious traditions, even in cases that were in conflict with local culture. They called on the government directly to revise the Confucian educational tradition and build a modern education system, and they were actively working to establish new schools and colleges in China. Although the Jesuits used "science" as a "bait" in the promotion of Christianity to attract the Chinese (Li, 53), they did not suppose that Chinese knowledge was superstitious. Conversely, Protestants such as Alexander Williamson (1743-1805) "disdained" Chinese literature and poetry and instead considered the existence of scholars and schools as a requirement for the revival of China (Elman, 117). They saw Western science and legal traditions rooted in Protestant Christianity, believing that Western science and medical education and law were "the prelude" to mental transformation and conversion (Woodberry, 1).

5.3 Modernization versus Evangelization

⁶. Between 1876 and 1879 severe droughts killed one million Chinese in five provinces. More than a hundred missionary groups went to these areas to help the poor. On January 26, 1878, they established the first missionary organization in China to organize all missionary relief / revival activities. In the flood of 1888, the missionaries provided food aid to hundreds of thousands. In the flood of the Yellow River in 1899, missionaries helped rebuild homes, bridges, and roads. Early in 1920 South China suffered from a severe drought. To align international efforts for post-drought relief and relief, the missionaries formed an organization called the China International Famine Relief Commission in 1921 to provide \$ 30 million for drought relief (Chen & Wang & yan, 6). Cohen has given a detailed account of the educational, medical, and women's activities of Christian missions (Cohen, 576-547).

Protestant missions, like any other missionary group, initially came to China with the goal of Evangelization, but because of the special circumstances of China at the end of the Qing period and the change in its relations with the Western powers, their strategy gradually changed. The most important feature of this new phase is the belief in Christian (or Western) cultural superiority over Chinese culture. Veer (2014) believes that the most important aspect of Protestant missionaries Modernization is "a new image of society being given to individuals". They broke the notion of life and society in people's minds. Although their efforts to convert to Christianity initially failed, they persuaded individuals to accept modern order or at least be prepared to change the existing order (Veer, 90). In other words, "saving" the heathen soul replaced "remaking" of his world (Bays, 71). In the 1890s, some missionaries, such as Timothy Richard (1845-1919), Yang John Allen (1836-1907), and Gilbert Reid (1857-1927), proposed Modernization of China to the court as top-down Conversion and as a reformist. They were actually trying for Modernization (Ibid, 82). Richard was one of the most prominent missionaries to undergo a "paradigm shift": he first came to China like other missionaries, believing that the Bible was the only source of truth, seeking "Saving of Souls". However, his intention gradually changed to "Seek the Worthy". He practically became a "Practical Reformer" (Johnson & Hamrin, 2015: 35) who saw his job as "influencing Chinese leaders" (Ibid, 31). Protestant missionaries were initially influenced by "natural theology" and believed in the compatibility between religion and science. But later with the Darwinian revolution, secularization and scientific education became widespread in Europe, challenging the "Protestant agenda for linking Christianity to science" (Elman, 122). Under the new circumstances, the world was moving towards secularization, and for Richard and the other missionaries, "Modernization" was now more general than "Evangelization." They sought to persuade the emperor and court officials to carry out innovative reforms as an attempt to "Top-down Conversion". In the late Qing period, intergovernmental reforms leaders such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao were under the influence of these reformist missionaries (Bays, 83).

6. CONCLUSION

This article examined the mental evolution of Christian missionaries in China and indicated how their tendency shifted from Evangelization to Modernization. In examining the history of Christianity in China, Nestorian Early Christianity (mainly Iranian) can be distinguished from later European Christianity. There was a great deal of commonality between the former and the Chinese semantic world, and their presence in the Tang period and even in the Mongolian Yuan period was not sensitized. However, the latter was challenging from the beginning. It took a long time for the Portuguese-backed Jesuits to be allowed to enter and operate in China during the Ming period. Upon arrival, they were forced to adopt a strategy of "cultural acceptance" and concentrated their efforts mainly on the Chinese court and elites. Finally, their activities were banned in China at the beginning of the Qing period for more than a century. In the nineteenth century, Protestants also began the path of conflict from the outset and found a permanent place in the provisions of colonial treaties of foreign powers with the Qing government. Drawing on

a Weberian approach, the paper indicated how the mentality of Christian missionaries as activists changed and their religious actions evolved.

The change in the aims and function of Christian missionaries in China must be understood in the triple junction of the missionaries' own religious motivation, the historical objective and subjective developments of the nineteenth century, and the Sino-Europe political and economic interactions. In the nineteenth century, because of the historically negative Chinese mentality of Christian function, the missionaries had no way to enter China except with the support of colonial powers. On the other hand, this dependency on colonial groups made the Chinese more susceptible to them, especially at the level of the governmental elites and scholars. Furthermore, as the Qing government's internal structural problems became apparent, government elites sought to reform (Tongzhi Restoration, Self-Strengthening Movement, and One Hundred Days Movement). Particularly after the Taiping Rebellion and its suppression, the Manchu government and its scholars and literati turned to the West to promote new science and technology. This improved attitudes toward missionaries. Although the Chinese government was forced to give the missionaries the permit to promote Christian freely in China based on the Nanjing and Tianjin treaties, promoting Christianity was not their heart's desire. The government elites were now expecting missionaries to promote Western science and technology, and this was a new challenge for the missionaries in establishing a relationship between Christianity and science-technology. Science tended to secularize the world, and was incompatible with the religious duty of the missionaries. Their efforts to translate scholarly work, to make reformist suggestions, and to help implement new institutions, especially in the field of education, should be seen as a practical way of responding to this problem.

However, It should be noted that in discussing the Protestants' relation with the emergence of new capitalism, Weber considers the Calvinists as a carrier group that provided themselves with their decline. Indeed, the religious action of the Calvinists in the hope of salvation paved the way for the rationalization of economic action in the form of capitalism that no longer needed religious thought and practice for its advancement, but its logic was fundamentally incompatible with religious logic and led to the rationalization of the world. Protestant missionaries seem to have a similar situation. They sought to influence Christianity in the people as well as in the decision-making layers of the Qing government. On the one hand, in order to draw people's attention and help them against natural disasters, they were promoting Western health and literacy, and spreading Western knowledge and on the other hand, because of the critical conditions of the Qing government and its urgent need to reform and rebuild old systems the missionaries had to promote science and technology and engage in Qing elite reformist programs. As a result, they inadvertently contributed to the rationalization of the Qing government and society. Eventually, as a result of political and social change, new liberal, communist, and nationalist elites appeared who no longer believed in religion. Even conservative reformers such as Kang Youwei's attempt to establish a non-mysterious "national religion" based on Confucian teachings and incorporate it into the constitution of the "Republic

of China" also faced the resistance of the new elites. The society and the government of the mysterious Chinese who had lived for thousands of years under the reign of the "Mandate of Heaven", certainly did not become more religious as a result of the missionaries' practices, but also became more rational and secular, especially as a result of entering the "Republican Age".

Peter van in Veer (Veer, 2014) describes the "contradictory role" of the missionaries in China who served both in the health and education field and in favor of anti-monarchist nationalist movements (Veer, 90). While Veer calls this situation a "contradiction", this article indicates that it seems to be a major change in the minds of the Protestant missionaries which Veer has failed to understand. Providing modern services to the natives and supporting nationalist movements against the old backward monarchies were two aspects of Modernization, and the missionaries were the leading actors of that. However, Veer's point is true that the association of missionaries with businessmen and militaries in the form of colonialist Modernization programs led to the missionaries themselves as well as Christianity to be the subject of nationalist disputes and anti-alien movements in some countries, including the boxers' uprising in China. Missionaries generally unwittingly participated in the shaping of these movements and acted against themselves. In their schools, they taught science and geography, native and western literature, ideas about democracy and individual rights. They provided a basic knowledge by which nationalist movements eventually were affected (Robert, 50).

Nevertheless, Christianity flourished in the political and cultural environment of the Republic of China in the first half of the twentieth century (Latourette, 1930: 63-64). Stark and Wang refer to the 1920-1929 period as "Glory Days" (Stark & Wang, 27). A very important debate, called "Weber's Fever", revolved around the claim to allow Chinese society to become Protestant in order to open the way to Chinese capitalism and industrialization (Tsai, 2016). How the Christian agency in Chinese twentieth-century history marginalized should be studied separately.

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