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The Encounters of Chinese Women with China Inland
Mission's English Female Missionaries: Reconstruction of
the conversion journey of Chinese women
based on the record from missionary

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The Encounters of Chinese Women with China Inland Mission's English Female Missionaries: Reconstruction of the conversion journey of Chinese women based on the record from missionary

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Abstract

Historians are used to making evaluations or comments on object in their research; few examine the inner world of converts or non-Christian themselves. Of course, as is often mentioned previously, the absence of women's voices in archival materials makes writing the women history a difficult task, especially when the research object is rural Chinese women who were almost illiterate or only semi-literate and left no personal records in early twentieth century. Despite the shortage of sources, this paper grew out of a historian's adventure with a different way of exploring the hope and feelings of modern Chinese women, and their interaction with modern English female missionaries; limited material is available in mission reports about the illiterate Chinese women situation.

The three women missionaries who will be discussed in this paper are Alice Mildred Cable (盖群英, 21 February 1878-30 April 1952) and the Misses French: Evangeline Frances French (冯贵珠, 1869-8 July 1960, short for "Eva") and Francesca Law French (冯贵石, 12 December 1871-2 August 1960). The three remarkable female missionaries became a well-known "Trio"¹ of the CIM (the China Inland Mission). The tie between them was not only a lifelong friendship, but also a shared zeal and belief for Christ and those Chinese women they met. After almost forty years in Shanxi (山西) and Northwest China later, the Trio wrote over twenty books to chronicle their work, travels and spiritual journeys in China. Those books presented readers with various stories of Chinese women's personal experiences. This paper concentrates on the Shanxi part of the Trio's work.

The objective of my research is to explore how the interaction of various kinds of Chinese women with these three foreign women missionaries can be assessed by observing the inner world of these Chinese Christian women from the cultural perspective of a 21st Century Chinese historian. First of all, in reports, correspondence and books, the documents concerning on the three was written from a missionary perspective. The materials we have are primarily from missionaries. As a Chinese woman who was born and lived in the Northwest China, I have chosen to concentrate on the Chinese side of the relationship between village women and missionaries. This involves to "sympathetic understanding" which Cable had been conscious and supported. Secondly, what I will use to analyze those women is the "Cross" model which was proposed by Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy.² His theory claims that humans' life, social as well as individual, is lived at a crossroads between four "fronts": "*backward* toward the past, *forward* into the future, *inward* among ourselves, our feelings, wishes and dreams, and *outward* against what we must fight or exploit or come to terms with or ignore".³ This method offers us directions to explore and

¹ The "Trio" will be used mainly in this paper instead of individual names of the three.

² Rosenstock-Huessy, Eugen. *The Christian Future: Or the Modern Mind Outrun*. New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1946.

³ The Cross of Reality formed by the four fronts is so self-evident, once it is grasped, that it is apt to seem trivial at first. But our "natural" minds deny this trivial truth. They do not admit that we respect the past, not the end. See Rosenstock-Huessy, Eugen. *The Christian Future :Or the Modern Mind Outrun*.p.168

understand the objects of this research. Thirdly, every Chinese lady had her own way on her life and belief journey, I divide their experiences into four stages of their contact with the Trio and Christianity according to their different levels of understanding. This study aims at reconstructing the history of Chinese women's conversion journey. Last but not least, the tension that exists in Chinese traditional custom and Christianized modern message brought by missionaries as transmitters of Western ideal is hoped to be revealed from both the missionary side and the Chinese Christian women side.

Keyword: Chinese Christian women, female missionary, spiritual journey

Introduction

Most studies on women and Christianity in China focus on the role and contributions of both foreign and Chinese women in church or the social improvements in China. Historians are used to making evaluations or comments on object in their research; few examine the inner world of converts or non-Christian themselves. Of course, as is often mentioned previously, the absence of women's voices in archival materials makes writing the women history a difficult task, especially when the research object is rural Chinese women who were almost illiterate or only semi-literate and left no personal records in early twentieth century. Despite the shortage of sources, recent efforts to explore the empowerment of Chinese women or the conversion process with female agency in it have proposed meaningful suggestions and conclusions on this subject.⁴

As a matter of fact, limited material is available in mission reports about the illiterate Chinese women situation; historians need this data to map the relationship between foreign female missionaries and Chinese women. This paper is no exception to this problem, but there are also some new ideas for discussion. The three women missionaries who will be discussed here are Alice Mildred Cable (盖群英, 21 February 1878-30 April 1952) and the Misses French: Evangeline Frances French (冯贵珠, 1869-8 July 1960, short for "Eva") and Francesca Law French (冯贵石, 12 December 1871-2 August 1960). The three remarkable female missionaries became a

⁴ Lutz, Jessie Gregory. *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women: Gender, Christianity, and Social Mobility*. Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2010. 林美玫. *婦女與差傳：十九世紀美國聖公會女傳教士在華差傳研究*. 初版 ed. 台北市: 里仁書局, 2005.

well-known “Trio”⁵ of the CIM (the China Inland Mission). The tie between them was not only a lifelong friendship, but also a shared zeal and belief for Christ and those Chinese women they met. After almost forty years in Shanxi (山西) and Northwest China later, the Trio wrote over twenty books to chronicle their work, travels and spiritual journeys in China. Many of them were very popular in the English-speaking world. Within those books they presented readers with various stories of Chinese women’s personal experiences.

Yet, as might not be expected, I consider that these individual experiences and their “inner world” are part of a basic element to express the “tensions”; these need to be brought forward and discussed. Properly speaking, the tension between the Christianity brought by Western missionaries and Chinese traditional culture was an enduring problem; this cultural tension has been mentioned a lot in philosophy or ethics. Here, with the narrow definition of culture, I mean to refer to a society mainly involving “customs of Chinese village society”. Then this cultural problem will be interpreted as a tension between “Christianized” (more Western and modern) civilization and traditional Chinese village customs. In that sense, the study is built upon an assumption of existing cross-cultural tension.

The objective of my research is to explore how the interaction of various kinds of Chinese women with these three foreign women missionaries can be assessed by observing the inner world of these Chinese Christian women from the cultural perspective of a 21st Century Chinese historian. First of all, in reports, correspondence and books, the documents concerning on the three was written from a missionary perspective. The materials we have are primarily from missionaries. As a Chinese woman who was born and lived in the Northwest where the Trio had worked during their lots years, I have chosen to concentrate on the Chinese side of the relationship between village women and missionaries. This involves to “sympathetic understanding” which Cable had been conscious and supported. Secondly, what I will use to analyze those women--- either as individuals or as a group---is the “Cross” model which was proposed by Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy.⁶ His theory claims that humans’ life, social as well as individual, is lived at a crossroads between four “fronts”:*“backward toward the past, forward into the future, inward among ourselves,*

⁵ The “Trio” will be used mainly in this paper instead of individual names of the three.

⁶ Rosenstock-Huessy, Eugen. *The Christian Future: Or the Modern Mind Outrun*. New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1946.

our feelings, wishes and dreams, and *outward* against what we must fight or exploit or come to terms with or ignore”.⁷ This method offers us directions to explore and understand the objects of this research. Thirdly, as it will be pointed out that every Chinese lady had her own way on her life and belief journey, I divide their experiences into four stages of their contact with the Trio and Christianity, according to their different levels of understanding. This study aims at reconstructing the history of Chinese women’s conversion journey. Last but not least, the tension that exists in Chinese traditional custom and Christianized modern message brought by missionaries as transmitters of Western ideal is hoped to be revealed from both the missionary side and the Chinese Christian women side.

This paper grew out of a historian’s adventure with a different way of exploring the hope and feelings of modern Chinese women, and their interaction with modern English female missionaries. Yet before returning to the story, it is necessary to note that in this paper I have chosen to concentrate on the Shanxi part of the Trio’s work in this paper.⁸ Nevertheless the Chinese environment was quite changing during those years; it was not quite the same drastic cultural shift, especially in the countryside. Impoverishment in the countryside had further widened the gap between rural and urban China as we all know. The Trio lived in Huozhou (霍州), which was a not big city at that time, thus what I concentrate on refers to Chinese village women in Shanxi. As my research on the Trio is progressing, the stories involving religion dialogue and pluralism in Northwest of China and Central Asia could be told later.

Literature Review and Methodology

The earliest academic research about the Trio could be considered as *Three Women: Mildred Cable, Francesca French, Evangeline French, The Authorised Biography* by William James Platt.⁹ The Trio’s experience in China was recorded not only in journaling, but also in the letters their friends often received in England. James Platt was one among them, he compiled plenty of the information he heard from the

⁷ The Cross of Reality formed by the four fronts is so self-evident, once it is grasped, that it is apt to seem trivial at first. But our “natural” minds deny this trivial truth. They do not admit that we respect the past, not the end. See Rosenstock-Huessy, Eugen. *The Christian Future :Or the Modern Mind Outrun*.p.168

⁸ Besides the Trio’s work in Shanxi, their experience were more fantastic in Northwest. They met various kinds of women in Northwest and Central Asia. I’ll present the story of Chinese and other women with a table as appendix.

⁹ Platt, William James, Mildred Cable, Francesca French, and Evangeline French. *Three Women :Mildred Cable, Francesca French, Evangeline French : The Authorised Biography*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964.

Trio and wrote this book. It resolves the problem which was unknown in Trio's public works by showing us the story of them. As a friend of the Trio, the argument from Platt's perspective should be investigated carefully. Another two books on the Trio are Phyllis Thompson's *Desert Pilgrim: The Story of Mildred Cable's Venture for God in Central Asia* and Cecil Northcott's *Star Over Gobi: The Story of Mildred Cable*.¹⁰ Both of the two are brief summaries of the Trio's journey in Northwest China and Central Asia, based chiefly on the autobiography of them. It tries to interest and thrill readers of all ages by the telling story. As the members of the CIM, the Trio was famous in their society which is called OMF (Overseas Missionary Fellowship) nowadays. Julia Cameron wrote an article on the website to memorize the Trio and their adopted daughter, *The funeral of an elderly woman*.¹¹

Without a doubt, the most important contribution on this topic is from Prof. Linda K. Benson. It's well-known that Prof. Benson has written lots of works about Xinjiang situation which attracted her attention to the Trio.¹² All of those research results bring a new book, *Across China's Gobi*, which could be treated as the necessary academic work regarding the Trio. Based on lots of first hand documents, Prof. Benson has written the detailed history of the Trio's lives and work. Moreover, as a professional historian, Prof. Benson comments on the influence of the Trio's work and the most key point or turning point of their certain success; she provides us plenty of information about the Trio and the CIM, including the state of female Christian. In addition, a postgraduate named Jing Tian who may be inspired by Prof. Benson, in her thesis she argues that the Trio are feminists who were involved in Feminism Movement.¹³ Actually I cannot agree with this point of view, I argue that the Trio who were faithful missionaries shouldn't be drawn into complex situation mixed with secular and sacred issues. Looking back the history of research on female missionary and China society, the interaction between the Trio and Chinese women

¹⁰ Thompson, Phyllis. *Desert Pilgrim :The Story of Mildred Cable's Venture for God in Central Asia*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1957.Cecil Northcott, *Star Over Gobi : The Story of Mildred Cable*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co Ltd, 1975.

¹¹ Julia Cameron, The Trio and Topsy, OMF International (UK) Available, http://www.omf.org/omf/us/resources_1/omf_archives/china_inland_mission_stories/the_trio_and_topsy [accessed 5February,1998].

¹² Benson, Linda. "French, Cable and French: Women Evangelists of the CIM." In *the Association of Asian Studies annual meeting, 2000*. Benson, Linda. "Muslims, Missionaries and Warlords in Northwestern China." *Oakland University Journal* (Fall 2001): 9-21. Benson, Linda. "Missionaries with Attitude: A Woman's Mission in Northwestern China." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 29, no. 4 (October 2005): 188-193. Benson, Linda. "Alice Mildred Cable of the China Inland Mission." *A Missionary Kaleidoscope*, ed. Kathleen Lodwick (Norwalk, Connecticut: EastBridge Press, 2006), 126-152.

¹³ Tian, Jing, and University of Alberta. *Evangelism and Feminism in China's Northwest*.2008.

even never been discussed by historian, which is my effort to do.

Recovering the lives and thoughts of illiterate Chinese women is not easy. Yet, we can take good advantage of the English materials which was telling Chinese story. The Trio's works are helpful. After the reports and books are being examined,¹⁴ Cable's own vivid description could be used for substituting for firsthand experience. Those fascinating books provided a picture of Chinese women's daily life, as it appeared to her Western eyes at the beginning of the twentieth century, even though information on the great majority of nameless Christian women is scanty. For example, *The Fulfillment of A Dream of Pastor Hsi's* was "local" as the author wrote, "I wish it to be clearly understood that the usages and customs to which I refer throughout this book are local"¹⁵. The same as other missionaries' work, it recorded "every tale of missionary endeavor" and "labor in the apostolic succession".¹⁶ Indeed, this book was a commonplace observation, but none the less true. Based on understanding of what Cable had written instead of surprising, I'm trying to rewrite and interpret the history. The purpose is to reconstruct what Clifford Geertz calls "a native point of view" in the complicated process of Chinese women's interaction with the Trio.

The aforementioned book would be used as the main sources for this paper. Then, a proper method to analyze them is necessary. Rosenstock-Huessy provides a cruciform image of reality in which we all live. He pointed out that¹⁷ "Our existence is a perpetual suffering and wrestling with conflicting forces, paradoxes, contradictions within and without. By them we are stretched and torn in opposite directions, but through them comes renewal. And these opposing directions are summed up by four which define the great space and time axes of all men's life on earth, forming a Cross of Reality."¹⁸ The "Cross" offer us a useful model of human reality, in which we have to face backward to the past, forward to the future, inward toward our selves, and outward toward the world. The Trio and Chinese women are no exceptions. They lived in cross-culture contexts, which will be discussed in next

¹⁴ Observation and Examination on the purpose of author's writing.

¹⁵ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfillment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*. London: Morgan & Scott, 1920. p.xi

¹⁶ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfillment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*.p.vii

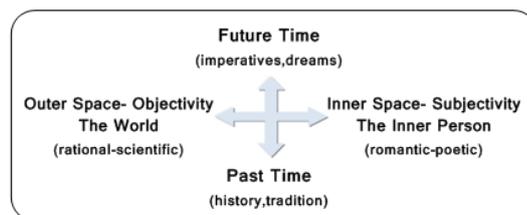
¹⁷ Rosenstock-Huessy, Eugen. *The Christian Future :Or the Modern Mind Outrun*. p.166

¹⁸ Comments of original text: This is not symbolistic fantasy of arbitrary schematizing, but something that has grown through two thousand years. The Jesuit writer, Hans Urs von Balthasar (*Die Apokalypse der Deutschen Seele*, Salzburg and Leipzig, 1939, III, 434 ff.), cites the authority of Origen and Augustine, in their commentaries on Ephesians 3:18 for his kindred interpretation of human existence, and even goes so far as to say, "In the philosophical object of knowledge the figure of the cross is engraved like an indelible watermark."

part; the “conflicting forces” or “paradoxes” presented by them should be emphasized more than it exists in other people. Since the integrated four sectors form a model which could be applied in analyzing individual persons and social groups, even in primitive cultures, we can also use it to analyze kinds of relationships or actions, such as a “Cross of Interaction”. When I was thinking about it, it seems that this cross is self-evident, and so it can save the task here. Rosenstock-Huessy suggested, “A new penetration of the Cross is required which shall draw together the hearts of men in East and West by showing that each has some essential ingredient of life which the other needs”¹⁹. And in addition, man’s existence and development depends on “preserving a delicate mobile balance between forward and backward, inward and outward, trends”²⁰. Hence the Cross of cross-cultural interaction is always changing; it’s a dynamic process by which man can keep moving forward, toward future.

To sum up, the cross is not some elaborate metaphysical concept but simply a commonsense way to interpret individual and group, behavior, their social network. As humans, we are always balancing our roles to keep moving forward. In view of that the cultural and religious tensions existing in the objects of my study, it must be useful to reveal the inner world of the Chinese women and their interaction with the three.

Here is an image of the Cross of cross-cultural interaction to make clear of the four sectors of man’s life.



With the help of this cruciform model, series of questions which conducted me to deepen my research on this subject as followed are possible to be answered. How the Trio approached Chinese women? Did they do so with appropriate sensitivity? What attracted the Chinese women to missionaries and Christianity? How did Chinese men react to both the foreign and Chinese women? When the Chinese women encountered the three, in what ways did the interaction process begin and keep dynamic? How did the changing Chinese context alter the Trio’s relation with both Christian and

¹⁹ Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper & Row, 1956. p.174

²⁰ Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. p.169

non-Christian communities?

The Trio and Their Challenges

On September 1, 1893, when Evangeline French stood on board with the port of Liverpool in full view, she even didn't know that she would spend the coming more than forty years in a strange but beloved land-China. Similarly, the other two girls-Mildred Cable and her younger sister Francesca French would arrive in China later and end up spending most of their adult lives there.

A. Brief Biographies of the Three Women

Evangeline Frances French was the senior one in Trio. Eva was born in Medea, Algeria, but not long after her birth the family left for Europe. They arrived in Bruges, Belgium, where Francesca Law French was born. And hereafter the family moved to Geneva, Switzerland, finally settled in England. Relying on their relative affluence, the parents offered their daughters well education-both academic studies and music lessons. It was seven years since Eva reached China, the Boxer Rebellion of the summer of 1900 forced her to flee her mission station of Huozhou. Fortunately, she got a furlough as the Boxer Rebellion instead of martyrdom like her most dear colleagues. "The sobered woman who emerged from that terrific experience was a very different person from the impetuous girl of 1893"²¹. During her furlough, she must have considered with care the decision: whether or not to return to the country where she had experienced the loss of close friends and colleagues. Ultimately, in late 1901, Eva once more embarked for China.

British-born Alice Mildred Cable had an upper middle class English family. She was raised and educated in Guildford, Surrey. As can be known, Cable was the most popular public speaker and writer of the Trio; however she wasn't like as so strong and professional at the outset. Eva had a rapid but deep impression of Cable when she held her hands for the first meeting in 1902, which is "such a frail child"²². Of course, not quite bad as Eva thought it would be. After a second look, she could feel Cable's plenty of grit. It has been proved in their lifelong cooperation that Cable could make good.

²¹ Cable, Mildred, and Francesca French. *Something Happened*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1933.p.53

²² Cable, Mildred, and Francesca French. *Something Happened*.p.77

Francesca Law French was Eva's younger sister by two years. They were born into the same family, even the elder one but it appeared like totally different personalities. For years, when sisters left the family home, she was kept at home by duty of care of her mother. "The two women's lives appeared to settle into a conventional pattern suited to women of means in late Victorian England"²³. After her mother closed her eyes in death, a chapter in her life was closed. In the summer of 1909, Francesca made up her mind for giving her contribution as a missionary, and she joined her sister and Cable. From then on, they became a well-known Trio.

From the beginning of their shared ministry in Shanxi, the three women considered their special calling to be the conversion and education of Chinese women and girls. On the other hand, "the Christian parents begged for a girls' school with such insistence that they yielded"²⁴. The mission opened its school to the daughters of Chinese Christians and others. The grade levels ranged from kindergarten through advanced classes equivalent to college-level teacher training. The classes taught at the Girls' School included a "standard Western education" course of study as well as the courses offered in Chinese schools. Daily life in school was routine of worship and education. Scripture memorization was very frequently in opium refuge, even for illiterate women. Stationed in Huozhou, besides the daily work, they prepared feast and music show on their courtyard crowded by many people, specific for Christian and Chinese festivals. Their colleagues reflected very well.²⁵

According to long years' work, thus they believed the Church in Huozhou had been rooted and established, no longer propagated by any external energy. The three decided to launch a new ministry as itinerant evangelist, whereupon they set out for another call from Northwest China and Central Asia in 1923. This must be considered as a milestone of their work and life.

During the long sojourns in the northwest, they itinerated on the broad scope and encountered Muslim, Tibetan Mongolian and Turkistan, they went through the exotic but death-meaning Black Gobi under the condition of no food and no safe shelter. With them was an adopted deaf-and-dumb daughter who had been born to a Mongolian Chief father and a Tibetan mother.

However, during staying in Willow Cottage, where they settled for a peaceful life,

²³ Benson, Linda. *Across China's Gobi :The Lives of Evangeline French, Mildred Cable, and Francesca French of the China Inland Mission*. Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2008.p.26

²⁴ Cable, Mildred, and Francesca French. *Something Happened*.p.106

²⁵ Alzina C.Munghr, "Spiritual Preparation." *The Chinese Recorder*, October. 1919,708-709.

the Trio's work for God wasn't over. Their life was filled fully with giving public speech or attending academic societies, including the Royal Central Asiatic Society and the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

B. What Challenges the Trio Met in Shanxi

The Trio has documented their stories clearly in the autobiographies; they said that something must have happened to them during their life from a little girl to women missionary in China. Inner branch of them and the relationship between each other within Trio is another topic to discuss. The individual factor doesn't have to be taken into consideration right now. With the help of Cross model to retell the Trio's impressed story, the challenge they met together in China which belonged to cross-cultural conflict could be shown.

Historians often discuss why those women missionaries chose their life in China rather than an easier and certainly safer life with their families in homeland-Europe or America. Have to be honest, I don't understand either. In addition to their individual background and social factor, this answer must be found in Bible and their private, strong feelings, which was called "call". If we identify their background and religious belief as the past of the Trio, what that was outer they encountered in China was totally different.

The first of all, as single female missionaries, they needed the support from male colleagues in both England and China. Fortunately, they rarely received any criticism as their gender when they were in Shanxi, but much praise. Secondly, preaching in heathen society means overcoming and conquering idol worship. As "the armor of God", missionaries came to the land; however that didn't mean they would not feel pressure from paganism. As a matter of fact, more intensive than we can imagine, Cable recorded, "in the land where it commands the homage of men and women, its hand-wrought figure is a mask for the Devil, who, through it, receives obeisance and worship. Therefore, the missionary never dares to relax the intensity of his inmost protest"²⁶. Thirdly, the local social-net made them adopt proper method for mission. Regarding the opinion of approaching the village women, the idea from a native deacon was "one by one", which was forced upon Cable's attention in a rather startling ways. Fourthly, Boxer Rebellion and revolution in 1911 had influenced the

²⁶ Cable, Mildred, and Francesca French. *Something Happened*.p.298

mission work in many ways, which everybody has known a lot.

Facing the out world, it was with mixed feelings for the Trio when they wandered between different cultures-Working in China and taking furlough in England. They had to readjust themselves to English ways and English dress; meanwhile, they indeed felt the thrill which comes with the first sight of home when they were back to China. After long years working in China, in the process they had become part of its life; that's what the homecoming zeal and challenge they pointed as pioneer missionary to junior ones. Cable underscored that *li* was "an untranslatable word, which embodies the idea of the complete range of all"²⁷. On every occasion, foreign missionary should be and do what was suitable for it.

It seems that there wasn't much clash of the outer and inner. The distance between objective out world and their romantic hope cannot be denied. God, who is absolutely the core of their inner world, has the first priority upon anything. When they faced the cross-culture or conflict between China and Europe, pagan custom and Christianity discipline, the suggestion was not that mankind can by its own efforts create a more holy culture, but that through the action of grace, this can happen. As faithful missionaries, the Trio had a more "hopeful view toward culture"²⁸, in practice, this view means that there is hope through Christ, for redemption of cultures, God ultimately had some hand in human creativity. There missionaries' theological conviction and zeal resulted in the positive viewpoint that about heathen culture they believed it can be "a transformed human life in and to the glory of God"²⁹ through the grace of God. On the other hand, the Trio worked for the "nativization" of local church, the aim was self-support and self-government. Both the wishes from their inner made up their future.

Those Shanxi Women the Trio Met

Metaphor of seeding the sow was given many times in parables.³⁰ In line with the Scripture, both Hudson Taylor and the Trio emphasized preaching the Gospel

²⁷ Cable, Mildred, and Francesca French. *Something Happened*.p.48

²⁸ The relationship between Christ and culture is an enduring problem in history of Christian thought. Focused on what's the relationship between divine Christ and the more secular culture which was defined as "the total process of human activity" and its result, Prof. H. Richard Niebuhr had examined five different answers to this question-Christ against Culture, the Christ of Culture, Christ above Culture, Christ and Culture in paradox, Christ the transformer of Culture. Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*.p.191.

²⁹ Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*.p.196

³⁰ Mark, 4th chapter; Luke, 8th chapter, etc.

more than counting the number of baptized people. Correspondingly, those Chinese village girls and ladies reflected at different levers. As a group, they were Shanxi women the Trio met; as individuals, they had their personal experience on contacting with missionaries and Christ brought by them. Like a portray gallery, *The Fulfilment of A Dream of Pastor Hsi's* and *Something Happened* have told us many vivid stories about individual woman and their personal relationships with the Trio. Some of them are described more detailed and some are told by only several sentences.

Belief Journeys of Possible Christian or Virtual Christian Women

At the outset, the foreign missionaries were active for setting kinds of personal relationship and social-net. In order to convert the heathen, they approached to the local women and children by taking advantage of their curiosity for “foreign devils” and launched the process of interaction. All of them were recorded, even including someone without any reference to Christianity, and others who kept continued connections with Christianity and foreign missionaries. However, according to the attitudes women expressed toward Christianity and the Trio, those connections were ended at different levels.

Inspired by *Seasons of the Soul*³¹, I was considering a belief journey on which Chinese women stopped at different stage. The journey can be divided into four stages; at each stage, one had two options- keep going or stop, which means getting closer to Christianity or keep a distance. Whether stop or keep going, that depended on her personal choice, and reflected her response. When she stopped, her journey with the Trio was over, there must be some reason or further valuation could be explored. When she kept going, she could arrive at the next stage, what would happen? We'll see.

³¹ Demarest, Bruce A. *Seasons of the Soul :Stages of Spiritual Development*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books, 2009.

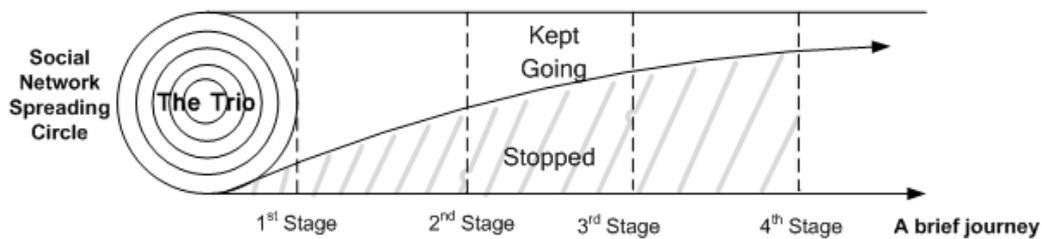


Chart of a seeking-God journey with the Trio

The more women the Trio met, the more possible Christians there would be. Yet not all of them would become virtual Christians. Only those who chose to keep going at the whole four stages became Christians finally. At each previous stage, there were always someone stopped her journey; even a few were not interested in neither missionary nor their Gospel at the first meeting. I'll try to make some observation on them at each stage, and explore the tension between their possible belief-Christianity and Chinese traditional custom. As below is the table of women with their specific experience and life when they were at each stage and made their decisions.

Table of Women at Different Stages on Belief Journey

Option	Name ³²	Trait and her Relationship with the Trio/ Christianity	Interpretation	Page ³³
The First Stage-contact for the first time				
Stopped	woman H	A neighbor of the Trio, she was angry with the daughter-in-law for she presented a girl, she dashed out the child's brains.	She had power of life and death in her hand. A merciless woman.	F.204
Stopped	woman F	Widow, claimed the Trio's compensate for the land which she thought it should belong to her.	Importunate and cared about property as a self-care widow.	F.154-155
The Second Stage-friend of the Trio				
Stopped	Mrs. Deh	Opium addict, living in Opium Refuge for three years, but failed in cure. Her daughter who was a Christian prayed for her, but never worked.	The addiction was too deep.	F.218
Kept going	Several women of	The Trio accepted their invitation, both of them had good talk to know each other and	The world view of these women in	F.179-181,18

³² The names which appears in the Table are quoted from the Trio's works, other nameless women was given serial numbers by author.

³³ In order to distinguish people appeared in different books, here I use F. to be short for *The Fulfilment of A Dream of Pastor Hsi's*, S. to be short for *Something Happened*.

	Mandarin's wives and daughters-in-law	shared family feast for several times. They both showed mutual respect to each other.	Mandarin's home partly represented the world view of local officials in China.	3-184
The Third Stage-possible Christian				
Stopped	Goat's mother	An old friend of the Trio, the leader of a group of visitors. She wasn't pointed Christian or not.	A number of a rich family with a large clan. That was the basic of her social-net.	F.223-224
Kept going	Ai Do's mother-in-law	She had come under the sound of Gospel, but actually not yet. She didn't force her daughter-in-law who was a Christian to worship idol.	Indeed she had the authority at home, but a little freedom was given to her daughter-in-law.	F.99
Kept going	woman G	Wanted to be a Christian, but not yet. Her heathen parents arranged marriage for her and a Christian-born boy.	Arranged marriage depends on the disposition of parents.	F.163
The Fourth Stage-virtual Christian				
Stopped	Mrs. Fan	She was very familiar with the Trio and Christianity, even worked in opium refuge. Her three daughters became unbound-feet Christian, but she never converted.	She was an arbitrary lady; she could control home issues as her wish. She didn't follow the Christian discipline in which she involved.	F.86,87-91
Kept going- Christian Women and Christian Girls in Girls' School				
Position	Name	Story	Tension between Christ and Culture	Page
Pastor Hsi's wife	Mrs. Hsi	Mrs. Hsi's life and example was one of the treasures of the Shansi Church. She gave her gift to church and devoted herself at Chao Cheng church after husband passing away. Regarding unfolding feet, she obeyed her husband although she didn't agree with him; however, she did what she thought was right and set an example to others as soon as her husband passed away.	She argued that Christian should unfold her feet just like the foreign female missionaries. She insisted Christianize and Westernize culture, but compromised with patriarchal tradition.	F.3-8,77-82,261
The headmistress	Mrs. Liang	She met the Gospel by accident, the couple converted with the help of Miss Jacobsen & Mr. Cheng who were Christian couple.	She persuaded her husband to give her the needed help; she indeed needed confirmation from patriarch.	F.158-161
Pioneer Christian	Mrs. Meng	A bright, earnest Christian woman who had survived in Boxer movement.	Faithful female Christians were backbones of Chinese native churches as the male Christians.	S.44-46
	Old Mother Ma	She was helper in Women's Opium Refuge; she marshaled the opium addicts in like a hen fussing over a brood of chicks.		S.119
Teacher	Ai Do	An unfortunate girl who served and trusted God when she was 14 years old. Case study in the next part		F.95-106

	Ai Do's elder sister	She chose busy housework instead of service in school.		F.102
	Ling Ai	A good assistant of Cable		F.104
	teacher J	In view of that her father who was a deacon became opium addict and left church, she suspected if she was qualified to be a teacher in the school.		F.248
Student	Flower of love	She fought for marrying a Christian against her parents but failed. Even her parents forced her to stop connecting with foreigner when the Revolution happened in 1911.	This part will be discussed in the interaction and communication of the Chinese Christian women and the Trio	F.219
	student I	She asked Cable for help to avoid marrying a heathen man.		F.247
	student L	Her father found Cable the proper lady to prepare for her marriage, as her mother died previously. She trusted and obeyed Cable.		F.251
	student M	The more modern parent desired that M should correspond with her fiancé by herself. Cable became postwoman and secret keeper.		F.251-252
	a new graduate K	She was a nervous freshman to be a teacher.		F.249
	Butterfly	She was accused of using bad language.		F.250
	Peach Blossom	She was scrupulous within the rules and regulations; meanwhile she was proud of her good looks.		F.250-251
	student N	She begged her father to send her to school by earning money.		F.252
	student O	She gleaned industriously for school expenses, but all the money was used by her opium addicting father.		F.252
	student P	Her father who was too poor to afford the hire of a donkey carried her to school. Father dedicated the only bedcovering to his daughter in the school.		F.253
	Fragrant Clouds & Pearl Drops	They were good friends in the school.		F.248-249
Little Goodness	She was a weak but naughty girl.	F.249		

Caption: the information in the table is from *The Fulfilment of A Dream of Pastor Hsi's* and *Something Happened*; names of Chinese women are quoted from original text; page number is that where the character appears in either *The Fulfilment of A Dream of Pastor Hsi's* (F.) or *Something Happened* (S.).

In accordance with this table, the four stages of the journey to identify those women whose relationships with the Trio were at different level might be described as follows.

A. The First Stage: Contact for the First Time

Stopped: Someone had no interest either in the Trio or their God

As a self-care widow, F woman seemed uncompromising when she thought someone else had taken advantage of her belongings. This aged lady entered a claim for two stones occupying nine square feet of waste land which was used for the building of Girls' School. She insisted on her right and assembled a crowd of supporters but paid no attention to the Trio's work and gospel. Even when she met them later, the only topic she reminded them was that the land had belonged to her. That problem troubled the Trio a little; they had to find middlemen who decided in their favor to solve it.

Kept Going: Others kept in touch with the Trio

When the Trio preached in village, on the road or in someone's home, they met Chinese women occasionally; more of them knocked the door of station for opium treat or something else. Women here were curious about foreign strangers and what they represented. The Chinese woman was described by the Trio "an inveterate sightseer", who was endless to find the marvels within the walls of the mission compound. Since various rumors warned them to raise their guard to the foreigner and look out the missionaries' magic spell, they were somewhat afraid of "foreign evils". However, some were still so willing to explore more.

B. The Second Stage: Friends of the Trio

Stopped: Some weren't interested in Christianity but still were nice to the Trio

On this stage, some were seekers because they had contact with Pastor Hsi's opium refuge or those run by other Chinese Christians, and in some cases had been opium addicts who were themselves liberated from addiction, but were not yet Christians. Mrs. Deh was the one who even failed in treat. She had been lived with missionaries for three years, following many the discipline of Christianity in Scripture, but not only failed in conversion, but also failed in treat. Her lovely daughter who became a Christian prayed that her mother should be saved, but never worked. We can assert that Mrs. Deh wasn't afraid of foreigner after keeping herself respectable under the Trio's roof, "living amongst Christian women and joining in their prayers and hymn, night and morning".³⁴ Then what kept her heart so far from Christianity? The Trio and other colleagues had tried their best to convert her; on the other hand,

³⁴ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*:p.218

her daughter had been a Christian, in the light of logical speculation, patriarchal family or other traditional ideology couldn't be hindrance of her conversion. May only opium addiction could account for it. This sin had rooted in her heart too deeply to be got rid of. Mrs. Deh immersed in her past which captured her whole inner, thus the dynamic process of her Cross couldn't keep going, her journey stopped.

Kept Going: Others were willing to keep in touch with the Trio and Christianity

Cable's first visit to the Mandarin was in answer to a request to see his wife who was suffering from acute toothache. It's a good chance for foreign missionary to know the *Tai-tais*'³⁵ life. According to the strictest etiquette, so "the *Tai-tai* of least rank came first to meet us", and "we respectfully removed our eyeglasses and made a bow"³⁶. Cable used great length of text to record almost every detail of her intercourse with the *Tai-tais*, including what they were talking about and how they enjoyed meal, tea and dessert. Both foreign missionary and Mandarin's wives and daughters-in-law showed mutual respect, however, the topic *Tai-tais* preferred mostly was the situation and culture in England instead of the gospel which was stressed by the missionary. They concerned about the modern Western society much more than their God. If there was any one of them who interested in religion, it's certain that Cable would set her as a good example to other Chinese women; but she never mentioned. Despite this, their friendship wasn't stopped until these *Tai-tais* had to flee Huozhou as the revolutionary in 1911.

In addition, others came to the Trio were curious about their personal life, even their bedrooms. Those gossip women were deep in a discussion on how the Trio would live their life at their old age with neither husband nor son. It's indeed a typical women's topic. Did the Trio's Chinese male colleagues whisper on this problem? We've no idea at least in current documentation.

C. The Third Stage: Possible Christian

Stopped: Some were familiar with the Trio and Christianity

Through daily life and continuous intercourse, some women who had become friends with the Trio knew a lot about their "foreign religion", but they did not show any further will to be a Christian in themselves. Goat's mother who was Trio's old

³⁵ Cable called the wife of an official by the polite and local item in her book.

³⁶ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*:p.179

friend often organized her friends or relatives visiting the station. She was the leader of this frequently inquisitive party. As can be discovered from Goat's "silvery appearance" that Goat's mother was a member of a wealthy family. May specific ideology claimed by Chinese authorities and ancestor worship tradition in clan made her keep distance of Christ. Her outer-foreign missionary and foreign religion-had more or less interacted with her inner-traditional and abiding custom, her Cross had being ongoing, but hardly changed. Her transformation couldn't be expected either. To sum up, Goat's mother's nice and friendly attitude toward the Trio and Christianity was typical among a large number of enthusiastic Chinese women in the Trio's book, but she never converted

Kept Going: Others often followed Trio to read Bible and pray, even had a strong desire to convert

There were others "had come under the sound of Gospel" or "would be a Christian", but who had not yet become Christians. I called them Bible-women or Gospel-women. Their inner which wanted to be closer with Christ had involved in their life a lot. That would change their attitude toward traditional custom. Ai Do's mother-in-law was not a Christian herself, but she could tolerate that Ai Do who was a faithful Christian refused idol worship at home. As everybody known, in early 20th Century China, in particularly Chinese village, one's mother-in-law had absolute authority to her daughter-in-law. Thanks to her mother-in-law's generosity, thanks to the gospel she'd heard, Ai Do could get the little freedom of worshiping her God; that was rare at the time. Did the woman's inner transfer her outer? Of course yes, her inner under Gospel changed her attitude toward the out world, although she hadn't declared her religious belief.

D. The Fourth Stage: Virtual Christian

Stopped: Some didn't convert

Some attended worship services, but finally didn't convert; Mrs. Fan was a typical one. "Mrs. Fan had scope for the exercise of the domineering will which made her ruler of the home, for while she was an enthusiastic follower of the Church she had never given evidence of personal conversion"³⁷. It seems that Cable felt a little disappointed that such a Bible-woman who had given her three daughters to Christ

³⁷ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*:p.98

nonetheless didn't commit herself to God. Properly speaking, as a Chinese mother who was familiar with doctrine of Chinese traditional custom, she had walked far on a way seeking Westernized/Christianized civilization, such as foot-binding situation. She had a strong determination "that her girls should be among the first who would have natural feet in the neighborhood, in spite of the lurking fear that all three might be left as old maids upon her hands if no man might be found bold enough to risk the disgrace of a wife with normal feet"³⁸. Meanwhile, she was a woman of "strong-minded and willful, capable in every duty which falls to the woman's share in the home", she interfered with daughter's marriage, and chose a man she liked but her daughter refused. We could discover a set of definite contradiction from Mrs. Fan, who followed the discipline of Christianity selectively. She had a stubborn inner full of paradox.

Kept Going: others became Christians

Others who were earnest seekers and ultimately had converted were assumably involved in the education institution at Huozhou. As presented by the Trio, in Christ, these Chinese girls and women tried something different from their past and got something new in their future. Both foot-releasing and free marriage were two essential issues concerning women during late Qing and beginning of Republican China. Without exception, all female Christian insisted to releasing feet and wished to marry a male Christian. Fortunately, some girls could avoid foot-binding or unfold their injured feet owing their parents' ideological transformation. However, a happy marriage is much more difficult to dream of. Whether persuasion and yelling worked or not, it's up to their parents. As a matter of fact, Christian women suffered from the tension between their accustomed rule and new civilization more often than non-Christian.

Mrs. Hsi was a faithful Christian. She had earnestly desired to unbind her feet as witness that she was a Christian, but her husband-Pastor Hsi was strongly opposed to her doing so. See, her husband had absolute authority on this matter. Pastor Hsi insisted to forbid foot-binding to girl, meanwhile ridiculously, he thought that middle-aged lady didn't have to unbind her feet. In contrast, Mrs. Hsi held mature judgment. Because as a woman with small feet, she had personal experience on such hurt. Despite this, Mrs. Hsi didn't resist patriarchy. During her husband's lifetime she

³⁸ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*:p.92

yielded to his wish, but after his death she did that which she felt was testimony to many of her weaker sisters. “She unbound her feet and adopted a normal shoe and sock, and many who had made her supposed attitude on the question an excuse, now followed her example”³⁹. It can be imagined that how struggling she yielded patriarch power with enduring hurt of bounding-feet. Each person is a subject of objective outward world and romantic inner. Each Christian is a subject of two realms-separately belongs to pagans and Christ. Each woman at that time is a subject of patriarchy outside and self inner. Thus Mrs. Hsi tried to balance these three paradoxes, she succeeded in a sense.

On the other hand, not all the Christian women transformed a lot in their God. Two Mrs. Bah who were wives of a wealthy man who had died early had some competition on heritage, but that the younger one became a Christian didn't make the senior converted one friendlier.

With the help of Cross model, there is a case study to analyze the fate and personal choice of a Chinese female Christian as below.

E. Case Study: Ai Do

“To radiate the heat of the affections into a clod, which absorbs all that is poured into it, but never warms beneath the sunshine of smiles or the pressure of hand or lip-this is the great martyrdom of sensitive beings-most of all in that perpetual *auto-da-fé* where young womanhood is the sacrifice”⁴⁰. However, such beautiful words was telling tragedy of Ai Do.

She was born with a tooth visible, which indicated an ominous symbol in the village. Even though she was named “Ai Do”(爱多)with meaning of lots of love, she grew up in the shadow of sorrow that she would be antagonism to her mother's life. Did her mother-Mrs. Fan- revenge her little girl? We've never known. However, actually Ai Do was forced by her mother to an arranged marriage with a wild and dissolute but Mrs. Fan's be-favored youth. At the outset the missionaries⁴¹ who had cared for Ai Do for many years refused their consent to the engagement, after that they were dead in Boxer Rebellion, Mrs. Fan was in power of her daughter's fate.

³⁹ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*.p.80

⁴⁰ Written by O.W.Holmes. See Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*.p.94

⁴¹ The senior missionaries who were in Huozhou station before Cable and Francesca.

Finally Ai Do was given as a wife of the cruel, passionate, licentious man who took to opium smoking and ruined home, a real horror of the fate was awaited her. When she was invited to teach in place of her elder sister, her life in school was a time of unmixed happiness until a great joy came into her life with the birth of a little son. The child was publicly dedicated to God, and God indeed took it away without any notification. It sickened with dysentery and died in the hand of a Chinese doctor with the unclean needle running into its tender flesh. A few years later, phthisis took her life away. She insisted on a Christian burial on herself.

Ai Do was living an unhappy life although she got her inward God's Love, the Cross of her life could be considered as blow.

Firstly, she was born to an arbitrary mother in a village filled with superstition, she didn't feel being loved or blessed in her childhood. Over time, she was formed to have kind and obedient disposition with no feeling of security to the outward world. This "past" determined what she would choose and how she would make a decision when she encountered dilemma during her life journey.

She knew that God lived in her heart; meanwhile she was trying her best to be a good daughter, a good daughter-in-law, a good wife, a good mother and a good teacher. It seemed that this nice wish wasn't contrary with the discipline in the Scripture; Jesus had taught his women disciples what to do. It was unfortunately inevitable that the objective outward world didn't give her chance to fulfill her dream. The custom and superstition in village had deprived off her childhood, and then shackled her to a terrible man with an arranged marriage. She felt so lonely and helpless that she escaped from her sisters' poor and inadequate efforts to protect and comfort her until that her health was occupied by phthisis. Her inner and outer was so conflicting that she suffered and endured with tears. She was always keeping silent of her sorrows, sufferings and "those deepest wrongs she had suffered which women have from time immemorial hidden as a shameful secret"⁴².

As a matter of fact, she neither balanced the paradox of Christianity and traditional custom, nor resisted to the outward world. It was in that the Christ lost the voice to say anything meaningful in/to heathen culture. It's a position that led Christian Ai Do to accept traditional custom. Luther argued that there was a stark contrast between two realms: the left-hand realm of the world governed by custom

⁴² Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*:p.104

and the right-hand realm of God governed by grace. These two realms exist side by side in a paradoxical relation, never to be resolved in one's life. In the tension between custom and grace, just like between dream and reality, only Ai Do herself was torn into pieces. On the other hand, she had all the characteristics of a natural leader, and she "easily controlled the girls" and was much beloved by them, her life in school was a time of unmixed happiness to her. The Girls' School played an important role of in her own life, but she didn't consider the work as her whole life; she did concern about her family, thus she could never release herself from family trouble.

As almost be learnt from experience, dealing with culture is accompanied with pain and peace. The tension between custom and grace made Ai Do both strong and tender. Until she saw the only One who could save her from further sorrow, this was the future but an end of Ai Do's Cross.

F. The Woman Beyond the Four Stages: Puppy's Mother

Of course, not all the Shanxi women could be grouped by these four stages. Here is another one who held complex attitude to Christ and foreign missionaries.

Puppy's mother had lived at the door of the mission premises since they were first opened. She had known three generations of missionaries who had lived there, and had been dressmaker to them all. Cable commented in her book, "no one has been more deliberate in her choice of heathendom over Christianity than she, and no one has lent a more willing ear to the scandalous lies circulated concerning the foreign women, even although she has seen enough of their intimate life to know such stories to be fabrications". Why did she slander her foreign neighbors on purpose? She seemed stubbornly xenophobic and full of prejudice. We can't tell what she had experienced previously; at least her attitude toward the foreign women couldn't make them become friends. While "she nourishes a secret regard for Mrs. Liang, in whom she recognizes a woman as intelligent as herself, and a match for her in every respect". Did she consider herself so intelligent that others could hardly catch up with her? Where was her self-confidence from? The most interesting point was that she didn't lack of thinking about the foreign religion in her thought. "It was to Mrs. Liang she confided one day that there seemed little inducement to repent and be saved, if going to heaven would entail associating with foreigners for all

eternity”⁴³.

It's clear to see that Puppy's mother was an arrogant lady, meanwhile a religious seeker. Her attitude toward foreign missionary reminds me an ancient Chinese story named “*yelangzida*” (夜郎自大), which indicated that the world view of a native should be improved through exchange with others from outside world. We don't know what's her lever of understanding of missionary and their God; at least, she insisted that God and his kingdom was belong to foreigners even though she expressed a wish that she hoped to get the key to the heaven. It seemed that Puppy's mother could partly represent Chinese village women who were conservatives on a way of seeking God brought by foreigners.

Interaction and Communication

Nicolas Standaert suggests “interaction and communication framework”⁴⁴ in research on contact between cultures, which results in a change of perspective. In sum, the shifts can be very schematically summarized as

action/reaction--> interaction,
transmission/reception--> communication,
self/other--> communication and encounter

As a matter of fact, the hope and aim of both historian and missionary are quite similar, that is to establish “mutual sympathetic understanding”⁴⁵. In the Trio's books were told stories, which were recorded by missionaries but demonstrated a reciprocal approach and contact. In view of the method I use in the research, namely Cross model, the situation of that Chinese Christian women encountered the Trio could be interpreted as that the Cross of the Chinese Christian women met the Cross of the Trio.

On the one hand, the different cultural context made the two sides hold different attitudes toward tension existed in Christianity and traditional village custom. Missionaries believed that they worked in heathen culture for its betterment and transformation because while there was sin in culture; furthermore, they would defeat

⁴³ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*.p.217

⁴⁴ Nicolas Standaert, *Methodology in View of Contact Between Cultures: The China Case in the 17th Century*, [CSRCS Occasional Paper No.11 December 2002].

⁴⁵ Cable, Mildred, and Francesca French. *Something Happened*.p.48

sin not by escaping it or fighting it directly, but rather with their desire to be positive and God-oriented. God will help to the extension of Christ's Kingdom in the land. They were full of confidence that mighty God can complete this hard transformation work, that could be seen everywhere in their books and mission journals. However, as can be seen in aforementioned stories, Chinese Christian women were lived in paradox. Those Chinese girls or ladies, who were involved in Christianity /the Trio, had kind of complex and ambivalent attitude to Christ and their traditional custom. When both Christ and culture claimed one's loyalty, the tension between them cannot be reconciled by any lasting synthesis. While they wanted to hold together "loyalty to Christ and responsibility for culture"⁴⁶, they had to face clash of their born culture and new religious belief. They had doubtless been keenly conscious of the barrier to reconcile the opposite values themselves. More or less they would try to overwhelm the obstacle to pursue a balance or union. That which was discovered more often in their personal experience was compromise.

Yet in an interaction and communication framework, the two Crosses could be combined as one, which focuses on the experience of both sides. Based on the stories of those converted women in the table, as below is a Cross of Chinese female Christians' interaction with the Trio, which could make clear of the process of their intercourse.

A. Past

The interaction couldn't happen before the arrival of the Christian women missionaries. In other words, the Trio was active initiator. How the interaction happened has been discussed above.

B. Inner: The Relationship of Chinese Female Christians and the Trio

"Partnership" is a key word of describe inner relationship of both of them. "Three missions for women have been conducted by the local Chinese and foreign staff"⁴⁷.The Trio, especially Cable was treated as teacher, friend, and sometimes mother-like lady. Those Christian girls respected the three and consulted plenty of private problems to Cable whose door was knocked much often. Examples have been shown above, such as I student, M student and J teacher, K graduate were recorded in

⁴⁶ Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*.p.149

⁴⁷ *China's Millions*, September.1917, 102.

the documentation, from which we could discover kinds of secrets or embarrassing stories at that time. The Trio set a good example to the students to be an independent and nice lady, but never forced them to be as same as them; the students followed their footsteps by becoming teachers, but not kept single.

Chinese female Christians were the Trio's colleagues, supporters and power sources. Among them, Ling Ai was an outstanding one. She had made possible for Cable that "which apart from her comradeship would have been impossible, the establishment of a large school and training-college where in happy fellowship Chinese young women are working together for the women and girls of their country"⁴⁸. What tensions existed between these women as Chinese teachers and the foreign missionaries who were their older colleagues and administrative leaders? If there was anything must be called tension between them, Ai Do's elder sister might be an example. She had to resign her position in school because her family had increased to prevent her holding the post as formerly. These Chinese girls composed nearly the whole life of the Trio, their misfortune always made the three foreign missionaries strong and helpful. When Ai Do opened her heart for the first time, and spoke out her sorrows and sufferings, she left Cable "with a determination that henceforth any one placed as she was should find an advocate and protector in me to the extent of my ability"⁴⁹. Yet, many things were beyond the foreign missionaries' reach; they couldn't do anything but prayed.

C. Outer: Chinese men and kinds of social movements or revolutionaries

In patriarchal society, males' attitude toward women was very important. Thanks to Prof. Benson's contribution, we've known many sources which indicated comments on the Trio from their male colleagues in the CIM.⁵⁰ In contrast, Chinese men showed more respect and praise to the Trio and what they did. Indeed, patriarchy was a big problem of the women's work, even so did Pastor Hsi as mentioned above. Have to admit, there would promote some transformation since the Trio entered this land. When the building of school was completed, a feast was prepared. The Trio was much privileged to share while it was part of the social custom of this land that "no

⁴⁸ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*.p.104

⁴⁹ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*.p.104

⁵⁰ See Benson, Linda. *Across China's Gobi :The Lives of Evangeline French, Mildred Cable, and Francesca French of the China Inland Mission*.

woman would presume to put in an appearance on such occasions”⁵¹. However, Cable considered the privilege was unquestioningly granted as they paid all expenses of the project. On the other hand, the men who offered help to these women were recorded in the book as well. Cable wrote, “the men gladly undertook the arrangements for catering, made necessary by the fact that women cannot go to the shops to buy food for themselves”⁵². A father who tried his best to support the education of her daughter could be found in the table above.

During their long years in Shanxi, the Chinese environment was quite changing which influenced the mission work a lot, both positive and negative. The events of 1900 had many Christian martyrdoms but “resulted in an extraordinary quickening of interest amongst those who had a contact of some kind with Christianity”⁵³. After 1911, “modernized” was misinterpreted to “westernized”, “a new convert warned by a Church member that sickness in his home might well be due to his rooted objection to calendar changes”⁵⁴. Even though the revolutionary seemed no harm to mission work, Cable criticized it with a low evaluation. She asserted, “The habit of revolution is a pernicious disease of the human mind, and once acquired hard to throw off”. “Transition periods are difficult, and China has been troubled by those who in their enthusiasm for change have lost the sense of proportion, and sought to revolutionize much that is dearer than life itself to many of their countrymen; nevertheless, this great nation, permeated with ideals so free from sordidity, will surely carve for herself a future worthy of her past”⁵⁵. In my opinion, I strongly agree with this wise lady who was full of experiences of living with Chinese people.

What’s more, facing kinds of confused political situation, the little group of foreigners in this town is popularly supposed to have access to the most far-reaching sources of information on matters national and international. They were treated like a symbol of trend of political movement.

⁵¹ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*.p.154

⁵² Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*.p. 171

⁵³ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*.p.69

⁵⁴ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*.p. 206

⁵⁵ Cable, Mildred, and G. Campbell Morgan. *The Fulfilment of a Dream of Pastor Hsi's :The Story of the Work in Hwochow*.p. 207

D. Future: Unknown Stories

After the Trio leaving for call from Northwest of China, what the Chinese Christian women's life would be was unknown in this research. It is expected that more vivid history could be discovered someday. In the letter from Pastor Kwo Chi-Ti'en to the Trio, better opportunities than ever for preaching the Gospel were reported.⁵⁶ The connection between Trio and their Shanxi colleagues even when they were far away was kept.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to answer a particular question: How did various kinds of Chinese women interact with these three foreign female missionaries? The answers seen from different "Crosses" remain "unconcluded and inconclusive" for most cases. When Chinese women encountered the foreign missionaries, another world was opened to them; hence they would be on the journey for seeking something new, while living in tension with their own religions and cultures. The Trio held the more optimistic hope that the cultures could be transformed as some of their people were converted. Yet, many of the Chinese women who actually living in this melt cultural tension found it not as easy as the Trio hoped.

However, this situation is not too difficult to understand. Missionaries and those Shanxi women had separately chosen to reconcile the two polar forms of different cultures. They learned how to get along with the others' custom and ideology during their interaction. The Trio could become localized English missionaries; on the other hand, the Shanxi women could become Christianized Chinese females. Both well educated missionaries and illiterate Chinese women chose to create a synthesis of two different religions and cultures. The humans are creators and carriers of culture, hence their culture orientation would not avoid being transformed when the humans were transformed. Meanwhile this often happened to both sides at different levers; both missionaries and these Chinese women had participated transmitters and receivers are roles simultaneously. This allowed for their differences in cultures adaptation.

Specifically, as can be discovered in the aforementioned categories, all these

⁵⁶ *China's Millions*, September, 1927, 141.

Shanxi women were on an individual way, neither accepting the Western/new ideology nor complying with old/traditional custom. They did have their thoughts and make decision upon their personal choice, which means that they were active and strong-minded enough at every stage of their life and belief journey. Even though all the materials were from foreign missionaries, Chinese native stories could be told.

Appendix

Those stories of women in Northwest China and Central Asia are more fantastic and complicated than what I've written in this paper. If we choose the Trio's experience in Northwest as main topic, the problems about dialogue between different religions and cultural plurality could hardly be avoided.

The way to approach to women was very different from what the Trio had used in Shanxi, as both the natural and cultural environment were absolutely different. The primary work was itinerant mission among nomadic people, especially in the Gobi Desert nearly with no animate things. Most of those women the Trio met lived far away from the mission station. The interaction happened between missionaries and those women could not be described as an integrated process. Then I will ask some questions: how did the Moslem women's conversion happen? How did they insist their religious belief among the non-Christian culture? Who could help those women in remote villages to understand Bible and got progress in their belief journey? If they would confuse disciplines of Christianity with other folk religions? The answers to these questions need be explored more in another paper. Based on the record of the Trio during their mission from Gansu to Xinjiang and then Central Asia, here a table of women who were from different cultural backgrounds and their short stories is shown.

Table of Northwestern and Central Asia Women

Name	Geographic Location	Context of Story	Interpretation	Page ⁵⁷
Mrs. Meng	Chinese from Shansi	A bright, earnest Christian woman who had survived in Boxer movement.	Faithful female Christians were backbones of	S.44-46
Old Mother Ma		She was helper in Women's Opium Refuge; she marshaled the opium	Chinese native churches as the male Christians.	S.119

⁵⁷ In order to distinguish people appeared in different books, here I use S. to be short for *Something Happened*, G. to be short for *The Gobi Desert*, T. to be short for *The Story of Topsy*.

		addicts in like a hen fussing over a brood of chicks.		
the wife of an artisan	Chinese from Gansu	Her determination to be a Christian dated from the first time she heard the Gospel.		S.144
Love Blossom	Chinese from Suzhou	Those orphan and pauper children often got food from the station.		S150-153
Christian girl	Chinese who was fleeing from General Ma	Her father was a Judge who didn't yield to General Ma. They were forced to flee for some safe place.	A girl who had an open-minded father could have freedom of her religious belief.	S.291-292
A tall Moslem woman	Moslem from the Gobi Desert	Her face was scarred with lines of tragic experiences, when she heard the preaching, stood up in the midst and declared: "Every word these women say is true". From that hour she became a disciple.	When this Moslem lady declared her conversion publicly, how could she face to her people who believed Allah instead of Jesus?	S.144
The old Moslem lady	Moslem near Cumul	The Trio gave medicine to this sick lady. Her son was grateful to foreign missionaries.	If the missionary could make friends with Moslem lady who had much power in her clan, their work would be done more easily.	S.202
A woman		She was helpful offering something to drink.		S.212
Patima	Moslem from Central Asia	A woman who was born in a large and wealthy household had totally tragic fate.	Case Study	S.279-286
A woman	Moslem from Uzbek	She was hardly recognized behind her black buckram veil.	Moslem lady's situation	S.306
Several women	Tibetan	They were group of pilgrim.	Their talk with missionaries focused on who's God which could be discuss as dialogue between Christianity and Tibetan Buddhism.	S.184
B woman	Woman from Tuyok	She offered the hospitality. "This happened in the very	The Trio noticed that some change	S.271-272

		place where two years previously the Trio had been cursed and stoned”.	had happened in those places where they worked.	
C woman	Russian in Moscow	She was a red-hot Russian Communist. She helped the Trio, but she defended for atheism and laughed at religion women.	When missionaries met atheist, the both sides could hardly understand each other.	S.310-311
ladies	Kiayukwan fortress	<i>Yamen</i> -if the men disliked Kiayùkwan, the women hated it:“there is nothing to do here all day but sit and listen to that howling wind”. The ladies of the yamen would gather in each other’s rooms, play <i>ma-jong</i> for small stakes, sip tea and gossip.	They knew all kinds of people from different places far away. However, they kept living on their own boring life instead of accepting other message from unknown God.	G.19
A woman was fleeing from calamity	In Gobi Desert	Both her husband and father-in-law were died when they went out for some food and water.	Being survived in desert was difficult.	G.112
Wife of the Innkeeper	Chinese in Gobi Desert	Her husband managed their inn business and she had no power to do anything. Her life was	What she liked during her boring life was those pictures of Shepherd.	G.121-123
Topsy’s mother	Suzhou	She bought infant Topsy when she couldn’t get pregnant. Afterwards she had her own boy then ill-treated Topsy. She was mean and grim.	The Trio saved Topsy with officer’s help. They didn’t yield to this woman as they were familiar with Chinese rule.	T.
Topsy	Suzhou		Case Study	T.