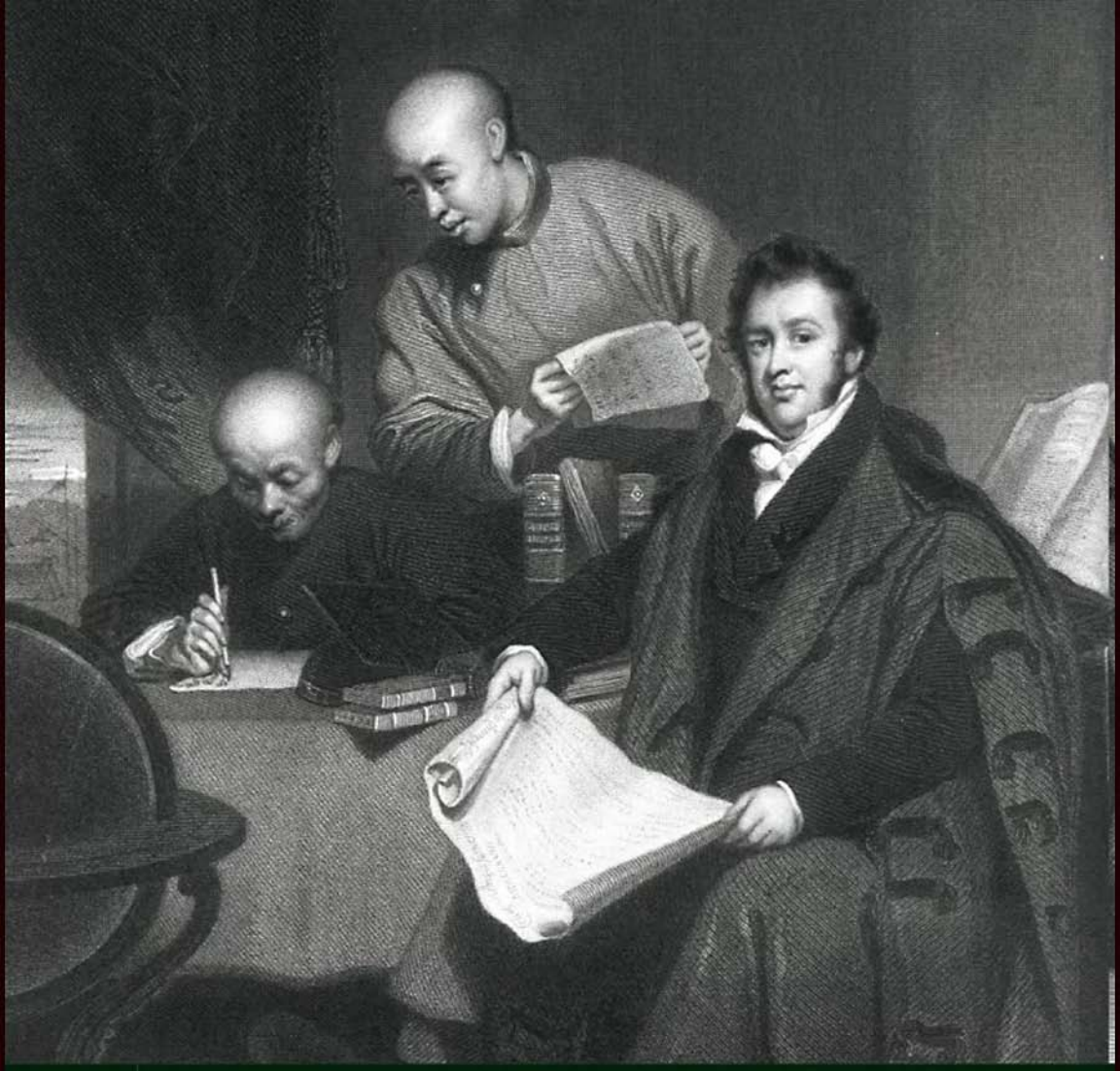

THE ORIGINS OF THE MODERN CHINESE PRESS

The influence of the Protestant missionary press in late Qing China

Xiantao Zhang

The Origins of the Modern Chinese Press

This book traces the emergence of the modern Chinese press from its origins in the Western Christian missionary press in the late nineteenth century. It shows how the Western missionaries and their evangelical/educational newspapers changed the long-standing traditional practices, styles, content, print culture and printing technology of Chinese newspapers and, in the process, introduced some of the key ideas of Western modernity which were to have a profound effect on Chinese society. It demonstrates how missionary publications reshaped print journalism, rather indirectly, from a centuries-long monopoly by the state – the Imperial press – into a pluralized, modernizing and frequently radical public journalism. It focuses in particular on the relationship between the missionaries and the class of 'gentry scholars' – literati and civil servants, educated via the traditional state examination system in the Confucian classics, who were the prime target readers of the missionary publications. This key group and the independent press they established at the end of the nineteenth century played a crucial role in shaping the ongoing struggle for a modern democratic media culture in China.

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For my parents

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Introduction

Looking back it was a small thing, but the episode has stayed with me. In 1997 when I was a young reporter for a national broadsheet newspaper in Beijing, I went to cover a story in the countryside of an inland province. As our Jeep arrived in the village, there were dozens of farmers gathered. They surrounded me, and in their emotionally charged thick local accents, competed with each other to pour out their stories of how a new local construction project was ruining their lives. Back in Beijing, I excitedly wrote my report of the anger and resentment this 'rural development' had aroused. But my story was 'spiked' by the editor. He was kind and encouraging, but experienced enough to know that publishing the article was impossible. The local government head in charge of the project had a national reputation as a 'model figure' in rural development, and so was simply beyond the reach of prudent criticism.

I soon learned not be too fussy about this routine censorship. All the media, no matter whether newspapers, radio or broadcasting, are 'state-owned' in contemporary China. Despite the rapid development in media marketization, the state can intervene in any media organization and pull the plug without much difficulty. So intuitively avoiding overstepping the political line has become the common sense of media practitioners.

To put it in simple words, in market-socialist China, the state enjoys control of the media and the idea of 'press freedom' is not accepted. The journalist is, of course, constantly encountering the consequences of this and, as a result, journalism can be a deeply frustrating profession. Liu Binyan, China's best-known investigative journalist, spelled it out in the 1980s:

> In the last 30 years, not one major event was accurately reported to the people . . . before 1984, even I did not know how many people had died of starvation [in the famine of the early 1960s]. In 1984, by chance I found out that perhaps 20 million had starved; a few months later, I heard another figure: 30 million. Five years later, I heard 43 million. I believed that at least 30 million people died. Despite an event of such proportions, I believe that only 300 people know for sure that 30 million starved.
>
> (Liu 1990: 134)

'30 million died, 300 knew'. To be sure, it would make a sensational news headline, albeit a chilling one. After so many years, still so little has been brought to light. The few out-spoken intellectuals like Liu were expelled from the Communist Party and had to take exile in the West. And it somehow adds to the sense of tragedy and frustration that critical voices can be heard outside but not inside the country. *The Economist* published its top story on the fiftieth anniversary of the People's Republic of China in October 1999 with the headline:

> Never before in the annals of human history has so much harm been done to so many with so little remorse.

Lack of remorse is, of course, a function of lack of public knowledge. And this in turn inevitably leads back to the lack of freedom to report.

This is the moral and political issue – so close to the core of contemporary Chinese society – that prompts this book. However, what follows is neither a documentation nor a critique of the state-controlled media in China today. Rather, it is an attempt to give some sort of answer to the question of why the modern press in China has been so *consistently* dominated by the state. And why journalists – sophisticated in their practice in all other ways – still struggle for (or else pragmatically acquiesce in the denial of) basic political and professional rights taken for granted in most parts of the world.

To blame the Communist Party for everything can offer a simple, convenient and immediate explanation. But this would be to confuse the particular regime with the more general and historically persistent trend. To develop a proper understanding of the issue requires, I believe, a broader socio-historical analysis. We can trace many of the problems faced by contemporary journalism back to the late nineteenth century and the origins of the modern press in China.

The origins of the modern press: the complex legacies of the missionaries

Liang Qichao was one of the most important pioneering journalists in China at the end of the nineteenth century and the newspaper he edited, *Shiwu Bao*, was perhaps the most influential of its time. It is striking, then, to find in the first issue of *Shiwu Bao*, in 1896, a leading article by Liang entitled 'Newspapers are beneficial to the state' (Zhang 1999: 18). Here he advocated that newspapers should improve communication and solidarity between the state and the public. When the 'above and below' are better informed about domestic and foreign affairs, the state can be strengthened. In another newspaper, *Qingyi Bao* (1901), Liang criticized the appalling lack of quality independent newspapers both in the capital city of the country and in the provinces. He emphasized the close link between the quality and quantity of newspapers, and level of national development and 'strength'. He declared:

> free thinking, free speech and a free press are the foundation of every civilization, from which modern world development derives. The Newspaper is the centre of people's thinking and speech, no matter big or small, detailed or general, serious or humorous, enthusiastic or calm, the public is well-informed; therefore a newspaper should tolerate everything, report everything, give rise to everything and destroy everything.
>
> (Zhang 1999: 37–8)

It is this sort of celebration of the ideals of press freedom in the turbulent China of a century ago, with its mixture of endeavour, optimism and frustration, that prompts me to search in this period for clues to the present. Despite the gap of over a hundred years, separating Liang Qichao's world from Liu Bingyan's and my own generation's, how little seems to have changed. But this cannot be some strange repetitive compulsion in Chinese national cultural life; what it suggests to me is that the roots of our present problems lie somewhere in this moment of dramatic historical change as China entered, with the demise of the Qing dynasty, into the modern world. This was the time, as Fairbank puts it, of two great dramas:

> first, the cultural confrontation between the expanding Western civilization of international trade and warfare, and the persistent Chinese civilization of agriculture and bureaucracy; and secondly, arising out of the first, the fundamental transformation of China in the greatest of all revolutions.
>
> (Fairbank 1995: 1–2)

And one scene in this drama stands out for us: the transformation of the print media from a single centuries-old organ of the state – the *Imperial Gazette* – into the institution of wide-circulation modern newspapers. It is widely acknowledged amongst Chinese historians of journalism (Ge 1935; Fang 1997; Huang 2000) that it was the Christian missionaries who opened up this new era in Chinese journalism.

In 1815, the British Protestant missionary Robert Morrison established the first Chinese periodical, the *China Monthly Magazine* (*Cha-shi-su Mei-yue Tong-ji-zhuan*). It is recognized as a milestone in modern Chinese journalism history in comparison with the *Imperial Gazette*, which was little more than a vehicle for official edicts and announcements, circulating amongst a very restricted élite readership. In contrast, *China Monthly Magazine* was unofficial, publicly available and contained at least a degree of what we would recognize today as news and comment. However, the real influence of this novel form of medium reached its peak time only in the late nineteenth century, as exemplified in the newspaper *Wanguo Gongbao*. As the flagship of the missionary press of its time, the circulation of *Wanguo Gongbao* climbed to 38,400 copies at its peak, and its readership ranged from the Emperor himself and high-ranking officials, to radical reform-oriented scholars such

Figure 1 Robert Morrison.

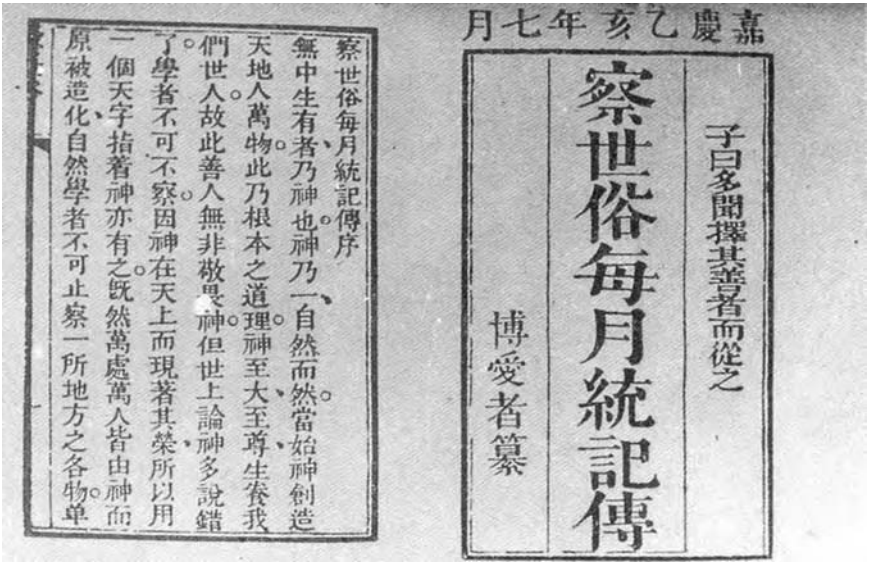

Figure 2 The *China Monthly Magazine*.
Source: Fang Hanqi (1991) *History of Modern Chinese Journalism*. Taiyuan: Shanxi Education Press.

as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. In fact, the first periodical Kang and Liang set up themselves borrowed the name of *Wanguo Gongbao* and also reprinted many articles from the missionary periodical. Undoubtedly, then, there was an extremely strong influence from the Protestant missionary journalists on the formation of the first modern Chinese élite newspapers and it is to this nexus, in all its complexity and sometimes contradictory features, that we can look for clues to the trajectory of modern Chinese journalism.

My aim in this book is thus to trace the contours of the emergence of the modern Chinese press from its origins in the Western Protestant missionary press in the late nineteenth century, using *Wanguo Gongbao* as a central point of reference. I try to map the way in which the Protestant missionaries, through their hybrid evangelical/educational newspapers, changed the long-standing traditional practices, styles, content, and overall 'print culture', of Chinese newspapers and periodicals – including printing technology. And, going beyond this, I attempt to show how in the process, the missionaries introduced some of the key ideas and imaginations of Western modernity which were to alter for ever the face of Chinese culture and society.

The book documents the – rather indirect – manner in which missionary publications came to shape the transition of print journalism from a centuries-long monopoly by the state – the imperial official *Gazette* – into a diverse, modernizing and frequently radical public journalism. In particular, it focuses on the crucial relationship between the missionaries and the class of 'gentry-scholars'. This key group of 'literati' and civil servants, educated via the traditional government examination system in the Confucian classics, were first the target readers of the missionaries' publications in the late nineteenth century and then their competitors. The rise of an independent 'Chinese élite press' at the end of the nineteenth century, modelled on the Protestant newspapers, retaining their modernizing, scientific and educational zeal but discarding Christianity, is perhaps the key transition in modern Chinese journalism's history. Not only did it sweep away traditional conceptions of the role of public communication, it was implicated in the creation of the scholars as a modern intellectual grouping at the centre of the transition to modernity. The book tells the story of this complex set of influences, analyses its wider historical and cultural implications and, finally, explores the connection between this historical moment and the situation the Chinese media face today.

The scope of the discussion

Having explained the motivation and purpose of the book, we should now clarify its scope and limitations. The wider context of Chinese history during the nineteenth century has of course been extensively documented. But, though I have benefited enormously from this literature – for example, in the work of such eminent scholars as John King Fairbank, Paul Cohen, Kwang-ching Liu, Immanual Hsu and Jonathan Spence – the book itself is not a history of Chinese journalism, and indeed makes no claims to original

historical analysis. Rather, it is an attempt, within the fields of media and cultural studies and historical sociology, to seek for sources of the contemporary context of journalistic culture, and the lessons these may hold for us.

This qualification accounts for the way I have drawn selectively and partially on other far more detailed histories: for example, that of the Western missionaries. Predominantly the missionaries I refer to here are Protestants, and I have very little to say of the Catholics. But even amongst the Protestants, my focus is on a relatively small group. As Lutz (1965: viii) stresses, 'at no one time was there unanimity among either Protestant or Roman Catholic groups', and Paul Varg's research (1965: 5–7) suggests four types of Protestant missionaries working in nineteenth to twentieth-century China: the fundamentalists, the conservatives, the socialization wing and the liberal wing. The early Protestants involved in publication and printing enterprises – Robert Morrison, Walter Medhurst and others – could be counted as 'fundamentalist' Protestants in that they were essentially non-political but focused on a traditional programme of evangelization through religious publications. The influential Protestant journalists in the late nineteenth century, including Young Allen, Timothy Richard, Ernest Faber, Alexander Williamson, W. A. P. Martin and Calvin Mateer, whose periodicals we will chiefly examine in this book, were in the main from the camp of social humanitarians and liberals. They were in a certain sense less driven by the desire to convert, but were devoted to building modern education in China and enlightening the educated Chinese through their publications.

It is important to stress, however, that the great majority of missionaries,

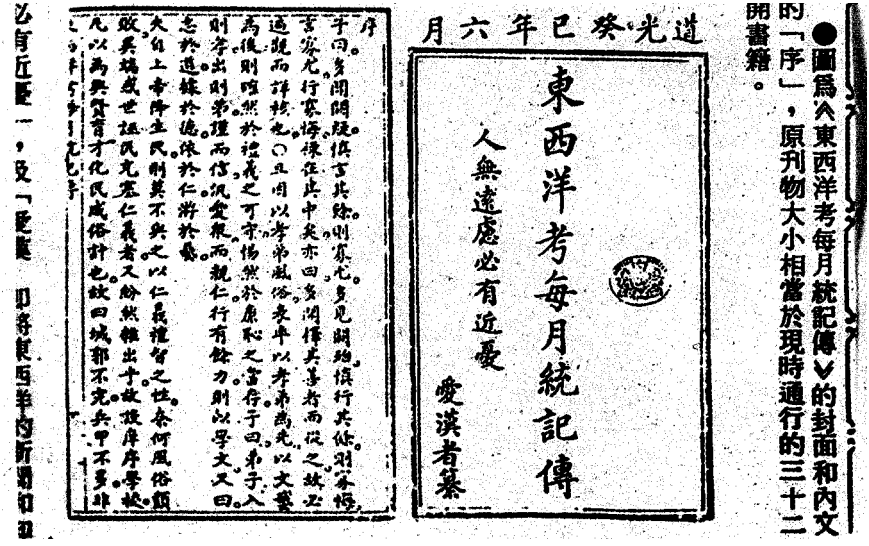
道光癸巳年六月
東西洋考每月統記傳
人無遠慮必有近憂
愛漢者纂
●圖爲《東西洋考每月統記傳》的封面和內文的「序」，原刊物大小相當於現時通行的三十二開書籍。

Figure 3 The *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine*.
Source: Fang Hanqi (1991) *History of Modern Chinese Journalism*. Taiyuan: Shanxi Education Press.

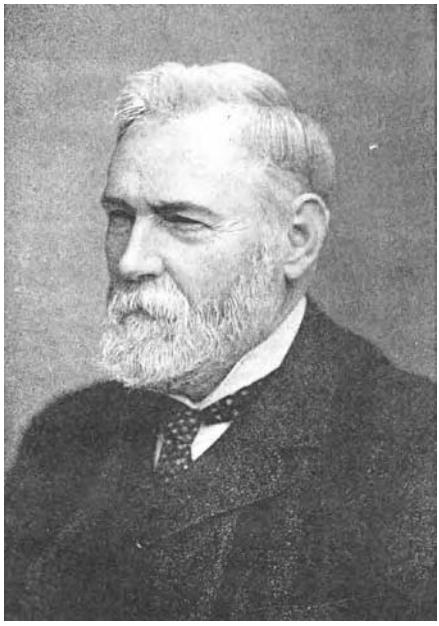

Figure 4 Timothy Richard.
Source: Richard, Timothy (1916) *Forty-Five Years in China*. London: T. Fisher Unwin.

both Protestant and Catholic, were mostly occupied by the single-minded attempt to convert the Chinese to Christianity and that these prominent 'liberal-wing' Protestant journalists, concerned with broader social change, constituted only a 'tiny fraction of the Protestant missionary community' (Cohen 1995: 555–6). Nevertheless, this 'tiny fraction' deploying their progressive intellectual approach over their spirituality, created an enormous social, political and cultural impact towards the end of the nineteenth century. And this is the reason for the focus on them.

Of course, such a selective focus, cutting into such a complex historical picture, is bound to leave many associated issues unaddressed. And so the book, in attempting to grasp the core issues for an account of the media, does not deal, for example, with the issue of the anti-Christian riots in nineteenth-century China – something that can only be understood in terms of a more detailed account of the complexity of the Protestant mission at that time.[1]

A similar selectivity has had to be applied to the treatment of the impact of the missionary press among the Chinese scholars. Generally speaking, this can be recognized as existing across three periods. The first period started around 1840 following China's defeat by the British army, when Chinese scholarly officials such as Lin Zexue and Wei Yuan began to recognize the military superiority of the West. They had some missionary publications translated for the purpose, as it was famously put, of 'learning the superior

techniques of the barbarians to control the barbarians' (Hsu 1990: 276). Then in 1858–60, when China suffered further defeat by the British and French armies, the Qing government launched a series of 'Self-strengthening' programmes from diplomatic and military modernization to a limited form of industrialization. Feng Guifeng, one of the leading statecraft scholars, and Guo Songtao, the first Chinese ambassador to Britain, both had contact with Young Allen and were influenced by the missionary publications (Bennett 1983: 57–8).

In the third period, towards the end of the nineteenth century, and especially after China's disastrous defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, Chinese scholars began to promote institutional reform and to embrace Western learning across a broader front and in more earnest than ever before. This is the period we will chiefly focus on in this book: the time at which the influence of missionary newspapers such as *Wanguo Gongbao* reached its peak and when Chinese scholar-journalists were most vigorous, first in their emulation and then in their distinctive appropriation of the legacy of the missionaries.

Finally, it should also be pointed out that the Protestant missionary press and Chinese élite press did not constitute the whole of print media in China in the nineteenth century. There was another line of journalistic development: commercial newspapers. After the 1860s, Shanghai was to become the centre for a commercial press as well as for missionary publications. It not only accommodated a number of English and other foreign-language newspapers such as *North China Herald*[2] and *North China Daily News*, but also some influential Chinese-language newspapers like *Shanghai XinBao, Zilin HuBao* and *Shen Bao*. In fact, *Shanghai XinBao* and *Zilin HuBao* were at successive periods Chinese editions of the *North China Daily News*.

There were indeed many connections between this commercial press and the missionary press. Many Protestant journalists, before or while working on their own publications, worked for the commercial press. Well-known figures including Walter Medhurst, Elijah Bridgman, Daniel MacGown, Joseph Edkins and Alexander Wylie worked for *North China Herald* or *North China Daily News* (Fang 1997: 311). Before starting *Church News*, Young Allen worked as editor for *Shanghai Xinbao*. Likewise, some other Chinese editors working for the missionary press also worked for the commercial press. For example, Cai Erkang, known for being the Chinese editor of *Wanguo Gongbao*, also worked for *Zilin HuBao* and *Shen Bao*. Moreover, there is evidence that the missionary press and the commercial press often shared the same sources and reprinted material from each other (Bennett 1983).

Despite its close connections with the Protestant press, the commercial press did not possess the same level of educational zeal and dedication to the project of enlightenment. Essentially, they were profit-oriented business enterprises. This was true even of one of the most popular and content-rich commercial newspapers, *Shenbao*, started in 1872 by the British merchant

Ernest Major. As Britton (1933: 63) suggests, Major, 'felt no call to offer the Chinese anything other than a newspaper which they would buy and read'. *Shenbao* – a combination of 'Western enterprise and Chinese execution' – did indeed offer many of the features of a modern popular newspaper – improved news reporting, editorials on current affairs, and 'a miscellany of fiction, verse and light essays' (Britton 1933: 67) – which attracted a large readership and occupied an important place in Chinese journalistic history. However, its ideological impact on the key sectors of the Chinese élite and their journalistic practices cannot be compared to the influence exercised by the liberal Protestant missionaries towards the end of the nineteenth century, particularly, as we shall see, in the later stages of *Wanguo Gongbao* and the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese (SDK). Without doubt, it was the broad agenda of social and educational concerns that sprang from deep sources in the evangelism of the missionary journalists that was the most significant element in inculcating a modern journalistic culture amongst the Chinese gentry-scholars.

The structure of the book

By way of a prelude to the main discussion of the impact of the Western missionary press, Chapter 1 sketches the history of the Chinese Imperial Press – a set of official organs originally used for disseminating imperial edicts, documenting government appointments and reporting court affairs which lasted, with little change, from the Tang to the late Qing dynasty. It was these '*DiBao*' that held the claim to being the earliest newspapers. The chapter pays particular attention to the unique relationship, intrinsic to the communicational function of these newspapers, between the gentry class, the state and wider society – a relationship which sustained the traditional social order in China for over one thousand years.

Chapter 2 describes the broad context of the emergence of the modern Chinese press by outlining the rise and development of the – predominantly Protestant – missionary press, particularly between the 1830s and 1890s. It describes the evangelistic and educational initiatives of the Protestant missionaries, distinguishes these from the earlier wave of Jesuit missionaries to China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and shows how these became concentrated into projects of journalism. The chapter focuses on Protestant journalistic activity in the three key cities of Canton, Hong Kong and Shanghai.

In Chapter 3, I focus on a case study of *Wanguo Gongbao – The Review of the Times* – without doubt the most influential missionary journal in the nineteenth century. It traces the development of *Wanguo Gongbao* from its early religious focus, which soon developed into a Christian-oriented cultural-scientific-educational journal and in its later stage became required reading amongst the Chinese élite. The chapter documents both the developing editorial policy and contents of the newspaper, and examines the profile

of its readership and its increasing cultural influence towards the end of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 4 examines the influence of *Wanguo Gongbao* on the intellectual élite in China during the nineteenth century, and the subsequent rise of a new form of Chinese élite journalism. It explores this process of influence, imitation, and finally a level of independence, via a focus on a number of key intellectuals of the period – beginning with Wang Tao, who edited *Xun Huan Daily* in the 1870s, to the key perspectives of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao in the Reform Movement in the 1890s.

Building on the historical documentation of previous chapters, Chapter 5 conducts a more theoretically informed analysis of the broader cultural impact of the new Chinese journalism. It explores three dimensions of cultural modernity as they began to emerge in late nineteenth-century China: 1. the emergence of a new 'social cosmology' based in a modern perception of the nature of time and space; 2. a changing sense of national identity; and 3. the rise of a distinctive Chinese form of cultural 'public sphere' centred on the activities of the 'gentry-scholars'.

Chapter 6 deals with a less often studied area of the missionaries' work – their impact on print technology – which was an intrinsic part of the overall modernization of Chinese journalism. It traces generations of missionaries who endeavoured to advance traditional woodblock printing technology in nineteenth-century China. It explores the far-reaching consequences of these changes, and finally reflects briefly on the implications of the Chinese experience for the influential theories of media technologies and politics found in the work of Harold Innis.

Having examined the missionary press as the key contributor to the formation of modern Chinese élite journalism, in Chapter 7 I turn to more indigenous sources of influence. It would obviously be simplistic to understand the influence of the missionaries in isolation from the context of Chinese intellectual, cultural and political developments, and so to treat China's modern transformation *only* as a response to the West. So in this chapter I examine the evidence for a dynamic of change within the Confucian intellectual tradition, running through the Qing dynasty and particularly during the nineteenth century. This dynamism – displayed in various arguments, schools of thought and reform programmes promoted by scholars from Wei Yuan, Lin Zexue to Feng Guifen, the 'Self-strengtheners', and then Kang Youwei – arguably represents a sort of indigenous modernizing force within Chinese élite culture. The chapter argues that it was the *encounter* of this force for change with the modernity represented by the missionary press – rather than a process of direct Western tutelage – that was at the heart of the Chinese gentry-scholars' embrace of modern journalism and cultural modernity more widely.

Chapter 8 explores that critical approach to the influence of the Western missionaries in China that sees this as a form of Western 'cultural imperialism'. The chapter assesses this critique in terms of the missionaries' wider

activities and affiliations – with Western economic and political expansion – and in terms of the ideological content of the missionary publications. It argues for a more complex critical assessment which understands the relationship of the missionaries and the Chinese élite scholars in the late nineteenth century as a developing struggle over cultural hegemony.

In the conclusion, I briefly review the historical evidence presented in the book and summarize the analysis. The Protestant missionaries were indeed highly influential in their journalism, but not in the way they had hoped to be. They were instrumental in enlightening Chinese scholars, but they did not succeed, other than on a very limited scale, in disseminating Christianity to China. Instead, the Chinese intellectuals adapted the model the missionaries set them to a distinctive secular form of cultural modernity, retaining Confucian influences. Whilst the dramatic and turbulent historical events in the twentieth century interrupted this passage to a distinctive Chinese modernity – particularly in the dimension of press freedom – it did not entirely displace it. The book therefore ends with a short exploration of the connection between the historical origins of the modern press in the nineteenth century and the dilemmas Chinese journalism faces today.

1 The press in imperial China

Before 1815, the Chinese press had experienced no Western involvement. In August of that year, Robert Morrison, a Protestant missionary from the London Missionary Society,[1] set up the *China Monthly Magazine*, which has been widely recognized as China's first modern journal. The word 'modern', though much debated in the social sciences, is used here to stress the contrasts between the official *Imperial Gazette* and the unofficial missionary press. These contrasts imply a much deeper set of cultural meanings which we shall explore in later chapters.

Before investigating this new era of the press in China, it will be useful briefly to trace the history of the newspaper before the nineteenth century and the social settings from which the modern press arose. It is impossible to grasp the fundamental nature of the changes which occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries without understanding the social structure and political institutions of the earlier period. As Hsu puts it, 'The study of the Western impact must be preceded by a knowledge of what that impact was on' (Hsu 1990: 5).

The origins of the Chinese newspaper: poetry, annals or bureaucracy?

It is well known that the Chinese mastered paper-making and printing technologies ahead of the rest of the world. Without doubt, ancient China had an extraordinarily rich written communication history, not to mention its rich traditions of oral communication. But for reasons of scope, we will have to confine ourselves here to print media disseminated on a regular basis in the journalistic sense: in newspapers, magazines and periodicals.

So, when did the practice of journalism originate in China? It is a controversial subject. While a majority of academics agree that the official gazette, either in the Han or the Tang dynasty, constituted the earliest imperial newspaper, others argue that the origins of print journalism can be traced back to even earlier poetic and historical writings. Thus, in 1896, in the opening issue of *Shiwu Bao*, Liang Qichao wrote an article entitled 'Newspapers are beneficial to the state' in which he traced the earliest newspaper back to ancient

Chinese ballads that were collected and presented to the 'Son of the Heaven' for the purpose of informing him about current affairs. Liang Qichao called the ballads the 'People's Newspaper' (Zhang 1999: 18). In the 1930s, another Chinese writer, Lin Yutang, echoed this view. Lin believed that folk song rather than prose was the very origin of Chinese journalism. In his account, the ancient 'epigrammatic verses and ballads' recording opinions on current affairs, 'were very effective as weapons of public criticism', which made them very similar to modern newspapers in terms of their function (Lin 1937: 12). He cites, for example, the 'great number of satirical poem' contained in the *Book of Poetry* collected by Confucius (Lin 1937: 20).

More recently, journalism and poetry have been linked in detailed historical research by the Taiwanese scholar Zhu Chuanyu. Zhu (1988: 12–17) claims that ancient ballads played a very similar role to modern journalism in communicating public information. He supported this claim by rewriting a poem from the *Book of Poetry* in modern journalistic prose. However, despite such formal similarities between ancient ballads and modern journalism, the *Book of Poetry* has more value as a literary and historical record of oral communication than as a link with print journalism.

Apart from poetry, early historical works have been considered as the other source of journalism. 'Following the decline of the *Book of Poetry* arose the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.' This saying of Mencius was known to all the Chinese. The famous '*Spring and Autumn Annals*' were identified by Lin as the beginning of the written press in China. He argues that the custom of news collecting by appointed officials across the country every spring and autumn[2] from the eighth century BC constituted 'the earliest official gathering of news' (Lin 1937: 13). In fact, according to Zhu (1988: 20), many modern Chinese assume that the *Spring and Autumn Annals* gave rise to Chinese journalism. The description 'the King without a crown' which was given to Confucius for his compiling of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is often used as a phase describing modern journalists. In Zhu's view, the records contained in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* shared an enormous amount of common ground, in terms of their news-gathering value, with modern newspapers. Like present-day journalism, they recorded a wide range of current affairs and, moreover, these were, during the feudal period, remarkably open in terms of access to a wide readership, including scholars from different states.

In these ways, Zhu concludes that these court historians can be compared to modern journalists. However, although the *Spring and Autumn Annals* may be narrowly regarded as the results of the 'earliest official gathering of news', it seems more convincing to consider these court-historical records, in an era before paper and printing technology, as the earliest forms of Chinese historical work, rather than as a prototype for the press in China.

The more widely accepted view that the Chinese newspaper was born of *DiBao* – the official gazette – owes a debt to the scholar and journalist Ge Gongzhen. In his seminal book *The History of Chinese Journalism*,

Ge claims that the Chinese newspaper developed from *DiBao*, firstly in its written version in the Han dynasty, and then its printed version during the Tang dynasty. Despite the various names it bore, such as *ZhaoBao, TiaoBao*, and *JingBao* in the Qing dynasty, the contents and general practice of the official gazette remained largely unchanged throughout the dynasties (Ge 1935: 24). Following Ge, mainstream Chinese journalism studies (Huang 1930; Wu 1933; Britton 1933; Guan 1943) endorse the view that Chinese journalism originated from *DiBao*. It is still debatable when the term '*DiBao*' was first used, Lin suggesting the Tang dynasty but Zhu insisting on the Song dynasty. But certainly, the word 'Di' occurs as early as in the statutes of the Early Han dynasty (Ge 1935: 25; Lin 1937: 14) and was defined then as 'the residence of provincial prefects for the purpose of communicating official reports'.

According to Zeng Xubai (1977: 66), it was the growth in military power, culture and trade in the Han dynasty, during the reign of Emperor Wu, that first gave impetus to the production of an official gazette. In his view, the vast geographical area and centralized political structure in the Han dynasty produced the requirement to circulate political information amongst the bureaucratic hierarchy.

However, it was in the Tang dynasty that a specific bureau – the Bureau of Official Reports (*Jin Zhouyuan*) – was created to accommodate local representatives. During this time, there were many rising powerful dukes, princes or governor-generals in charge of large territories, equal in size to a modern province in China. These dukes or princes would naturally provide for their own news service at the capital Chang'an,[3] which handled all official documents submitted by these representatives and transmitted imperial edicts in return. Recent archaeological research has uncovered such official reports from the Tang dynasty. Two archive documents of that period originally found in Dunhuang[4] have been regarded by Chinese scholars as the earliest forms of newspaper in the world (Fang 1997: 53–8).

Whether or not one accepts this claim depends to some extent on whether written documents can be considered as print journalism. The surviving archive documents were composed by handwriting and despite earlier suppositions that woodblock printing may have been utilized in the Tang official gazette (Ge 1935: 27–9), recent research (Zhu 1988: 109–14; Fang 1997: 62) suggests there is insufficient evidence for this.

It is probably wisest to discount handwritten documents. As Raymond Williams observes, though writing had made possible the recording of communication; printing made possible its rapid distribution, and it was in this form that the press (literally defined as printing) is 'the great means of modern communication' (Williams 1973: 22). Viewed thus, we should regard the printing of *DiBao* in the Song dynasty as the first manifestation of the Chinese press (Zhu 1988: 14; Britton 1933: 1), and it was *DiBao* that dominated right up to the Qing dynasty.

The rise and development of *DiBao*

To understand the advent of Di and *DiBao*, we need to grasp the political-institutional context of its emergence. In 221 BC, the twenty-year war among the feudalistic states came to an end with the victory of Qin, who was able to proclaim himself Emperor of all China. Unification had come to China and a vast nation arose. Emperor Qin introduced bureaucratic political institutions which were to shape Chinese politics for the next two thousand years: until the late Qing dynasty and, to some extent, until the modern Republic of China. In order to replace the pre-Qin feudalistic power structure dominated by the aristocrats with land and political muscle, Emperor Qin created a bureaucratic centralized government – dividing his kingdom into thirty-six 'commanderies' (i.e. provinces) and sending officers chosen on the basis of 'proven ability', and regardless of their family background, to manage these localities. In each commandery, there were three officers. Two of them were responsible, respectively, for 'defence and commanding the local armed forces' and 'civil administration, economics and industry'. The third one – 'directly responsible to the Emperor' – was in Cottrell's account the Emperor's special envoy to keep the two other officers in order (Cottrell 1964: 123).

As territory expanded through the Han dynasty, the political structure remained but required a larger bureaucracy. In particular, more communication between the central authorities and the local level was required. In these circumstances, representatives began to be sent by the local authorities to lodge in the capital, and it was because of this that the Dis appeared. Qin had in fact already laid some of the grounds for this mobile bureaucracy in his programme of military road construction:

> Under the Emperor of Qin, military necessity had caused him to build an elaborate system of military roads and post-relays, with regular stations ten li apart, and his system of roads and relays was elaborated upon during the Han Dynasty, with regular post stations at regular intervals of thirty li. Both post-houses and post-chaises, with from one to seven horses, were in use, as well as couriers on foot.
>
> (Lin 1937: 15)[5]

Thus a material communicational infrastructure – the beginnings of a postal system – can be attributed to Emperor Qin. But to understand how the Dis became such effective forms of political-bureaucratic communication, we should mention one further achievement of the Emperor: his establishing of a standardized corpus of written characters, from which modern Chinese derived, and which made communication among different areas of the empire possible. As Benedict Anderson remarks in *Imagined Communities*, 'the reach of the mandarinal bureaucracy and of painted characters largely coincided' in imperial China, as contrasted with medieval Western Europe where the

universality of Latin never corresponded to a universal political system (Anderson 2003: 41). In effect, we could argue, the Chinese sovereign monopolized the standard written language and made it 'his-and-only-his-language-of-state' (Anderson 2003: 41). This considerably contributed to end the political fragmentation of pre-Qin China and build a new political entity: a centralized powerful state. It is instructive to notice the early and deeply embedded bond between language and written communication, on the one hand, and the bureaucratic political system, on the other. And this state monopoly over the written medium was even further enhanced and sustained when Confucian ideology became authorized.

By the time of the Tang dynasty, the Di system had become more developed owing to further territorial expansion and economic prosperity. During the reign of Emperor Taizhong, archive records suggest plans to build over three hundred new Dis in the capital city Chang'an (Fang 1997: 35). In AD 777, the 'Bureau of Official Reports' was set up to deal with correspondence sent to provincial authorities. The well-developed postal service of that time – some 1,643 postal stops, of which 1,293 operated by land, 260 by water and 86 by both – also greatly contributed to the circulation of *DiBao* (Fang 1997: 34). As Elvin (1973: 133) observes, with the government postal service, 'the capital of the middle Chinese Empire, in Tang times, was only eight to fourteen days away from the most distant city of any importance'.

Nevertheless, it must be remembered that *DiBao* in the Tang dynasty were published only at irregular intervals. It was not until printing technology was adopted in the Song dynasty that *DiBao* grew into the standard official periodical gazette of imperial China.

Following the elaboration of the bureaucratic political institutions in the early Song dynasty, the imperial authority terminated the 'Dis' set up by the local officers and instead established the 'Central Petition Court' to regulate and control official news distribution. According to Zhu (1988: 122–4), news-gathering, editing and distributing then became divided amongst several departments of the central bureaucracy. In contrast with the random semi-official handwritten newsletters in the Tang dynasty, *DiBao* in the Song dynasty developed into an important system of daily printed official news with an increasing amount of information (Fang 1997: 71–2). What *DiBao* carried were mostly details of imperial court affairs, such as the official edicts and orders for promotion and dismissals; memorandums by the ministers and provincial authorities; selected edicts of the emperor and other official documents (Zhu 1988: 129–38).

More importantly, during the Song dynasty, *DiBao* started to enjoy a larger circulation among a wider range of officials and gentry-scholars all over the country. Extensive references to *DiBao* are found in the notes, letters, poems and biographies of the scholars of that period. Su Shi, a well-known poet in the Song, wrote that his source of information on officialdom was through reading the *DiBao* (Ge 1935: 31). *DiBao*'s growing popularity was also reflected in the variation of its names. Besides being called *DiBao*, the official

newspaper was also known as *ZhaoBao, Jizhouyuan Bao*, *DiZhuang, DiLi ZhuangBao* and so on (Fang 1997: 77–8).

While *DiBao* was reaching a wider readership from the Tang to the Song, it was also becoming more manipulated by the central authorities. It was moving from being the channel for mass communication to becoming the mouthpiece of the government. Through the Yuan, Ming[6] and most of the Qing dynasty, *DiBao* continued to developed without significant changes and interruptions. Its dominance was not challenged until the arrival of the modern press in the nineteenth century.

XiaoBao: the 'unofficial press' in imperial China

Having sketched the emergence and development of the official imperial gazette, *DiBao*, we can turn now to the relationship between this and the emergence of an unofficial press.

In *Chinese Journalism History*, Ge (1935: 31–2) notes that during the Song dynasty, while reading *DiBao* became a general habit for many scholars, there emerged a kind of unofficial newspaper, the *XiaoBao.* The *XiaoBao* were the 'tabloid' newspapers of the Song dynasty, originally established by the local representatives in the capital, the 'Di officials'. They emerged as a result of 'a feverish demand for up-to-date news' among the scholars. They were also considered to be potentially subversive, to the extent that a petition to the Emperor was made by the official Zhou Linzhi for them to be banned on the grounds that they often contained inaccurate or groundless statements damaging to imperial authority and were involved in leaking information from the Bureau of Official Reports.

Lin (1937: 17–18) regards the *XiaoBao* as an attempt by the Di officials to confront imperial censorship and to break the control of the Bureau of Official Reports. And for this reason he describes them as 'the first important growth of journalism in China'. The rise of the *XiaoBao* can be dated back to the early days of *DiBao*, and the establishment of the Bureau of Official Reports was in part an attempt to thwart the development of *XiaoBao*. As Zhu (1988: 155–68) observes, political messages became imperative in the Song dynasty as political turmoil intensified. With its limited and often out-dated official news, *DiBao* became an insufficient and frustrating monopoly of intelligence for the rising political factions and the gentry officials in and out of the imperial court. The *XiaoBao*, therefore, provided for the growing appetite for more and more timely political information. In one sense, the *XiaoBao* emerged in direct reaction to the censorship and the restricted circulation of *DiBao*, Zhu stresses that these *XiaoBao* were often handwritten by the Di officials and reached a very limited readership. But there was a more vigorous form in which information was collected by reporters rather than Di officials. Lin quotes from a widely cited contemporary source:

> The *Chaopao* . . . [another name for *DiBao*] records the important events

> of the day. Every day the office of the Court Chamberlain would compile this news and submit it to the editorship of the Court Secretariat, and then pass it on to the Bureau of Official Reports for general promulgation. There were, however, private reporters such as 'court reporters', 'provincial reporters', and 'yamen reporters' who were connected with the tabloid papers, and as these were often accused of leaking out official news, they concealed them under the title of hsinwen [news].
>
> (Lin 1937: 17)

According to Zhu, the 'hsinwen' carried by *XiaoBao* meant the same as 'news' in the modern sense. The 'court reporters', 'provincial reporters' and 'yamen reporters' could be compared to present-day political correspondents who report in the national, provincial and local newspapers. These were professional reporters who could, apparently, make good money. The wide variety of sources of their reports may have contained court news, some of it censored, along with social and political gossip and rumours on the street. Zhu even presumes that the *XiaoBao* contained some form of commentary on current affairs, though this must have been indirect so as to avoid official intolerance of the free expression of opinion. Because of the breath and diversity of their contents and their wide circulation, in Zhu's view, these *XiaoBao* could only have been produced by printing rather than handwriting.

Zhu's account of the ambiguities of the *XiaoBao* is consistent with Britton's belief in the existence of 'popular sheets retailing sensational news of any sort' in imperial China, but also with his claim that 'by the necessities of absolutism, printed attacks on the government were treated as sedition or treason' (Britton 1933: 3). Indeed, although the *XiaoBao* were at one point in the Song dynasty even peddled on the streets of the capital city, the government made repeated attempts to close them down (Fang 2000: 18). To summarize, the *XiaoBao* certainly created challenges to the official gazette in imperial China, but since they were partially based on social and political rumours, they were lacking in journalistic credibility and, in fact, began to decline significantly by the early nineteenth century.

Both official and unofficial communication sources, however, were very different for the majority of the population who had no access to *DiBao*. For them, the most common channel of information was the 'Bang', the public poster. As Fang (1997: 95–8) says, the Bang was the primary medium used by the Song government to publicize its edicts, regulations, war information and so on. Depending on the level of dissemination intended, the Bang could be displayed in the imperial court, on the main streets of the capital or throughout the country. During wartime in particular, it could produce an enormous impact on public opinions.

Since *DiBao* offered censored and often dated information, the *XiaoBao* were often in a precarious state, and the Bang had only an irregular appearance, public criticism found other outlets:

> Publishing was highly commercialized from Song times on, and there was a large market among literate classes for all kinds of reading matter, most of which was politically and morally innocuous; but there also developed forms of satirical literature in which social criticism could be formulated.
>
> (Stockman 2000: 152)[7]

The Chinese people are great critics of their rulers: as Lin suggests (1937: 20) neither censorship nor monarchical absolutism has ever really stopped the Chinese criticizing their government. They gossiped at tea-parties and behind closed doors, although their opinions were not reflected in the official press.

Indeed, the official newspapers by and large catered exclusively for officialdom and the gentry literati. This being so, the question arises of how *DiBao* managed to survive and dominate communication over such long periods of time by serving only a small, privileged readership. To understand this, we need to go beyond the press itself and explore the wider relationships between the state, society and the press in imperial China.

The traditional order

> Until 1800 the agrarian-bureaucratic empire of China preserved a social order more ancient than, and very different from, the commercial-military society of Europe.
>
> (Fairbank 1995: 9)

By the nineteenth century, unlike Western Europe, China still, by and large, remained the imperial system it had been for almost two thousand years. Fairbank's phrase, an 'agrarian-bureaucratic empire' perfectly captures the core features of the economy and politics in traditional Chinese society. So how did this distinctive context influence the early press?

In such a predominantly agrarian country, one criterion for social classification became obvious, the urban/rural divide: 'the farmers who constituted some 80 per cent of the population' as distinct from 'the other 20 per cent of the population, who lived in the urban areas and represented a composite stratum of scholars, gentry, officials, absentee landlords, artisans, merchants, militarists, etc' (Hsu 1990: 70). Though an accurate estimate of the literacy rate of this vast empire is impossible to obtain, it is probably safe to borrow Anderson's (2003: 15) phrase that there were only 'tiny literate reefs on top of vast illiterate oceans' in ancient China.

This surely explains why the early newspapers in imperial China were beyond the concern of the majority of the population and only catered for the minority. But how did the officials and the gentry manage to sustain the state's official monopoly over newspapers? To explore the extraordinary endurance of *DiBao* – over one thousand years – we need to explore the political bureaucratic system.

Chinese politics is a complex and controversial field in which many

Western scholars have ploughed. After three decades of study of the institutional settings of 'oriental[8] despotism', Wittfogel (1957) comes to believe that the terms 'hydraulic society' and 'hydraulic civilization' express most appropriately the peculiarities of this social order. 'Hydraulic agriculture' – large-scale and government-managed works of irrigation and flood control – highlight the prominent role of the government and draw attention to the agromanagerial and agrobureaucratic character of this civilization. Agriculture based on the widespread management of water resources in a vast empire, Wittfogel argues, had far-reaching implications – affecting the relationship between land and labour, the forms of the village, and family and kinship organization. And all these lead to 'oriental despotism' – the managerial bureaucracy in which ruling class and supreme autocratic leadership is the rule.

Wittfogel was neither the first nor the last to link the institutional features of oriental society with its mode of production. From John Stuart Mill to Karl Marx, critical Western observers saw that Eastern absolutism, rooted in its economic output, was definitely more comprehensive and more oppressive than its Western counterpart. Marx began, in the early 1850s, to employ the formula 'oriental despotism' for the whole institutional order. He expressed his particular concern with the economic aspects of Asiatic society by speaking of a specific 'Asiatic mode of production', which he thought contributed to the static nature of society and sustained absolutism. Following the same line of thought, Foucault (1973: xix) writes:

> In our traditional imagery, the Chinese culture is the most meticulous, the most rigidly ordered, the most deaf to temporal events, most attached to the pure delineation of space; we think of it as a civilisation of dikes and dams beneath the eternal face of the sky; we see it spread and frozen, over the entire surface of a continent surrounded by walls.

Here, the 'civilisation of dikes and dams' once again displays the Western obsession with the significance of irrigation schemes in China. However, sufficient studies have now come to conclude that 'Wittfogel wildly exaggerates the amount of administrative centralization involved in the building or the day-to-day working of irrigation projects' (Giddens 1987: 47). In fact, Eberhard's (1970) studies imply a very different picture from Wittfogel's. In Eberhard's account, the irrigation systems were actually rather decentralized in China. Instead of state control and management, many irrigation projects were led by elders appointed by the local communities. In addition, the work of Huang (1985) suggests that in imperial China large-scale managerial agriculture was generally uncommon, though its extent varied regionally. In many rural areas smallholder peasants outnumbered farm labourers. Infrastructural work did sometimes require large-scale organization and considerable economic power over many workers, but by no means as often as suggested by the theory of 'oriental despotism'.

Those simplified visions of oriental Chinese society may have their roots in a misguided historism that flourished soon after the Industrial Revolution and the era of Western expansion. As for Foucault, one sinologist remarks, 'in meditating on the perhaps mythical Chinese encyclopaedia, [he] quite unashamedly resorted to the stereotypical China, a Kingdom of No-Progress' (Hay 1994: 8). The idea of a stereotypical 'non-progressive' China consequently underestimated the complexity of Chinese social formations and dynamic mechanics. Simply figuring China as Europe's Other neglected the vitality of cultural ideology in the historical context of China.

As 'oriental despotism' does not adequately address the distinctiveness of the Chinese political system, we may pay attention to Qian Mu's view. This distinguished Chinese historian strongly rejected using Western terms to label Chinese politics (2001: 24). In the Qin dynasty, as Qian argues, when aristocratic feudalism had to large extent been terminated, there emerged a monarchy without a constitution. Nevertheless, it is not accurate to call it despotism. He named it 'bureaucratic government' – the nation was organized by an appointed hierarchical government. The central authority sent officials to reside and administrate locally. The co-governance of emperor and prime minister in the imperial court implies an obscure sharing of power, never clarified, and without comparison in Western European history. It was this centralized bureaucratic political system that maintained the unity of the Chinese empire for two thousand years until the late Qing dynasty. With some pride, Qian claims that politics in traditional Chinese society was open because anyone qualified in the state examination could pursue access to a career in government.

Nonetheless, Qian's view has been criticized for its idealization of traditional politics. As Jin (1992: 68) argues, Qian was right in associating openness and fairness with the *ideal* model of Chinese culture. The political reality, however, was rather different. Standing between Wittfogel and Qian, Jin's (1992: 64) understanding of China's political structure sees political institutions as the key to unlocking the mysteries of imperial China. He neither calls it absolutism, like Wittfogel, nor glorifies it as 'a government by the scholars and for the people' like Qian. Instead, Jin borrows Weber's term – 'patrimonialism' – to explain the patriarchal pattern of relations between the monarchy and the government. More importantly, Jin emphasizes the significance of a well-developed imperial bureaucracy monopolized by a group of Confucian scholars. He also identifies with Weber's view of the '*de facto* freedom of mobility and of vocational choice' among the scholarly bureaucracy (Weber 1978: 1047). Unlike Wittfogel or Qian, Jin refuses to take a black-and-white view – Chinese politics was never absolutist monarchy, nor truly open for the people (1992: 68). The government was caught between two contradictory discourses: the Confucian morality of the scholarly officials, with their concerns for the well-being of the population, but constraining this, the perception, also deriving from Confucianism, of the need to exert and maintain the patrimonial control of the monarchy.

The contradictions and ambiguities of Chinese political institutions are fascinating. One distinctive facet is the long-standing imperial bureaucratic system, which, though it varied during its two-thousand-year history, maintained some fundamental features without comparison in human history. At the centre of this we find the integrating influence of Confucian values and ideology in imperial Chinese society.

Confucianism and social structure

Since the 1980s, the Chinese scholar couple Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng have been researching the historical context of the turbulent modern political trends in China. They believe that to make sense of modern China's political and cultural development, it is essential to seek out the deep structure of imperial society embedded from the Qin, Han through to the Qing dynasties. Borrowing Fernand Braudel's approach to the historical '*longue durée*', they discover an 'ultra-stable structure' which can explain the long-standing fundamental characteristics of traditional Chinese society despite constant dynastic changes. In their book *The Origins of Modern Chinese Thought* (2000), Jin and Liu discuss how this 'ultra-stable structure' was established and how it maintained a remarkably long-lasting social cohesion. The idea of an 'ultra-stable structure' may invite controversy, but it will be useful here to shed some light on the enduring dominance of the imperial bureaucratic system that was at the root of the official press monopoly.

The key to understanding the sustained overall structural unity of Chinese society, and its difference from other agrarian civilizations in history, is that Confucian culture united the monarchical state, bureaucratic authority, the landlord class and family clans. During the course of imperial history, Confucianism is by no means a fixed or unchanging set of ideas, and in Chapter 7 we will discuss how Confucian dynamism contributed to shaping the movement towards modernity in Chinese journalism. However, despite some degree of institutional change, Confucian culture has been the source of legitimacy of social and political formations over two thousand years from the Han to the Qing dynasty. The three levels could explain the unitary structure of traditional society, from the top to the bottom level – bureaucratic authority, gentry autonomy and family clan – are all bound together by Confucian ideology. This three-fold social stratification, to borrow a figure of speech from the historian Huang Ray (1989: 193), was like a submarine sandwich.

> There was a huge piece of bread on the top called the bureaucracy, there was a huge piece of bread on the bottom called the peasantry, both undifferentiated. The makings in between, being the cultural norms or the quintessence of governance or the substance of the civil service examinations, were basically a moral platform that suited the agrarian simplicity within a country of many millions of small self-cultivators. Relying on

> these moral precepts to supplement the penal code, China did not have the structural strength to qualify as a modern nation. It did not possess the needed functional manoeuvrability.

Between the state authority and the grassroots, the cultural norms were best represented by the gentry-scholar class. Upholding Confucian ideology on which the 'open' government examination was based, the gentry-scholar class connected the social levels above and below, as they accepted social movement from the peasantry class and, in turn, were themselves able to ascend to form the élite bureaucratic authority. Thus, the borders between social stratification became blurred and social cohesion was largely achieved.

While we are using the concept of the 'gentry', it is necessary to clarify this term. The 'gentry' is a typical English term which, from Tudor times onwards, acquired rather concrete social, economic and political connotations. Ho (1962: 40) points out that:

> Since the most important determinant of English gentry status was landed property and sometimes other forms of wealth, there is danger in borrowing it as a generic term for the Chinese class of officials and potential officials who, during a greater part of the imperial period, owed their status only partly to wealth but mostly to an academic degree. Furthermore, it is difficult to equate broadly the Chinese class of officials and potential officials with the English gentry because many of the officials and potential officials of the lower bureaucratic stratum were actually men of relatively modest circumstances and a far cry from 'nobiles minores'.

'Gentry', therefore, should be regarded as a key class only in the peculiar context of the civil examination system in traditional Chinese society.

Let us take a closer look at the social composition. The top level is the state authority whose small size, compared to the vastness of the empire, has amazed many Western scholars. One mystery of the Chinese empire, Fairbank (1995: 20) thought, was its capacity to govern so large a populace with so small an official establishment. In his discussion of Chinese politics, Weber (1978: 1047) also mentioned the tremendous expansion of the empire and the small number of officials relative to the size of the population. As Hsu's findings suggest (1990: 57), the government administration only reached the County (*Xian*) level.[9] In the Qing dynasty, official figures show that, among the whole population, the percentage of government officials was as tiny as less than 0.01 per cent.[10] On average, there were five commissioners appointed by the emperor in a county with a population of 250,000 (Jin and Liu 1993: 29 and 48).

It was impossible, practically, for the county magistrate alone to collect taxes, settle legal and civil disputes, and maintain peace and order. They had to rely on the local gentry, the intermediary agents between the

grassroots government and the people. The same moral ideology – Confucianism – bound the gentry-scholars as loyal political allies of government. No wonder Fairbank (1973: 208) coined the phrase 'Confucian monarchy', as Confucianism was such an intrinsic part of the institution of monarchy. Max Weber (1978: 1050) also perceived the importance of the educated élites: 'the unity of Chinese culture is essentially the unity of that status group which is the bearer of the bureaucratic classic-literary education and of the Confucian ethic with its ideal of gentility'.

Through sociological fieldwork in a traditional Chinese community, Zhou conducted research on gentry identity. In his discussion, Zhou provides fresh details of the multiple social and cultural responsibilities the gentry-scholars undertook (2000: 93–110). Because of the small size and short term-of-office of the magistrate government, many local issues became the duty of the gentry. As Zhou concludes, being the leading figures of the local community, the gentry-scholars were knowledgeable about local affairs and won the respect of the people. They organized local security defence; they applied persuasion and arbitration to settle civil disputes out of court; they were also responsible for raising funds for public projects, such as the construction and repair of irrigation systems, and charity work such as famine relief; they set moral examples and gained trust in the local community and oversaw the enacting of cultural rituals such as funerals and weddings.

For all these contributions, the gentry were respected and also rewarded. They were generally exempt from manual labour service and paid fewer taxes than the commoners. Widely spread across the country, the gentry population was much bigger than the bureaucracy. In the nineteenth century, there were between 1.1 and 1.4 million gentry, which is a few dozen times that of the ruling bureaucracy, but their percentage together with their family members out of the total population (between 1.3 and 1.9 per cent) suggests they were a clear minority of the society (Chang 1955: 139–41).

Apart from the state authorities and the gentry, there was another important component contributing to the social integration of Confucian ideology. Here we come to the bottom level of the diagram – the family and clan. As Stockman (2000: 94) observes, 'China has often been seen as a peculiarly familial society and Confucian social theory placed special emphasis on family relationships as the core of a stable and harmonious society'. Indeed, in traditional Chinese society, the family, instead of the individual, was regarded as the basic unit. The family and the 'clan' – families of common ancestral lineage – were like a miniature version of the society, with hierarchical and reciprocal relationship structures largely based on the patrimonial moral code of Confucianism. As Hsu (1990: 69–70) describes it, the head of the family and the clan, generally, was the father, or an older authority figure. They decided all family or clan issues, such as arranging their children's marriages, managing the clan property and the ancestral hall, and the reward and punishment of clan members. Yet the authority over the family and the clan had to be practised 'within the moral rule of Confucianism'.

This is perhaps why Johnson (1999: 73) believes that Chinese villagers and literati shared a common culture. In his view, despite all their differences, many class, dialect, and occupation-based subcultures could be recognized as Chinese. A common culture overlapped a 'vernacular ideology' which was embedded in the fabric of the everyday life of the ordinary people. The essence of the overlapping common culture and 'vernacular ideology', 'Confucian ethics', was vital in that, in Parsons's words, it 'established a microscopic-macroscopic congruence between the family and the society as a whole' (Parsons 1977: 77).

Confucianism embraced the whole society from the state authority to the grassroots as, 'a tremendous code of political maxims and rules of social propriety for cultured men of the world' (Weber 1951: 152). In addition to uniting society, the Confucian classics-based examination system served to recruit the bureaucracy from the wider society. To some extent, this allowed new blood to enter the bureaucracy and prevented hereditary corruption. Though, as we will see in later chapters, the examination system was not without its problems or its critics.

Both Chinese and Western scholars recognize the power of Confucian ideology in producing, in Fairbank's words, 'a firmly-knit and thoroughly tested society with a culture of great vitality' (1975: 90). However, China's 'cultural unity' based on Confucianism was not simply ready-made at the birth of the empire. We need to look back to the early stages of imperial history to find out how Confucian ideology became established.

It is widely recognized that Confucian thought, during the Han dynasty, gained the position of the orthodoxy (Hsiao 1979: 469). Although the Qin state ushered China into a new political epoch, it was of very short duration – less than forty years. Embodying Legalist teachings, the Qin regime obtained its supremacy by applying harsh punishments and audaciously utilizing its military power. To put it briefly, after replacing the Qin, the Han emperors introduced Confucianism as the official ideology against the backdrop of the failure of the Qin. As Ho explains, the harsh aspects of Legalism had to be softened and cloaked in the morality of Confucianism:

> On account of its common sense, humanism, catholicity, flexibility, and ability to assimilate useful teachings of other schools, Confucianism gradually overshadowed all its ancient rivals. Furthermore, its advocacy of a hierarchical society served the imperial government so well that during the period of intensified autocracy under Han Wu-ti (140–87 BC) Confucianism finally received imperial patronage and established its primacy over other schools. Since a strong centralized government took but limited cognizance of hereditary privileges, the Han rulers provided certain ad hoc means to recruit members of the ruling class, thus partially resolving the antithesis that had been a common feature of all major ancient social ideologies.
>
> (Ho 1962: 5)

The adoption of Confucianism to aid the imperial ruling powers proved to be a success – the Han dynasty lasted four hundred years. As the authorities encouraged Confucian classical studies, which were sufficient to qualify one for an official career, Confucian studies attained unprecedented popularity.

The Confucian ideal of government, as Gray describes it, 'was that of rule by an enlightened élite who, through study of the classics, had become committed to the moral norms which the classics expressed' (1990: 15). Cultivated in such an intellectual setting, generations of Confucian scholars grew up to fulfil their role of being the backbone of imperial government and society.

Having outlined the long-term macro structure of traditional Chinese society, we can now understand how the monopoly of imperial bureaucracy rested upon the integrating power of Confucianism. This helps us to understand our initial question of the longevity of the official newspaper's dominance. On the one hand, the restricted circulation of *DiBao* highlighted the obvious social divisions. It catered for the top and middle levels of the society – from the state bureaucracy to the gentry – but it failed to reach the bottom level, the majority of the population – the peasantry and urban commoners. As a form of written communication, the official newspaper served an exclusive minority readership. On the other hand, *DiBao* also played the role of social cohesion by serving the scholar official class, who were the key class connecting the stratified society. In that sense, much more than a privilege for the ruling class, the official newspaper was in fact an intrinsic part of the official bureaucracy and imperial political institutions. It was built into the political structure through the hierarchical positioning of gentry scholars and officials.

How did this sector, along with the official newspaper, achieve lasting dominance and general social cohesion? It was not brought about merely in ideological terms, as in Mencius's belief that, 'Those who labour with their minds rule others, and those who labour with their physical strength are ruled by others.' The two seemingly contradictory social and political consequences – monopoly and cohesion – were settled through an institutional lever – the government examination system.

The government examination system

It took a long time for the civil examination system to become fully institutionalized. According to Qian (2001: 27), it can be traced back as early as the Han dynasty, when officials were chosen by the recommendation of excellent and talented scholars based on Confucian orthodoxy. However, the recommendation system caused problems because of its lack of openness. From the Sui dynasty onwards, an examination was introduced, partially to supplement recommendation in recruitment to the bureaucracy. As Elman observes, a comprehensive examination system, 'theoretically open to almost all Chinese' began to be adopted in the Northern Song dynasty. With the exception of the Yuan and early Ming, this system was central to Chinese

public administration, and indeed society as a whole, right up until its abolition in the early years of the twentieth century (Elman 2000: 13).

Generally speaking, the examination process involved a three-tiered arrangement. At the lowest rung, success in examination at the county (xian) level allowed a quota of students to proceed to further examination in the capital of the prefecture. The successful candidates – 'Cultivated talents' (*Xiucai*) or 'Government students' (*Shengyuan*) – then became 'officially members of the "gentry", with the right to a stipend and to various privileges under the law' (Gray 1990: ixvi). The next stage was examination at the provincial level, again according to quotas, and the graduates from this were called 'Recommended men' (*Juren*). The highest level of the examination was a two-stage process held in the capital every three years and involved a prior examination (*Huishi*) from which a shortlist of candidates was drawn. The few candidates who won through all these levels of examinations proceeded to the 'palace examination' (*Dianshi*) conducted under the personal supervision of the emperor. Graduates were called 'Presented scholars' (*Jinshi*).

The scholars we will discuss in the next chapter, such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, were both 'Recommended men' and went to the capital in 1895 for the examination to pursue the title of 'Presented scholar'. However, as we shall see, they experienced far more than the conventional imperial examination.

The Chinese civil exam system has been approved on many counts. According to Max Weber, it was historically unprecedented: for the first time in history, 'there appear official qualifying examinations and official certificates of conduct' (1978: 1048). From a formal viewpoint, Weber argues, 'this constitutes the most radical application of bureaucratic objectivity possible and therefore an equally radical break with typical patrimonial office-holding which rests on the ruler's personal discretion and favour' (1978: 1048). Hsu (1990: 79) also applauds the way in which the relatively open exam system created a convergence from all walks of life, except for the 'degraded',[11] which united Chinese society. Therefore, rather than having a stark division between ruler and ruled, Chinese society was 'always a multi-class one in which four major "functional orders" coexisted: scholars, farmers, artisans, and tradesmen'. According to Ho (1962: 107–11), despite a general trend for upward mobility to decline from the Ming to the Qing dynasties, across the period as a whole it was found that the government exam candidates of *Jinshi* from commoner families made up 42.3 per cent.[12]

On the other hand, many voices critical of the civil examination system can be heard. In his studies of the Chinese gentry in the nineteenth century, Chang (1955: 182–97) condemns the inequality of the examination for candidates from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds and the level of corruption in the examination process. In researching primary sources of late imperial China, Elman (2000: xxix) warns that the examination during the Ming and Qing dynasties, 'was not a system designed for increased social mobility'. In his view, focusing on the social mobility of the civil examinations may neglect

the resulting process of social selection. Moreover, as Elman argues, since the civil examination required mastery of 'nonvernacular classical texts', there were big advantages for the literate merchant-gentry élite. If we underestimate the degree of cultural monopolization the examination's content imposed, we will fail to grasp the full picture of the civil examination system (Elman 2000: 239).

We should not treat the examination system, with its long history of development, as a fixed or permanent institution. On the contrary, it was full of changes and modifications as both the imperial court and established gentry élite had attempted to influence the examination system to their advantage since its early days. Yet, from the South Song to the Qing dynasty, Neo-Confucian orthodoxy synthesized and developed by Zhu Xi dominated in the civil exam curricular. Let's take an extract from one of the *Four Books* – the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*), the major reading selected by Zhu Xi – to see how Confucianism subtly but explicitly and powerfully ties educational, moral and political programmes together.

The *Great Learning* (*Daxue*) teaches how the central Confucian doctrine of 'humanity' (*ren*) is put into operation. The eight steps described below draw the blueprint for realizing 'humanity' in the process of actual practical living. Thus according to Confucianism, the balance and harmony between the individual and society are sustained:

> The ancients who wished to manifest their clear character to the world would first bring order to their states. Those who wished to bring order to their states would first regulate their families. Those who wished to regulate their families would first cultivate their personal lives. Those who wished to cultivate their personal lives would first rectify their minds. Those who wished to rectify their minds would first make their wills sincere. Those who wished to make their wills sincere would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge consists in the investigation of things.
>
> (Chan 1973: 86)

Then Confucius reverses the way of talking the same steps.

> When things are investigated, knowledge is extended; . . . the will becomes sincere; . . . the mind is rectified; . . . the personal life is cultivated; . . . the family will be regulated; . . . the state will be in order; . . . there will be peace throughout the world.

Confucius continues to clarify other important principles:

> From the Son of Heaven[13] down to the common people, all must regard cultivation of the personal life as the root or foundation. There is never a case when the root is in disorder and yet the branches are in order. There

> has never been a case when what is treated with great importance becomes a matter of slight importance or what is treated with slight importance becomes a matter of great importance.
>
> (Chan 1973: 87)

As these Confucian texts suggest, the emperor was held to supply a moral example that all others should follow. The state (emperor) and the society (public) were required to face the same fundamental moral and political task, which implies that the state and the public were firmly connected through Confucian doctrine. The examination system provided a certain level of social mobility between the ruling élite and the commoners. Meanwhile, the practice of a principal social value – to be successful scholars in the exam – was aspired to and pursued across the whole society, thus strengthening the dominance of the official ideology and legitimizing political institutions with effective moral and cultural force. In brief, it can be said that the political, institutional and cultural frameworks were combined precisely and comfortably in traditional China. The gap between the state and the public was filled by providing open access for the commoners to become scholars, servants and representatives of the state. Thus the tension between the state and public was diluted by attaching institutionalized moral and cultural principles to daily life, which helped to build and sustain the firm-knit social order.

To summarize the arguments of this chapter: Chinese newspapers, appearing as early as the Tang dynasty, were born of and developed in a distinctive political institution and cultural framework. The hierarchical bureaucratic-political constitution gave rise to the dominating official gazette *DiBao*. Reaction to this monopolistic control of information, with the help of developing printing technology, stimulated the short-lived unofficial press *XiaoBao*. But the remarkable endurance of the dominance of *DiBao* from the Tang to the Qing dynasties with few significant changes can be best understood in the context of traditional Chinese social and political institutions. More than a communicational tool for officialdom, the imperial press developed as an intrinsic part of the political institutions in catering for gentry-scholar officials selected through the (theoretically) open government examination. As a result, alongside serving the privileged gentry officials, *DiBao* played an important role in assisting them to create and maintain the traditional social order: the social integration underpinned by Confucian ideology which also embedded bureaucratic and cultural dominance.

Unlike the critical independent periodicals of the rising bourgeoisie in seventeenth-century Western Europe, which, as Habermas has argued, contributed to the democratic transformation of their societies, the transition of the press and society in imperial China took place in a very different context which could not easily have been predicted. This is the story to which we now turn.

2 The emergence of the modern press in China

It took more than one thousand years, in China, to challenge *DiBao*'s monopoly of the press along with its privileged minority readership. Although domestic forces certainly contributed to the declining of the empire, the effective influences by and large came from the outside world. It was Protestant missionaries of the nineteenth century who first turned the new page of Chinese journalism's history. Following this, the initiatives were taken over by Chinese scholars. Before exploring the Protestant influences on the rising modern press in nineteenth-century China, we should consider the impact of Christian pioneers – the Jesuits arriving in China at the end of the sixteenth century who established the first extensive cultural contact between China and Europe.

The Jesuits in China

When Protestants and Catholics arrived in China in the nineteenth century, they inherited a ready-made, albeit controversial, cultural vocabulary and set of approaches for dealing with Chinese society and culture from the early Jesuits.[1] But the hostility they faced in China was also at least partly due to the legacy of the Jesuits. To grasp the historical context in which the Protestants were caught in the nineteenth century, we need to have a brief understanding of these early Christian pioneers in China.

Near the end of the sixteenth century, thanks to the great voyages of the Portuguese and Spaniards, the Jesuits began to set foot on the Chinese coast. Another reason for this, as Mungello (1999: 11) argues, is that the emergent Protestant Reformation in Europe, 'stimulated a religious revival in the Counter-Reformation which led Catholic missionaries to expand and control the Christian mission in China through the period 1500–1800', whereas the Protestants were preoccupied with domestic religious reform. Up to the eighteenth century, the Jesuits dominated the Christian presence in China and thus built a cultural bridge between China and Europe.

As is well known, the Jesuits did not confine their activities to Christian teachings. Perceiving the ethnocentric cultural tradition among the educated Chinese, the Jesuits began to interpret Christianity by adopting Confucian

classics and also introduced Western scientific knowledge to Chinese scholars. The Italian-born Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) set the example of the first independent and the most influential mission in China. In August 1582, Ricci was assigned to Macao after years of thorough education in the Jesuit College of Rome and a post on the west coast of India. In Macao, Ricci undertook very concentrated Chinese language training and went to Canton the next year. After spending many years in various parts of China, in 1601 Ricci reached Peking in order to seek the ultimate imperial support. Although Ricci never met the emperor in person, he and his associates were well treated in Peking. Ricci lived in Peking until his death in 1610.

To adapt himself to Chinese society, Ricci not only embraced Chinese language and literature, but started living his life like the Chinese. At the beginning, he wore the robes of a Buddhist monk. But soon he found the Buddhist lifestyle failed to win the respect of Confucian gentry officials. So he flexibly adopted Confucian dress, and became intensively engaged in studying Confucian classics. In his Chinese works on Christianity, Ricci endeavoured to apply quotations from Confucian classics to prove that the Chinese concept of Heaven and the Lord of Heaven (*Shangdi*) was the equivalent of the Christian notions of heaven and God (*Tianzhu*). No doubt, Ricci was carefully preventing conflicts between Christianity and the Chinese tradition. His approach to the Chinese was so delicate that he avoided mentioning the Crucifixion and Resurrection as he believed the Chinese were not ready to accept this part of Christianity. He went as far as to tolerate Confucian temple worship and ancestor and funeral rituals among his Chinese converts. In a practical spirit, Ricci even modified the Catholic ritual, for example allowing the Chinese Catholics to wear hats during the Mass, and to anoint with cotton rather than fingers, in order to adapt to Chinese customs (Gu 1998: 40–7).

Apart from 'Sinocizing' Christianity, Ricci was known for his introduction of broader aspects of Western civilization to China. One of his achievements was that he produced, with the European cartographic training and materials he possessed, the first world map in China. As he learned that the Chinese firmly believed their empire was right in the middle of the whole world, Ricci changed the design of the original map. In the map he made in Zhaoqin, not far from Canton, Ricci 'left a margin on either side of the map, making the Kingdom of China to appear right in the centre' (Gallagher 1953: 167). Ricci's redesigned map proved a success. It was reprinted widely and eventually reached the imperial palace. As Spence observes:

> Ricci performed the major feat of constructing an accurate world map with all the place names transcribed into Chinese – a map that went through scores of unauthorized printings, and ended up in a giant version of six separate panels each over six feet wide in the inner chambers of the Peking palace of Emperor Wanli.
>
> (Spence 1985: 149)

In his journal, Ricci mentions that many Chinese scholars were convinced by the size and figure of the world his map revealed and consequently 'had a much higher opinion of the European system of education' (Gallagher 1953: 167). Indeed, Ricci's introduction of the world map left an enduring legacy, not least linguistically. The Chinese translation of many geographic names, such as 'Asia', 'Europe', 'Atlantic Ocean', appearing in Ricci's map are still in use up to the present (Xiong 1995: 45).

While he was in China, Ricci did work across an extraordinarily wide range of learning: horology, optics, observational astronomy, surveying, music,[2] geography, geometry. By demonstrating himself as a polished scholar, a scientist, and last a Catholic missionary, Ricci made friends with some leading Chinese scholar officials and even converted a few of them, such as Li Zhizhao and Xu Guangqi. Their collaboration introduced a number of influential Western scientific works to China.[3]

Ricci's well-calculated strategy – 'pacific penetration, cultural adaptation, and the avoidance of needless conflicts with Chinese prejudices and suspicions' (Hsu 1990: 99) – contributed to the 'boom' of Catholicism in China. In 1640, the total number of converts was between 60,000 and 70,000, and by 1651 it had risen to 150,000. Briefly, through missionaries like Ricci, 'the Chinese learned the Western methods of cannon-casting, calendar-making, cartography, mathematics, astronomy, algebra, geometry, geography, art, architecture, and music' (Hsu 1990: 103). In addition to introducing European civilization to China, the Jesuits provided an important channel to inform the Europeans about Chinese culture and society.

Nevertheless, the extraordinary success of the Jesuits in China did not impress the Franciscans and the Dominicans in Rome. They rejected and even attacked the Sinofied Christian preaching by the Jesuits. In 1704, the Pope reversed the existing decree and forbade the Chinese rites. Soon after this, the Pope issued another affirmation of the anti-rites stance and in response, Emperor Kangxi decided to ban the religious activities of the missionaries in China and allowed only those missionaries who were scientists and technicians[4] to remain in residence. The restrictions became even tighter in the reign of Emperor Yong-zheng (1723–35) when suspicion of the political motives of foreign missionaries grew. By that time, the glory of Catholicism in China had vanished. In 1724, Christianity was banned by Emperor Yong-zheng as heterodoxy. The Jesuits and their religion were treated as a menace to Chinese social order (Fairbank 1987: 127). In 1773, the Society of Jesus, one of the most important Catholic missions, was dissolved by papal order. Over 450 Jesuits who had endeavoured to spread Christianity to China were dismissed, and only a small number of Catholic clerics survived in the increasingly hostile environment (Latourette 1929: 196).

The Protestants in China

The end of Catholic dominance in eighteenth-century China did not, however, lead to the demise of the Christian mission in China but to the start of a new vigorous era. Instead of the Catholics, in nineteenth-century China it was the Protestants who played the leading role in producing a considerable social, political and cultural impact.

If we regard the period 1500–1800 as the initial encounter between the West and China in modern times, the nineteenth century can be counted as the second great phase. During the initial encounter, the Catholic missionaries had introduced substantial information about Chinese culture to Europe. The realistic stance of the Jesuits revealed that, 'China was in many ways, apart from its lack of Christianity, the equal or superior of Europe' (Mungello 1999: 59). The Chinese literati on the whole, however, except for a rather small number of leading scholar officials like Li Zhizhao and Xu Guangqi, found Western learning irrelevant to the pursuit of power and social advancement, while the Confucian classics remained the core of the government examination (Levenson 1958: 51).

Entering the nineteenth century, although the Chinese maintained their attitude of arrogance and superiority towards the West, the perception of China in the eyes of the West drastically changed. China was no longer 'the great and mighty kingdom' but the 'inscrutable Orient', referring to China's exotic past (Mungello 1999: 98). The reasons behind the Western change in perception are complex, but the broad picture was unmistakable: whereas the West was achieving extraordinary ascendancy through industrial revolution, global trade and colonialism, China was passing its imperial peak and falling into decline. In 1793, Lord Macartney, after failing in his diplomatic mission to make China extend trade with Britain, famously remarked that the empire of China was 'an old, crazy, first rate Man of War', which had intimidated its neighbours 'merely by her bulk and appearance', but through the incompetence of its current leaders was destined to drift as a wreck, and then 'be dashed to pieces on the shore' (Macartney in Spence 1999: 60).

In contrast to Ricci's ardently favourable account of China, what the Protestants faced – this 'old, crazy, first rate Man of War' – was not only a declining kingdom but an intensely hostile country towards the missionaries. The Europeans were regarded as dangerous, essentially as barbarians. In fact, after 1760, the Chinese ports open to trade with European merchants were reduced only to Canton (Collis 1997: 5)[5] and foreign residence was forbidden except during the trade season from October to March each year (Spence 1999: 121). In such a restricted context, it was difficult for the Protestants to act as the messengers of cultural exchange between China and the West as the Jesuits had done. Although most Protestant missionaries had less intellectual training compared to the Jesuits (Treadgold 1973: 37), a small number of liberal Protestant journalists were to become important players in their own ways within this turbulent phase of the great Sino-Western encounter.

Despite a late and a slow start, by the end of the eighteenth century, the rising missionary zeal of the Protestants was to dwarf Catholic resurgence in the foreign missions. According to Cohen (1995: 547):

> the Evangelical Revival in Great Britain and the Great Awakening in America breathed new life into all denominations of Protestantism, and countless individuals, after passing through the intense emotional crisis of conversion, were prepared to devote their lives to Christ.

These 'countless individuals', as Cohen went on to trace in the evangelical movement, developed into various Protestant bodies, from denominations like the Methodists to such institutions as the Salvation Army, the Sunday school, and eventually the YMCA and YWCA. Moreover, the upsurge of the Protestant world also gave birth to the great missionary societies – the English Baptists (1792), the London Missionary Society (1795), the Church Missionary Society (1799), the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804), and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810).

The rapid expansion of Protestant missions reached China in the early nineteenth century. The first Protestant missionary, Robert Morrison of the London Missionary Society, arrived in Canton in 1807. The hostile environment for the missionaries was to become relaxed in the treaty ports following China's defeat in the Opium War in 1840. The peace settlements with France and Britain in 1858 and 1860 guaranteed tolerance of the Western missionaries and Chinese converts residing in the interior. Foreigners, including missionaries, were no longer restricted to the treaty ports but were free to travel throughout the whole country. Thanks to the 'opening-access' policy, British Protestant Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission began to penetrate into interior China. In 1874, the number of Protestant missionaries in China reached 436. By 1889, the figure trebled, and by 1905 it had soared to 3,445. In contrast, in 1870 there were about 250 European Catholic priests in China. Although the number continued to grow, it mounted only to 886 by 1900 (Cohen 1995: 554–5).

For the early Protestants, their main undertaking was in preparing written materials for spreading the Christian gospel of conversion. Alexander Wylie (1967) listed 31 Protestant missionary societies and 338 Protestant missionaries engaging in publishing up to 1867 in China. In Cohen's words, their work was 'not to be sought in the harvest of souls but in the foundations laid for future work' (Cohen 1995: 548). Another point we must not miss was the strong tradition of using printing by the Protestants. It is known that the rapid and wide spread of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses in the early sixteenth century throughout Europe owed heavily to the distribution of the printed flysheets. And Luther's sermons and tracts published in various editions became hugely popular (Thompson 1995: 57). Three hundred years later, printing was employed by Morrison in China to 'combine the diffusion of general knowledge with that of Christianity' (Milne 1820, quoted in Su

2000: 155). Although Morrison and Milne's periodical *China Monthly Magazine* did not become an immediate 'hit' like Luther's pamphlet, in retrospect it did have significance on the development of Chinese journalism. Among the large quantity of publishing the early Protestant missionaries were responsible for,[6] what we are going to explore in this book are not religious tracts or pamphlets, nor the information on Chinese culture and society catering for the foreign communities in China, but the newspapers and periodicals printed in the Chinese language and predominantly for a Chinese readership.

Starting from Robert Morrison, the founding father of the modern Chinese press, we shall then map the progress of the modern press from Canton, Hong Kong, and other treaty ports, such as Fuzhou, Xiamen and Ningbo to Shanghai, which became the centre of Chinese publishing after the 1860s, and where arose the most influential missionary periodical in the nineteenth century: *Wanguo Gongbao*.

Morrison: the originator of the modern Chinese press

Sun Zhongshan ('Sun Yat-Sen'), the founder of the Republic of China, paid his own tribute to Robert Morrison: 'the Republican movement began on the day when Robert Morrison set foot on the soil of China'. Unfortunately the unascribed article containing this comment[7] did not suggest when Sun Zhongshan made this remark. Yet, it is plausible for Sun, a Christian himself who was influenced by the Taiping Rebellion[8] in his youth and educated in a medical college set up by the London Missionary Society in Hong Kong, to state the historical significance of Robert Morrison, the first Protestant to reach China.

Although Morrison baptized only ten Chinese in total during his twenty-seven year mission, he worked unstintingly on a number of other tasks, including establishing the Anglo-Chinese College.[9] Before leaving Britain for China,[10] Morrison was given three tasks by the London Missionary Society: learning the Chinese language, compiling a Chinese dictionary, and translating the Bible into Chinese (E. Morrison 1839: 96). So it was natural that printing became an important part of Morrison's concern and activities before and after arriving in China in 1807. Another reason that Morrison preoccupied himself with printing work was the hostile environment in Canton and Macao where missionary activities were forbidden. In a letter Morrison wrote to his relatives from Canton in September 1807, he laments:

> I have now arrived at the close of another Sabbath day. The opportunity of going up to the assembly of God's people to hear the gospel of salvation, and engage in social prayer and praise, is not mine.
>
> (E. Morrison 1839: 174)

While preaching was impossible, the printing of tracts and books could be

carried out. In 1810, Morrison published the Acts of the Apostles (*Shitu xinzhuan*) in Chinese. He was convinced that 'the effect of books is silent, but powerful' (E. Morrison 1839: 346).

Nevertheless, the political hostility in China was worsening. In a letter to the Director of the London Missionary Society in April 1812, Robert Morrison attached a copy of the imperial edict against Christianity:

> . . . From this time forward, such Europeans as shall privately print books and establish preachers, in order to pervert the multitude, and the Tartars and Chinese, who, deputed by Europeans, shall propagate their religion, bestowing names, and disquieting numbers, shall have this to look to: – the chief or principle one shall be executed; – whoever shall spread their religion, not making much disturbance, nor to many men, and without giving names, shall be imprisoned, waiting the time of execution; and those who shall content themselves with following such religion, without wishing to reform themselves, they shall be exiled to He-lau-keang . . .
>
> (E. Morrison 1839: 336)

While Morrison's printing activities, with the assistance of William Milne,[11] entered a new stage, the increasingly antagonistic environment made it impossible to build a Christian preaching and publication base in either Canton or Macao. They decided to move to Malacca, where, though the Chinese population was small, the seaport provided various good links with China, India and other parts of Southeast Asia. Very importantly, in Malacca they would not have to worry about their security as the British or the restored Dutch rule[12] would be unlikely to object to their establishing a mission station there. Before Milne departed from Canton in 1815, he and Morrison planned seven projects, one of which is directly relevant to our discussion:

> 'That a small Chinese work in the form of a Magazine, be published at Malacca monthly, or as often as it can with propriety be done; in order to combine the diffusion of general knowledge with that of Christianity'.
>
> (Milne in Su 2000: 155)

Milne even drafted the editorial introduction to the first issue. He stressed that the magazine would concentrate on Christianity but also include articles on morality, customs, astronomy, geography and so on. In Milne's account, the magazine was to serve the majority of the Chinese population – the poor and labourers.

A few months later, August 1815, *China Monthly Magazine* edited by Milne, printed with traditional Chinese woodblock, appeared in Malacca. Since Ge Gongzhen claimed it as the first modern periodical in his book *The History of Chinese Journalism*, first published in 1927, *China Monthly*

Magazine has been widely accepted as the beginning of modern Chinese journalism. As Milne made clear:

> To promote Christianity was to be its primary object; other things, though, were not to be overlooked. Knowledge and science are the hand-maids of religion, and may become the auxiliaries of virtue.
>
> (Milne in Britton 1933: 18)

Not surprisingly, religious and moral messages stood at 85 per cent of the substance (Su 2000: 163). This corresponds with the general contents of the magazine given by Alexander Wylie (1967: 19–20). The New Testament of the Bible translated by Morrison was one of the main sources of the periodical. The other contributors included W. H. Medhurst and the Chinese printer Liangfa, but the editor, Milne, was responsible for the majority of articles. With their story-telling style, a series of articles on Christianity by Milne – 'Dialogues between two friends, Zhang and Yuan' (Zhangyuan liangyou xianglun) – were so well received that they were published as a separate tract many times and became one of the most famous Christian tracts of the nineteenth century (Fang 1997: 256). But the magazine also contained articles on Confucian morality, which aimed to build a smooth connection between Confucianism and Christianity and so to persuade the Chinese to convert. Even on the front cover of the magazine, Milne seems to have applied a Confucian maxim with a classical flavour: 'The Master said: Hear more; choose the good and emulate it' (Britton 1933: 18).

Significantly, *China Monthly Magazine* carried a variety of other articles. The category of science and technology contained mostly astronomical knowledge. A series of illustrated articles gave an introduction to the basic concepts, such as the solar system, planets, satellites, comets, eclipses etc. The magazine also discussed the invention of the steam ship and its popularity in Britain and America. In spite of the limited coverage and depth, these articles pioneered the reporting of science and technology in the Chinese media in the nineteenth century.

Alongside world history, geography and poetry, *China Monthly Magazine* carried current affairs, which was perhaps, above all, its most important journalistic feature. Although only a very limited amount of news coverage survives, this is found to contain the main elements of news reporting – who, what, when, where and how. For example, as Fang observes (1997: 256), one piece of news – forecasting the moon eclipse – was brief but informative. As well as news reports, Su (2000: 168) identifies two current affairs commentaries in the periodical which discuss the various imports of Britain from Asia and the importance of international trade and also review the current European political situation after the Napoleon War.

In addition to its journalistic content, *China Monthly Magazine* marked its historical significance in its circulation. It was free and available for any Chinese interested in the journal. As Milne notes (Britton 1933: 19), for about

three years, 500 copies were printed monthly and circulated through the Chinese communities in South East Asia and some parts of China. Later, more copies were printed monthly and the complete editions for each year were printed as required. Though producing very limited impact, *China Monthly Magazine* abolished the enduring privileged readership the imperial press had served for over one thousand years.

As for its printing technology, *China Monthly Magazine* did not depart far from the traditional woodblock process[13] practised by Chinese printers. Although several of the early missionaries, such as Walter Henry Medhurst of the London Missionary Society, were professionally trained printers (Cohen 1995: 548), it took some time for them to adapt modern Western technology to use in China. The impact of their printing technology innovations, as part and parcel of the early modern press in China, will be discussed in Chapter 6. After running for seven years, the *China Monthly Magazine* came to a halt when Milne became gravely ill in 1821. He died in the following year, aged 37.

We may pause here for reflection. Looking into the historical background, it is perfectly understandable why Morrison and Milne rather than Ricci established the first recognizably modern periodical in China. In Ricci's time, despite the huge spread of printing practice since Johann Gutenberg's invention in 1450, public newspapers were largely unheard of in Europe. At the end of the eighteenth century, however, when Morrison was born, 'print became part of daily life' in England, where the sale of newspapers in 1792 was estimated at fifteen million (Briggs and Burke 2002: 70). In addition to the daily or weekly or bi-weekly paper, the so-called 'periodical' and 'magazine' – monthly or quarterly publications – diversified the press at that time.

By the time Morrison left Britain for China in 1807, the advent of the steam engine was about to revolutionize the printing industry. In 1814, a huge steam printing press was installed in the headquarters of *The Times* (Briggs and Burke 2002: 111). During the dynamic period of the Industrial Revolution, the media was seen as a stage for publicizing and praising the inventions 'at the centre of what most contemporaries saw as progress' (Briggs and Burke 2002: 108). We can probably assume the appearance of the invention of the steam ship in *China Monthly Magazine* was inspired by its contemporary media coverage in Britain. In this sense, the missionary press in China was not only the product of evangelical revival, but also one of the consequences of the early globalization of Western modernity.

When Morrison died in 1834, more periodicals had emerged. In South East Asia, two other Chinese periodicals, following on from *China Monthly Magazine*, were established by the missionaries from the London Missionary Society (Ge 1935: 70). *A Monthly Record of Important Selections* (*Texuan zuiyao meiyue jizhuan*) founded in Batavia by W. H. Medhurst existed between 1823 and 1826. *The Universal Gazette* (*Tianxia xinwen*), set up by Samuel Kidd[14] in Malacca in 1828, began to cover European and Chinese news, with religious and moral material playing a less central role. This broadsheet

newspaper also contained paragraphs illustrative of European science and history and was known for its use of lead movable type (Wylie 1967: 48–9). But despite an impressive start, *The Universal Gazette* discontinued after one year.

Despite their historical importance, all the three missionary periodicals in Malacca or Batavia produced limited impact in China. It was with the emergence of the *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* (*Dongxi yangkao meiyue tongji zhuan*) in Canton that the missionary press entered a new phase.

Canton: the forerunner of the missionary press

In August 1833, the *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* was established by Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff, a Prussian missionary. This magazine has been regarded as the first Chinese periodical actually to be published in China, and this historical significance was enhanced by its editorial innovations.

Like Morrison, Gutzlaff was an important Protestant in early nineteenth-century China. If we say Morrison was perhaps the only Englishman at this time to know Mandarin, Gutzlaff was probably the only Prussian who knew the language. According to Collis (1997: 66), Gutzlaff spoke and wrote Cantonese fluently and had mastered other dialects. With his remarkable language expertise and close contact with the Chinese, Gutzlaff managed to print and circulate his magazine in China when foreign missionary activities were still forbidden.

Compared to previous missionary monthlies dominated by religion or at least closely related to religious affairs, Gutzlaff's magazine has been described as 'a periodical apologia for Western civilization' (Britton 1933: 22). It intended to demonstrate the strength of European culture and learning and to persuade the ignorant and arrogant Chinese to change their attitudes towards the West. Thus wrote Gutzlaff in his prospectus:

> The monthly periodical, which is now offered for the patronage of the foreign community of Canton and Macao, is published with a view to counteract these high and exclusive notions [the Chinese profess to be first among the nations of earth, and regard all others as 'Barbarians'.], by making the Chinese acquainted with our arts, sciences, and principles. It will not treat of politics, nor tend to exasperate their minds by harsh language upon any subject. There is a more excellent way to show that we are not indeed 'Barbarians'; and the Editor prefers the method of exhibiting facts, to convince the Chinese that they have still very much to learn. Aware also, of the relation in which foreigners stand to the native authorities, the Editor has endeavoured to conciliate their friendship, and hopes ultimately to prove successful.
>
> (Britton 1933: 23)

Gutzlaff's strong intention of breaking the communicational barrier was reflected in the title *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine*. He was no doubt

more engaged with and more frank about secular issues as compared with Morrison and Milne, whose magazine was modestly intended 'to combine the diffusion of general knowledge with that of Christianity'. His bold character was also revealed in his pseudonym – 'One who loves the Chinese' (*Ai han zhe*) – which appeared in the early issues of the periodical on the front cover. Moreover, Gutzlaff's quotation of Confucian analects on the front cover seemed more alarming than Milne's: 'He who gives no thought to difficulties in the future is sure to be beset by worries much closer at hand.'[15]

Concerning both 'worries at hand' and 'difficulties in the future', Gutzlaff endeavoured in his magazine to broaden the minds of the Chinese with a wide coverage of news, history, geography, comment, astronomy, science, technology, trade and literature – leaving religion playing a minor part. So we can see in the magazine a skilful and well-judged mixture: the magical power of the steam engine (with illustrations), the history of the Napoleonic Empire, the British judicial system, a poem by a Chinese scholar living in London, other accounts of European and American impressions by Chinese travellers and so on. Of course, more importantly, news coverage improved greatly in the *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine*. According to Fang (1997: 268), every issue carried a number of news items, mostly translated from foreign newspapers. In its later issues, the magazine began to select news from the official *Peking Gazette*. It is worth noting that commentary, which was rare in *China Monthly Magazine*, came to be a regular part of the magazine. It dealt with the issues Gutzlaff aimed to tackle – breaking down the communication barriers between China and the West – such as free trade, respect for Western civilization and for people.

With such a diverse, secular and dynamic content, the *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* not only reached the foreign community but a sizeable Chinese readership. The first issue printed 600 copies and then 300 more were required. It was known that some copies of the magazine were dispatched to Peking, Nanking and other cities, but no details of their reception are known (Britton 1933: 24).

As mentioned earlier, *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* was set up with 'the patronage of the foreign community of Canton and Macao'. So it was not surprising to see that in November 1834, this same community formed the 'Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in China' in Canton, at which point the magazine became the organ of the society.

The *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* in fact had a rather disrupted publishing history. Although it officially began in 1833 and ended in 1838, there were long periods of time when it was out of publication and the total running time of the periodical was only about two years. The magazine was suspended after it was published in Canton from August 1833 to May 1834. Then in February 1835, publication was moved to Singapore as the organ of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in China, but only old issues were reprinted. During 1837–1838, the magazine was again published

in Singapore under the editorship of Gutzlaff, John Robert Morrison (the son of Robert Morrison) and Medhurst.

But in spite of its short existence, *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* made impressive strides in journalistic practice compared with *China Monthly Magazine*. As an early model for modern Chinese journalism, its strong secular concerns and close connection with the foreign communities and non-governmental lobbying organizations set an example for the coming missionary press to follow, including *Wanguo Gongbao*.

In the 1840s, the turbulent political environment surrounding the Opium War restricted the development of the missionary press. After the Treaty of Nanking, Hong Kong was colonized by the British and came to host new developments in the missionary press in China.

Hong Kong: a new stage of the modern press

According to the Treaty of Nanking, signed in August 1842 following China's defeat in the first Opium War, the Island of Hong Kong was 'to be possessed in perpetuity'[16] by Victoria and her successors, and ruled as they 'shall see fit' (Spence 1999: 161). In the Chinese text of the treaty, though, the cession of Hong Kong was euphemistically stated thus: 'that the emperor graciously grants a place of rest and storage to the British after their long voyage to China' (Hsu 1990: 190). Astonishingly, the imperial regime still resisted the fact that they had become victims of their own fantasy of China as the hub of the universe.

As for Hong Kong, far from 'a place of rest and storage' for the British, it was soon to be transformed into a modern port of free trade embracing a wider world. More than the heart of Anglo-Chinese trade, Hong Kong developed to be a major business trading centre in East Asia. Its booming business, not surprisingly, sparked off the rise and rapid growth of commercial newspapers filled with shipping and market listings, first in English and later in Chinese. However, the lifting of previous political restrictions in this free port did not mean the immediate expansion of the missionary press. In fact, according to Britton, in China as a whole for fifteen years after 1838, the missionaries published no new Chinese periodicals. He explains:

> Treaties after the war opened five port cities to foreign residence, and the Toleration Edict of December 1844 ended the prohibition of missions. Missionaries could preach within the empire, and literary undertakings rather gave way to chapels, schools and hospitals. Mission presses were active, but with reprints and revisions more than original productions.
>
> (Britton 1933: 34)

The Toleration Edict of December 1844 probably derived from the Treaty of Wanghia signed between the American and the Qing government earlier that

year. In the treaty, Article 17, added to the British lines of the Nanking Treaty, allowed Americans in the five treaty ports to hire sites for building 'hospitals, churches and cemeteries'. Because of its 'most-favoured nation' status, the British were also entitled to the new concessions offered by the Chinese government to the Americans (Spence 1999: 163).

As the Protestants were provided with a much more relaxed environment, they became engaged with a variety of enterprises, such as building chapels, schools and hospitals, rather than focusing on printing. It is therefore not so surprising to find a temporary absence of the original missionary press in Hong Kong after the Opium War. Nevertheless, *China Serial* (*Xiaer Guanzhen*), established in Hong Kong in 1853, restarted the missionary printing enterprises and led modern Chinese journalism to a new milestone in its history.

Interestingly, *China Serial*, though set up nearly forty years after *China Monthly Magazine*, had many connections with the first Chinese periodical. As described earlier, *China Monthly Magazine* was founded in Malacca in 1815 by Robert Morrison with the assistance of William Milne, who also became the first principal of the Anglo-Chinese College in 1818. In 1843, the Anglo-Chinese College, of which James Legge was then principal, moved from Malacca to Hong Kong. At the same time, James Legge took on the responsibility of being the secretary of the Morrison Education Society, an organization created in 1835 as a memorial to Robert Morrison who had died in the previous year. These two organizations so closely related to Morrison – the Morrison Education Society and Anglo-Chinese College Press – gave rise to the *China Serial*. Therefore, in a certain sense, *China Serial* was a continuation of the early *China Monthly Magazine*.

However, compared with the early periodical, *China Serial* was distinctly innovative. Though a periodical of the London Missionary Society, it was almost completely secular (Britton 1933: 35). From the beginning, *China Serial* had an extensive coverage of news, which went further than *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* in its domination of domestic news. Its reporting of the Taiping Rebellion, despite using excerpts from the *Peking Gazette* and translations from the foreign press, has been regarded as an important source of historical studies on the subject. Its credibility was further enhanced by revealing some suspicious official reports in the *Peking Gazette*. More than providing well-documented articles, *China Serial* developed into an illustrated periodical. It pioneered the use of a graphic map in 1854 to aid a report on a military conflict between the Qing and the Anglo-American army. Furthermore, *China Serial* broke new ground in carrying trade advertisements, and was indeed claimed to be the first Chinese periodical containing commercial advertisement by Fang (1997: 296). In terms of printing technology, *China Serial* commenced the era of adopting metal movable type and ended the long-standing practice of woodblock printing. Overall, as Britton says, *China Serial* 'in style was a great advance over the pioneer missionary magazines' (1933: 35).

During its three-year existence, *China Serial* saw three editors: Walter Henry Medhurst (1853–4), Charles Batten Hillier (1854–6) and James Legge during the last year. It was closed down in May 1856 as Legge was called away by other duties. In the last issue of *China Serial*, Legge added a notice in English, in which he praised the endeavours of missionary editors, 'by means of periodical works, to stir the Chinese mind from its apathy, and circulate among the people the lessons of universal history and the accumulations of Western knowledge'. He hoped, 'the place of the *Chinese Serial* will soon be filled by one or more similar publications' (Britton 1933: 35).

Indeed, before long, more missionary periodicals did emerge, not in Hong Kong, but in Shanghai.

Shanghai: the centre of the modern press

According to Huang (2001: 20), during the period 1841–60, the number of English and Chinese periodicals and newspapers published in Hong Kong was more than the total number in the rest of China. However, the press dominance in Hong Kong was overtaken by the rapid growth in Shanghai. From 1861 to 1894, Shanghai hosted over 57 per cent of the Chinese press, leaving Hong Kong behind (Fang 1997: 305–6). It is worth noting that, apart from Canton, there were three other cities – Fuzhou, Xiamen and Ningbo – which became treaty ports along with Shanghai following the Treaty of Nanking. In these three cities, although the missionaries published religious pamphlets and a number of scientific and educational readings,[17] the scale and impact of their journalistic work did not amount to anything near the level of the press in Shanghai.

On 14 November 1843, Shanghai was declared open to foreign trade with Britain as a result of the Nanjing Treaty (Hawks Pott 1928: 12). Soon, the United States and later the French demanded not the same, but even more, privileges in Shanghai from the Qing government. As Shanghai was located in the most prosperous region in China and had easy access to the mainland by river and sea, trading in the city, once open to the West, increased steadily. After the Treaty of Tianjin, signed in 1858, more inland treaty ports, such as Jiujiang and Hankou, were open to trade. All of them were connected with Shanghai through the Yangtze River. As foreign investment increased, Shanghai took the place of Canton and Hong Kong and was to develop into the biggest distributing port in China.

As well as advancing trade in Shanghai, the post-1860 Western missionaries were tolerated to travel throughout the whole country. Understandably, the Foreign Settlement of Shanghai saw the arrival of more missionaries, especially the Protestants. Hawks Pott gave a list of the well-known Protestants in Shanghai at that time: W. H. Medhurst, Wm. Lockhart, E. C. Bridgman, M. T. Yates, W. A. P. Martin, Young J. Allen. Their main efforts, according to Hawks Pott (1928: 90), were directed to founding churches, schools and hospitals.

But Hawks Pott curiously failed to mention the other main activity in which they were engaged, publishing new newspapers and periodicals. In January 1857, the first Chinese monthly magazine *Shanghai Serial* (*Liuhe Congtan*), edited by the British missionary Alexander Wylie,[18] was published by the London Missionary Society Press established by Medhurst. Like *China Serial, Shanghai Serial*, rather than a religious journal, was a periodical intended to broaden the view of the Chinese, with a wide-ranging news and factual content including scientific knowledge, world geography, ancient Greek and Roman cultural history and customs (Xiong 1995: 204). The leading missionaries William Muirhead and Joseph Edkins were regular contributors. A few Chinese scholars also wrote for the magazine, including Wang Tao – whose importance in the story of the development of Chinese journalism we will come to in Chapter 4. Despite its diverse coverage, it was closed down after just over a year due to problems in funding (Xiong 1995: 204). This 'highly scholarly' journal, as Britton notes (1933: 52), though being short-lived, was well received not only in China, but also in Japan, where it was reprinted, minus the religious articles.

Entering the 1860s, the missionary press in Shanghai, because of the relaxed political environment, became more active. A stream of new titles followed: *Shanghai Miscellany* (*Zhongwai zazhi*) in 1862; *Church News* (*Zhongguo jiaohui xinbao*) in 1868; *Christian Magazine* (*Shengshu xinbao*) in 1871; *Christian News* (*Fuyin xinbao*) in 1874; *The Children's News* (*Xiaohai yuebao*) in 1875; *A Miscellany of Useful Knowledge* (*Yizhi xinlu*) in 1876; and *Chinese Scientific Magazine* (*Gezhi huibian*) in 1876.

Among these periodicals, *Chinese Scientific Magazine* was the most influential. Established in Shanghai in 1876 by the British missionary John Fryer, it was in fact the first scientific magazine in China. After working in a few foreign language schools and in the Jiangnan Arsenal Translation Bureau, Fryer came to realize the urgency of promoting science in China.[19] His monthly journal covered an extraordinarily wide range of information from all the subjects of natural science, such as physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, geography, pharmacy and so on, to the latest technological development, such as the making of typewriters, electricity, telescopes, microscopes and so on. More interestingly, *Chinese Scientific Magazine* won its popularity with its Questions and Answers ('Q&A') section. According to Xiong (1995: 426–31), every issue of the *Chinese Scientific Magazine* carried a Q&A column, and in total, the questions appearing amounted to about 500. Most of the questions involved basic scientific knowledge, for example why frozen pottery breaks. Some questions also demonstrated the curiosity of the Chinese people towards Western products, such as why Western ink can resist washing and how to make it with Chinese materials. Similar questions were asked about Western matches, Western soap and so on. Indeed, across eighteen provinces in China, mostly in the east and south coastal region, the Q&As were raised and read by the increasingly wide readership of the journal. It is estimated that the average circulated copies of every issue reached 6,000,

which was counted as an enormous success in journalistic circles at that time. No wonder that during the Reform Movement of the 1890s, the influential figure Liang Qichao, who we will come to in Chapter 4, listed *Chinese Scientific Magazine*[20] as required reading for the students of the Shuwu College (*Shiwu xuetang*) in Hunan (Xiong 1995: 433).

In short, Shanghai developed into the centre of missionary publication in China in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was, of course, not accidental if we consider how Shanghai was rapidly transformed to a modern metropolis, becoming in all other ways the centre of early modernity in China. With the vigorous development of the foreign settlement, an entirely new environment was seen in Shanghai: new roads, bridges, street lighting, banks, hospitals, schools etc. (Hawks Pott 1928: 63–93). Simultaneously, Shanghai grew into 'a new intellectual and organizational centre' (Rankin 1986: 137) from which new ideas and public opinion was spread by the press across the whole country. Along with the missionary publications, new commercial newspapers emerged – *Shanghai Xinbao* in 1861, *Shenbao* in 1872 and *Hubao* in 1883.

The dynamic publishing industry in Shanghai from the 1860s onwards thus represents the culmination of the endeavours of the Protestant missionaries over most of the nineteenth century to introduce Western ideas of science, technology and culture, along with Christianity, into China via the print media. Despite the short-lived nature of many of the missionary publications over this period, the mixture of increasingly secular content and increasingly sophisticated editorial practices and production processes ultimately bore fruit. Amongst all of this, however, one journal stands out as the most significant for its influence on the Chinese political élite in late nineteenth-century China. This is the subject of our next chapter: *Wanguo Gongbao*.

3 *Wanguo Gongbao*: high point of the missionary press

Amongst all the missionary press publications in nineteenth-century China, without doubt, *Wanguo Gongbao*[1] stood out as the most influential periodical. Its peak time, however, arrived at the later stage of its thirty-three-year existence at the end of the nineteenth century, when it became fully engaged with social and political affairs and as the Chinese national crisis deepened. In this chapter, we will explore how an ordinary Protestant periodical grew to make a considerable impact on the Chinese high mandarins, élite scholars and the Reform Movement of 1895–8. To begin with, we will investigate the humble origins of *Wanguo Gongbao*.

Young Allen and *Church News*

During its existence in the nineteenth century, *Wanguo Gongbao* carried two different names in English: *The Chinese Global Magazine* and *A Review of the Times*. They derived from the *Church News* (*Jiaohui Xinbao*) and it took twenty years for *Church News* to develop into *A Review of the Times*. Young J. Allen (1836–1907), the founder and editor of the periodical, oversaw the whole process.

Growing up in Georgia, Young Allen made an uncommon decision at the age of 21, to become a missionary in China. In July 1860, after a six-month voyage, the American Southern Methodist Allen arrived in Shanghai. China was in turmoil. The Qing government was not only involved in the war with the Anglo-French forces but also confronting the rapidly expanding Taiping Rebellion. Under increasing pressure from the first Opium War to the latest humiliating Treaty of Tianjin in 1858 and the Treaty of Peking in 1860, the imperial authority was forced to acknowledge and tolerate the existence of a wider world. Slowly their interest in Western development was increasing. During the early 1860s, some Qing officials were to inaugurate the so-called 'Self-strengthening Movement', which included programmes for the study of Western languages and the introduction of Western military technology.

For our discussion here, what is relevant is that, as mentioned in the last chapter, the Treaty of Tianjin guaranteed tolerance of missionaries and converts residing in the interior. Missionaries were allowed to travel throughout

the country. In spite of this gradual opening up and a more relaxed political environment, Protestant missionaries made little progress in their task of converting the Chinese. To take an example, the Methodist Church, South, which included Young Allen as one of its members, had converted only thirty-one Chinese since its mission began in 1848. By 1866, there were only twenty Chinese members, the others having been 'excluded from the church on account of evil conduct, adultery, smoking opium and persistently breaking the Sabbath'. The Methodist Church, South may not be the best example of the Protestant missions in China. The whole picture, however, was not much more encouraging. As Bennett notes, statistics available to Allen in 1866 showed that there were about 3,000 Chinese Protestant communicants in China (Bennett 1983: 28).

While continuing his direct preaching, Young Allen was forced to take a wide range of employment simply to support himself and his family. This was because the American Civil War cut off his financial support and even communication with American Methodist Church, South for nearly five years (Bennett 1983: 22). Allen taught in Shanghai Tongwen Guan, a state-run language training college with a mathematics and science programme. He also worked as a translator for Shanghai Municipal Council and joined the Translation Bureau of the Kiangnan Arsenal. All these experiences working for the Qing government and contact with wider Chinese society improved Allen's understanding of Chinese culture and stimulated him to refine his missionary approach (Liang 1978: 10–11). His brief working experience as editor of *Shanghai Xinbao*, a commercial newspaper, prompted him to employ journalism as part of his missionary work. In 1868, Allen set up his weekly news magazine *Church News*.

Designed more particularly to serve the Protestant communities in China, *Church News* had only a limited circulation. However, the religious features of the periodical declined sharply during its running time as Allen's other intentions for his news magazine began to emerge. According to Bennett (1983: 111–12), in the first volume, religious materials accounted for 48 per cent of the lines, news items 26 per cent, scientific and technical materials 22 per cent, and criticisms and proposals 4 per cent. By the third volume, however, the space devoted to religion (18 per cent) was less than half what it was in volume one, and 68 per cent consisted of secular news coverage. In total, among the six volumes, only 28 per cent of the magazine consisted of religious material and the coverage of secular news reached 45 per cent. It can be concluded that the coverage of *Church News* was quickly broadened from a Protestant church journal to a secular-oriented periodical containing general Western knowledge and a marked concern with Chinese current affairs. Allen's strong concern with Chinese social and political issues was manifest in that *Church News* (1870) carried two letters to the Qing government by Robert Hart and Thomas F. Wade urging reform.[2] The printing of these reform proposals predicted the future direction of Allen's journal. Within six years, Allen transformed his news magazine from an

unofficial church organ to a general magazine aiming to influence the Chinese literati.

Wanguo Gongbao

In 1874, *Church News* was renamed *Wanguo Gongbao* (*The Chinese Globe Magazine*). Reflecting its more secular orientation, the unreligious title seemed less offensive (or indeed loathsome) to the educated Chinese. But Allen did not mention that the new name of his magazine intended to be more appealing to the Chinese readership. He 'merely explained that the new name was called for by the broadened features of the publication' (Bennett 1983: 149). In its opening issue,[3] *Wanguo Gongbao* explained that '*WanGuo*' means 'Globe' and implies international convergence and '*Gong*' means being neutral, not biased in dealings between the West and China.[4] The opening issue also claimed that *The Chinese Globe Magazine* aimed to introduce broad knowledge of Western geography, history, culture, politics, religion, science, art, industry and other general items.

Like *Church News, Wanguo Gongbao* continued to carry religious content, but on a smaller scale. However, in terms of secular news, *Wanguo Gongbao* drew on a wider range of sources. Apart from the usual Western sources such as the *New York Observer* and the *London Times*, *Wanguo Gongbao* drew upon Chinese sources including *ShenBao, Shanghai Xinbao, Zhongxi wen jian-lu*. Interestingly, it also began to reprint articles from the emergent Chinese newspapers, such as the *Xun Huan Daily* edited by Wang Tao. We will discuss in the next chapter how Wang Tao was deeply influenced by the missionary publications and became a journalistic pioneer himself. In addition, Allen decided to add the official news from the *Peking Gazette* to *Wanguo Gongbao*, as they interested a Chinese readership.

With such a variety of sources, the coverage of global secular news in the weekly magazine increased in substance. As Bennett (1983: 173–89) observes, four categories of content could be identified: 'Events and conditions in China'; 'Sino-Western relations'; 'The West and its institutions'; 'Japan and its reform'. It is worth noting that the news reports implied a strong social-evangelical concern for the Chinese people. The government's self-strengthening policies, such as training students overseas, industrial experiments in steam shipping and coal mines, were all reported and discussed. The great North China famine of 1877–9 was given full coverage. The magazine reported the relief efforts by the government, the Westerners, such as Timothy Richard, and the Chinese public. The difficulties of delivering relief goods to the famine regions were stressed. After the famine, the magazine went on with its coverage of local poverty and the needs of the people. Concern for the poor and appeals for contributions to charitable works were regular features of *Wanguo Gongbao*.

Another development of the weekly was its longer feature articles. With more contributors, Allen brought out these articles with in-depth analysis of

Western political and religious systems as well as critical reviews of China's weaknesses and need for reform. One of the well-known pieces was Allen's own work 'China and Her Neighbours' (*Zhongxi Guanxi lue-lun*)' which appeared in *Wanguo Gongbao* in 1875. According to Wang (1998: 11–12), the article had been published just before the imperial government was sending ministers abroad. It was an attempt by Allen to suggest to the Chinese ministers how to deal with foreign countries in the context of current international relations. In the article, Allen defended the request of the West for trade and the spreading of Christianity in China. In Allen's view, trade was essential to enhance the wealth of China. Moreover, he insisted that China should break away from rigid ancient rules and become forward-looking. He suggested that China adopt reform policies including modernizing the army, increasing trade, and more fundamentally, modernizing education. Following his article, Allen once again reprinted the proposals by Robert Hart and Thomas F. Wade, which had previously appeared in *Church News*, to the Qing government on foreign relations techniques and the adaptation of Western innovations. The repeated use of these two early reform proposals implied Allen's great interest in influencing Chinese politics and foreign policies in general.

More than publishing articles, Allen met with Guo Songtao, China's first minister to Britain and France (1876–8). As *Wanguo Gongbao* records (Vol. 178: 24–5), in 1876 just before Guo's departure, Allen met him in Shanghai and gave him a copy of his 'China and Her Neighbours'. In 1878, when Allen met Guo Songtao in London, Guo told Allen that, 'when I first took up the job [of minister to Britain], I knew nothing but luckily I had your book as a guide' (Bennett 1983: 58). Allen then suggested that Guo should record his experience abroad and publish it in China to inform and enlighten Chinese scholars. Indeed, Guo's subsequently published diary caused quite a stir. Guo's diary, based on his firsthand observation, praised Western civilization for having its own distinctive history of over 2,000 years, out of which had developed its celebrated political institutions and moral teachings. He also urged the Qing government to embrace broader reform policies rather than focusing on the military reform promoted by the Self-strengthening Movement. All these progressive ideas were condemned by the conservatives as heresy. Guo's diary was banned from circulating in print (Zhu 1997: 140–1).

Allen, however, understandably appreciated Guo's objective and reform-minded attitude. He continued to serialize Guo's diary in *Wanguo Gongbao* and made it available to the Chinese readership after it was banned by the imperial government.

According to Bennett (1983: 160), the circulation of *Wanguo Gongbao* was increasing and it began to attract the attention of more Chinese – 'high officials as well as literati and merchants'. Notably, the leading reformist Kang Youwei, whose role we will come to in the next chapter, bought copies of the magazine in 1883. However, in that same year, Young Allen, preoccupied with managing the Sino-Anglo College, and perhaps for other reasons, suspended *Wanguo Gongbao*.

After six years, *Wanguo Gongbao* was resumed in 1889 with the new English title of *A Review of the Times* (but with the Chinese title remaining unchanged). As the organ of the SDK (the 'Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese'),[5] *Wanguo Gongbao* grew to become a flagship of the missionary press. It carried not only increasing amounts of news, both domestic and international, but a large and comprehensive body of sources of new knowledge to 'inform and enlighten' the Chinese, in the first instance through the educated élite.

In the launching proposal of the SDK in 1887, the general secretary Alexander Williamson pointed out that the educated Chinese, particularly local gentry-scholars and officials, were the 'soul' of the kingdom and the key social sector of Chinese society. To influence China, Williamson stressed, it was vital to enlighten the gentry-scholar officials with its publications. This general approach became a much more specific strategy under the leadership of Timothy Richard,[6] who became the general secretary of the SDK in 1891 and launched a well-known readership survey. In Richard's account, two groups of readership should be the main target of SDK publications. First, the civil examination participants across the country, who had reached one million in total. The local missionaries could get to the examination centres to hand out free copies of SDK publications. Second, the potential regular readership could reach 44,000 if all levels of officials, gentry-scholars and a small number of their family members were included (Jiang 1988: 34). To influence these educated Chinese, as the 1894 seventh annual report of SDK (*Chuban Shiliao* 1989) claims, meant influencing the rest of the Chinese population who respected and followed the leading class.

The trajectory for *Wanguo Gongbao* over twenty years was clear from its inception. Its influence was growing, with its enlightenment agenda focusing on the Chinese literati. We can turn now to look in more detail at the secular-modern contents of the periodical.

The promotion of Western science

The opening pages of *Wanguo Gongbao* were often taken up with scientific articles and/or illustrations. This was no accident in the nineteenth century, when a leading role in the introduction of Western science into China was taken by the Protestant missionaries. According to Cohen (1995: 578), 'Despite the special problems involved in the creation of a new Chinese scientific vocabulary, Protestants produced more books on science and mathematics than on all other non-religious subjects combined.'

In respect of journals, as noted, Western science had its presence as early as the 1810s to 1830s. In *China Monthly Magazine*, Western astronomic knowledge was advocated by missionaries in order to counter Chinese superstition. This journal, for example, explained eclipses with scientific illustrations in order to undermine traditional explanations, as in 'the dog in heaven bites the sun' and the assumption that eclipses were bad auguries (Fang 1997: 254).

Likewise, in the 1830s, *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* carried regular features on the practical application of Western scientific discoveries such as the steam engine, along with articles on general subjects from world geography to first aid (Fang 1997: 267).

Entering the 1860s, the state-owned Kiangnan Arsenal Translation Bureau,[7] as one of the consequences of the Qing government's Self-strengthening Movement, began to contribute to the diffusion of Western scientific and technological information, while *Church News* emerged as a missionary journal actively promoting the modern sciences. For example, it serialized the *Introduction to Science* by William A. P. Martin, the chancellor of Tongwen Guan, a state-run training college in Peking, as well as Alexander Williamson's comprehensive book *The Exploration of Science* which also appeared 1873–4.

Although compared to *Church News, Wanguo Gongbao* (1874–83) accommodated a smaller percentage of scientific and technological materials, they still covered a wide range of subjects from practical knowledge to basic science such as chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, botany, geography, medicine and agriculture (Bennett 1983: 189–94). In terms of practical and educational functions, the articles and notes on medicine seemed informative: 'advice was given on how to purify water; prescriptions for some diseases were offered such as those dealing with intestinal parasites' (Bennett 1983: 193). Other medical subjects included 'the control of epidemics, the treatment of leprosy, the origins of smallpox, the value of vaccination, methods of delivering babies and so on' (Bennett 1983: 193). Furthermore, many of the fashionable technological inventions and developments at that time such as the telegraph were introduced. In 1874, *Wanguo Gongbao* published a seven-part essay on the telegraph. The history of the telegraph, its wide usage and contributions to trade and industry, the technical aspects such as the role of electricity, connecting wires and so on, were all clearly documented (Bennett 1983: 190).

More than offering basic scientific knowledge, *Wanguo Gongbao* advocated a set of strategies – the development of railways, coal mines, the telegraph and so on – to industrialize China. For instance, it tirelessly promoted the way in which railway transport would benefit China. In 1889, a series of essays appeared to introduce how the railway works and to demonstrate benefits of the railway, such as reducing travel costs, boosting travel and business, with the figures drawn from British and American sources.

Modern science and technology, arguably the best that Western civilization had to offer, was oddly packaged with religion and transmitted to China by the missionaries. Timothy Richard, the general secretary of SDK, one of the key contributors of *Wanguo Gongbao*, made a typical statement when he wrote a book introduction published in 1894. Addressing the question, 'What is the cause of the foreign wars, indemnities, and repeated humiliations suffered by China during the last sixty years?', Richard answered:

> God was breaking down the barriers between all nations by railways, steamers, and telegraphs in order that all should live in peace and happiness as brethren of one family, but that the Manchus, by continual obstruction, determined from the first to prevent this intercourse. They were thus not opposing foreigners so much as God in this universal ruling. Their repeated humiliations were punishments from heaven. If therefore, this attitude of opposition to the world was the cause of China's defeat, then she should change it for one of goodwill and friendship, and it would not be difficult for her to become one of the greatest nations on earth.
>
> (Richard 1916: 231)

In addition to the propagation of Western science and technology, *Wanguo Gongbao* did not hesitate to attack social and political problems and offer opinions as to their solution.

Advocating educational reform

On the one hand, *Wanguo Gongbao* promoted Western civilization to awake China. On the other hand, it practised social and political criticism and offered political-economic reform plans to make China more prosperous.

During the 1870s and 1880s, *Wanguo Gongbao* gradually moved to become a fully fledged commentary journal with a strong element of social and political discussion and critique. At the centre of criticism in the 1870s and 1880s were the traditional education and examination systems. As noted by Wang Shukui (1998: 20–4), Calvin Wilson Mateer of the American Presbyterian Mission wrote a celebrated article, 'On School Reform' in 1881 (*Wanguo Gongbao* Vol. 653–656). He pointed out three serious problems of Chinese education: 1. The absolute respect for the classics stifled progressive scholarship. The Chinese scholars should correct the mistakes of 'antique learning' and explore what was unknown in the classics. 2. The sole purpose of learning – to gain office prebendary – undermined the profound significance of learning. 3. The psychological resistance to Western learning, e.g. machinery manufacturing, still prevented the educated Chinese from broadening their view.

Mateer summarized the weakness of Chinese education as follows: scarcity of inspiring teaching, very narrow subjects, lack of oral teaching, exclusion of women's education, shortage of children's reading. Based on the American educational system at that time, he suggested the setting up of state schools for general study and training schools for professional development. In terms of examination reform, he insisted that new subjects should be included in addition to the classics, and universities should be given the right to grant degrees to their students. Apart from writing, Mateer practised his educational reform in the school, college and university he set up. According to Wang Zhongxin (2000: 35–9), Mateer established an elementary school

(Mengxue Tang) in Dengzhou (now Yantai), Shandong Province. The elementary school was developed into a high school (Wenhui Guan) in 1877 and to Dengzhou College in 1882, which ultimately developed to Qilu University. Mateer was its first chancellor.

To encourage more new-style colleges in China, in 1875 *Wanguo Gongbao* published the memorandums that recorded how Shanghai Polytechnic College (Gezhe Shuyuan) was organized, along with the college regulations and the list of sponsors from both Western and Chinese organizations and individuals.

Other well-known missionaries made noticeable contributions to Chinese educational issues (Wang Shukui 1998: 17–20). Ernest Faber wrote in *Wanguo Gongbao* in 1881 criticizing the government examination system for being corrupt and mischievous and for failing to select and reward real talent and knowledge. He strongly promoted Western education principles, introducing details of the German system to Chinese readers. Alexander Williamson also wrote to disapprove of the traditional exam system based on composing poems and essays. He insisted that a variety of subjects should be adopted.

Young Allen made a significant mark in modernizing the Chinese educational system through both his writings and his actions. In *Wanguo Gongbao* as early as 1875 (Zhu 1998b: 179–80), Young Allen accused the 'eight-legged essay'[8] of blinding Chinese scholars to new knowledge and world progress, thus contributing to the stagnation of Chinese society. He wrote another article in *Wanguo Gongbao* (Vol. 704, 1882), reiterating his criticism of the classics-dominated Chinese curriculum and accusing it of jeopardizing social development. He suggested that schools should adopt Western categorized courses, such as astronomy, geography, physics, agriculture, maths, chemistry and medical studies. In 1881, Young Allen set up the Sino-Anglo College in Shanghai to practise his Western curriculum, with Chinese learning playing a minor role. It proved to be popular with the Chinese. As Xiong observed (1995: 297), in the first year, over two hundred students enrolled and more followed in the second year.

Across the country, by 1890 there were 16,836 Chinese attending the increasing number of missionary-run schools. In fact, many of the famous contemporary Chinese universities, such as Peking University, Nanking University and Hong Kong University, originated from the missionary colleges of that time. There can be no doubt that the missionaries played a crucial role in modernizing the Chinese educational system and that campaigning through their press, in particular *Wanguo Gongbao*, played a significant part in this.

The campaign for liberating women from foot-binding

Apart from education, one of the other long-term social problems the missionaries tackled in the nineteenth century was the emancipation of women, most effectively, liberating women from foot-binding. It was evident that

many missionaries, some of whom were women, such as the celebrated Gladys Aylward (who worked as a local foot inspector), devoted themselves to eliminating the ancient harmful custom. Among the missionary press, *Wanguo Gongbao* championed raising awareness and made constant criticism of the enduring ritual.

Although throughout the centuries, as Levy (1992: 65–70) notes, foot-binding was criticized by liberal Chinese thinkers, and even once banned by Taiping Rebellion leader Hong XiuQuan, the traditional opinion and practice remained. The Qing government, despising foot-binding as culturally backward from their Manchu point of view, tried to abolish the custom. Nevertheless, their efforts were largely in vain as they also, overall, failed to treat women equally.

According to Bennett (1983: 42), from the early days of his preaching, Young Allen realized that 'women were much more attentive and more easily impressed than men'. He believed in the potentially important role of women in the enlightenment of the whole country. In 1874, the 'Amoy Anti-Foot-Binding Society' was established as the first organization of its kind in China. An early attack on the practice of foot-binding came out in *Wanguo Gongbao* 1875. In April of that year, an article challenged the common belief that a woman would gain virtues from bound feet and argued that those women who did not bind their feet were in fact very virtuous. Two more articles by the same author, Qian Meixi, followed in the two issues of May that year. Another assault on foot-binding was made by Ernest Faber in his series 'Civilization, China and Christianity' in *Wanguo Gongbao*, October 1879–83. In Volume 3, Faber condemned the practice of women's foot-binding as being against human nature. In his view, foot-binding caused severe misery and suffering for women from an early age. When they grew up, distorted feet prevented them from working normally and having healthy babies. Briefly, Faber argued that binding the foot damaged women themselves, their families, their children and the society. He accused foot-binding of being contrary to traditional Confucian learning which believed the human body should be treated as a gift from the parents and should be protected with respect.

In September 1878, another article on foot-binding, 'Guozhu lun', was published in *Wanguo Gongbao* (Vol. 503). The author, though unnamed, can be assumed to be the editor, Young Allen. In this short essay, the author traced the origin of foot-binding to the imperial court dancers serving the last emperor of the Tang dynasty. Afterwards, the practice of foot-binding, in the author's account, was more widespread in the cities than in the rural areas. Entering the Qing dynasty, the long-standing practice of foot-binding, though banned by the government, refused to come to a halt. The author blamed the Qing government for failing to act decisively to discontinue the harmful practice. He pointed out that foot-binding had not existed in earlier periods of Chinese history and argued that the practice was cruel, contrary to nature and should be banned.

In October 1882, another article encouraging abandoning foot-binding appeared in *Wanguo Gongbao* (Vol. 710). This time written from a man's perspective, the author complained that men had to take on some of women's work as their bound feet restricted their working capacity. The cruelty women and young girls suffered from foot-binding was also stressed.

The frequent condemnations of foot-binding made by *Wanguo Gongbao* contributed to build a common awareness among the Chinese that the practice of foot-binding was barbaric and harmful to women and to society. Moreover, as Levy (1992: 78) points out, missionaries were instrumental in pushing for change in other ways. In the late nineteenth century, girls began to be encouraged to go to modern schools set up by the missionaries. In 1890, Young Allen founded a girls' school – 'McTyire Home and School' (Zhongxi Nushu) – with the help of the Methodist Women's Foreign Mission in Shanghai (Liang 1978: 51). In many modern schools, girls were introduced to physical education and a variety of other subjects. Those with bound feet were refused admission. It became a common practice for women who joined the Church to unbind their feet (Cohen 1995: 582–3).

In the 1890s, more anti-foot-binding societies were founded in China. One of the most influential organizations was the 'Natural Foot Society' (Tianzu Hui) established in Shanghai in 1895. In his autobiography, Timothy Richard recorded how the president of the Natural Foot Society, Mrs Archibald Little, consulted him to 'aid in the production and publication of literature to create a public opinion against the evils of foot-binding' (Richard 1916: 227). Richard responded promptly. In June 1895, *Wanguo Gongbao* published an article jointly issued by the Natural Foot Society and SDK: 'On the Importance of Developing the Women of China from the Cruelties of Foot Binding'. It also carried an advertisement for the Natural Foot Society to appeal for articles condemning foot-binding.

The tireless campaigns by *Wanguo Gongbao* to oppose foot-binding can be counted as part of the missionaries' broader endeavour to emancipate women as the social equals of men, which eventually was to produce significant changes in the reform era of the 1890s. By that time, reform-oriented Chinese scholars such as Liang Qichao[9] began to organize their own anti-foot-binding societies and campaigns appeared in their newspapers, including *Shiwu Bao*. The centuries-old consensus collapsed in the early years of the twentieth century. We will return briefly to the Chinese scholars' campaigns against foot-binding in the next chapter.

'New policy'

After China's disastrous failure in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5, these issues of social reform were overtaken by the boiling political crisis of the time. In *Wanguo Gongbao*, Timothy Richard, Gilbert Reid and Young Allen all wrote to condemn the corrupt imperial bureaucracy. Among them, Young Allen made the most vehement criticism (Vol. 82–7, 1895–6). He complained

that the government abused their power with serious bribery and corruption. He accused the authorities of being totally irresponsible and of leaving the people in misery. The corruption was so severe, Young Allen noted, that the military expenses went into the private pockets of officers dealing with the arms trade. He pointed out that China's shattering defeat was unavoidable, given such ridiculous tactics as the use of coal powder for explosives or soy beans as bullets. But, he pointed out, the politicians who conducted these outrageous crimes were the ones who appeared in the official *DiBao* and were given public acclaim. Allen even applied the words 'arrogant, ignorant, untrustworthy, brutal, greedy and passive' to describe the weaknesses of the educated Chinese and the ruling class. These criticisms struck a deep chord with the leading reform-oriented scholars, like Liang Qichao and Tan Shitong, who used them to arouse public concern about the national crisis and to appeal for political reform (Wang Shuikui 1998: 75).

In addition to their criticism, the missionaries began to draw the effective blueprint of comprehensive political reform. Rather than revolution, the missionaries were in favour of evolutionary reform strategies. In *Wanguo Gongbao* (Vol. 84, 1895), Young Allen wrote to criticize the emergent revolution in South China led by Sun Zhongshan, who later founded the Republic of China in 1911. This was in contrast to his and other missionaries' support for the Reform Movement led by Kang and Liang. Richard was personally involved in the Reform Movement of 1895–8. In his autobiography, he recorded his frequent meetings with those political figures in Peking. And the Chinese Prime Minister, Weng Tonghe, even requested him to write a brief statement of what was most needed in China in the way of reform. Richard proposed a reform scheme with four vital requirements (1916: 256): 'educational reform, economic reform, internal and international peace, and spiritual regeneration'. Although the Chinese Prime Minister Weng did not mention the proposal in his diary, which implied his possible disagreement and the suppression of the proposal in the imperial court, Richard's reform scheme was published in *Wanguo Gongbao* with the title of 'New Policy' in Vol. 87, 1896. Reading Kang's policy proposals to the emperor during the Reform Movement, Richard was surprised to see a remarkable similarity with his own reform plans (Zhu and Long 2000: 190).

The four requirements in Richard's reform scheme, as he elaborates, were essentially to promote Western modernization in China. In Richard's account, educational reform was to improve communication on two levels. First, Chinese officials should be sent to visit or study abroad to improve communications between China and the West; tactics such as setting up newspapers, translating Western books, establishing new style colleges with a variety of subjects should be adopted to narrow the information gap between the upper and lower stratas in China. Second, economic reforms included building roads, mining, developing banks and currency and machine making. Third, in terms of internal and international peace and security, Richard

suggested that China should seek a peaceful and diplomatic relationship with the West and develop fund-raising to further army training and the modernization of weapons. Finally, to accomplish the spiritual regeneration of the Chinese, Richard insisted that the Chinese needed to correct their xenophobia. He endeavoured to convince the Chinese that Christianity shared the same values as Confucianism.

Such a comprehensive reform scheme, as Richard stressed, requires vigorous policies to bring it to action. In his book *Forty-Five Years in China*, Richard recorded his detailed proposals as follows:[10]

1. Two foreign advisers to the Throne.
2. A Cabinet of eight Ministers, one half of Manchus and Chinese, and the other half of foreign officials who would understand the progress of all the world.
3. The immediate reform of currency and the setting of finance on a sound basis.
4. The immediate building of railways and the opening of mines and factories.
5. The establishment of a Board of Education to introduce modern schools and colleges throughout the Empire.
6. The establishment of an intelligent Press with experienced foreign journalists to assist Chinese editors for the enlightenment of the people.
7. The building up of an adequate army and navy for the country's defence.

(Richard 1916: 256)

In short, Richard's blueprint for reforming China reflected the essential rationale of the SDK and many other Protestant missionaries. Through journals like *Wanguo Gongbao*, they propagated their belief that Western-experienced modernization – modern schools, newspapers, publishing, railways, mines, telegraphy, postal service, banking and financial systems etc. – should be implemented in China. Chinese scholars were encouraged to participate in writing contests to understand and absorb these Western solutions to China's problems.

Writing contests

Writing contests had been organized by the missionaries to attract Chinese literati from an early stage, but mostly had focused on religious issues. Young Allen set up a number of writing contests when he was running *Church News*. After it was renamed as *The Chinese Global Magazine* in 1874, more Chinese contributors were invited to write on a range of issues mainly related to religion. Timothy Richard also appealed to the public in North China, before he joined the SDK in Shanghai, for articles concerning religious and social

topics. After *Wanguo Gongbao* became the organ of the SDK in 1889, these contests engaged a wider range of subjects.

In 1889, Alexander Williamson advertised in *Wanguo Gongbao* to call for articles with two optional titles: 1. 'The comparison of science in the West and China'; 2. 'Why Western maths is more accurate than Chinese maths'. Although only twenty essays were received (four of which won prizes), Williamson was satisfied with the result. He thought these Chinese contributors showed plenty of scientific knowledge, which was much more than he had expected.

At the end of 1893, a British businessman, Thomas Hanbury, responding to Richard's suggestion of writing contests, agreed to sponsor 600 taels towards prizes for the best essays from MA candidates, on the following thought-provoking subjects:

1. The advantages to be derived by China from adopting the railway system, the coinage of silver money, and an Imperial postal system, such as Japan has recently adopted.
2. The advantages to accrue if China would introduce machinery for the preparation of tea and for the reeling of silk, so as the better to compete with foreign countries.
3. The benefit derived during the past thirty years by the excellent administration of the Imperial Maritime Customs.
4. Show whether China is really in earnest in wishing the opium trade stopped, and prove it is possible to suppress the immense cultivation of the poppy in China, if the Government in India consents to cease producing the drug.
5. Show how better and more friendly relations may be cultivated between China and foreign countries.

(Richard 1916: 225)

In August 1894, *Wanguo Gongbao* advertised the writing contest. The SDK distributed 10,000 advertisements among five cities: Suzhou, Peking, Canton, Fuzhou and Hangzhou. Every applicant was required to write on all the five subjects without restriction of writing format. The exam board consisted of well-known Chinese writers and editors of *Wanguo Gongbao*: Wang Tao, Shen Yugui and Cai Erkang. As a result, 70 out of 172 contributors won prizes. The most famous prize winner was Kang Youwei,[11] a leading scholar in the Hundred Day Reform Movement.

This writing contest, compared to the rest, can be regarded as the most influential organized by the SDK. Free-style writing was promoted to break away from the rigid traditional form, producing a liberating effect on the educated Chinese. The required titles obviously mirrored the missionaries' solution to China's problems, that is industrialization, modernization and Westernization. Chinese scholars were guided to learn from the West, think like the West and speak like the West. But we must ask what was really

appealing to the Chinese readership. The two best-sellers serialized in *Wanguo Gongbao* may help provide an answer.

Two most influential articles

Two articles in *Wanguo Gongbao* became exceptionally well known: one was the translated version of Mackenzie's *History of the Nineteenth Century* and the other was *History of the Sino-Japan War* edited by Young Allen.

The British historian Robert Mackenzie, as Zhou (1995: 6) notes, published his work *The Nineteenth Century – A History* in 1880, narrating the development of the main capitalist countries in Europe. It depicted that century as a time of progress from a state of barbarism, ignorance, and bestiality which could hardly be exaggerated, to a reign of science, enlightenment, and democracy. In 1892–3, Timothy Richard abridged Mackenzie's work and translated it into Chinese, with the help of the Chinese editor, Cai Erkang. From March to September 1894, the abridged version appeared in serial form in *Wanguo Gongbao*, just prior to China's disastrous defeat in the Sino-Japanese War. In response to extraordinary public demand, SDK published it as a book in 1895 (Ma 2002: 1).

The enormous curiosity of the Chinese readers towards Western learning has to be understood in the context of the growing national crisis. It was more pressing than ever for the educated to be engaged with social and political issues. Mackenzie's book – an unsophisticated European history – provided an easy access for them to perceive the emergence of Western power and seek the position of China within a bigger picture. The remarkable developments of nineteenth-century Europe were certainly very inviting for the frustrated Chinese readers. It was no wonder that Liang Qichao recommended this book as one of the best Western books to Chinese literati in his 'Index of Books on Western Learning' (1953: 452–5). It was even seen on the desk of Emperor Guanxu. As *Wanguo Gongbao* in 1898 and 1899 records, despite its repeated warnings on illegal copying, six pirated editions were found in Hangzhou, and there were nineteen types of illegal copy in Sichuan. It is not exaggerating to say that millions of pirated copies were circulating throughout China at this time (Zhou 1995: 6).

Ironically, this book was received rather differently in the West, at least among academics. R. G. Collingwood counted the book 'among the most unsavoury relics of third-rate historical work' (1967: 145). The historians of the late nineteenth century, Collingwood thought, characteristically of a positivistic age, 'were more or less openly contemptuous, as a matter of professional convention, of philosophy in general and the philosophy of history in particular' (1967: 145). English historians of the late nineteenth century in particular, in Collingwood's view, proceeded without often pausing to make reflections on their work. Nevertheless, Mackenzie's 'third-rate' *History of the Nineteenth Century* easily impressed the Chinese scholars, who were extremely eager to absorb Western advances in the wake of a national crisis.

Young Allen's *History of the Sino-Japanese War* was no less influential. It accumulated news reports and comments about the war from the main Chinese and foreign language press in 1896 and added articles promoting social and political reform. Timothy Richard claimed that 'Dr. Allen's articles on the war were greatly appreciated as being the only reliable record in Chinese' (1916: 230).

Why was a collection of journalistic report and comment so in demand that it had to be reprinted three times? Compared with the *DiBao*, with its single official voice and tone, the collection could not be more different. The unofficial news reports had diverse sources and the comments addressed different opinions and even criticized the government. What really attracted the Chinese readers, however, was the dynamic presentation of political issues and public opinions. The enormous popularity of the missionary journal articles embodied the eagerness among the Chinese élite to embrace the wider world beyond the empire and to articulate their anxiety for social and political reform. From an acceptance of the imposed authority of the *DiBao* to the possibility of projecting various private opinions, the relationship between society and state began to shift. Invitations from provincial mandarins requesting lectures on Western learning began to arrive at the offices of *Wanguo Gongbao* (Zhou 1995: 8) and even the high-ranking mandarin Sun Jianai was sufficiently impressed by the book to recommend that the government purchase more SDK publications (*Wanguo Gongbao* Vol. 91, 1896). Not surprisingly, *History of the Sino-Japanese War* also appeared in Liang's 'An Index of Books on Western Learning'.

These two popular best-sellers – *History of the Nineteenth Century* and *History of the Sino-Japanese War* – represented the peak of *Wanguo Gongbao's* influence. With its quick and informative essays, *Wanguo Gongbao* won a wide range of readership, including the emperor, ministers, and ordinary gentry-scholars. By that time, as Elman (2000: 585–6) notes, there was growing demand among the Chinese scholars for education and examination reform to revive the nation. The Western modern schools and a successful Japanese educational system were accepted by many as the models to follow. In these circumstances, change began to occur in the civil exam system, as the subject matter began to shift to a focus on policy questions and current affairs. The SDK naturally encouraged such a positive move. In advertisements in *Wanguo Gongbao* 1896, it promoted its publications, including the two best-sellers, to the scholars entering government exams as required reading in order to answer questions on current social and political issues. In this sense, it can be said that the increasing demand for *Wanguo Gongbao* contributed to and also benefited from the growing reform atmosphere. In 1895, its circulation rapidly increased, and so great was the demand that in one month a second edition had to be printed (Ye 1996: 123). As *Wanguo Gongbao* penetrated throughout China, Young Allen's Chinese name, Lin Lezhi, became well known.

While professing not to know what profits the Chinese booksellers made

from the selling and pirating of the SDK publications, Timothy Richard records:

> those who bought our publications at our own depots secured to the Society [SDK] an annual profit of more than the contributions sent us from England and Scotland, and consequently enabled us frequently to make large free grants where we thought they would be useful.
>
> (1916: 232)

According to Ye (1996: 123), *Wanguo Gongbao* started with a print run of 1,000 for each edition, and reached nearly 40,000 in 1898, which led all the other periodicals at that time. After 1894, the annual sale of SDK publications grew fast and increased nearly ten times by 1898 (Wang 1986: 46–7). Additionally, SDK made regular donations of its publications to Chinese readers. In 1897 alone, the donated books and periodicals reached 120,000 copies (Xiong 1995: 555–6).

Without doubt, it was during this time of national crisis when *Wanguo Gongbao*'s political influence increased and more Chinese scholars and officials became involved as its contributors. According to Xiong (1995: 415), in addition to the missionaries, over 500 Chinese writers from over 50 cities contributed to *Wanguo Gongbao*, among whom were included leading politicians, diplomats and scholars, such as Guo Songtao, Wang Tao, Zheng Guanying, Sun Zhongshan,[12] Xue Fucheng and Kang Youwei. Many of these Chinese contributors soon began to set up their own publications to promote social and political reform. We will turn in the next chapter to this pivotal point at which Chinese élite journalism emerged in the late nineteenth century under the considerable influence, in both practical and intellectual terms, of *Wanguo Gongbao*.

4 The rise of the Chinese elite press[1]

China's response to foreign newspapers can in a limited sense be traced back to 1839 when Commissioner Lin Zexu arrived in Canton to enforce the prohibition of opium. As information on Western countries was scarce, Lin, being one of the few open-minded high mandarins, spearheaded the work of translating the foreign press[2] in order to understand the 'barbarian' institutions and customs and limit their influence.[3] However, though they represent the first signs of a recognized need, these translations, originally compiled for Lin's private use, can not really be considered as the beginning of the Chinese periodical.

During the period of the Taiping Rebellion, Hong Rengan,[4] in his well-known reform proposal 'New Plans to Aid Government' (Zizheng Xinpian) drawn up in 1859, stressed the importance of setting up the press to enhance a democratic government and enlighten the people. Despite being approved on paper by the Taiping regime, Hong's proposal of establishing a modern press in China was never put into practice.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, when the modern Chinese press initiated by the missionaries had developed for half a century, their example of journalistic practice began to be known and adopted by the Chinese, firstly in the coastal treaty ports and then in the hinterland. As the flagship of the missionary press at that time, *Wanguo Gongbao* played a crucial role inspiring Chinese scholars to launch their own press in their reform campaigns. In this chapter, we will examine two leading Chinese elite newspapers: the pioneering *Xun Huan Daily*, edited by Wang Tao in the 1870s, and the influential *Shiwu Bao*, edited by Liang Qichao in the 1890s.

Wang Tao and *Xun Huan Daily*

According to Ge Gongzhen (1935: 115), the first newspaper established by the Chinese was *Zhaowen Xinbao*, started in Hankou in 1873. Britton (1933: 76) reserves doubts as he suspects the name of the editor-publisher 'Ai Xiaomei' might be 'a foreign transliteration'. In Fang's account (1997: 470–1), *Zhaowen Xinbao* made a very limited impact and failed to win readership after changing from a daily newspaper to one issue every five days. It is

difficult to make any further judgements on *Zhaowen Xinbao* as no original copies remain extant. But it is safe to assume that its emergence was related to the treaty port status of Hankou. By the 1870s, Hankou had grown into an important commercial centre along the Yangtze River after it became a treaty port in the Tianjin Treaty signed in 1858.

Since most Western missionaries and merchants resided in the treaty ports of nineteenth-century China, it was not surprising to find the Western impact first in these coastal areas rather than in the hinterland. It was therefore the Chinese literati in Shanghai and around the other treaty ports who first brought forward a broad programme for the 'reform of institutions' through setting up their own newspapers.

Wang Tao was among the best informed and most celebrated Chinese scholars in the nineteenth century. Growing up a well-trained classical scholar, he went to Shanghai in 1849 and worked for the London Missionary Society Press as a translator and amanuensis. In 1854, Wang Tao was baptized in Shanghai (Cohen 1995: 584). In 1861, because of his involvement in the Taiping Rebellion Movement, Wang Tao was wanted by the Qing government. With the help of the London Missionary Society, he escaped to Hong Kong, the British colony, where he assisted the Christian sinologist James Legge in translating several volumes of *The Chinese Classics* into English.

Wang Tao's frequent contact with Western missionaries gave him a perfect opportunity to encounter Western learning: not only religious literature, but also the Western natural and social sciences, which he helped missionaries introduce to Chinese readers. He worked closely with Alexander Wylie and Joseph Edkins in translating a number of scientific works on Western astrology, optics and so on. Wang Tao also showed his interest in Western philosophy and was reckoned as the first Chinese scholar to introduce the ideas of Francis Bacon to China (Zhu 1998a: 3–12).

More importantly, Wang Tao's acquaintance with missionary publishing equipped him, ahead of most of his fellow Chinese, with an alternative set of values and views to the traditional Chinese ones. He gradually transformed himself from a refined classical scholar to a modern intellectual advocating institutional reform in China. The newspaper *Xun Huan Daily* played an important role in his reform campaign.

After travelling in Britain and other European countries for two years,[5] Wang Tao returned to Hong Kong, and in 1874 founded his own newspaper – *Xun Huan Daily*. This has been recognized as the leading newspaper in the first wave of the Chinese-run press (Huang 2000: 38). Although the establishment of *Xun Huan Daily* was no doubt inseparable from Wang Tao's involvement in missionary publishing, interestingly, his religious link was not reflected in his newspaper. *Xun Huan Daily* was an entirely secular daily newspaper, except for its Sunday issue. As Wang Tao emphasized, it aimed to revive China through promoting reform[6] and learning from the West. Despite the unremarkable layout – the first, third and fourth pages were mostly occupied by business, stock market, shipping information and

advertisements – *Xun Huan Daily* won its reputation with current affairs editorials and a news section consisting of the local, provincial, national and international news (Ding 1997: 245).

Benefiting from his wide exposure to Western learning and his foreign protection in Hong Kong, Wang Tao expressed more insightful and bolder views in his writings than many of his contemporaries. In his editorials, Wang Tao commented on a wide range of issues: domestic reform, international politics and diplomatic strategy. He promoted industrialization and foreign trade, which demonstrated the influence of the Western missionaries. He also advocated the building of a railway and electricity network in China and showed his enthusiastic support for the emerging Chinese shipping and trading businesses (Wang 1958: 41–5). In terms of political institutions, Wang Tao endorsed the constitutional monarchy of Britain but hesitated to challenge the imperial regime. Instead, he emphasized the paramount importance for the state to communicate and unite with the ordinary people. On international affairs, Wang Tao's analyses found very few competitors amongst Chinese scholars (Ding 1997: 245–8). For his sharp and wide-ranging editorials, Wang Tao has been regarded as the first leading modern political columnist of China (Fang 1997: 473–9).

In the same year that *Xun Huan Daily* was launched, *Church News* was renamed as *Wanguo Gongbao* (*The Chinese Global Magazine*) in Shanghai. Based in East China and South China, *Wanguo Gongbao* and *Xun HuanDaily* endeavoured to create a reform atmosphere across the country. Differing from the *DiBao* in so many aspects, they were quickly to influence the young educated elite beyond the treaty ports.

In 1884, Wang Tao was cleared of his connections with the Taiping Rebellion and given a permit by the Qing government to return to Shanghai. He was accepted as an important intellectual, journalistic commentator and innovative writer. Thus he was given a number of senior positions in the field of journalism, including being a columnist of *Wanguo Gongbao*. In this way, the link between Wang Tao and *Wanguo Gongbao* was secured. His columns calling for institutional reform regularly appeared in *Wanguo Gongbao* and were widely read among the literati (Ding 1997: 258).

Among the early reformers influenced by the missionary publications, Zheng Guanying was another representative. He had a conventional Chinese education in his youth and studied English for some time with John Fryer, an eminent Christian educator and translator whose contribution to publishing we mentioned in Chapter 2. In the 1860s and 1870s, Zheng was working as a *comprador* for British firms in Shanghai. In the 1880s, he joined the Chinese state-run enterprises. According to Teng and Fairbank (1982: 113), Zheng was 'a patron and enthusiastic reader of the *Wang-kuo kung-pao*' (*Wanguo Gongbao*) during the 1890s. He was so impressed by the translation of Mackenzie's *Nineteenth Century History* published by the SDK that he bought one hundred copies to circulate among his friends in Peking. Zheng made his reputation by writing and publishing essays on China's manifold

problems (Liu 1968: 140). The influences of *Wanguo Gongbao* were manifest in his well-known reform tract, *Warnings to a Prosperous Age* (*Shenshi Weiyan*).

Wanguo Gongbao and reformers of the 1890s

Although individual reformers close to the missionary circle around *Wanguo Gongbao* remained active past the turn of the century, as a group they yielded the stage to a younger generation of reformers in the 1890s.

Led by Kang Youwei, the new reformers first attained national prominence in 1895, in the wake of China's defeat at the hands of Japan. During the next few years the reformist tide swelled and *Wanguo Gongbao*'s impact on Chinese reform efforts reached its height between 1895 and 1898.

Kang Youwei and *Wanguo Gongbao*

Unlike Wang Tao and Zheng Guanying, who mixed with the missionaries from an early stage, Kang began as a remote and isolated reader of *Wanguo Gongbao*. However, Kang maintained that 'he owed his conversion to reform chiefly to the writings of two missionaries, the Rev. Timothy Richard and Dr. Young Allen' (Candle 1931: 174–5).

As Chen (1962: 75–6) tells us, Kang Youwei (1858–1927) was educated as an old-style scholar-literatus in South China. He came from a strongly Neo-Confucian[7] family background. After years of intensive training in Confucian schools, towards the end of 1880s Kang came to the view that the true Confucian scholar should go beyond the disputes between Han Learning and Song Learning and embrace two essential aspects: 'cultivation of the personality and practical statesmanship'. In other words, 'moral conduct' and 'political affairs' (Chang 1971: 41–3). Kang moved beyond being an open-minded Confucian scholar to embrace Western learning.

Compared to the scholars in the hinterland, Kang had early access to Western works in China because he lived close to the hub of the missionaries' activities in Canton. A visit to Hong Kong in 1879 proved decisive in changing Kang's fairly conventionally hostile view of Western culture. He was deeply impressed by the orderly situation under the British governance – handsome Western buildings, clean roads and an effective police force.

In his autobiography, Kang (1953: 116) recalled that he bought copies of *Wanguo Gongbao* in 1883 and absorbed himself in reading it and many other Western books. He read widely from Western science and technology to Western histories and travel writing. Although it is unclear how deeply Kang grasped the details of these issues, as Chang pointed out, what really mattered then was his awareness of 'the existence of competing civilizations [which would] go a long way toward shattering Chinese ethnocentrism and establishing a pluralistic world view' (1971: 40).

With his intellectual exposure and organizational capacity, Kang endeavoured to integrate Western learning with Chinese traditional studies. In 1891, Kang set up a private school, Changxing Xueshe (later known as Wanmu Caotang), at Canton to train young political talents for reforming China. In this school, Kang began to formulate a new syncretic interpretation of Confucianism (which we will discuss more in Chapter 7) with the help of his students, including Lang Qichao and Chen Qianqiu.

Unlike most nineteenth-century Chinese schools, Changxing Xueshe provided wide-ranging and diverse programmes. According to Su (1986: 306–10), there were six main subject clusters: philosophy; geography and history; mathematics and science; political science; linguistics; and physical education, music and cultural rituals. The majority of subjects contained Western sources. For example, the subject of philosophy included not only Confucianism and Buddhism, but also Western philosophy. World history and geography were taught alongside well-known Chinese works. Scientific teachings were presented using mostly Western material.

In the previous chapter, we examined how *Wanguo Gongbao* devoted articles to criticize traditional Chinese teaching and promote educational reform. As *Wanguo Gongbao* was one of the key publications Kang encountered, we have good reasons to assume its contribution to inspire Kang's radical curriculum and cosmopolitan political thought.

Another piece of evidence of Kang's connection with *Wanguo Gongbao* is his participation in the writing contest advertised in *Wanguo Gongbao* in 1894. As noted, Kang was a prize winner and his name appeared in *Wanguo Gongbao*. The fact that Wang Tao was on the examination board suggests the close connection *Wanguo Gongbao* had with the reformers of the late nineteenth century and the earlier ones. In addition, Kang went on to have personal contact with Timothy Richard. In his book *Forty-Five Years in China*, Richard recorded his meetings with Kang. And significantly he mentioned 'Kang Youwei's most brilliant disciple, named Liang Qichao' (1916: 255). While Richard was in Peking, Liang assisted him as his Chinese secretary. At that time, Richard might not have anticipated that Kang's disciple would soon become the most influential editorialist in China.

Liang Qichao and *Wanguo Gongbao*

As an extraordinarily successful civil examination prodigy, Liang's (1873–1929) intellectual trajectory was dramatically altered by a meeting with Kang Youwei in 1890.

Like Kang, Liang came from a scholar family near Canton. At the age of four, he began to be taught Chinese classics by his grandfather. In 1884, at the age of twelve, he succeeded in passing the entrance examination of the government academy and became a student of the national academy (Boshi Dizi). In 1887, he entered the Xuehai Tang[8] at Canton for the study of Han Learning, which involved textual, philological, and historical studies of the

classics. In 1889, at the age of sixteen, Liang triumphed in passing the civil service examination at the provincial level and became a *Juren* with such distinction that the examiner Li Duanfen, later president of the Board of Rites, proposed to arrange a marriage between Liang Qichao and his own sister. At that time, Liang was so proud of his achievements that he later confessed that he had never dreamed of any learning beyond the level of the eight-legged essay and the conventional classics (Li and Yuan 1994: 17–21).

However, Liang failed in the metropolitan examination in 1890. On his way home, he passed through Shanghai and was impressed by a number of translated books. But the missionary influence had to wait until his meeting with Kang Youwei:

> During our first interview, the master [Kang Youwei] launched a stormy attack on the worthlessness of the traditional learning of the past few centuries. Item by item, he completely shattered and rejected the scholarship I had hitherto so greatly cherished. The interview lasted from 9:00am to 9:00pm. His criticism was like ice water being poured on my back and blows from a heavy stick being rained on my head. It cut me off from all my former points of view and dazzled me so that I did not know what to do. . . . I decided to forget my former education and quit the Xue Haitang to pursue my studies with Mr. Kang. This is the first time I have understood what true scholarship is.
>
> (Chen 1962: 79)

Kang Youwei's activities, then, may be regarded as a principal means by which the missionaries exerted a vicarious influence on traditionally minded scholars such as Liang Qichao. In the following four years, Liang, with a number of other young scholars, attended the private school – Changxing Xueshe (Wanmu Caotang) – set up by Kang in Canton. As noted, Kang's radical teaching programmes implied the strong influence of *Wanguo Gongbao* (Gu 1998: 300). Consequently, Liang's political consciousness, under the instruction of Kang, was at least partly shaped by *Wanguo Gongbao*. And Liang, who was soon to become the most influential editorialist in China, went on to recommend *Wanguo Gongbao* as essential reading in his 'Index of Books on Western Learning' (1953: 453) in 1895. So we could assume Liang had been reading *Wanguo Gongbao* regularly before that year. *Wanguo Gongbao*'s considerable influences became further manifest in the Reform Movement of 1895–98, when it was established as a leading nationwide periodical.

The Reform Movement of 1895–1898

In March 1895, Kang and Liang left Canton for Peking to attend the triennial metropolitan examinations. In April, the disastrous news of China's defeat and the Treaty of Shimonoseki arrived in Peking. As the Japanese had long

been despised by the Chinese as inferiors, this defeat naturally aroused the patriotic fury of the literati assembled at Peking for the examination.

Feeling indignant, Kang and Liang drew up a ten-thousand-word petition and collected the signatures of 1,200 provincial graduates[9] to protest against the peace treaty and request 'institutional reform'. This petition to the imperial court was known as 'Public vehicles presenting a memorial' (Gongche Shangshu). 'Public vehicle' here was a nickname given to provincial graduates who had come to the examinations in Peking via public transport. This event was reckoned by some as the first 'mass political movement' in modern China (Hsu 1990: 367; Nathan 1986: 138).

This petition, because of its outspoken and highly charged language, was refused presentation to the throne. But Kang did not give up. He drafted another memorial which eventually reached the throne in June 1895. Kang's reform proposals impressed the emperor so much that he ordered that copies be made for the Empress-Dowager, the Grand Council and the various provincial authorities. Encouraged by the response, Kang soon wrote his next memorial to suggest more reform strategies, including launching a parliament. But this memorial was suppressed before it reached the emperor (Cai 2001: 309–11).

What we are chiefly interested in here is that, in the memorials, Kang addressed the prime importance of newspapers. He suggested that newspapers should be published in every province, district and town to publicize government policy and social issues. He even advocated that the government translate well-known Western newspapers such as *The Times* to inform imperial officialdom about international politics (Kang 1953: 185). Probing the reform strategies in Kang's memorials in 1895, we can see that Kang was promoting very similar reform schemes as *Wanguo Gongbao*: to develop a national industrial base, to develop a state banking system, to establish a railway network, to build a commercial fleet, to install a modern postal system. Not surprisingly, Timothy Richard commented in his book that the lines of the memorials, 'were similar to those laid down by the publications of the SDK' (1916: 253).

While appealing to the imperial court with reform petitions, Kang, Liang and other leading reformists began to adopt other approaches – establishing newspapers, schools, publishing houses, study societies – to create reform atmosphere and win the support of the gentry-literati at large (Zhang 1971: 197–9). Here we will examine their effort in organizing study societies among the educated elite across the country, on the one hand, and published newspapers to promote their reform schemes, on the other.

Qiangxue Hui[10] and *Wanguo Gongbao*

Christian missionaries played an important role in shaping the specific techniques, ideas and worldviews of the reformists. In Wang's view (2003: 30–1), the Chinese gentry-scholars were heavily influenced by SDK's publications,

and the study societies they organized were directly inspired by SDK,[11] the most influential organization set up by the missionaries.

As Chang observes, the rising Chinese study societies were organized on two criteria: 'locality and intellectual speciality'. Starting from Peking and Shanghai, Kang and Liang aimed to expand the study societies to 'every province, every county, every district and every town' (1971: 61). A range of new intellectual disciplines was introduced by the study societies, while newspapers and periodicals were launched to circulate educational information and to promote reform.

The first results of such effort were the QXH and the Chinese *Wanguo Gongbao*. QXH was formally established in November 1895 in Peking.[12] Timothy Richard was involved as one of its founding members. In his book *Forty-Five Years in China*, Richard wrote that a junior reform society set up by a number of intelligent young men, shortly after the Treaty of Shimonoseki, 'brought their rules for me to revise, and discussed with me how they could help to enlighten their country' (1916: 254). He also recorded his first meeting with Kang:

> On October 17, 1895, occurred my first meeting with Kang Yu-wei.[13] I was at the LMS compound in Peking, . . . In the guest-room I found the famous scholar, clad in yellow silks. He had brought a copy of his work to present to me . . . He told me he believed in the Fatherhood of God and in the brotherhood of nations as we had taught in our publications, and he hoped to co-operate with us in the work of regenerating China.
>
> (Richard 1916: 254)

In his autobiography, Kang noted that Richard's joining QXH symbolized that Chinese gentry-scholars had begun to communicate with Westerners. Kang also mentioned the generous donation of books and equipment from British and American ambassadors (1953: 134).

In August 1895, during the course of organizing QXH, the first reformist newspaper, *Wanguo Gongbao*, personally funded by Kang, was set up in Peking – significantly, though for the historian rather confusingly, for the first three months of its life sharing the same name as the periodical operated by the missionaries in Shanghai. This newspaper was delivered to the gentry officials in Peking as a free supplement to *Peking Gazette*. After one month, its circulation reached 3,000 copies (Fang 1997: 544). Timothy Richard commented on the newspaper (1916: 54):

> The *Peking Gazette*, the organ of the Government, had been for a thousand years the sole publication in the capital, but now, for the first time in China's history, there appeared a new paper, independent of the Government, though having its secret support. This was issued by the Reform Society.[14]

In Richard's view, the Chinese scholars adopted the name of *Wanguo Gongbao* because of 'the timidity of the Reform Society at this period'. They knew that the *Wanguo Gongbao* of the SDK 'had been in circulation for many years amongst the leading officials without any opposition' (Richard 1916: 254). Richard also pointed out that the Chinese *Wanguo Gongbao* first consisted mainly of reprints from the Western *Wanguo Gongbao*. In his account, the only difference was that the Western *Wanguo Gongbao* was printed in metallic type in Shanghai, whilst the Chinese one was made from the woodblock used for printing the government official gazette. Thus, Timothy Richard claimed that in outward appearance the Chinese *Wanguo Gongbao* resembled the government official organ, 'whilst in contents it was introducing Western ideas propagated by the SDK' (Richard 1916: 254).

The influence of the SDK's *Wanguo Gongbao* on the Chinese reform periodical was manifest. According to Fang (1997: 543), the articles of the *Wanguo Gongbao* edited by Liang Qichao and Mai Menghua were mostly reprinted from the SDK's *Wanguo Gongbao*, such as 'On Western Schools', 'On Western Newspapers', 'On Railways', 'The Importance of the Postal System', 'On Modern Agriculture', 'On Currency' and so on. After QXH was established formally in November 1895, the Chinese changed its name to *Sino-Foreign News* (*Zhongwai Jiwen*), but the influence of the SDK's *Wanguo Gongbao* continued.

The first issue of *Sino-Foreign News* was published in December 1895. In addition to domestic news selected from the Chinese official gazette and international news translated from Reuters news agency and other Western newspapers, more space in *Sino-Foreign News* was devoted to introducing translated Western scientific or other useful books, such as on Western railways and the mining industry (Shanghai Library 1965: 566–7; Fang 1997: 547).

In January 1896, *Qiang XueBao* was launched in Shanghai as the organ of Shanghai QXH. With original political commentaries by Kang and his disciples, *Qiang XueBao* marked significant progress compared to the reprints-dominated *Sino-Foreign News* and its earlier title *Wanguo Gongbao*.

While using newspapers to promote Western learning and institutional reform, QXH also organized meetings for their members regularly, about every three days. Some leading missionaries were invited to give speeches in the meetings, often in the form of a dinner. In his autobiography, Timothy Richard recorded that he and Gilbert Reid, of the American Presbyterian Mission, 'were frequently invited by the members of the Reform Club', and they in turn invited the Reform Club members back:

> At each dinner speeches were delivered bearing on reform in China, and discussions followed in which the members took the keenest interest. They invited me to remain in Peking a few months so as to give them advice as to how they should proceed.
>
> (1916: 255)

As Zhang (1971: 184) notes, the missionaries' talks on reforming China often enormously impressed the high-ranking scholarly officials who were the majority members of QXH. It is not surprising, then, that Liang Qichao, being Richard's Chinese secretary at the time, praised Richard as a good guide for the Chinese reform movement in his 'On Institutional Reform' (Bianfa Tongyi) serialized in *Shiwu Bao* 1896–7 (Chang 1971: 71). As noted in the previous chapter, Richard was also requested by the Chinese Prime Minister Weng Tung-ho to write a brief statement of what was most needed in China in the way of reform.

During the Reform Movement of 1895–8, the missionaries and their press endeavoured to produce an impact on leading reform-oriented scholarly officials. Under their influence, the emerging Chinese elite press began to change the landscape of political communication. As Fairbank and Liu (1950: 502) note:

> No aspect of change in Chinese life since 1895 has been more striking than the rise of the modern press, and partisan newspapers are of course one of the essential sources for any study of the political history of this modern half century.

Chang (1971: 149) echoes this view, claiming elite journalism as 'the most important institutional innovation' of the late Qing dynasty. If we can say that Wang Tao and his *Xun Huan Daily* broke away from the official gazette, Kang and Liang's journalistic practice produced a far more profound institutional change.

Shiwu Bao and other Chinese press

The pioneering Chinese reformist newspapers were in fact very short-lived, falling victim to the banning of the QXH in Peking and Shanghai by the Qing government: *Qiang XueBao* lasted for only three issues over two weeks and *Sino-Foreign News* for eighteen issues and one month. But by the year 1896, the activists' outcry for reform had become unstoppable in China. The Reform Movement launched by Kang and other gentry officials in Peking began to spread widely. New Chinese newspapers, periodicals and study societies were appearing throughout the country.

Among these, *Shiwu Bao* was one of the earliest and most important. It was set up in August 1896 in the British settlement of Shanghai by the leading figures of the study society QXH. In one sense, this ten-day periodical was the continuation of *Sino-Foreign News* and *Qiang XueBao*. Yet journalistically, *Shiwu Bao*, with twenty to thirty pages of diverse content in each issue, was rather more comparable to the monthly *Wanguo Gongbao*. A number of similarities between them are worth noting.

In Table 1, we can see that *Wanguo Gongbao* and *Shiwu Bao* shared the same basic format. Starting with commentary on current affairs and reform

Table 1

	1. Comments and campaigns	*2. National news*	*3. International news*
Wanguo Gongbao May 1896 edition	Lessons of the War (concluded) Educational reform: introduction Memorial to the Emperor (Christian promotion in China) War between China and Japan: Introduction How to enrich China	Extract from the *Official Gazette* including the recent edicts of the emperor and various other items	Britain (four items) America (two items) Russia (three items) France (two items) Germany (two items)
Shiwu Bao September 1896 edition	On School Reform: Part I On Higher Taxes: introduction	Extract from *Official Gazette*, including the recent edicts of the emperor and appeals of the local officials	News translated from English newspapers (eight items) One item from Reuters telegraphy News from French newspapers (ten items) News from Japanese newspapers (six items)

campaigns, both of the periodicals had news following. The news section was organized in a similar fashion, which consisted of both domestic news, mostly a selection from the official *Peking Gazette*, and international news translated from foreign newspapers and classified in relation to the main Western powers. However, it was not simply a matter of layout; it demonstrated the focus of political concerns. The considerable amount of international news in *Shiwu Bao* implied the eagerness of the Chinese scholars to understand the international world dominated by Western powers. Not only the form, but also the themes, of *Shiwu Bao*'s editorial comments, such as the urging of economic reform and school modernization, resembled those of *Wanguo Gongbao*.

Beyond the particular issues listed in the table, we can find more similarities between *Shiwu Bao* and *Wanguo Gongbao*. For example, *Shiwu Bao* treated the issue of railways particularly seriously. It serialized the translation of the 'London Railway Company Regulations' over twelve issues from 19 August 1896 to 15 December 1896. In this it was clearly influenced by

the tireless advocacy of railways by *Wanguo Gongbao* throughout its campaign for industrialization in China. In another example, *Wanguo Gongbao's* anti-foot-binding campaign, discussed in the last chapter, was also taken up in *Shiwu Bao* 1897 (Vols 38 and 40), when the Chinese scholars set up their own anti-foot-binding society and publicized the regulation. More space were devoted later to the forum for discussing anti-foot-binding 1897–8 (Vols 47, 49, 50, 52).

Despite its many debts to *Wanguo Gongbao, Shiwu Bao* made an impact with its original editorials, chiefly by Liang Qichao. Liang's writings on the reform campaign, particularly the celebrated 'On Institutional Reform' (Bianfa Tongyi), voiced the opinions and attitude of many Chinese scholars and attracted a large readership. After half a year, the circulation of *Shiwu Bao* had reached 7,000.[15] One year later, a circulation of 17,000 copies at one point made *Shiwu Bao* the best-selling periodical in China (Fang 1997: 559). Liang's name became as well known as Kang's to the Chinese readership.

As a principal organ of the reform movement, *Shiwu Bao* set an example, stimulating more Chinese scholars into organizational and subsequent publishing activities. From 1895 to 1900, the number of newspapers set up by Chinese gentry reached at least twenty-two (Wang 2003: 31). These reflected the whole range of political attitudes to reform and even included the first women's newspaper in Chinese history, *Nu-xue Bao* 1898, which advocated women's emancipation. Alongside the increasing numbers of newspapers and periodicals, study societies expanded quickly. From 1895 to 1900, the study societies organized by gentry-scholars were accounted seventy-three (Wang 2003: 31). Table 2, showing the most prominent examples, demonstrates this rapid journalistic development stimulated by reformists across China at the end of the nineteenth century.

This remarkable increase of elite newspapers continued into the twentieth century: by 1911, when the Republic of China was founded, the total number of Chinese newspapers and periodicals increased to 500, among which many were set up by gentry-scholars (Fang 1999: 1014). In 1919 alone, about 400 new journalism titles emerged, the majority of which can be counted as elite press (Chang 1999).

From *DiBao* to *Wanguo Gongbao*, and then to *Xun Huan Daily and Shiwu Bao*, the Chinese press had entered an entirely new era. We can clearly see the guiding role of *Wanguo Gongbao* on Chinese elite journalism in many respects. In the next two chapters, we will explore how the missionary press contributed to shape China's modernity from the perspectives of its cultural and technological impact on Chinese scholars and society.

Table 2

Area	*Title*	*Date and place*	*Specialized contents*
South China	*Zhixing Bao*	Founded by Kang and Liang and their associates at Macao in February 1897	Called the sister newspaper of *Shiwu Bao*, and having very similar contents: 1 Reform campaign; 2 Reform edicts by the Emperor; 3 Domestic news about social reform; 4 International news; 5 Western learning This was the standard model for all the reform publications except for those with a specialized content or editorial policy
Southwest China	*Yu Bao*	Chongqing, October 1897	
	Shuxue Bao	Chengdu, September 1898	
Central China	*Xiang-xue Xin Bao*	Changsha, Hunan April 1897	
	Xiang Bao	Changsha, Hunan March 1898	
North China	*Guo-wen Bao*	Tianjing, October 1897	
Shanghai	*Ji-cheng Bao*	May 1897	
	Fu-qiang Bao	May 1897	
	Cui Bao	August 1897	
	Shi-xue Bao	August 1897	Editorial policy favouring conservative views of reform
	Qiu-shi Bao	September 1897	Some specialization in terms of coverage of Western law
	Nu-xue Bao	July 1898	The first women's newspaper in Chinese history. It advocated social reform along with women's liberation
	Nong-xue Bao	May 1897	The first journal to introduce modern agricultural knowledge in China
	Suan-xue Bao	July 1897	The first mathematics journal in China, it promoted maths education
	Xin-xue Bao	August 1897	A fortnightly journal devoted to advancing new learning in maths, medicine, physics and other natural sciences

5 The new press and the transition to cultural modernity

Having traced the emergence of the modern press from the missionary periodicals to the early élite Chinese press, we can see a link, as illustrated in the cases of *Wanguo Gongbao* and *Shiwu Bao*, between developing journalistic practices and wider cultural and intellectual perspectives. The impact of the missionary press, undoubtedly, went much deeper culturally than modernizing and pluralizing the print media. In this chapter, we will examine the way in which the missionary press contributed to transforming the cultural outlook of the Chinese intelligentsia towards models provided in Western modernity. In particular, we will explore the impact of the transformation of the social and cultural understanding and organization of time and space, and the implications of this for challenges to the traditional cosmological outlook of the Chinese scholars and, as a consequence, of their sense of national identity. Finally, we will explore the question of whether, and in what way, a transformed print media created, in a broad sense, a form of 'public sphere' in China in the late nineteenth century: shifting the state-society relationship, and re-defining the traditional role of the scholars.

The transformation of time and space

Time-space transformation, as Giddens (1990: 17–21) notes, is a key enabling feature of the social-cultural institutional changes that we understand as 'modernity'. Modern social life involves the reconstruction of social relations across time and space, allowing for the coordination of actions beyond the limits of locality. This coordination, according to theorists of modernity like Giddens, is essential to those key dynamic institutions – capitalism, industrialism, the nation-state system, urbanism, media and communications systems and an increasing globalization of social relations at all levels – that we take to be definitive of the 'modern' social experience and which are held to distinguish modernity from previous forms of society.

In his book *The Media and Modernity*, John Thompson (1995: 31–3) gives a central role to the development of communications and media systems in this respect. Following Giddens, he argues that the fundamental impact of

media technologies is to alter the spatial and temporal dimensions of social life. It enables individuals to reorder the spatial and temporal features of social organization, and to use these reordered features as a means of pursuing their goals. Thompson stresses, 'the advent of telecommunication thus resulted in the uncoupling of space and time'. While one level of this argument refers to institutional changes – for example, the adoption of GMT as a global standard time in 1884, providing 'a framework for the co-ordination of local times and for the organization of networks of communication and transport' – on another level, the impact of the actual technologies of media and transportation must be considered highly significant. For Thompson, the rapid development of the telegraph and the railway in the nineteenth century gave rise to a modern reordering of time and space.

The context, Giddens's and Thompson's historical-geographical vision of the development of modernity is of course that of eighteenth- to nineteenth-century Europe and America. In contrast, until late in the nineteenth century, China by and large retained its agrarian pace and remained resistant to the overtures of Western modernity. For example, the first attempts to introduce the telegraph into Shanghai by Westerners in 1865 ended as a failure. According to Hawks Pott (1928: 105), the country people, with the connivance of the Chinese authorities, destroyed the poles, which they said had a bad effect on the 'fengshui' (the influences of wind and water). Ten years later, the initial construction of railways was also ill-fated. In 1876, the first railway in China was completed over a distance of five miles in Shanghai. However, after only one month of operation, an unexplained death of a Chinese man on the line aroused the hostility of the local people towards the railway. The Chinese authorities took over one year to negotiate to buy off the railway rights from the Western owners and, eventually, the train was dismantled and the rails were torn up. Another significant Western modern importation to China was frustrated.

Thus, the arrival of modernizing media and communications was by no means a straightforward story in China. The disastrous fate of the initial introduction of the telegraph and railway from the West to China certainly implied a clash between two different social and cultural settings enclosing their respective frameworks of time and space. Moreover, we can see a more deeply embedded pattern of cultural difference and resistance if we look back further in history. There is evidence that one of the most important Western modern inventions from the point of view of time-space coordination – mechanical clocks – was introduced into the Chinese empire long before the nineteenth century.

According to Cipolla (1970), from the end of the sixteenth century, mechanical clocks, those pivotal inventions of modernity, were introduced into China by European Jesuits, becoming known, significantly, as 'self-ringing bells'. One of the most well-known Jesuits, Matteo Ricci, mentioned in his record that most Chinese then measured time either by water or by fire, but 'all of them fall far short of the perfection of our instruments, are subject

to many errors, and are inaccurate in the measurement of time' (Gallagher 1953: 23).

Probably this observation might have led Ricci, a few years after arriving in China, to present to the emperor with the clock 'that rings of itself' as one of his gifts. In 1601, when the emperor eventually received the presents from the missionaries, mechanical clocks for the first time entered the royal court. According to Ricci, the emperor was so impressed by the clocks that he kept a small one before him 'because he liked to look at it and to listen to it ringing the time' (Gallagher 1953: 374). A richly decorated wooden tower was built to contain a larger clock and it was placed in an attractive garden. Ricci wrote:

> They say His Majesty came here at times for recreation, as did other high dignitaries, to see the attractions and among them, this monument to Europe.
>
> (Gallagher 1953: 374–5)

'This monument to Europe', as Cipolla's study shows, took its place alongside a stream of other mechanical toys and automata that found their way into the Imperial Palace during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Cipolla (1970: 157) also reveals that Emperor K'ang Xi ordered the establishment of a clock workshop in the palace, and that the Jesuits 'with characteristic pliancy, recruited professional clockmakers into their ranks and incorporated them into the China Mission'.

The crucial point to note, however, is that the key role which mechanical clocks played in transforming European society – the establishment of 'clock time' as both generalized accuracy of time reckoning and as abstraction from local context (Tomlinson 1999: 49) did not find an immediate counterpart in China. From the upper circles of society to the wider populace, the Chinese regarded the contrivances as amusing oddities which, as it were, 'fell out of the blue' – and so treated them as recreational objects. In one of the greatest novels in China, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (Wang 1963), set in the Qing dynasty in the eighteenth century, it is mentioned that wealthy families like the Jias had Western-imported 'self-ringing bells' but used them mainly as decoration and gifts. Clearly, mechanical clocks aroused great wonder and admiration among the Chinese, but any wider impact on social time, such as the beginning of the modern calculation of 'man hours' which occurred in the West (Adam 1990: 112), was largely absent.

It can, of course, be argued that Western modern time-space reconstruction was not only triggered by technological inventions, but also by principles of rationalization. The adoption of GMT as standard time, no doubt, illustrates rationalization and regulation of clock and calendar time. These Enlightenment notions of linear, progressive and ordered time, also, inevitably, collided with Chinese traditional understanding of time and space.

Like other pre-modern forms of society, imperial China had its own sense of time and space. As Thompson (1995: 36) describes it,

> When most individuals lived on the land and derived their subsistence from it, the experience of the flow of time was closely connected to the natural rhythms of the seasons and to the cycles of birth and death.

Indeed, according to Watson (1999: 351), Chinese cyclical conceptions of history had become manifest by the time of the Han dynasty when a system of 'cyclical signs for designating years, days and hours' was in use. Certainly, the Chinese lunar calendar was based on the time of agrarian production with its ancient origins and its early development of astronomy. As Huang notes in his book *1587, A Year of No Significance*:

> Every year, in the eleventh lunar month, the emperor received the following year's calendar and proclaimed it to the populace, so that they would know when to plant their seeds for food and when to sweep their family graves.
>
> (Huang 1981: 5)

However, another type of Chinese time calculation – dynastic time – represented a *discontinuous* mode of time apprehension quite distinct from the linear Western Christian calendar. Following the change of each dynasty, time calculation became attached to the reign of the new dynastic emperor.[1] The Jesuit Matthew Ricci noticed this particular Chinese custom. He wrote in his journal:

> The only point from which the Chinese reckon time, whether in published books or in printed documents, is the beginning of the reign of the present sovereign, just as we count in the Christian era, from the birth of Christ.
>
> (Gallagher 1953: 70)

The principal Chinese dynasties were sustained nearly two thousand years, from the Qin (began 221 BC) to the Qing (ended AD 1911). Over such a long period of time, the patrimonial state played a dominant role in the ordering of social time. The concept of time, beyond its practical function, thus possessed an intimate bond with the political institutions of the state. This was not an accidental case. The notion of space, in traditional China, was also closely linked to the emperor, the centre of political power. *The Book of Poetry* says 'the land under the heaven belongs to the King'. The King or later the emperor had virtually absolute power over every inch of the land in the country. The early geographical term 'Zhongguo'[2] (the middle kingdom) was exploited to enhance the ideological fantasy of imperial China being the centre of the world. The space inside the empire was thought of as sacred and civilized, and anywhere beyond was judged as negligible. 'To China, *foreign* had come to mean *inferior*' (Murphey 1974: 32).

Despite Ricci's introduction of the world map and globe to China at the end of the sixteenth century, many Chinese scholars' geographical understanding remained limited at the end of the nineteenth century. This was evident in Kang Youwei's autobiography (1953: 134). As noted, when the QXH was preparing to build a library, a world map was required to decorate the room. However, it could not be found in any bookshop in Peking. Kang frustratedly wrote that a nation with such a stifling and ill-informed capital city could not hope other than to be defeated. Eventually, a world map purchased in Shanghai was brought back and enormously impressed Chinese scholars (Li and Yuan 1994: 51).

In short, the social organization of time and space in traditional China was largely agrarian and also highly political. The system of time-space organization was closely connected with a long-standing system of imperial rule which managed the spatial extension of Chinese imperial territory through a sophisticated bureaucratic system. With the help of the government examination system, the deep-structured traditional social ontology of time and space was maintained by, and also strongly influenced, the gentry-scholars who had, historically, acquired a sense of cultural superiority and even arrogance. Perhaps not surprisingly, in the light of this, the time-space-transforming technological inventions of the Europeans remained peripheral or encountered cultural resistance in China. Their frustration left space for another Western import – the public press – to play an important role in the historical-cultural transition to modernity.

The cover of *Wanguo Gongbao*: opening up new time-space

About two hundred years after the Jesuits brought mechanical clocks and introduced modern geographical concepts to China, it was Protestant missionaries, again envoys of Christianity, who established their periodicals to enlighten the Chinese and expose them to Western modernity. This new form of publication, unlike the mechanical clock which had produced insignificant consequences, generated a profound social and cultural impact.

Long before *Wanguo Gongbao*, from the early nineteenth century, the Protestants, as we have seen, had been attempting to influence the historical and geographical vision of their Chinese readership for the purpose of spreading Christianity and promoting trade. Implicitly, then, they were introducing a Western-modern framework of time-space. As Barnett (1972: 132) notes, Alexander Wylie's record of Protestant missionaries in China, first published in 1867, suggests that over the period 1815 to 1850, there were more than thirty works published on geography and history by ten different missionaries. Among them, Barnett marks out the key figures from Robert Morrison, William Milne, Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff to Elijah Bridgman. Although these works, before and after the Opium War, became the main sources of information about the West for scholars of statecraft such as Lin Zhexu and Wei Yuan, they were treated as practical knowledge for building

up China's maritime defence against Western aggression. Barnett rightly argues that the early missionary works not only failed to convert Chinese scholars in a religious sense, but also, they failed to set off 'conceptual change' in mid-nineteenth-century China. Nevertheless, by the end of the nineteenth century, the impact of the missionary press and the attitudes of Chinese scholars towards Western learning were changing fast. Especially after China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, as the Self-strengthening Movement proved a failure, the influence of *Wanguo Gongbao*, the flagship of the missionary press, reached its peak. Here we shall examine how *Wanguo Gongbao* contributed to reshaping the time-space structure of Chinese scholars' experience in the Reform Movement of 1895–98.

Let us take a closer look at the cover page of *Wanguo Gongbao* (see Figure 5). On the masthead, we can see that two versions of the date are given. In the middle is the title, to the left of this is displayed Western calendar time; while to the right, we see traditional Chinese dynastic time.

What is interesting here is, on the one hand, the stark difference between the dynastic and Western Christian calendars, and on the other hand, the way *Wanguo Gongbao* exhibited them. Perhaps it can be said that the symmetrical layout beside the title symbolized the strong tension and conflict between imperial China and the Western powers in this historical context. In this sense, the cover of *Wanguo Gongbao* was a provocative rather than modest presence. It is worth noting that just over fifty years ago, when Gutzlaff was editing the *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine*, he deliberately adopted the Chinese dynastic date instead of the Western calendar in order to appeal to his Chinese readership (Barnett 1972: 136). By the end of the nineteenth

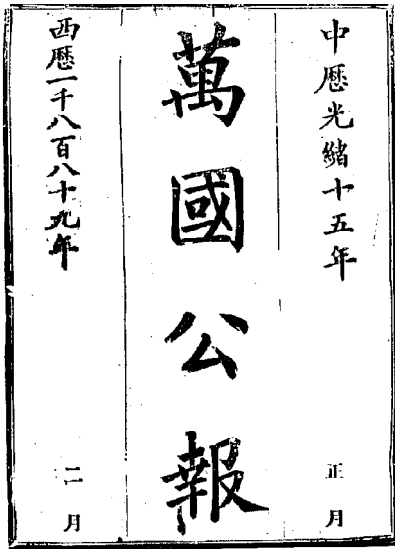

Figure 5 The cover of *Wanguo Gongbao*.

century, *Wanguo Gongbao* gained a much more confident position – though within just over a decade, the concept of dynastic time, along with the empire, was about to collapse.

The cover of *Wanguo Gongbao* in fact condensed a new world of time-space. The best-selling *History of the Nineteenth Century* serialized in *Wanguo Gongbao* is a good example. As Ma (2002: 2) observes, the translators Timothy Richard and Cai Erkang devised a new format of historical dating, which recorded the Christian date alongside the Chinese dynastic date. Moreover, an appendix listing English and Chinese place names appeared in the text. This format greatly widened the Chinese scholars' conception of time and space. No wonder the book became a best-seller, and this invented format was soon widely adopted and continues in use in present-day historical works.

As we discussed in Chapter 3, *Wanguo Gongbao* contained a large number of articles introducing and illustrating Western science and technology. For example, during the year of 1889, nine articles appeared in *Wanguo Gongbao* providing a basic knowledge of railways and the railway regulation in Britain. Other modern technologies such as telegraphy, mining and so on were also explained and promoted. Furthermore, Chinese readers were informed about Western social institutions, for instance, the European education system, in articles by Ernest Faber. In addition, the international news carried by *Wanguo Gongbao* consisted of various social and political events in Europe and America. Although many subjects treated in *Wanguo Gongbao* can not claim to be the earliest of their kind compared to previous missionary publications, *Wanguo Gongbao* unfolded to the Chinese readership a dynamic and progressive Western world made into immediate reality through the Western calendar.

If we treat the cover of *Wanguo Gongbao* as a symbolic new framework of time and space, we can ask how this affected the rising Chinese élite press which we discussed in the last chapter. *Guo-wen Bao*, established in 1897, the most influential newspaper promoting reform in Northern China, was found to use both the dynastic and the Western calendar and even the names of Western week days. If not the earliest, *Guo-wen Bao* must be reckoned among the most pioneering Chinese newspapers, pro-reform and carrying a Western date. But this was not just an adoption of format. It reflected the chief editor Yan Fu's deeper understanding of Western thought, owing to his mastery of English and study in England 1877–9. As one of the best-informed scholars, Yan Fu was responsible for translating T. H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* and other works of Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill, which had considerable impact on Chinese scholars (Schwartz 1964).

Another interesting example to portray the influence of *Wanguo Gongbao* in terms of a conception of time is the periodical *Qiang-xue Bao*, edited by Kang Youwei in 1896. *Qiang-xue Bao* employed a striking feature: the Confucian calendar. Along with dynastic time, Kang formulated a Chinese version of the Christian calendar by replacing Jesus Christ with Confucius.[3]

This unprecedented innovation no doubt reflected Kang's radical reformist thought.

On the one hand, Kang advocated the transformation of Confucianism into a national religion like Christianity and the building of Confucian temples as the equivalent of churches for people to worship in. On the other hand, he actively lobbied the Chinese government to adopt Western political institutions. In *Qiang-xue Bao*, he wrote urging the establishment of a parliament to improve communications between the state and the wider society. The demand for a parliament was obviously an idea of Western provenance. But how can we interpret Kang's idea of worshipping Confucianism as the national religion?

Though not a case of direct borrowing, the influence of the missionaries and their press was evident. The linkage is even more evident if we remember that Kang had become a loyal reader of *Wanguo Gongbao* as far back as 1883, if not earlier. In the previous chapter, it was noted that Kang told Timothy Richard, during their first meeting, that he believed in the Fatherhood of God and in the brotherhood of nations as taught in the missionaries' publications. As Gu observes (1998: 300–1), Kang was greatly impressed by the fundamental role Christianity played in Western society through reading *Wanguo Gongbao*. He even claimed himself as the 'Martin Luther of China', aiming to re-establish Confucianism as the national religion and to restore the nation in crisis. Kang tended to think that the spiritual merits of Confucius had been obscured by later commentators and could be reinstated to play the role of Christianity in the West:

> [In Kang's account], Confucius really had had a celestial mission and had wielded his spiritual power to reveal to the Chinese nation a set of ideological and institutional principles, which he then embodied in the classics. These should be treated just as the Holy Bible is treated in the Occident so as to produce a kind of supernatural or moral strength to guide the nation in her endless innovations and progress as an everlasting unity.
>
> (Chen 1962: 82)

For Kang, the Confucian calendar did not imply his intention to uphold the old tradition for its own sake, but to reinforce tradition with new impetus in serving his reform agenda. Inside the cover of *Qiang-xue Bao*, the articles campaigning for social and political reform revealed the real significance of Confucian time. It can be said that Kang's invention of a Chinese version of Western time reckoning was an effort to marry Western modernity with Chinese tradition. In a certain sense, then, Kang's Confucian time mirrored the spirit of the European Renaissance. The essence of the invented term, in the name of tradition, in fact concerned the future. The future, in Kang's view, would embrace infinite innovations and progress under the guidance and unity of Confucianism. This blueprint, resembling the Western

experience interpreted via Christianity, finds its root in the missionary press, particularly in *Wanguo Gongbao*.

In this sense, *Wanguo Gongbao* transmitted a new meaning of time – a notion of progress. As Thompson writes, this notion of progress was developed in Enlightenment philosophies of history and evolutionary social theories: 'the continuously shifting horizon of expectation began to associate with the future' (1995: 36). Indeed, from reading the covers of *Wanguo Gongbao* to *Qiang Xuebao*, from the Christian calendar to the Confucian calendar, we can see a new framework of time and space emerging in Chinese intellectual discourse. Although the new ideas of time and space were not practically the 'empty' daily-life time and space of Giddens's account, the radical dating system and the associated perception of China in the context of an independent universal world space implied the advent of a new cosmology.

A new cosmology

A cosmology, as Furth (2002: 16) puts it, is 'a systemic conception of the universe, in which natural, spiritual and social phenomena were perceived as manifestations of a single cosmic reality'. For the Chinese, the new 'evolutionary cosmology' in the nineteenth century largely derived from their interaction with Western learning, particularly its conceptions of nature and history:

> On the one hand there was the discovery of a world history encompassing a plurality of high civilisations in dynamic interaction with one another as well as with a 'barbarian' perimeter; on the other, there was the exploration of the implications of Western scientific law – particularly the laws of evolution based upon Darwinian biology, but also those of Newtonian physics as well.
>
> (Furth 2002: 16)

To be sure, the missionary press, as we have seen in the previous chapters, played a leading role in introducing Western learning and was thus certainly an important source of this new cosmology. While it is crucial to address Western influence, we should pay attention to traditional Chinese cosmology to achieve a better understanding of the transition. As Chinese scholars Jin and Liu (2000: 23–32) suggest, imperial Chinese cosmology combines both the Confucian and Taoist tradition. In their account, Confucianism deals with human life issues and moral principles and Taoism stresses, 'the celestial and human union' (Tian ren he yi). When Confucianism was established as the official ideology in the Han dynasty, the Taoist belief in 'the celestial and human union' was adopted to become part of the foundation of Confucian ideology. Thus, traditional Chinese cosmology comes to hold to an internal relationship between social events and natural phenomena. An interesting

example is given by Jin and Liu. The influential Confucian scholar of the Han dynasty, Dong Zhongshu, made a claim inspired by Taoism that human being and heaven shared the same structure:

> In every year, there are four seasons, twelve months, three hundred and sixty days. Because human beings are created imitating natural creation, every person has four limbs, which is the identical number of seasons, and twelve big joints and three hundred and sixty small joints, which reflect the number of months and days of each year. Moreover, human being has five important organs, which correspond to the five elements of the universe.[4]
>
> (Jin and Liu 2000: 29)

Indeed, Chinese cosmology believed that natural creation had the same moral capacity as the human being. The emperor was regarded as the Son of the Heaven as he was given the mission by the heaven to exercise moral power over human beings. The political conduct of the emperor was not personal but reflected the moral principles of natural creation.[5] In this sense, Confucian-Taoist cosmology, with its idea of 'the celestial and human unity', treated social-political phenomena and moral idealism as interdependent matters. Once any social problem emerged, moral principles were called to be restored. Therefore, dynastic changes became acceptable when a new emperor signalled his intention to abide by the 'morality' of natural creation. The traditional politicized cosmology played a pivotal role in holding together the unity of the nation and moral idealism of the scholars for nearly two thousand years.

In contrast with traditional Chinese cosmology, Western-modern evolutionary cosmology had a different emphasis. It involved the belief in a progressive and linear development process. This is clearly seen underlying the Western learning promoted by the missionary press. One good example is the *History of the Nineteenth Century* serialized in *Wanguo Gongbao*, which we discussed in Chapter 3. With the 'facts' of the European transformation during the nineteenth century, this book effortlessly convinced Chinese scholars of the evolutionary 'truth'.[6]

In embracing the new cosmology, the Chinese were forced to abandon their sense of being at the centre and origins of world civilization and to come to see themselves as and understand themselves as 'members of one culture and one nation among many' (Furth 2002: 16).

The early modern Chinese newspapers and periodicals, from Wang Tao's *Xunhuan Daily* to Kang's *Qiangxue Bao* and Liang's *Shiwu Bao*, reflected the development of this new cosmology. Their promotion of social reform often finds its roots in this adopted cosmos. Wang Tao stressed, in the *Xun Huan Daily*, that if the sage king had been revived, he would have had to face changes: 'The Way honours institutions which suit the times, and no more' (Furth 2002: 18). In his early article promoting reform in *Shiwu Bao*, Liang

Qichao began by stressing the ever-changing nature of reality and went on to criticize traditional historical thinking with its inflexible adherence to the concept of the way and the resistance to change which this entailed.

To sum up, China's emergence into social and cultural modernity involved the same sort of deep-structural social-institutional changes as those that occurred in the West – crucially a transformation in the social organization of time and space. But the pattern of this transformation was quite distinctive. While the initial frustration of attempts to introduce modern technology, such as the railway and the telegraph, into China suggested a resistant and hostile social and cultural environment, the print media introduced by Western missionaries eventually afforded a key role in informing Chinese scholars of wholly new ideas of simultaneity towards the end of the nineteenth century. *Wanguo Gongbao*, not the first but the most influential missionary journal, guided Chinese scholars into the Western-modern world of time and space. With the growing new apprehension of China as a nation among many others and the Western interpretation of the nation and the world, Chinese reform scholars began to express their changing national identity in their publications.

Imperial China: a cultural nation-state?

If we are adequately to grasp the influences of the missionary press on early modernity in China, we need to consider another important issue – national identity – and ask if and how the missionary press affected the sense of national identity of Chinese scholars.

Discussions of nationalism most commonly locate its historical origins in the nation-state as a phenomenon of modernity,[7] along with such institutional features as capitalism, industrialism and mass communications. In such accounts the concept of national identity is often treated as the outcome of certain modern developments. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson (2003) argues that what he calls 'print capitalism' along with other technological developments, played a decisive role in the production of a national consciousness. He claims that toward the end of the eighteenth century, a certain convergence of historical events made 'nation-ness' imaginable in Europe. Foremost amongst these events was the rise of 'print capitalism'. Anderson argues that the commoditized and mechanized production of books and, more importantly, of newspapers produced a 'national imagining' and created the 'imagined political communities' which we understand as the nation. In Anderson's account, 'the revolutionary vernacularizing thrust of capitalism' (2003: 38) fixed a vernacular language as the 'national' language. It also made possible a new apprehension of national 'community' by the convergence of time and space that it created in its representations. For Anderson, 'national imagining' is a phenomenon of modernity, a form of experiencing which is only possible within the context of the technological and economic changes that produced modern capitalist societies.

While Anderson links national consciousness with the development of print capitalism, Gellner argues that nationalism has to do with industrial society. He claims that:

> . . . in the agrarian order, to try to impose on all levels of society a universalized clerisy and a homogenized culture with centrally imposed norms, fortified by writing, would be an idle dream.
>
> (Gellner 1983: 17)

It is only in industrial society, Gellner stresses, that, 'a homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism' (1983: 39).

Anthony Giddens understands nationalism as a part of a much broader social-theoretical analysis of modernity. He sees national identity as, by and large, a social-psychological phenomenon emerging in the institutional context of 'nation-state'. Giddens defines the 'nation-state' as:

> A particular type of state, characteristic of the modern world, in which a government has sovereign power within a defined territorial area, and the mass of the population are citizens who know themselves to be part of a single nation.
>
> (Giddens 1997: 583)

When these theorists discuss the rise of nationalism or national identity as one of the phenomena of modernity, though there are occasional brief references to China, the focus is predominantly on the experience of Europe.[8] Traditional Chinese national identity, recognized by many, does not seem to coincide with this modernist interpretation. Murphey (1974: 31) makes this clear:

> . . . in China a vigorously self-conscious cultural nationalism, national identity, and a tradition of an integrated national state and culture had existed for some two thousand years before the Westerners arrived.

And Wang (2000: 240) echoes Murphey's view:

> As forms of group-identity consciousness, concepts of nationality and culture developed very early in Chinese thought. This is seen in the classic texts *Zuo Zhuan* ('If they are not of our kin, their minds must be different'), the *Li ji* ('Those who have this knowledge always know to love their own kind'), and the *Xunzi* ('The ancestors are the basis of our kind').

Moreover, Wang stresses that the idea of nationality did not penetrate people's minds as much as the concept of culture, even to the point where one can say that 'eliminating distinctions through culture has been a tradition of

political ideals since the pre-Qin era' (2000: 240). Mungello (1999: 23) also recognizes the importance of cultural self-identity: despite the physical differences between Han and non-Han Chinese, identity as a Chinese has traditionally been regarded as much more a matter of culture than race.

Indeed, the distinctive Chinese cultural national identity can not be easily explained with Western theories of social modernity. We need to turn to the Chinese historical context in which national identity is conceived. And we go back as far as the Qin dynasty, if not earlier, to see the vital role it played in shaping the Chinese national identity.

As noted in Chapter 1, the Emperor Qin united the warring states and introduced a bureaucratic governmental system to replace the rule of the Feudal lords. Importantly, he achieved a great deal of cultural standardization. The most important standardization was that of language. The 'Small Seal' system of writing was developed to standardize the different languages of the states which became the basis of modern Chinese script. Besides this, uniform standards were applied to many aspects of the society, including manufacturing, agricultural implements, weights and measures, cultural customs and so on. Apart from language, what affected the communication system most was an extensive nationwide project of road building, which greatly improved the postal service (Lou 1940: 87–9).

Although these standardizations may have been imposed for the convenience of the ruling regime, in the long term they contributed to form people's sense of being part of one nation. But, arguably, what most significantly empowered the Chinese sense of cultural identity was the establishment of Confucian orthodoxy and the government examination system.

As discussed, Confucian ideology, being a dynamic entity, played a central role in maintaining the structural stability of Chinese society for nearly two thousand years. The 'open' examinations to a large extent dissolved class tensions and Confucianism survived notwithstanding dynastic changes. Many have recognized that Chinese bureaucracy, recruited from the scholars through examinations, was far in advance of the modern Western civil service system. Even Gellner recognizes the Chinese bureaucracy as an unusual example of agrarian society – the local communities and estates are co-extensive with the state which, 'did display a certain kind of nationalism' (1983: 16).

These form, precisely, the Chinese cultural nationalism or national identity that Murphey identifies. Indeed, this 'agrarian bureaucratic empire' (Fairbank 1975: 90), long before Western intervention in the nineteenth century, had developed many features of the nation-state and possessed a distinct sense of national consciousness with her Sino-centric view of the world. Her distinct cultural nationalism was highlighted in the periods when China was ruled by the alien 'barbarian' regimes including the Mongols and the Manchus. After the Manchus seized Peking in 1644, officially ending the Ming dynasty, many Chinese scholars committed suicide,[9] many took up arms and many more simply refused to serve the government in any form. All these responses to

the Manchus, as had happened in the Yuan dynasty following the Mongol conquest of China in the thirteenth century, were grounded on Confucian moral principles which stressed the importance of righteousness and loyalty.

In short, the imperial Chinese sense of nation-state and nationalism cannot be regarded as the outcome of modernity. They were conceived in their own unique social, political and cultural tradition and development. Importantly, the nation and the state were underpinned by Confucian ideology. More than knowing themselves to be part of a single nation, the Chinese identified themselves as part of a distinctive and superior culture encompassing a vast territory with a bureaucracy appointed through the civil examination system. As the examinations were based on Confucian classics, scholarship was nurtured for purpose of the state:

> [In traditional China], scholarship and statesmanship were two sides of the same coin. The Master said, 'He who excels in learning should serve in the government.' Scholarship in traditional China, therefore, was the root of statecraft, and statesmanship, the fruit of learning.
>
> (Hsu 1970: 1)

Thus 'cultural nationalism' seems an appropriate term to describe the Chinese national consciousness. Before we ask whether or how the Western missionary press affected this pre-existing national consciousness, we ought to examine the relationship between the imperial press and nationalism.

The imperial press and cultural nationalism

Despite its early emergence, print media in China did not seem to contribute to creating national consciousness in the way that Anderson argued. In Western Europe, printing grew fast under the dynamic impetus of capitalism and created an 'emerging' national language, which led to the production of a 'national imagining'. In contrast, in imperial China, in which woodblock printing was invented in the eighth century, the language had been standardized for nearly one thousand years and the social and political pattern, though changing, remained largely underpinned by Confucianism. As Huang Ray observes:

> The regime's primary function was to hold the village communities together. Ideology came before technology, cultural influences were valued more than economics, and the passiveness of the bureaucrats as a rule took precedence over adaptability.
>
> (Huang 1989: 6)

In imperial China, printing was confined to strengthening rather than challenging the established social and political system including its self-conscious cultural nationalism. Long before the invention of printing, the imperial state

of each dynasty had practised the banning of books and prosecuting authors who were 'politically offensive' in their writings. Such strict censorship, as Chen and Tan (2004) trace it, has never ceased during the long imperial history up to the present day.

As the creator and guardian of cultural ideology, the gentry class, or scholar-officials, were certainly the leading force of the cultural nationalists. The ordinary peasants, as Fairbank reckons (1995: 10), at least four-fifths of the population, were assumed generally to be 'illiterate or only semi-literate'. So they were 'less devoted to Confucian rationalism than to the lore, superstitions and Taoist-Buddhist religious observances of their folk culture'. By and large, it was the educated élite who believed in the classical Confucian teachings and the universal supremacy of the Son of Heaven, who maintained his rule by the edifying example of his virtuous conduct at the top of a harmonious social order of hierarchy and status. They adopted the *Tianxia* idea ('under the heaven') and built on this their sense of universal cultural superiority and a Sino-centric view of the world. In addition to this, its geographic location, the vast size and self-sufficient economy of China, also encouraged the cultural complacency and even arrogance of the Chinese.

By the time of 1800, the Sino-centric view of the world still stood at the centre of its long-standing cultural nationalism. And, as Fairbank observes (1995: 5), in that particular historical context, there were a number of other factors upholding the vigorously self-conscious nationalism. First, foreign trade was still accounted as an insignificant part of the economy. Second, the Qing empire, by its successful dealings with border disputes, was satisfied with its militarily defensive position. Finally, the fortified Confucianism ideology under the Qing rulers was proof against for penetration by foreign political thinking. All these factors made for a remarkable self-sufficiency and maintained the traditional national sentiments. Moreover, as Fairbank points out:

> another historical tradition also made China unresponsive to foreign aggression – this was the tradition of barbarian invasion and the absorption or neutralization of the barbarians in the vastness of China's society and culture. For this reason, imperial Confucianism had become a supranationalistic system which could not easily appreciate the sentiments of nationalists from outside countries.
>
> (Fairbank 1995: 5)

Wanguo Gongbao and *Shiwu Bao*: a new nationalism?

Facing this 'supranationalistic' sentiment, the Western missionary press introduced a new set of concepts of the nation-state and national identity. Among the first wave of the missionary press, Karl Gutzlaff's *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* established in 1833 began to criticize China's Sino-centric view of the world. As noted in Chapter 2, in his proposal for

setting up the periodical, Gutzlaff emphasized that China's sense of superiority – regarding all other nations as 'barbarians' – would harm the interests of the Chinese people and their foreign relations. His periodical aimed at informing the Chinese about Western scientific and technological development and Western morality, and endeavoured to 'correct' the culture arrogance and xenophobia of the Chinese. In the same proposal, Gutzlaff expressed his belief that the Chinese would be convinced to learn from the West if his periodical provided facts about Western civilization. In every issue, the *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine*, though adopting Confucian analects, focused on introducing Western learning and attacking China's sense of cultural superiority, the distinctive national identity shared by the educated élite.

By the time *Wanguo Gongbao* was set up, the missionary press was involving itself in the discussion of the nation-state and national identity in greater depth. As we have seen in the third chapter, *Wanguo Gongbao* conducted severe criticism on the Chinese traditional education and examination system for their absolute respect of classics and sole purpose of gaining bureaucratic office. Since the civil examinations played a pivotal role in constructing the Chinese national identity, *Wanguo Gongbao*'s criticism certainly targeted the centre of imperial cultural nationalism. By introducing the Western schooling system and curriculum to China, *Wanguo Gongbao* provided an alternative to traditional learning and 'enlightened' Chinese reform-oriented readers such as Kang Youwei.

Moreover, *Wanguo Gongbao* carried a great deal of international news which demonstrated the advantages of Western social and political institutions. As Bennett (1983: 184) observes, *Wanguo Gongbao* 'regularly noted elections (gongju) of a new president (jun) in the United States or the opening of the parliament (gongyi tang) in England or Sweden'. It also reported 'the establishment of a parliament in Turkey in 1876 and 1877 and one in 1878 in Egypt'. This initially caused great confusion among the Chinese readership. According to Xiong (1995: 413–14), with the long-standing Sino-centric view of the world, they had difficulty in grasping the concepts of 'president' or 'election'. Before the 1870s, most Chinese had equated the title of 'president' in the West to 'emperor' in China. The information gap between the two different social and political setting was waiting to be filled. *Wanguo Gongbao* took advantage of its journalistic approach – informative, quick-responsive and flexible – to improve the knowledge base of the Chinese. In *Wanguo Gongbao* Vol. 301, dated 14 November 1874, following a piece of news on Spanish political issues, Young Allen attached a short note to clarify how the title of 'president' was different from 'emperor' and 'king' and explained that a 'president' was an elected figure in a democratic country rather than a hereditary position. In the next year, Young Allen wrote an article 'Yi minzhuguo yu geguo zhangcheng ji gongyitang jie' to define the translated terms 'democratic nations' (minzhuguo), their 'Constitution' (geguo zhangchen) and 'Parliament' (gongyitang) (*Wanguo Gongbao* Vol. 340, 12 June 1875) in

more detail. Allen's illustration of the Western democratic system can be summarized in the words of Abraham Lincoln in his famous Gettysburg Address of 1863 as 'of the people, by the people, for the people'. Furthermore, Allen explained the three divisions of Western democratic power – judiciary, executive and legislature – and how the whole system worked. He also paid particular attention to introducing the parliamentary system and how it benefited the nation.

Although these two examples, being brief journalistic works, may not be the earliest information on Western political institutions made available to the Chinese, they sketched the main structure of Western political institutions and made sense of the key concepts involved. This was certainly timely in responding to the Chinese readers' mixture of confusion and increasing curiosity towards the West. The official-scholars or gentry class were gaining a sense of an alternative political structure distinctive from imperial bureaucracy. Some important political concepts such as 'presidency', 'democracy', 'parliament', 'elections' entered, in a clearly defined sense, into Chinese vocabulary. The national consciousness of the Chinese educational élite was exposed and examined in a broad global context. Following the continuous failures in the war with the Western powers and the unsuccessful Self-strengthening Movement, China's sense of cultural superiority and Sino-centric view of the world were rapidly waning. With the introduction of Western political concepts and institutions, *Wanguo Gongbao* contributed to making the Chinese scholars reflect on their own cultural national identity in relation to other nations and other cultures. The traditional nationalist sentiment began to emerge as a *relational* concept.

The new belief in relational national identity can be found in *Shiwu Bao*. The chief editor Liang Qichao insisted that profound social and political institutional reform, rather than the self-indulgent Self-strengthening Movement, should be carried out in China without hesitation. A large number of international news stories[10] and accounts of Western learning appeared in *Shiwu Bao*, which suggested the importance of Western affairs to the Chinese scholars. Their national consciousness had never been so intensely challenged as the intelligentsia began to relate to other nations and other cultures. No doubt, all these factors led to the further disruption and transformation of Chinese society. Arguably a deeper structural transformation took place. Something resembling a 'public sphere' was gradually emerging.

The new press: the scholars' public sphere?

The theory of the public sphere

Certainly one of the most important institutional transformations of modern Western states was the success of a free press in achieving public scrutiny of government. The argument that the struggle for an independent press, providing news and critical comment on events with a minimum of state

interference played a key role in the development of the modern state is a compelling one. Early liberal thinkers, such as John Stuart Mill (1971), were strong advocates of press freedom, viewing liberty of expression through an independent media as a vital safeguard against state despotism.

As Thompson (1995: 69–70) observes, the foremost contemporary counterpart to nineteenth-century liberal thinkers like Mill is found in the work of Jürgen Habermas. In his pivotal work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas claims that the combination of developments in capitalism from the sixteenth century, with shifts in the institutional arrangements of political power, allows a new form of political-communicational space to emerge in early-modern Europe: the 'public sphere'. This was a discursive space which occupied a place between, on the one hand, the apparatus and authority of the state and, on the other, the realm of private life: the emergent economic sphere of 'civil society' and the sphere of personal and familial relation. This 'bourgeois' public sphere comprised the interaction of private individuals deliberating and debating among themselves on matters concerning not just private, narrow interests, but issues of the public regulation of society reaching even to the conduct of the state:

> This new public sphere was not part of the state but was, on the contrary, a sphere in which the activities of the state could be confronted and subjected to criticism. The medium of this confrontation was itself significant: it was the pubic use of reason, as articulated by private individuals engaged in argument that was in principle open and unconstrained.
>
> (Thompson 1995: 70)

In Habermas's account, this new public sphere arose within the physical context of new public locales that began to emerge in the cities of Europe during the eighteenth century – the salons and coffee houses which provided new spaces for recreational interaction and where debate could flourish amongst the newly leisured, culturally confident bourgeoisie.[11]

But it was the new moral-critical journals which began to appear at the same time that were perhaps most influential in conduct of public debate. Originating as literary and cultural-critical organs, these journals increasingly moved towards the debating of social and political issues.

Habermas's case studies cover Britain and France with German history playing a more minor role. He argues that it was in England at the beginning of the eighteenth century that the most favourable conditions were found to give rise to the bourgeois public sphere. According to Briggs and Burke (2002: 94–5), 'the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695 ended not only the censorship system but also the control of printing through the Stationer's Company, a control which had lasted since the Company had been granted a Royal Charter in 1557'. Despite the attempt of the Stamp Act of 1712 to roll back some of this freedom, censorship and state control of the press in England

remained less rigorous than in some other parts of Europe. Papers and journals saw a significant growth and the public sphere came to develop into 'a permanent institution, making politics part of the daily life of a considerable proportion of the population' (ibid.). Habermas stresses the connection between independent journalism and a wider participation in public /political life:

> [Besides] the new, large daily newspapers like the Times (1785), other institutions of the public reflecting critically on political issues arose in these years. In (the radical Whig) Wilkes's days, public meetings increased in size and frequency. Political associations too were formed in great numbers.
>
> (Habermas 1999: 65)

By the end of the eighteenth century, 'loosely knit clubs' and unstable alliances had transformed themselves into parties with clear lines of demarcation and, for the first time, extra-parliamentary levels of organisation. 'Public opinion' was coming to be invoked by both government and opposition.[12] Finally, the extension of the franchise to the middle classes in 1832, and the publication of the first issue-based election manifesto, signalled the transformation of Parliament, 'for a long time the target of critical comment by public opinion, into the very organ of this public opinion' (op cit. 62). By the end of the nineteenth century, the freedom of the press had become a constitutional feature of many Western states.

Thus, a key feature of Habermas's argument is the claim that the critical periodical press had a direct impact upon the institutions of the modern state. Because of this, Parliament became routinely subject to public scrutiny and in response to this situation, began, itself, to take a more constructive role in the formation and articulation of public opinion. In Habermas's account, the development of printing and the periodical press altered the pre-existing networks of communication and the established relations of power.

Here we intend to ask, in a broad sense, if the impact of print media by missionaries and then the Chinese élite created a similar sort of 'public sphere' or caused similar political-institutional repercussions in early modern China.[13] We will begin with a brief examination of the traditional 'political communication system' in Imperial China.

Traditional modes of public/political communication

Despite its complexity, the system of public/political communication in imperial China can generally be described as 'paternal'. In Raymond Williams's words:

> A paternal system is an authoritarian system with a conscience: that is

> to say, with values and purposes beyond the maintenance of its own power. . . . In a paternal system, what is asserted is the duty to protect and guide. This involves the exercise of control, but it is a control directed towards the development of the majority in ways thought desirable by the minority.
>
> (1973: 117)

The notion of 'conscience' here can be identified fairly with 'Confucianism' since Confucian ideology bound together different social classes and built these into a cultural-national identity via moral precepts. In the Confucian classics, it is clear that 'the ultimate purpose of government is the welfare of the common people' (Lau 1979: 32). This ethical basis of government is fundamental to Confucianism:

> The Master [Confucius] said, 'Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble but will have no sense of shame. Guide them by virtue, keep them in line with the rites, and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves'.
>
> (Confucian Analects, Book II.3: Lau 1979: 63)

Obviously, Confucius believed in the power of moral force. He stressed that it was the duty of the ruler to set moral examples for his people:

> Chi Kang Tzu asked Confucius about government. Confucius answered, 'To govern is to correct. If you set an example by being correct, who would dare to remain incorrect?'
>
> (Confucian Analects, Book XII.17: Lau 1979: 115)

To 'set an example by being correct' is pretty close to what Williams meant by 'the duty [of the authority] to protect and guide'. Mencius's view that political power should be exercised by the people who work with their mind also implied the moral – directional role of the ruling élite.

In a paternal system, Williams also suggests that a monopoly of the means of communications is sought, and that censorship is widely used, both directly and indirectly. But these are defended on the grounds that they are required for the overall good of the community. All these assumptions were evident in the Chinese case: the dominance of the official gazette, the system of imperial censors and the moral ideals of Confucian ideology. Although the policy towards the public domain was not formally documented and remained somewhat inconsistent,[14] the imperial government was undoubtedly always aware that, 'it should be more alert to keep the people's mouth shut than to prevent flooding' and never gave up the control of public opinion. In some ways, public opinion was like a kite in the hand of the authority. The government controlled the thread and determined how far the kite could fly. In other words, to sustain its own power, the state manipulated the

avenues of people's expression allowing a limited flexibility. The contradictory co-existence of rigidity and flexibility of the communications is another feature of the paternal system:

> At different times, and serving different social orders, the paternal system can vary in the degree to which it explicitly announces its role or explains its methods. The actual methods can also vary widely: sometimes putting the blanket over everything; sometimes allowing a measure of controlled dissent or tolerance as a safety-valve. But the general purpose and atmosphere of the system remain unmistakable.
>
> (Williams 1973: 118)

With such paternal characteristics, the 'publicness' of imperial China was not a sphere of interaction and debate but rather a political barometer monitored by the state.

No doubt this state-dominated communication structure can not be separated from the political power structure. As noted earlier, Jin (1992) borrows 'Patrimonialism' from Weber to identify the imperial state as an enlarged 'household' headed by the monarch, who built his own absolute authority and recruited the bureaucracy through open exams based on the Confucian classics. He argues that by sharing Confucian ideology, the monarchy stood at the top of the power structure, and the educated élite formed the ruling class at the national, provincial and local level. Thus the ideology-dominated relations of power highlighted the central role of the gentry scholars. In the nineteenth century, this traditional power structure, along with its communication system, was about to disintegrate.

A new communicational structure

In many ways, the nineteenth century missionary periodicals and Chinese scholars' newspapers can scarcely be compared to the bourgeois periodicals that are central to Habermas's theory – not to mention the remarkable difference between the two social and political settings. Nevertheless, in terms of their broader political impact, these two types of publication – existing in such utterly different cultural contexts – shared at least one significant thing in common. That is their fundamental influence on the pre-existing communicational and power structures. In this respect, without much exaggeration, the missionary press played a transformative role.

First of all, the appearance of the missionary press symbolized a new era of communication – the emergence of an unofficial press in imperial China. As discussed, there was no public print media to speak of in the imperial regime. The government gazette was published in the capital and in the provinces exclusively for the benefit of officialdom. Although the official gazette had become popular reading among scholars in the Song dynasty, and was widely read among the literate classes during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the

unofficial print media remained strictly controlled and so failed to challenge the monopoly of the official gazette.

The nineteenth-century missionary press, though with quite different aims, nevertheless ended the dominance of the official gazette. The statistics show that, from the 1840s to 1890s, the Western missionaries established about 170 newspaper and journals, which accounted for 95 per cent of the press in China during that period (Fang 1991: 18).

In a certain sense, the missionary press obtained its independence, or at least became free of the control of the Qing government, as one of the consequences of Western 'gunboat diplomacy'. It can therefore be accounted as one of the by-products of Western intervention in China. We will come to discuss the controversial issue of how this may be viewed as a process of 'cultural imperialism' in Chapter 8.

Second, the Western missionary press influenced the established relations of power in that they brought a new vehicle and critique for scholars to communicate with the state. An important part of Confucian ideology was that 'classical learning tolerated only change-within-tradition' (Fairbank 1995: 2). Therefore, as Yu (1996: 125–7) stresses, the traditional political and social critique adopted by scholars consisted primarily in the interpretation of the *Way*, not in the discovery or invention of an alternative *Way*. Nevertheless, Yu recognized that the Chinese intellectual élite began a strategic move from 'interpretation' to 'discovery' in the late Qing. As discussed earlier in this chapter, these reform-oriented scholars were discovering a new framework of time-space, cosmology and cultural national identity, which all implied a *Way* different from the traditional one. More importantly, reformists like Wang Tao and Liang Qichao employed modern periodicals to promote their new *Way* including political-institutional reform. These reforms involved proposals for a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy on the British model. By pursuing this, the Confucian scholars were, rather ironically, promoting changes which would inevitably remove them from their traditional place at the centre of the state. Nevertheless, it is the reform scholars who played the leading role in producing the particular style of 'public sphere' which was to emerge and briefly to flourish in early modern China.

The scholars' public sphere

Unlike the bourgeoisie which emerged as a new class following the development of capitalism in early modern Europe, Chinese scholars were not connected with a new economic force but were a long-standing leading social and political class. However, by engaging with new communicational forms and organizations, the scholars' position and their relation with the state were undergoing an important structural change. As Furth observes:

> [They] had created novel modes of communication and association, in

> the form of newspapers and periodical press on the one hand, and various types of study societies and political parties on the other.
>
> (Furth 2002: 13)

From the mid-1890s, as we have seen, reform-oriented newspaper and periodical publishing flourished across China, spreading from Shanghai and Canton to Peking and then to the other provincial capitals and major cities. Despite facing government bans, persecution and a lack of financial support, many members of the educated élite began publishing enterprises, seeing these as the chief means of engaging in political criticism and agitation for political reform. In these circumstances, the gap between state and this key sector of society began to grow:

> . . . as the intellectuals became more and more frustrated with the state's failure to take initiatives, they turned away from the state to become radical spokesmen of Chinese society.
>
> (Lee 2002: 143)

Through their print media, discontented scholars promoted various reform plans including the ideas of a free press, educational reform and a parliamentary system which demonstrated their demand for *independent power*. From being an integral part of the institution of the state, radical scholars were becoming the opponents of governmental authority and transgressing the boundaries of the state's tolerance of heterodoxy. More than just opposing the policies of the state, the scholars' new-found critical reasoning, underpinned by a new cosmology and sense of national identity, turned towards a fundamental re-thinking of public institutions. Some began to attack the core feature of the traditional social and political order: Confucianism itself. As Liang Qichao wrote in *Shiwu Bao* 1896, Vol. 9:[15]

> Throughout the past two thousand years, from the Qin Dynasty to the Ming Dynasty, the law became increasingly more meticulous and elaborate; politics and education deteriorated increasingly; the monarchical power became daily more exalted and national prestige daily plummeted. From the officials on top to the mass of people below, all were caught in an intellectual net. They were so inured to it and complacent about it, so tamed and harassed by it, that they were immobilized, stupefied, and unable to think. The oppressors of the people in the past, priding themselves on this situation, intensified their abuse of the people. Ultimately two emergencies developed, which were out of their control and beyond their ability to guard against – foreign incursions and roving bandits – and the extinction of those oppressive rulers followed. Thus all the steps and measures which they took to foretell trouble only served to work against them.
>
> (Chang 1971: 101–2)

Here Liang launches a furious attack on the imperial regime and the traditional polity. His phrase 'an intellectual net' implied Confucianism which, in Liang's account, dominated, manipulated and stifled the state and society. In contrast to the 'pure criticism' conducted within Confucianism, Liang's denunciation of traditional cultural despotism inaugurated a new trend which clearly demonstrated the influence of Western democratic ideals.

While Western influences were plain in the leading scholars' critical discourse, it is important, however, to note the variety of political concerns and approaches projected in the early modern periodicals. For example, based on a strong sense of racial identity, Sun Zhongshan launched *China Daily* to attack the Manchu government. He insisted that the hope of China lay in driving out the alien Qing regime. By contrast, scholars like Zhang Taiyan who founded *Jinshi Bao* declared their position of restoring and preserving the traditional culture to revive the nation.

Along with the press, study societies formed an important aspect of the emergent public sphere institutions promoted by the scholars. In his autobiography, Kang recorded his thoughts in 1895 concerning the importance of 'grouping' or 'uniting' Chinese scholars through study societies:

> . . . in order to develop both social customs and general knowledge, it is absolutely necessary to group the greater human community. Only the greater human community can produce greater impact. To group the greater human community, it is absolutely necessary to organise study societies.
>
> (Kang 1953: 133)

The purposes of study societies, in Kang's view, was to disseminate new intellectual thought and knowledge of new disciplines among the gentry-literati and in this way to promote public consensus on social and political reform. In 1898, Kang organised the association 'Baoguo Hui', meaning 'protecting the nation's land, people and religion'. As Zhang (1971: 36–42) observes, the emergent study societies in the period of the Reform Movement were the forum for disseminating new political thinking. Through periodicals such as *Shiwu Bao*, Western political systems were introduced to Chinese scholars. The admiration for Western party politics expressed by the reformists led to an adoption of constitutional monarchy as a dominant political aspiration within the Reform Movement.

For Liang, this idea of 'grouping' developed more sophistication in his political thinking in the emerging idea of 'Qun'.[16] As Liang explains in an article entitled 'Preface to a treatise On Qun' (Shuo Qun Zixu) in *Shiwu Bao* Vol.26, 1897, 'Qun' stands as the central concept in his political thought. His understanding of 'Qun', in Chang's view (1971: 96), 'involved the vital problems of political integration, political participation and legitimation, and the scope of the political community'.

Thus, Liang's concept of 'Qun' entailed the 'democratic connotations of

popular sovereignty' (Chang 1971: 105), which indicated the reformists' belief in the modern political structure imported from the West. In this sense, the importance 'Qun' lay in the way it allowed the Chinese scholars to conceive of 'society' as a separate entity from the state.

Although many study societies and the independent periodicals set up by scholars, did not last long after the failure of the Reform Movement of 1898, they were historically significant in that they fundamentally changed the way opinions were formed and facilitated the rise of an opposition. While the scholars were promoting social and political reform with an alternative *Way*, it can be said that they were also emancipating themselves from the old ideological control. A new independent intellectual force gradually developed and became engaged with understanding China as a common society, and with social and political critique. Thus, Liang wrote in *Shuiwu Bao* Vol.26, that he looked forward to a new society based on the ideal of 'public-mindedness' and utilizing 'collectivistic methods' (Chang 1971: 105).

Of course, the Chinese élite had been concerned with 'the people' long before they set up their own press or organized study societies. The literati had served as spokesmen for the masses within the Confucian humanist tradition. But a significant shift in this idea of representation can be clearly seen in the novel modes of communication and association which the scholars engaged with in the 1890s. This involved a new mode of advocacy – the independent press rather than petition – and a new concept of the audience – the public rather than the emperor. If we can say that the traditional gentry-scholar believed in the ideal of 'government of and for the people', the emergence of an independent press and of study societies implied a demand for 'government by the people', which had been absent in traditional Chinese political culture (Jin 1987: 66–7). In this sense, the traditional 'moral ideal of "gong" (public)' changed its meaning from being an abstract moral category defined in opposition to 'the moral vice of "si" (selfishness)' to having the related senses of 'public-mindedness' and 'collectivistic methods' – both of which suggested the democratic principle of popular sovereignty (Chang 1971: 104–5).

Taken altogether, this suggests that the sources of political legitimacy in traditional view of the 'mandate of Heaven' invested in the person of the emperor had come to be undermined. The transition from the Mencian ideal of benevolent government to the Western ideal of political participation involved a fundamental shift in cosmology: the people 'replace the mandate of heaven as the ultimate standard of political legitimation' and 'all political actions of the state had to be justified with reference to the collective will of people alone' (Chang 1971: 105–6).

As the foregoing suggests, a rising consciousness of public sovereignty together with the readership of independent periodicals and involvement in study societies indicated an emerging form of 'pubic sphere' in the last years of the nineteenth century in China. The scholars, heavily influenced by the

Western missionary press, played the leading role in the installation of this 'public sphere'. The scholars' public sphere, along with new cosmological comprehensions of time and space and a new cultural nationalism, all pulled towards the advent of social and cultural modernity in late nineteenth-century China. In the next chapter, we shall explore how the Western missionaries contributed to innovate Chinese printing technology: a key aspect of the embracing of cultural modernity, during the nineteenth century.

6 Missionaries' impact on printing technology

An important aspect of the missionary-journalists' work which is not so frequently recognized, is their crucial contribution to modernizing Chinese printing technology. Exploring this aspect, moreover, may cast new light on theories of the wider socio-historical impact of media technologies, such as that classically propounded in the work of Harold Innis (1972; 1995). This chapter aims, first, to trace the way in which generations of missionaries endeavoured to advance traditional printing technology in nineteenth-century China; second, to explore the implications and the 'unintended consequences' of this activity; and, finally, to reflect briefly on the implications of the Chinese experience for Innis's theories.

Traditional Chinese printing technology

There is no doubt that one of the earliest technologies for the reproduction of continuous texts – 'woodblock printing' – first developed in China. However, the date of its origins remains a matter of some dispute. In one of the most detailed discussions, contained in Joseph Needham's monumental *Science and Civilisation in China*, Tsien Tsuen-Hsuin narrows the range of likely dates to between the sixth and the ninth century AD and suggests the eighth century as the most reliable date, since several specimens from this period are extant (Tsien 1987: 146–59). Other scholars have been prepared to push the probable date back to the sixth-seventh (Xiao 2001: 45). On either account, Chinese printing hugely predates European printing.

The invention of the woodblock method was followed by a series of innovations and refinements in printing technology, including, as Rawski (1985: 17) identifies, colour printing, woodcut illustrations and facsimiles, and the use of copper movable type.[1] Despite all of these, Rawski insisted that the core techniques remain unchanged right through until the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Chinese printing continued to depend on, 'a very simple and inexpensive process, woodblock printing or xylography' (Rawski 1985: 17).

Rawski goes on to quote from the writings of the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (see chapter two)[2] in a passage describing the 'mechanical arts' among the Chinese. Though unimpressed by Chinese architecture and musical

instruments, Ricci held the art of printing in China in high regard. His enthusiasm was evident in his detailed description of woodblock printing techniques:

> Their [Chinese] method of making printed books is quite ingenious. The text is written in ink, with a brush made of very fine hair, on a sheet of paper which is inverted and pasted on a wooden tablet. When a paper has become thoroughly dry, its surface is scraped off quickly and with great skill, until nothing but a fine tissue bearing the characters remains on the wooden tablet. Then, with a steel graver, the workman cuts away the surface following the outlines of the characters until these alone stand out in low relief. From such a block a skilled printer can make copies with incredible speed, turning out as many as fifteen hundred copies in a single day. Chinese printers are so skilled in engraving these blocks, that no more time is consumed in making one of them than would be required by one of our printers in setting up a form of type and making the necessary corrections.
> (Gallagher 1953: 20–1)

The simplicity and consequent cheapness of woodblock printing, in Ricci's view, accounted for 'the exceedingly large numbers of books in circulation here and the ridiculously low princes at which the are sold' (Gallagher 1953: 21). The historian Ping-ti Ho echoes Ricci's point: 'there can be little doubt that books [in the Ming and Qing dynasties] were more plentiful and more inexpensive than ever'. Ho goes so far as to suggest that, 'up to about 1750, China had printed more books than probably the rest of the world put together' (Ho 1962: 214). Probably, then, it was the efficiency and utility of woodblock printing for most general purposes which prevented the Jesuit missionaries from introducing Gutenberg's invention to China. All the books which the Jesuits published in China, both in Chinese and Latin, were accomplished by woodblock or moveable wood type printing (Su 2000: 79).

Up to this point, it is evident that traditional Chinese printing techniques and their efficiency and productivity had led the world. There is, indeed, a long-standing debate about the possible influence of Chinese printing techniques on European developments. In 'The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward' first published in 1925, an American scholar, Thomas Carter, suggested that various aspects of the Chinese printing tradition – for instance, the invention of paper, the example of playing cards, image prints and books, and reports by returning European travellers on wood-block printing – may have inspired early developments in printing in Europe. Carter is however very careful to stress that there is little really reliable evidence to support this presumption, and so restricts his claim to saying that the Chinese should be considered, 'cousins rather than ancestors of the inventor of European typography' (Carter 1925: 182). Despite these qualifications, some Chinese scholars have endorsed Carter's general view with much more certainty (Ge 1935: 247–51; Xiao 2001: 311).

By contrast, many contemporary Western academics remain sceptical of the Oriental influence when discussing the origins of Western printing. Briggs and Burke, for instance, insist that the Chinese invention of movable type 'had few consequences' (Briggs and Burke 2002: 15). In their account, modern Western printing begins in 1450 with Johann Gutenberg's invention of the moveable metal-type printing press, thought to be inspired by the wine presses used in the Rhine Valley. The most significant aspect of Gutenberg's invention was the production of metal type using a mould – the first example of precision mass-production.[3] With this innovation earlier forms of Western printing, along with the medieval copying industry, rapidly collapsed as the printed word, previously restricted to ecclesiastical establishments, became widely disseminated and the first mass media 'explosion' hit Europe.

The comparison between the Chinese and the European experience in printing history is instructive, since, as Su Jing (2000: 2–9) argues, it reveals broader patterns of historical-cultural difference. While in China woodblock remained the dominant technique for over one thousand years, in Europe, woodblock, though introduced seven hundred years later than in China, had only a brief currency, soon to be replaced by movable metal type and the series of innovations in this technology – lithography, the steam press and so on – during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The interesting question thus arises: why did woodblock printing endure so long in China but fail in Europe? The reasons are complex. One of the reasons why block printing was never displaced by movable type, as Carter (1925: 24) mentions, is the Chinese love of calligraphy as a fine art. But the most significant factors, as Briggs and Burke (2002: 15) observe, is probably the profound difference between the two languages: Chinese uses thousands of ideograms compared to a European alphabet of twenty to thirty letters. McLuhan echoes this point of view:

> Phonetic script was the indispensable prelude. Thus Chinese ideogrammic script proved a complete block against the development of print technology in their culture.
>
> (McLuhan 1962: 152)

Indeed, movable letter type is clearly much more efficient when applied to an alphabetical language. In contrast, the character system in China made movable type a laborious, time-consuming and expensive process, discouraging its development for centuries and ensuring the unchallenged dominance of woodblock printing right up until the nineteenth century.

But then, suddenly, and in a sense unpredictably, this ancient technique comes under pressure during the nineteenth century, and during the early twentieth century, is by and large displaced. Accounting for this transition involves us in a story of cultural upheaval which extends far beyond the practicalities of technique and which parallels the broader transition from a traditional-dynastic society to modern one. And central to this story – as the

carriers not only of Western-modern printing techniques, but of Western scientific and cultural modernity – are the Protestant missionaries, crucial catalysts in the process of the emergence of modern journalism in China.

Robert Morrison and the pioneers of missionary publishing

> Letters and the Press constitute a mighty engine; in itself innocent, but according to its application, productive of good or evil almost infinite.

In these words taken from the beginning of the introduction to his *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language* published by the East India Company's Press in 1815, Robert Morrison (1782–1834) encapsulates the nineteenth century missionary's project of harnessing the media of the day – the 'mighty engine' – in the cause of Christian evangelism. Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China, reached Canton in 1807. It was hardly surprising for a Protestant like Morrison to make such a remark, knowing as he did the profound significance of printing for the Protestant reformation in Europe.[4] For him, and others who would follow, disseminating Christian literature was without doubt a primary task of their mission. Indeed, as Wylie noted:

> The commencement of the Protestant Mission to China, was closely connected with a scheme for translating the Scriptures into the native language; a work to which the pioneers devoted much time and attention.
> (Wylie 1967: i)

Soon after his arrival in Canton, the hostile political environment enhanced Morrison's belief that the development of a dedicated missionary press was a key strategy in the task of spreading Christian doctrine, and thus printing techniques became one of his main concerns.

Whilst the steam press was about to become common in Europe as part of the burgeoning industrial revolution, Morrison, with very limited financial support, at first turned to woodblock printing as the most plausible solution. Using this technology in 1810, he published the first Christian tract – *The Acts of the Apostles* – in a 1,000-copy print run in Canton (Morrison, 1839: 293).

By 1814, however, as Morrison came to fulfil his mission of publishing the Dictionary of the Chinese Language that he was compiling, an unexpected sponsor – the East India Company – offered assistance by providing a professional printer, Peter Perring Thoms, along with a Western printing machine and Western movable type in Macao. After some initial experiments, Morrison and Thoms agreed that, as the dictionary would be using both Chinese characters (albeit a small proportion), and English words on the same pages, metal type seemed to be the most efficient printing technique. Thoms, with the help of Chinese printers, laboriously handcut the type in a process which was similar to woodblock cutting.

Despite enormous difficulties, the dictionary of nearly 5,000 pages was eventually published in 1823 and included the largest number of Chinese characters up to that date (Reed 2004: 36).

Exploiting the support of the East India Company to publish the Chinese-English Dictionary in Macao, Morrison with the aid of William Milne, established a printing house and an Anglo-Chinese College (Yinhua Shuyuan) in Malacca in 1815. In August of that year, the *China Monthly Magazine* – the first modern Chinese periodical – was launched. The significance of this periodical for Chinese journalistic history is hard to exaggerate. Although the main body of the magazine continued to employ traditional woodblock printing by Chinese printers who were brought to Malacca from Canton, it was significant that the one surviving news section was found to be printed with metal movable type (Su 2000: 161;168).

In addition to experimenting with metal movable type, Morrison spearheaded the use of stone-based lithographical printing to China. In 1826, he returned from Britain, bringing with him a lithographical printing machine by means of which he began to print religious tracts. During the 1830s, more lithographical machines were imported and employed in China for religious and commercial purposes. In 1838, the periodical *World Report* (Geguo Xiaoxi) became one of the earliest journals to employ lithography (Fang 1997: 270).

Two other figures from the London Missionary Society are significant in the pioneering of modern print technology in China, Walter Henry Medhurst and Samuel Dyer. Medhurst arrived in Malacca 1817, working as a printer and became a missionary two years later (Xiong 1995: 182–3). Medhurst in particular saw printing as his primary mission and his devotion to improve printing techniques in China was at least as passionate as Morrison's. He had adapted a lithographic machine to print Chinese fonts and other local languages in Batavia (Djakarta). In addition to religious pamphlets, Medhurst also printed a thesaurus combining the technique of lithography for rendering Chinese characters with movable type for English. His *Chinese and English Dictionary* was thus produced at a much more affordable price than Morrison's dictionary (Su 2000: 182–5). After the Opium War, Medhurst moved to China[5] and played a leading role in developing printing in Shanghai, as we will see in the following section.

From 1827, Samuel Dyer, working under the influence of Robert Morrison, made other significant innovations in printing techniques in China. Chief amongst these was in tackling the problem – particularly the cost – of producing metal fonts of the forty thousand characters of the corpus of Mandarin. Up to this point this had involved the laborious process of producing individual metal engravings of each character, with no technique available for metal-alloy casting allowing reproducible fonts. Dyer began to explore new techniques for producing Chinese movable type. He experimented with a form of stereotyping, using plaster moulds and lead-alloy plates, to produce individual type (Reed 2004: 41). However, this type lacking

durability, Dyer eventually settled upon the usual type making technique used in the West – steel punch cutting, brass matrix fitting, metal alloy type casting – which was a much more sustainable option in the long term. He even claimed that one set of steel punches could produce sufficient Chinese type to meet the demand of many parts of the world (Su 2000: 196). But Dyer's ambition was interrupted by his ill health. In 1843, he died in Macao. Although he had completed fewer than half the fonts in large size and much fewer in smaller size than he had intended, Dyer's innovation in type casting was quickly adopted following his death (He 1954: 259). Dyer's movable type was prominently used in Chinese printing until the end of 1850s.

From Morrison to Medhurst and Dyer, the Protestant missionaries in the early nineteenth century undertook a quest to improve relief printing (*tuban*) and to introduce lithographic printing (*shiyin*) in China and achieved remarkable results. After the Opium War of 1840, the transformation of printing entered another stage, involving not only continuously improving techniques, but equally importantly, new ideas, styles and, indeed, genres in the missionaries' publishing enterprises. These institutional and cultural changes were to produce an even greater impact on the development of print media in China.

The London Missionary Society Press

In 1842, the Nanjing Treaty signed following the Opium War made Shanghai and other four coastal cities – the 'Treaty Ports' – free for the activities of British missionaries. Strategically located between Northern and Southern China, Shanghai enjoyed good access to many parts of the country and it became home to one of the London Missionary Society's main mission stations. Walter Medhurst played a leading role in establishing the Shanghai station. Alongside supervising the building of hospitals and schools, Medhurst continued to develop his printing enterprise. In 1843, he moved all his printing equipment from Malacca to Shanghai and established the London Missionary Society Press,[6] which became the first publishing house to adopt Western printing techniques in China.

The year 1847 saw the arrival of a cylinder printing machine in the LMSP. Sponsored by the British Bible Society, this first powered printing machinery that China had ever seen enormously increased the output of printing. Its first half year of production exceeded a whole year's output of the hand operated press. It is worth noting that the printing machine was in fact modified to be driven by an ox, which, along with its remarkable efficiency, created a sensation among the educated Chinese. Wang Tao, working then as a Chinese editor in the LMSP, describing the printing studio was astonished at the production of more than forty thousand pages every day. Several Chinese scholars wrote poems to express their amazement. One poem joked that the busily-employed ox was puzzled as to why it was not ploughing a field of soil but one of paper (Xiong 1995: 186–187).

With its burgeoning publishing activity in Chinese rather than English, the LMSP came to act as the press centre in Shanghai until the 1860s, with the 'Medhurst Circle' at its core. Amongst these were figures like Alexander Wylie who produced introductions to Western mathematics, geometry and astronomy and established the *Shanghai Serial*, the first secular Chinese language journal in Shanghai, and William Muirhead who produced many educational works, including two large academic books on geography and British history.

The industry and achievements of the Western missionaries were remarkable, however it is fair to say that they were in part dependant on the contribution of some outstanding Chinese scholars, such as Wang Tao, Li Shanlan, employed by the LMSP.

Although it is difficult to establish accurate figures, it is safe to say that, from 1844 to 1860, the output of the LMSP was dominated by religious subjects and that secular Chinese books and periodicals only amounted to a fraction of LMSP' titles.[7] Nevertheless, this small 'sideline' in scientific, medical and historical books and periodicals created a disproportionate impact. During the 1840s and 1850s, many of these were highly influential amongst Chinese gentry scholars and officials.

Amongst these was Euclid's *Elements of Geometry* translated jointly by Wylie and the Chinese mathematician Li Shanlan. The Chinese Scholar-General, Zeng Guofan, an active advocate of the Self-strengthening Movement, applauded this complete translation of Euclid's works (which had been partially translated by the Matteo Ricci over 250 years earlier), viewing it as a vital supplement to pre-existing Chinese works on mathematics (Spence 1999: 205). The first ever book on modern botany was translated into Chinese by Alexander Williamson, Joseph Edkins and Li Shanlan from the book of the British botanist John Lindly. Apart from this knowledge base, the LMSP was influential in spreading an enthusiasm for Western learning amongst figures who were to become opinion shapers amongst the Chinese intelligentsia at the end of the nineteenth Century. For example, Feng Guifen, an early reform-orientated scholar, quoted William Muirhead's works on geography in his article 'On Learning from the West' in his influential collection 'Proposals written in Xiao Fenlu' (Xiao Fenlu Kangyi). Even more importantly, after working for many years in the LMSP, Wang Tao went on, in 1874, to become the chief editor of *XunHuan Daily* in Hong Kong and subsequently grew to be perhaps the most celebrated Chinese editorialist at his time. For the later reform-oriented scholars, LMSP had produced a noticeable impact. Liang Qichao, in writing about how to read Western books, recommended the book co-translated by Alexandra Wylie and Li Shanlan – *Outlines of Astronomy* (Tantian) based on Herschell's popular work – as a 'must-read' for the educated Chinese. This was an important text in that it exposed the Chinese misunderstanding of Copernicus' heliocentric theory and so allowed the foundational ideas of modern astronomy spread among the Chinese scholars (Xiong 1995: 196).

During the 1850s, the influence of the LMSP was increasing as the foreign settlement in Shanghai achieved substantial growth and attracted elements of the educated Chinese elite who had left their homes because of the Taiping and Nian Rebellions. By 1860, however, the LMSP began to decline. One of the chief reasons was the death of Medhurst in 1857. But added to this, as more Western missionaries flooded in, Shanghai was becoming the centre of missionary activity in China and this expansion brought competition. One of the most dynamic of these – the American Presbyterian Mission Press – eventually overtook the LMSP,[8] and one of its employees, a young professional printer named William Gamble, was about to make his mark in the development of Chinese printing techniques.

The American Presbyterian Mission Press

The American Presbyterian Mission Press developed out of 'The Chinese and American Holy Classic Book Establishment' established in Macao in 1844, and relocating to the treaty port of Ningbo the following year. In 1860, it relocated to Shanghai and changed its name to the American Presbyterian Mission Press (Meihua shuguan).[9]

Like the London Missionary Society, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions took printing seriously. From the beginning they employed movable type and imported printing machines from America. Following Samuel Dyer's death in 1843, Richard Cole, one of the founders of the 'Chinese and American Holy Classic Book Establishment', continued to experiment with Chinese type making. In 1858, William Gamble arrived in Ningbo to take charge, and was soon convinced that Shanghai was a more promising place for the future of the organization. In 1860, 'the Chinese and American Holy Classic Book Establishment' moved to Shanghai and became the American Presbyterian Mission Press.

The increasing importance of the APMP in Shanghai owed much to Gamble. Based on a newer plate-making technique, 'electrotype'[10] developed in Europe in the 1840s, Gamble adapted it successfully to cast Chinese type. 'This revolutionary innovation' (Zhang 1989: 585) enabled more efficiency, lower costs and also produced clearer-edged and better-shaped Chinese type with improved calligraphic style. Compared to the two Chinese font sizes produced by Dyer, Gamble's electrotype process allowed him to make seven different font sizes. So popular was this innovation that these type were named after the Chinese name of APMP – 'Meihua type' – and sold across China.[11]

Apart from this, Gamble achieved considerable improvements in printing speed. He organised the Chinese characters which appeared in the Bible and other books into three categories – 'most useful, useful and less useful' (*changyong, beiyong and hanyong*).[12] All these characters were catalogued by their ideographic structure, the principle used in a well-known Chinese dictionary, the Kangxi Dictionary. For ease of access to these catalogued type

Gamble invented a device – a multi-layer shelf – to accommodate them. The 'most useful' and 'useful' type were placed in front of the printer and the 'less useful' type were stored on both sides. Use of this device greatly improved the speed of typesetting (He 1954: 261).

Altogether, Gamble's innovations in both type making and sorting guaranteed the APMP's dominance in producing and supplying Chinese type for the printing industry in the second half of the nineteenth century. In fact, its influence spread beyond China as Gamble's electrotype technique was adopted to compose Japanese type.

APMP provided Chinese type for a diverse range of clients including other missionary societies and different Western government interests and organizations. More importantly, in addition to being interested in what the American missionaries published and visiting the printing studios, Chinese gentry officials and some of the more open-minded representatives of the Qing government began to adopt the new printing techniques perfected by the missionaries. According to Su (2000: 277–279), during the 'Self-Strengthening' period, several orders for Chinese type and even whole sets of brass matrices were made by Chinese gentry officials, such as Ding Richang, the governor of Shanghai. In 1872, the Foreign Office (Zhongli Yamen)[13] of the Qing government ordered a large set of type and other printing equipment from the APMP and the LMSP in Hong Kong.

In terms of publishing, the APMP followed the same pattern as the LMSP. While religious reading filled the main body of published work, there was a large number of scientific books, on topics such as popular physics, geography, mathematics and even Western cookery. Many of these scientific publications were used as text books in church schools. And it was the APMP which conducted the printing of the later period of *Wanguo Gongba*, the most influential periodical in nineteenth-century China. By the early twentieth century, the APMP had become the biggest and the best equipped printing enterprise operated by Western missionaries in China.

The contest between woodblock and Western techniques

So far, we have traced, from Morrison, Dyer, and Medhurst to Gamble, how missionaries endeavoured to innovate traditional Chinese printing techniques, and the impact this had on the Chinese printing industry and on attitudes towards Western learning amongst many open-minded gentry officials and scholars. However, up until the 1860s, this impact was relatively limited in relation to the whole of the Chinese printing industry, where the long-standing practice of woodblock printing continued to enjoy dominance. But the situation was changing fast. With the growing improvement of type making, lithography and the emergence of photo-lithography, a fierce contest between woodblock and the Western printing techniques began to intensify during the 1870s.

As more steam-driven cylinder printing machines appeared in Shanghai,

lithography and another new Western invention – photo-lithography – began to make an impact. As Tsien observes,

> [Chinese] printers in the past had usually reproduced fine editions in facsimile by the laborious and difficult process of re-engraving, so they naturally found great attraction in this new process [lithography] which permitted them to reproduced handwriting and art work directly, or to make exact replicas of treasured editions with great speed.
>
> (Tsien 1987: 192)

Tsien goes on to mention that photo-lithography was used to print books used for preparing for the important civil service examination. But photo-lithography was perhaps best-known in China in application to the '*Dian Shizhai Pictorial*' published between 1884 and 1898 by one of the biggest photolithography studios 'Dian Shizhai' in Shanghai. Pioneering pictorial journalism, '*Dian Shizhai Pictorial*' appealed to a wide and eager readership across China. More importantly, as Chen and Xia (2001: 1–25) stress in a collection of excerpts from '*Dian Shizhai Pictorial*', it portrayed the turbulent current affairs of its time and provided a unique account of Chinese social, political and cultural history in the late Qing dynasty.

By the end of the nineteenth century, especially following the Sino-Japanese War of 1895, Chinese scholars had begun publishing their own newspapers and periodicals. Although little is known specifically about their concerns for printing techniques, it was impossible for them to avoid confronting this key aspect of the publication process. In the beginning, wooden movable type was employed to print some of the earliest Chinese periodicals. These included the influential periodicals *Wanguo Gongbao* and *Zhongwai Jiwen* edited by reform-oriented scholars such as Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. Nevertheless, with the increasing circulation and volume of content of such periodicals it was beyond the capacity of wooden movable type to meet the demand. Not surprisingly, both lead type and lithography began to be adopted in Chinese journalistic circles. According to Tang (1993), during the Reform Movement period of 1895–8, of the thirty-six important Chinese newspapers and periodicals, twelve were printed with lead type, nine with lithography, and the rest with woodblock, wood movable type or 'unknown'. Thus, more than half of the Chinese journalistic production had embraced Western printing techniques by the end of the nineteenth century. The rivalry between traditional woodblock and modern innovation ended with the modern techniques gaining the upper hand. The thousand year dominance of woodblock technology had in effect ended by the turn of the twentieth century.

More than just facilitating modern journalism, the printing techniques introduced by the missionaries played a crucial role in transforming the Chinese printing enterprise as a whole. In 1871, the first modern Chinese publishing house – China Printing House (Zhonghua Yinwu Zhongju) – was

established in Hong Kong by Wang Tao and Huang Sheng who bought the old Anglo-Chinese College Printing House and inherited the printing facilities installed by missionaries including Dyer (Ye 2002: 363–367). From there Wang Tao edited *XunHuan Daily*, the first modern Chinese newspaper operated solely by the Chinese. Another pioneering modern Chinese publishing house – the Commercial Press (Shangwu Yinshuguan) – was founded in Shanghai in 1897. Its four founders, Xia Ruifang, Bao Xianen, Bao Xianchang and Gao Fengchi were all educated in Presbyterian church schools and colleges and had worked as printers in the APMP (Ye 2002: 941–945). Initially printing school text books, the Commercial Press, 'grew into the largest printing house in the Far East and had been a landmark for the intellectual and educational development of modern China' (Tsien1987: 194).

The cultural implications of modern printing technology in China

Having established the considerable impact of the missionaries' printing institutions and their technological innovations on publishing practice during the late Qing Dynasty, I would like to consider briefly their possible wider impact in transforming Chinese society. And to open this up we can turn to Harold Innis's theories of communication.

Innis, a leading figure of the Toronto Circle of media theorists, pioneered the historical study of communication technologies in his book '*Empire and Communication*'. This sweeping overview of world history from ancient to modern times focused not on the contents of media messages but on the material media of communications – clay, the stylus, papyrus, the brush, paper and the printing press. As is well known, Innis's theory made a connection between these various media and associated social formations and forms of cultural experience.

The specific aspect of Innis's theories that is relevant to the present discussion is his argument about the influence of technological innovation on media monopoly.

As Patterson (1990) and Meyrowitz (1994) note, Innis's unique approach benefited from his early background of being a political economist. In his later works, Innis recognizes the crucial importance communication occupies in social, political and cultural power across ancient empires and Western modernity. He borrowed the principles of economic monopolies and applied them to the study of information/knowledge monopolies. In Innis's view, information/knowledge monopolies can be built up through a certain medium but also can be broken by the growth of a different type of medium. For example, Innis (1972: 148) argues that by the end of the sixteenth century, the Reformation was established in relation to the increasing production of paper and printing, which imposed a threat to 'the monopoly of knowledge built up in relation to parchment' which written tradition depended on.

In his other celebrated book, *The Bias of Communication*, Innis (1995) stresses a similar point that the medieval Church's monopoly over religious information was terminated by the invention and widespread utilisation of the printing press. The Church lost its control over the interpretation of the Bible and other religious text as the printing press created wider availability and easier access to them. For Innis, the development of print-as-technology is the key to the end of the Medieval media monopoly by the church.

When we come to consider Innis's theories in relation to the case of China however, some difficulties arise. As we have discussed, the printing innovations the Protestant missionaries achieved out-performed traditional woodblock techniques and led Chinese printing into the modern era. But did the profoundly new lead type mechanical printing and lithography have an effect on changing the information monopoly as Innis's theory would suggest?

As we have seen, newspapers, from the Tang to the Qing Dynasty, were dominated by official imperial gazette *DiBao*, with the unofficial *XiaoBao* playing a very minor and largely derivative role in terms of content. The *China Monthly Magazine* published by Morrison in 1815 has been generally accepted as the beginning of modern Chinese journalism and as marking the end of this long-standing state control over the press. Nevertheless, what made the unofficial periodical possible was not a new printing technique, as the *China Monthly Magazine* was printed with the traditional woodblock technique. In point of fact, the growth of the Protestant press and printing enterprises, such as LMSP and APMP was secured in the treaty ports because of the Qing's defeat by the Western powers. So what terminated the state monopolies over the press was the failure of the Qing government to resist Western intervention. But then can we say that printing technology innovations had no impact on ending the media monopoly?

Not exactly. The mechanical lead type and lithography, as discussed, improved the output of printing enormously. Better efficiency had led to quicker and wider distribution of the early modern newspapers and periodicals. Especially when the reform-oriented scholars launched their own newspapers in the late nineteenth century, much more frequent issues – for instance in the daily *Guo Wenbao* edited by Yan Fu – meant that imported modern printing technology became vital to sustain regular publication. Therefore it can be said that printing technology innovations played an important indirect role in the development of modern Chinese journalism, which in turn challenged the state's control, not least over the press.

Given this, it would seem somewhat exaggerated to interpret the impact of the imported printing technology in late-Qing China using a narrow interpretation of Innis's technology-centred media theory. Although it might be said that, in Western Europe, printing was probably 'at the heart of the intellectual, literary, economic, technological and political movements which anticipated the Renaissance' (Martin 1981: 131), claims for revolutionary social changes deriving directly from the invention of printing have been

regarded as overstated (Briggs and Burke 2002: 22). Yet, we don't have to reject Innis's theory completely.

As Briggs and Burke suggest, both autonomous and contextual factors should be considered without taking up an extreme position. They argue that, 'the contextualists deal more satisfactorily with the short-term, with the intentions, tactics and strategies of individuals. The revolutionaries, on the other hand, grapple more closely with the long-term and with the unintended consequences of change' (2002: 68).

Treading a delicate line between views that overstate the importance of printing technology and those that don't credit it with enough, we can see a clearer picture of the implication of the printing innovations introduced by the missionaries. Chronologically, from Morrison, Dyer to Medhurst, from LMSP to APMP, it took over half a century for the missionaries to improve the traditional Chinese printing technology and even longer to break the dominance of woodblock printing. Along with this, modernising journalism emerged as the missionary press became one of the important sources informing the reformist work of Chinese scholars and gentry officials. These developments might justifiably be called the 'unintended consequences of change'.

7 Modern Chinese journalism and Confucian dynamism

Although the missionary press created considerable impact on the Chinese scholars and thus on modern Chinese journalism, we should not presume that they were the sole agency involved. Benjamin Schwartz (1964: 2) has warned against a too complacent assumption of the power of the West in this respect. The implication that traditional Chinese culture in its confrontation with the West was inert, capable of response only when stimulated from without – the implication of the concept of 'impact' – may lead us to underestimate the complex and dynamic qualities of traditional Chinese culture. Yu Yingshi (1995) also stresses the importance of looking into the inner dynamism of Confucian tradition in studying cultural transformation in the late Qing.

Before we explore how Confucianism might have acted as an internal agent affecting the development of Chinese journalism, we should firstly examine how traditional Chinese learning shaped the character of the Protestant publishing enterprises. This is vital to avoid the pitfall of accepting the oversimplified model of 'Challenge-Response' in understanding the emergence of modern Chinese journalism.

Protestant missionary publications: a Sino-Western enterprise

Fairbank argues clearly that 'Christianity in China from the first was a Sino-foreign enterprise' (1985: 8). As he observes, since it was most unlikely for the missionaries to master the Chinese language and writing system to a native level, Chinese assistance was essential and indispensable for them to convey the Gospel message to their Chinese audience. He concluded that three steps were involved in the 'Sinofication' of Protestant Christianity: firstly, the participation of Chinese personnel; secondly, the adoption of Chinese terms within Protestant Christian texts; thirdly, the official status given to the missionaries by the imperial government.

In general terms, Fairbank's points seem valid. But how do they apply specifically to the missionary printing enterprises? Looking into the making of the missionary press, we can say that the Western Protestants could not have accomplished their projects without the involvement of Chinese

literati and printers and also without exploiting pre-existing Chinese religious texts.

Take the example of Robert Morrison. Although he had been diligent in his study of the Chinese language in London before his departure to Canton (Morrison 1839: 91), his Chinese was found to be far from adequate after his arrival in Canton in 1807. It was recorded that Morrison was introduced, through the help of the English Factory, to a language teacher Abel Yun, a Roman Catholic Chinese from Peking (Morrison 1839: 159). Apart from learning the language, Morrison, 'supposed that it would greatly facilitate his object to live in the manner of the natives' (Morrison 1839: 188). Though this project of cultural assimilation proved in some ways to be futile, Morrison did grow his hair to a tail of some length, became skilful using chop-sticks, grew his nails and dressed like the Chinese.

When Morrison was involved in the printing, Chinese printers such as Liang Fa and Qu Ang were crucially important in that they were responsible for the woodblock printing and distributing among Chinese communities in South East Asia and the government examination sites near Canton.

Morrison's experience was by no means unusual. The significance of Chinese personnel for most of the other missionaries publishing enterprises in China cannot be exaggerated. In the case of *Wanguo Gongbao*, we have seen that Young Allen, though being knowledgeable in China Affairs, could not publish his periodical without the help of Chinese editors including Wang Tao, Cai Erkang and Shen Yugui.

However, more than simply depending on Chinese personnel, the missionary press relied on Chinese concepts to interpret Christianity. Long before the Protestants, the Jesuits had developed their mission for over a century in China and established many expressions of the Christian faith in Chinese. In the early nineteenth century, Protestants came to encounter the heritage left by Matteo Ricci and other Jesuits. Morrison wrote in his diary:

> . . . I was perplexed, not knowing what words to make use of, to express to the Chinese, with whom I conversed, the Supreme Being; whether to adopt the Teen-choo of the missionaries, or to make use of words which are commonly understood by the heathen to denote spiritual and superior beings, or their gods, which are many . . .
>
> (Morrison 1839: 200–1)

Despite his perplexities, Morrison and other Protestants found that many of their tracts fitted well with the broad general Chinese religious-literature discourse using accepted concepts and expressions. According to Bays, one of the most frequently printed Christian tract – 'The Two Friends' – utilized 'standard popular religious terminology'. His analysis lists over 20 key concepts used in 'The Two Friends' and he found that, 'all but 2 or 3 had definite usages and meanings somewhere in the corpus of Mahayana Buddhist writings in Chinese'. The examples Bays cites: 'one of the Christian

terms for God (Tian-chu) and those for Heaven (Tian-tang) and hell (ti-yu), sin (tsui), repentance (hui), redemption (shu), saviour (chiu-shih-che), and spirit or soul (ling-hun)' were all borrowed rather than created terms. In Bays's view, other than for seriously committed readers, a casual glance at 'The Two Friends' may lead to an impression of a largely Buddhist-oriented religious literature (1985: 131).

While some missionaries despised these adoptions, other missionaries of a more optimistic disposition were quite open to embracing the indigenous religious literature, which as W.A.P. Martins noted, was 'helpful preparation for Christian teaching' (Rawski 1985: 148). Beyond adopting Buddhist terminology, the missionaries incorporated Confucian expressions to make their printing appeal to a Chinese readership. Morrison, Milne and Gutzlaff were among the pioneers here. In their periodicals *China Monthly Magazine* and *East Western Monthly Magazine*, both covers contained Confucian maxims, respectively: 'The Master [Confucius] said: Hear more; choose the good and emulate it' and, 'He who gives no thought to difficulties in the future is sure to be beset by worries much closer at hand' (Britton 1933: 18). Following the style of elementary Confucian teaching texts, the missionaries created their Christian tracts – Christian 'three-character classics' – to be used in the schools they set up (Rawski 1985: 137–139). Evidently, in order to localise and contextualise their Christian readings, the Protestants had to come to terms with some key Confucian ideas and expressions.

Exhibiting their general capacity for practicality, the missionary press went further to assimilate Confucianism with Christian doctrine. On the one hand, the Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century obviously believed that Christianity was superior to Confucianism in that it represented divine revelation and this led them to see it as morally and institutionally superior. As Morrison records:

> 'The multitudes of people in this country are truly, in a moral and religious view, as "sheep without a shepherd." Without referring to the peculiar and important doctrines of Christianity, but speaking merely of its general aspect in Protestant countries, with the qualifications and duties of its minister, in the public assemblies of the people, how vastly superior to the system of Paganism which prevails here!'.
>
> (Morrison 1839: 48)

On the other hand, many missionaries devoted themselves to integrating Christianity with Confucianism. James Legge, famous for his translations of Chinese classics to English, insisted that Confucianism did not conflict with Christianity and that Western missionaries in China should learn to understand and appreciate the Confucian classics:

> Missionaries have not merely to reform, they have to revolutionize. . . . Confucianism is not antagonistic to Christianity. It is, however, a system

> whose issues are bounded by the East and by time. . . . Let no one think any labour too great to make himself familiar with Confucian books. So shall missionaries in China come fully to understand the work they have to do.
>
> (Harrison 1979: 114)

In Young Allen's *Church News*, essays were published to make 'intelligent comparisons' between Christianity and the religions of China (Bennett 1983: 114). In December 1869, one such essay appeared to state that the Confucian Four Books and Five Classics shared similar views on God, human nature and morality to those found in the Bible. Christian doctrine contains comparable elements of faith with Confucianism, for example, the Confucian belief in 'Humanity' can be interpreted in terms of the Christian belief in 'love and benevolence' (Gu 1995: 189). The idea of a close resemblance and parallel messages between Confucian classics and Christianity was to be endorsed in a number of other articles. In one of these, Joseph Edkins stated that the Confucian classics contained similar description of ancient history to those found in the book of Genesis. He therefore concluded that different religions stemmed from the same source (Chen 1986: 35). Following in the same path as *Church News, Wanguo Gongbao* continued to make comparisons between Christianity and Confucianism. Essays were published to discuss the analogies between the Ten Commandments and Confucius's teachings or, more broadly, between the Five Books and the Bible (Bennett 1983: 167).

There can be no doubt that the missionary publications contained considerable input from both Chinese personnel and traditional learning. But, in order to fully comprehend the Chinese scholars' response to the missionary press, particularly *Wanguo Gongabao*, we need to examine the intellectual setting and to probe how the inner dynamics of Confucianism affected the Chinese scholars' perception of Western influence.

A brief glance at pre-Qing Confucian debates

To the Western intellectual historian, as Schwartz (1970: xi) notes, the concept of Christianity implies, 'infinite complexities, all sorts of polarities and tensions and above all, change over time'. In contrast, Confucianism has been, by and large, presumed to consist only of the Confucian classics. This certainly helped to sustain the stereotype of a changeless China. It is an often repeated and misleading generalisation that Western intellectual history reveals a diversity of elements and influences, such as those of Greece, Judea and Rome, whereas it seemed that China was dominated for over two thousand years by 'unproblematic' Confucianism.

Nevertheless, this pigeonholing understanding of Chinese learning is far from the truth. The long history of Confucianism is a fluid and changing process. Studies of Chinese intellectual history such as that by Jin and Liu (2000)

demonstrate that Confucianism had been influenced by and incorporated with different schools of learning such as legalism, Taoism and Buddhism over centuries. Some of the most dynamic periods of Confucianism were the Neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty when the Chen-Zhu School rose and during the Ming when the Lu-Wang School emerged.

Neo-Confucianism in the Song, also known as the Song School of Rationalism, was a syncretic philosophy which combined elements of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism and was developed by a number of scholars including Zhou Dunyi, the Chen brothers (Chen Hao, Chen Yi), and Zhang Zai. The six major concepts developed by them – the 'Great Ultimate', 'principle' (li), 'material force' (qi), 'nature', 'the investigation of things', and 'humanity' – were revised and synthesized by Zhu Xi, the greatest of the Neo-Confucianists. Although we clearly cannot enter into debates on the philosophic details of Neo-Confucianism, it is worth noting that Zhu Xi's most radical innovation – selecting and forming the Four Books – had produced profound influence on Chinese scholars up to the Qing Dyanasty. As Chan (1973: 589–590) observes, the Four Books, interpreted in new lights not only provided the foundation for Zhu Xi's social and ethical philosophy but also were, 'the basis of the civil service examinations' from 1313 to 1905.

In the Ming dynasty, 'much new intellectual and cultural activity' emerged thanks to 'economic growth, social change, and the spread of education and literacy' (de Bary 1999: 841). Zhu Xi's orthodox interpretation of Confucianism was challenged, most effectively by the philosopher Wang Yangming whose ideas of dynamic idealism dominated the sixteenth-century intellectual scene. As Chang (1971: 11) observes, the dispute between Chen-Zhu School (the Chen brothers and Zhu Xi) and Lu-Wang School (Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming) focused on, 'the problem of the usefulness of learning to faith'. While the Cheng-Zhu School stressed that learning was essential for the realization of the Confucian life-ideal, the opposing Lu-Wang School, 'upheld the primacy of moral intuition' rather than learning and 'hence the self-sufficiency of the human mind'.

Having briefly sketched the climate of intellectual dynamism and critical debate that existed before the Qing, we can now move on to the Qing period to investigate the intellectual setting immediately before Western intervention in the nineteenth century. This will help us to see how contemporary Confucianism affected the response of the Chinese scholars towards the missionary press, and was thus, to an extent formative of the early modern print media in China.

Intellectual trends in the Qing dynasty

Unlike the Song or the Ming dynasty, the late Qing period did not create the most impressive context of intellectual vigour. Yet intellectual arguments among the traditional educated élite remained heated:

> Confucian scholars continued to be engaged in such lively intellectual debates as those between the schools of Han Learning[1] and Song Learning, those between the New Text School and the Ancient Text School,[2] or even those between the Cheng-Chu School and the Lu-Wang School of Neo-Confucianism. Thus for scholars in the late nineteenth century, Confucianism, not to say the whole Chinese cultural tradition, was by no means a monolithic whole but a vast and complex intellectual world divided into competing schools of thought.
>
> (Chang 1971: 2)

These competing schools of thought, in Liang's account (1970), can be better understood chronologically in three periods. The early Qing saw the dawn of the School of 'Practical Statesmanship' (Jinshi zhiyong). Then in the middle Qing period, there emerged the dominance of the School of 'Empirical Research' (Kaozheng xue). Finally, contestation between the 'Modern Text School' and the 'Ancient Text School' became the main feature of the late Qing period.

Many late Ming and early Qing scholars blamed Neo-Confucianism as being responsible for the collapse of the Ming regime and so launched a fierce attack against it. Two scholars in particular – Gu Yanwu and Huang Zhongxi – built their reputations on their criticism of Ming intellectual trends and their proposals for new scholarship.

Gu Yanwu[3] (1613–1682) was one of the most celebrated scholars of the early Qing dynasty. He vehemently denounced the abstract and metaphysical nature of late-Ming scholarship, which he saw as a form of Taoism disguised as Confucianism (Levenson 1958: 49). Declining all invitations to serve the Qing government, Gu spent much of his time in travelling and improving his scholarship. Through his wide social observation, Gu laid the basis for a new kind of rigorous and pragmatic scholarship. His main contribution to Qing-period learning was in terms of developing new scholarly methods having the characteristics of originality; utility; and the use of extensive evidence (Hsu 1990: 84).

Another leading scholar Huang Zongxi (1610–1695) also advocated the 'useful application of knowledge'. He was a fervent Ming loyalist fighting for many years against the Manchu occupation in the east coast, but at the age of 39 he returned to scholarship (Wu 1987: 52). Like Gu Yanwu, Huang believed that scholars should fulfil the long-neglected intellectual task of scholarship expressing a concern for human society. In his well-known work, *Plan for the Prince* (Ming-Yi-dai-fang- Lu), he wrote a critique of the autocratic regime 'The Origin of the Sovereign' (Yuan jun), along with an article, 'The Origin of Law' (Yuan fa) promoting the idea that rule of men should be replaced by the rule of law.

The radical thought of both Gu and Huang, as Jin and Liu (2000: 170–192) observe, to some extent resemble modern political thought. They claim that Huang's ideas on restraining the prince's power and allowing the law to be

openly debated can be compared to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Le Contrat Social* which had considerable impact on Western-modern political institutions. However, it was in the late Qing when the influence of the thought of Gu and Huang reached its peak. The reformers in the late nineteenth century, such as Liang Qichao and Tan Shitong printed several tens of thousands of copies of excerpts from Huang's *Plan for the Prince* for secret distribution. Liang himself claimed that, 'this contributed powerfully to the sudden alteration of thought in the late Qing' (Liang 1970: 38).

But following the generation of Gu and Huang, the trend towards 'practicality' was eclipsed by the School of Empirical Research (Kaozheng) which dominated the intellectual circle in the middle period of the Qing dynasty. Scholars became concerned with a methodology which involved the meticulous evaluation of ancient text and artefacts with high standards of precision. During the eighteenth century, many scholars concentrated on textual criticism, bibliography and other such fastidious pursuits so intensely that they moved entirely away from issues of social and moral concern. While some defended the scholars of Empirical Research School for being under political pressure from the Manchu regime, they were criticised by others as 'escapists' from reality.

Dai Zhen (1724–1777) was one of the most well-known scholars in the Empirical Research camp. His guiding belief was that a scholar should not be deluded either by others or by himself. From the age of ten, he questioned the authenticity of the Confucian master Zhu Xi's works. It was not surprising to find that Dai Zhen went on to establish his own school of learning. Beyond the realm of empirical research, Dai Zhen won his reputation with his radical criticism of the Confucian 'rational principle' at the heart of its moral system. For his original and challenging opinion that, 'The Confucian rational principle kills men', Dai Zhen was revered as a pioneer of liberal thinkers in Chinese history.

The third era of the intellectual trends in the Qing was focused on the dispute between the New and Ancient Text Schools. This controversy largely lay in disputes over the authenticity of sources of Confucian teaching and hinged on the fact that the emperor of the Qin supposedly destroyed all the ancient classics in acts of book-burning. 'New Text' was thus not a reference to contemporary texts, but referred to the classics and commentaries on these in the Qin (221–206 BC) and Han (202 BC–220 AD) periods, in opposition to the 'Ancient Texts' of earlier times.

Despite the fact that this was chiefly an debate over textual interpretation, we should not ignore 'ideological implications' of the differences between the New Text School and the Ancient Text School. Chang stresses the central belief of the New Text School that, 'the core of Confucianism is its socio-moral pragmatism' and that this is to be found in, 'a free "ideological" interpretation' as opposed to, 'a literal and prosaic understanding of Confucianism' (Chang 1971: 23).

So far, we have sketched the three mainstream intellectual trends. As we

can see, far from being static, the internal development of Qing scholarship was both active and complex. The scholars consistently re-assessed and re-arranged the rich Chinese cultural heritage with their contemporary concerns. Their arguments pushed back further from the Ming to the Song, to the Han and the pre-Han period. As Liang notes

> Intellectual trends during the two-hundred-odd years of the Qing were actually a reverse development of the intellectual trends of the previous two thousand or more years. It was like peeling a spring bamboo-shoot: the more it is peeled, the closer one gets to the core.
>
> (1970: 14)

In Liang's account, 'the core' is not sheer obsession with ancient researches but to bring forth 'a liberation from Confucius and Mencius' through the revival of antiquity (Liang 1970: 26–27). While acknowledging the decline of traditional learning, Liang declared the spirit of scholarship and research should be maintained in the new social and cultural environment.

Indeed, nineteenth century Chinese scholars, though confronting Western learning through the missionary publications, were still deeply embedded in the changing Chinese cultural tradition and concerned with the central problems of traditional thought. Their response to the Western influences can be understood better within the complex context of Confucianism.

The late Qing statesmanship and reformists

In the nineteenth century, the early group of scholars promoting internal reform were largely from the New Text camp, such as Lin Zexu, Wei Yuan and Gong Zizhen. Among these pioneering reformists of modern China, most noticeably, Wei Yuan compiled the first significant Chinese works on the West – 'An Illustrated Gazetteer of the Maritime Countries' (Hai-guo Tu-zhi)[4] – in 1844. This sizable collection is considered as one of the milestones in modern Chinese history as it implies one of, 'the first systematic attempts by a dedicated Confucian to provide his countrymen with a realistic picture of military affairs and the outside world' (Liu 1999: 206). Wei Yuan famously summed up the purpose of his book as, 'learning the superior techniques of the barbarians to control the barbarians' (Hsu 1990: 276). Although Wei's understanding of Western learning was rather limited, it marked the beginnings of a Chinese intellectual transformation in which the Confucian tradition was involved. Wei's promotion of the 'barbarian' superior techniques was, though not solely, underpinned by the principle of the Confucian ideal of practical statesmanship.

Indeed, the seventeenth century thinkers Gu Yanwu and Huang Zhongxi of the Statesmanship School became spiritual inspiration for many late Qing scholars. Some of them, including Wei Yuan and Feng Guifen, even erected a temple in Peking to commemorate Gu (Chang 1976: 145). If we can say

earlier scholars adopted the principles of Statesmanship during the declining years of the Ming and occupation of the Manchurians, the nineteenth century scholars were under pressure of the Western invasion when they turned to statesmanship. Thus the principle of Confucian practicality – 'knowledge of antiquity, though of fundamental importance, must meet the needs of the present, hence the emphasis on practical affairs' (Liu 1999: 185) – can be seen to be a central feature of Chinese tradition shaping the approach of the Qing reformists. Thus as Cohen has it, certain aspects of its long cultural heritage, 'far from acting as barriers to China's modern transformation, might actually assist in this transformation and take an important part in directing it (Cohen 1996: 79).

As we have seen, the leading late nineteenth century reformists Kang and Liang, thanks to the missionary press, absorbed a wide range of Western-modern learning which, through independent periodicals and study societies, inaugurated a distinctly modern intellectual and political movement in China. However it is also very important to understand Kang and Liang in their roles as central figures of the New Text School in order to appreciate the significant role traditional learning played in their response towards the Western influence.

Though from a Neo-Confucian family, Kang Youwei (1858–1927) followed his mentor and developed the position of merging the Han and the Song learning despite the differences between them. For Kang, Confucianism was not only oriented toward the ideal of moral cultivation but toward the ideal of practical statesmanship. Between 1891 and 1897, Kang wrote his two most important works – *A Study of the Classics Forged during the Xin Period* (Xin-xue Wei-jing Kao) and *A Study of Confucius on Institutional Reform* (Kongzi Ganzhi Kao) – which Liang (1970: 94) subsequently compared to a 'cyclone' and a 'mighty volcanic eruption'.

What made Kang's two books radical and influential was not just the attack against the totality of the Ancient Text classics. Kang defined the central ideal of the New Text School as practical statesmanship and stressed that Confucianism, in its true nature, was oriented toward institutional reform rather than toward the preservation of ancient doctrines and institutions. In *A Study of Confucius on Institutional Reform,* Kang went further than most previous scholars to pronounce his extraordinary theories that Confucius was first and foremost a reformer. In doing this he drew upon the doctrine of 'three ages' – 'the Age of Disorder', 'the Age of Approaching Peace' and 'the Age of Universal Peace' – and portrayed the Confucian view of history as a linear and progressive one. Kang argued that each of the three epochs has its appropriate political system: 'absolute monarchy is suitable for the Age of Disorder; constitutional monarchy for the Age of Approaching Peace, and republican government for the Age of Universal Peace' (Chang 1971: 50–51). These ideas were what Kang based his idea of political 'reform and restoration' on (Liang 1970: 94).

It is worth noting that the theory of the three ages was not new and that

Kang in fact borrowed it from the early influential Confucian scholar Dong Zhongshu (179–104 BC). But Kang dismissed Dong's cyclical view of history and formulated his Confucian evolutionary view of history most probably under Western influence (Chan 1973: 724). Nevertheless the flexible nature of Confucian practical statesmanship provided key support for Kang's inventive theories to convince Chinese scholars during the late Qing.

Liang Qichao (1873–1929), another important scholar of the New Text School, followed Kang and developed his radical view of traditional Chinese culture. Liang maintained the principle of Confucian practical statesmanship stressing its strong social and moral concerns. For him, the Confucian ideal of practical statesmanship provided a key justification for channelling new ideas into China.

The marginal impact of the early missionary press

Having now considered the broad intellectual setting within which the Chinese scholars responded to the West, we can see the extent to which principles embedded in traditional scholarship were involved in their response. The Chinese scholars should not be considered passive in the process of early modern transformation. The revival of the School of Statesmanship played a central role in the scholars' attitudinal change towards Western influence. This helps to explain the changing impact of the missionary press among the Chinese scholars.

As we have seen scholars like Wang Tao, who had close contact with the missionaries, initiated the establishment of their own Chinese newspapers in Shanghai and the other Treaty Ports after the 1860s. Nevertheless, what must be noted, at that stage, is that the positive influence of the missionary press was fairly limited to the coastal cities and reached only a small percentage of the gentry scholars.

And indeed the most responsive scholars like Wang Tao and Zhen Guanying were considered 'marginal men lacking the traditional respectability in the Chinese intellectual world' (Chang 1971: 4). Despite their better understanding of Western learning, the fact of their not being considered part of the mainstream intellectual élite restricted their impact. According to Jin and Liu (1999: 259), Wang Tao only passed the lowest level of the government examination and was in exile for many years. Benefiting from his wide exposure to Western ideas and his many connections, Wang Tao developed cosmopolitan views which discarded the absolute centrality of traditional Chinese thought. He respected Western civilization and earnestly believed that China should learn from the West to gain wealth and strength. Through his journalism he was the first to deliver to the Chinese news of the sweeping economic and institutional reforms of the Meiji Restoration begun in Japan in 1868 (Cohen 1974).

However, for the élite group of gentry-literati, up to the 1860s, there was no major value reorientation as a result of the presence of the West. The School

of Statesmanship merged with the New Text School to provide the élite with the pragmatic approach and technical rationality which led to the Self-strengthening Movement. In spite of a very small number of 'marginal' figures like Wang Tao and Zheng Guanying who embraced Western civilization and supported institutional reform, mainstream scholarship insisted that the substance of Confucianism should remain intact even while they accepted the doctrine of, 'learning the superior techniques of the barbarians to control the barbarians'. Their intellectual outlook can be described by the later coined slogan, 'Chinese thought as substance (ti), Western thought as function (yong)'[5] (Tong 2000: 129). Confronting such a well-protected framework of Chinese learning, the missionary press failed to penetrate deeply into the centre of the Chinese literate life and brought little change to the central values held by the majority of Chinese gentry.

The hostility of the mainstream scholars to the doctrines of the missionaries can be readily understood as the defensive stance of a core strata of society intent on preserving the cultural stability of Confucianism. But this did not in any straightforward way extend to a rejection of the tenets of Western learning. What emerged, then, was a process of incorporation of Western ideas into a reforming agenda *within* Confucianism. This was catalysed by the mounting national crisis of political legitimization as the century drew to its close. The urgency of the need for institutional change justified the expanding ideals of Confucian Statesmanship and at the same time shifted the missionary press out of their marginal position.

1895: intellectual turning point and peak time of the missionary press

The year 1895 saw dramatic changes in the Chinese response towards missionary print media. The SDK publications including *Wanguo Gongbao* were without doubt among the best-received. As Timothy Richard records:

> For eighty years public opinion in China had set its face against Christian literature. Christian tracts were actually made into soles for Chinese shoes, and the final fate of most of the rest was to be collected and burned, along with other papers containing Chinese characters, in temple buildings. The booksellers of China refused to handle, on any account, any Christian books for sale, considering it a transaction disloyal to their country and unworthy of honourable men. But in 1895, after the appearance of Mackenzie's *History of the Nineteenth Century* and other books of the SDK, a great change came over the Chinese booksellers.
>
> (Richard 1916: 232)

Richard goes on to describe how pirated editions of missionary publications burst out across China:

> In one city alone-Hangchow-there were no less than six pirated editions of the 'Nineteenth Century[6]', one edition de-luxe for the rich, the others for people of lesser means. Altogether there must have been a million pirated copies in circulation throughout China.
>
> (Richard 1916: 232)

Why did the year of 1895 become such a watershed in the changing attitudes to the missionary press in China? There can be little doubt that the disastrous defeat by Japan taken for granted as a 'sub-nation' by the Sino-centric scholars was decisive here.[7] The stunning demise of the whole Qing navy, the most significant achievement of the Self-strengthening Movement, announced not only a military failure but also the failure of the Confucian pragmatic attempt to meet Western challenges. Their profound frustration and humiliation led many scholars not only cut their queues (Wu 1987: 95) but also to begin to embrace the very Western learning which had been rejected. It was not surprising to see the surging popularity of the missionary press, particularly of *Wanguo Gongbao*.

Chang (1999) defines the year 1895 as the beginning of the modern transformation of China. In intellectual terms, it marked the point at which many mainstream scholars began to distinguish themselves from their traditional roles in the society and through establishing independent newspapers and study societies, changed the way opinion was formed and openly criticised government actions.[8]

Nevertheless, we should not fall into the simplistic assumption of a 'radical discontinuity between tradition and modernity' (Cohen 1996: 80). We cannot presume that when the missionary press 'penetrated from the periphery to the centre' [of the Chinese élite], 'earlier Chinese concerns became moribund' (Cohen 1996: 75). In fact, as Chinese scholars were inspired to adopt the Western forms of newspapers and study societies, traditional learning retained a significant role.

Traditional learning and the Chinese élite press

In the élite press which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, traditional Chinese intellectual outlook was manifest. As noted earlier, in *Qiangxue Bao* 1896, Kang invented the Confucian calendar and wrote two articles to advocate Confucianism as a national religion. Confucian temples, in Kang's view, should be built across the country and the people should be requested to attend the temples to listen to Confucian sermons on the seventh day. He also suggested that other forms of religious cult be abolished in China (Wang 1997: 447). Although Kang's attempt to invent Confucianism as a 'religion' was clearly inspired by the West, it was undeniable that Kang still endeavoured to defend traditional culture through the modern press.

This no doubt reflects the ambivalence of the gentry scholars, caught between tradition and modernity. On the one hand, they were educated and

grew up with traditional scholarly teaching, on the other hand, the repeated defeats by the Western powers and intensifying national crisis encouraged their study on Western learning. With such complex and tense cultural anxieties, the educated élite turned to both traditional Confucian ideals and Western ideas for their inspiration and this was mirrored in their newspapers.

Not surprisingly, we see that in *Qiangxue Bao,* Kang not only advocated the thought of 'three ages' from the Confucian tradition, but also the establishment of a parliament in China. Like Kang, Liang valued aspects of traditional learning in his leading reform periodical *Shiwu Bao* 1896–1898. In Vols 7–8, 1896, Liang wrote articles on the civil examination system in which he gave credits to the system while criticising the curricular. In his reform proposal, Liang insisted that session one of the civil examinations should 'remain devoted to the Four Books and Five Classics' while he also stressed that Western subjects should be adopted in the exams (Elman 2000: 589–590). Liang's idea of adopting both Chinese and Western learning was also reflected in his well-known article 'Colophon to an Index of Books of Western Learning' (Xi-xue Shu-mu-biao Xu-li) in *Shiwu Bao* Vol.8, 1896 (Liang 1953: 447–51). In this article he vigorously promoted translations of Western books but simultaneously expressed his concerns that many Chinese scholars had completely discarded traditional learning to pursue Western learning. In Liang's view, the Confucian classics should be accepted as primary reading to combine with Western learning and without it, Western learning would have no substance (Liang 1953: 458–461). In another article,[9] Liang also attempted to employ a traditional mode of thought – the three-ages formula – to suggest China's maturity in modernity as the movement from the 'Age of Approaching Peace' to the 'Age of Universal Peace' (Chang 1971: 106).

To underline the traditional elements in shaping the modern élite press, as the cases of Kang and Liang show, does not mean we should think of the early modern Chinese press as merely 'new bottles filled with old wine'. In the words of Levenson (1965: 36), élite journalism actually saw 'the confluence of two streams of history' which mingled to dissolve traditional Chinese ethnocentrism.

To summarize, the inner dynamism of Confucianism, often neglected in discussions of China's modernization played an important role shaping the scholars' response towards Western intervention. The changing impact of the missionary press was very much affected by the revival and development of practical statesmanship of the New Text School of Confucianism. At the close of the nineteenth century as the national crisis was deepening, mainstream Chinese scholars, following the principle of Confucian practicality, began a wider and deeper embrace of Western learning. By then, the missionary press, particularly the SDK publications, such as *Wanguo Gongbao* were no longer peripheral but vital sources for the Chinese intellectual transformation. Within this complex and contradictory interaction between Chinese tradition and Western modernity, the Chinese gentry-scholars created the early modern press in the form of an unique admixture of both.

8 The missionary press and the issue of cultural imperialism

So far, the study has understood nineteenth-century missionary publishing enterprises as a major source of influence on the emergence of the Chinese modern élite press, though in the previous chapter we qualified this by stressing the importance of traditional culture in shaping Chinese scholars' response towards the missionary press.

But now we need to address a critical issue in the analysis of the impact of the missionary press. In this chapter, we will examine the notion of the Christian mission as a form of 'cultural imperialism' and seek out the political meaning of the Chinese media's entry to modernity. We shall review the implications of the new media the missionaries brought to China in the light of the distinctive Chinese political culture in which an élite class – Confucian 'gentry-scholars' – had enjoyed cultural and moral hegemony.

The concept of 'cultural imperialism'

Opening contemporary Chinese books, no matter whether they be school history text books or academic works, we find that Christian missionaries in nineteenth-century China are more often than not condemned as 'serving Western colonialism' (Fang 1997: 246). Although the positive impact of the Christian mission is sometimes mentioned, the missionaries are still regarded as an intrinsic part of Western power invading China. The cultural 'damage' they caused is often imagined as no less than the opium trade or the gunboat (Wu 1998: 68). In order to understand this claim, which has stood as one of the central tenets for interpreting the missionary impact within China, we need to examine the concept of 'cultural imperialism'.

This is a curious concept. Its remarkably wide usage and somewhat superficial appeal disguise its complexity. From a sociological perspective, as Tomlinson (2001) warns us, to produce a non-controversial definition of 'cultural imperialism' would be extremely difficult. Both 'culture' and 'imperialism' are notoriously complicated words.

Let us look at 'imperialism' first. According to Schlesinger (1974: 336), the word 'imperialism' was not found in use until the 1840s. Its early appearance in English can be traced in application to the Second Empire of

Napoleon III but not to overseas colonialism. In the late nineteenth century, its contemporary meaning was established in the growing European territorial expansion. Then it was used to refer to 'the phenomenon of colonial or neo-colonial empire' which created a substantial but not entirely coherent literature.

Raymond Williams (1983) clarifies the term 'imperialism' in a more up-to-date context. Apart from noting that the word first grew out of and was connected with European colonial rule in the nineteenth century, he claims that 'imperialism' was employed by the early twentieth-century Marxists to analyse and criticize the stages of capitalist development. He also suggests that the term mainly refers to two strands: an economic system, which America's domination represented, and a political system, which was found in the example of the former Soviet Union's 'satelliting' of the Eastern European Bloc. However, he admitted that

> [Imperialism], like any word which refers to fundamental social and political conflicts, cannot be reduced, semantically, to a single proper meaning. Its important historical and contemporary variations of meaning point to real processes which have to be studied in their own terms.
>
> (Williams 1983: 160)

Indeed, the concept of 'imperialism' contains considerable complexity and ambiguities. It is impossible to understand it without looking into its intricate and particular historical context.

When we come to discuss the concept of 'culture', we face, if anything, a more overwhelming complexity. As Raymond Williams (1983: 76–82) traces it, from its etymological roots in rural labour, the word 'culture' comes first to mean something like 'civility', and then in the eighteenth century becomes more or less synonymous with 'civilization', in the sense of a general process of intellectual, spiritual and material progress. The word 'culture' has developed deep complexity within contemporary discourse. According to a well-known piece of research carried out by A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1952), over 150 definitions of 'culture' were gathered from English and American sources alone.

In a much-quoted comment, Williams regards 'culture' as 'one of the two or three most complex words in the English language' (1983: 87). This intimidating scope is echoed by Terry Eagleton:

> It is hard to resist the conclusion that the word 'culture' is both too broad and too narrow to be greatly useful. Its anthropological meaning covers everything from hairstyles and drinking habits to how to address your husband's second cousin, while the aesthetic sense of the word includes Igor Stravinsky but not science fiction. Science fiction belongs to 'mass' or popular culture, a category which floats ambiguously between the

> anthropological and the aesthetic. . . . It would be hard to come up with a more resplendently empty definition.
>
> (Eagleton 2000: 32)

In his account, Eagleton stresses that culture is made up of 'countless numbers of forms'. To attempt to define 'culture' is most likely to fall into a trap, 'between disablingly wide and discomfortingly rigid notions' (2000: 32).

Whereas the two words 'culture' and 'imperialism' involve remarkable historical ambiguity and intricacy, the use of the term 'cultural imperialism' has been relatively recent. Thompson (1995: 165–6) locates it as one prominent theoretical account in the literature on international communications during the last few decades. The core argument that the term embraced, as Thompson observes, was the dominant role American transnational corporations played in global media, and the damaging consequences this brought to traditional cultures. He traces the early work on 'cultural imperialism' to Herbert Schiller's *Mass Communications and American Empire*, first published in 1969. As the leading proponent of the 'cultural imperialism thesis', Schiller argues that America emerged as a new empire after the Second World War on two important grounds: economic power and communicational strength. This enabled American business and military organizations to manipulate the global media, especially broadcasting. Large quantities of commerce-driven American media products flooded into many parts of the world, threatening to destroy 'authentic', traditional and local culture.

The 'cultural imperialism thesis', though tremendously influential, has been exposed to a great deal of criticism both in terms of its empirical basis and its assumptions about the process of cultural appropriation – particularly in relation to media texts. Indeed, critics like Tomlinson go so far as to argue that there is a deep *conceptual* problem with the idea:

> Although the central idea of cultural imperialism – that certain dominant cultures threaten to overwhelm other weaker ones – looks like a fairly straightforward claim, things turn out to be more complicated at the conceptual level, making a clear empirical answer to the cultural imperialism question difficult to arrive at.
>
> (Tomlinson 2000: 129–30)

Tomlinson's overall approach to these conceptual problems is to treat cultural imperialism less like a coherent 'thesis' than as a set of discourses – sometimes overlapping, sometimes contradictory – that circulate within intellectual/political/academic communities, largely within the West itself. To understand this, he claims, means to 'assemble the concept of "cultural imperialism" out of its discourse' (Tomlinson 2001: 7). This will broadly be the approach of this discussion. However, in doing so we will add a context which is largely absent from discussions of the subject within media studies: that is, the particular case of the discourse of cultural imperialism

developed in the early part of the twentieth century, appropriated by Mao, and then applied retrospectively to the nineteenth-century Western missionaries.

The Chinese cultural imperialism thesis: Lenin to Mao

To all native Chinese-speaking scholars who criticized the Western missionary press as a form of 'cultural imperialism', the term seemed a commonplace. The two words have been so widely used in modern Chinese discourse since the early twentieth century: 'culture' was one of the most popular words applied in the May Fourth Movement of 1917–23, which was also referred to as the 'New Cultural Movement'. In the Anti-Japan War of 1937–45, 'Japanese imperialism' became the most hateful phrase for the Chinese.

Nevertheless, the two words, like many modern non-ideographic Chinese words, did not have a particularly long history. Both 'culture' and 'imperialism' were adopted, around the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth century, in a complex appropriation: from Japanese translations of Western terms, which themselves used classical Chinese vocabulary. As early as 1902, the first Chinese book criticizing Western imperialism was translated by Zhao Bizhen from a Japanese book (Xiong 1995: 660). However, 'imperialism' did not develop into an important term until the Leninist theory of imperialism entered China after the Russian Revolution in 1917. Why did Lenin's theory become so influential in China?

We should note how Lenin (1982: 83–5) employed 'imperialism' in his writing in 1916 to analyse Western behaviour: imperialism was the highest stage of capitalism with certain fundamental characteristics: economic monopoly, financial oligarchy, capital export, the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations and the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers. Lenin stressed that economic monopoly under cartels, syndicates and trusts would lead to parasitism and the decay of capitalism. Although Lenin said that it would be absurd to assume the particular year or decade in which imperialism was 'definitely' established, in his view, imperialism in America and Europe, and later in Asia, took final shape in the period 1898–1914. As Hsu explains,

> At this point mutual jealousy and rivalry among the capitalist states would inevitably lead them into conflict and eventual extinction. The downtrodden people of Asia and other underdeveloped areas should thus rise against foreign imperialism and hasten the passing away of the foreign yoke.
>
> (1990: 515)

With such strong criticism and the prediction of the collapse of the Western powers, not surprisingly, the Leninist theory of imperialism quickly became popular among the Chinese élite, who had been suffering Western invasions for decades,

> [For] it not only blamed the Western powers of being responsible for China's ills and forecast the imminent decline and demise of capitalism, but also assigned Asia a place in the world revolution, thereby refuting European Marxist views which believed the problems of the world could be solved only in and by the West.
>
> (Hsu 1990: 515)

By the 1920s, the usage of 'imperialism' had grown steadily in the thinking of both the Guo Mintang and the Chinese Communist Party, and then it became firmly established in the thought of Mao Zedong. Fairbank (1995: 5) makes it clear that it was Mao who expanded the scope of the word 'imperialism', 'to include nearly all forms of foreign contact in the Nineteenth century, including Christian missions, as cultural imperialism'. Indeed, Mao wrote in 1939 on 'The Chinese Revolution and The Chinese Communist Party':

> The imperialist powers have waged many wars of aggression against China, for instance, the Opium War launched by Britain in 1840, the war launched by the Anglo-French allied forces in 1857, the Sino-French War of 1884, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894. . . .
>
> (Mao 1965: 311)

In his account, Mao pushed the time boundary of 'imperialism', which Lenin had employed to refer to late nineteenth-century capitalism, back to the start of the Opium War in 1840. By doing so, Mao invented his own 'imperialism', which became a bag containing all forms of Western expansion and contacts. Not surprisingly, the Christian mission, including their press, is found within the boundaries of the term. In the same article, Mao says:

> The imperialist powers have never slackened their efforts to poison the minds of the Chinese people. This is their policy of cultural aggression. And it is carried out through *missionary work*, through establishing hospitals and schools, *publishing newspapers* and inducing Chinese students to study abroad. Their aim is to train intellectuals who will serve their interests and to dupe the people.
>
> (Mao 1965: 312 – emphasis added)

Borrowing the critical tone rather than the definition of imperialism from Lenin, Mao used the term 'imperialism' to forge his own political thought, in which all Christian missionary activities, without exception, were firmly treated as 'cultural imperialism'.

In short, our investigation of the concept suggests that it is evident that the words 'culture', 'imperialism' and 'cultural imperialism', deeply embedded in the modern Chinese political vocabulary, arise out of a very complicated set of discourses and interactions between the West and the East

during the early part of the twentieth century. From Lenin to Mao, 'imperialism' was increasingly altered and manipulated in the Chinese discourse. Compared to the contemporary Western 'cultural imperialism' which emerged in response to the American media and cultural expansion in the 1960s, Mao's cultural imperialism, oddly but interestingly, was an earlier version of response and resistance towards Western Christian expansion. It can be argued that, in both cases, the superficial appeal of the concept of 'cultural imperialism' was shared and applied to describe and criticize relations of cultural domination and subordination in the modern world. It implied 'the use of political and economic power to exalt and spread the values and habits of a foreign culture at the expense of a native culture' (Tomlinson 2001: 3).

Was the usage of the generic term in Mao's account plausible? Having noted the ambiguity and complexity of 'cultural imperialism' as it arose in Western critical intellectual circles in the 1960s,[1] we are inclined to treat Mao's notion with some caution. However, what concerns us particularly in this chapter is Mao's claim that the missionary press was one form of cultural imperialism. This claim, applying the concept in other words to the beginning of the modern press in China, needs to be probed more deeply.

The missionary press and Western expansion

To assess twentieth-century Chinese history's highly critical opinion of the missionary press, we should first seek out the motivation behind the missionary press in the nineteenth century. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the Protestants started the press with 'the stated aim' to lay the foundations for future religious work (Cohen 1995: 558). But this produced 'unintended consequences', which not only brought a modern press and Western learning to the scholars and inspired the Chinese élite press, but also created far-reaching social and cultural transformations. Does this mean the missionary press was an innocent religious and 'Enlightenment' force isolated from other more obviously imperialistic aspects of Western expansion?

In a speech made in Shanghai in 1877, a British missionary, Griffith John, pronounced the task of the Western missionaries in China thus:

> We are here, not to develop the resources of the country, not for the advancement of commerce, not for the mere promotion of civilisation, but to do battle with the powers of darkness, to save men from sin, and to conquer China for Christ.
>
> (Elder 1999: 55)

Griffith John's remark was echoed by the British theorist of imperialism J. N. Hobson, who makes his assessment of the motives of British missionaries who conducted their worldwide mission in the nineteenth century in these terms:

> [M]ost British missionaries are quite untainted by admixture of political and commercial motives, and that they set about their work in a single spirit of self-sacrifice, eager to save the souls of the heathen, and not a whit concerned to push British trade or 'sanctify the spirit of Imperialism'.
>
> (Hobson in Schlesinger 1974: 339)

The religious commitment of some of the missionaries, if not all of them, was clearly genuine. As Bennett (1983: 226) argues, the Protestant journalists in China expressed their interest in the reform of secular affairs as a natural outcome of the blossoming of the 'Social Gospel movement in the West', their primary concern being for the Chinese people. However, Hobson's view is not supported by available historical sources, which suggest the missionaries in late imperial China, at least in a practical sense, had close personal connections with Western political and economic circles. Two important early missionaries, Robert Morrison and Karl Gutzlaff, who set up *China Monthly Magazine* and *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* respectively, played a very mixed role beyond their supposedly primary part of proselytizing:

> Robert Morrison served as a translator for the British East India Company from 1809 to 1815, and in 1816 accompanying the Lord Amherst embassy to Peking as interpreter. . . . The Prussian missionary, Karl Gutzlaff (1803–51), acted during the Opium War first as a British interpreter and then as 'magistrate' of Chusan; he subsequently succeeded Morrison's son as Chinese secretary to the British authorities at Hong Kong.
>
> (Cohen 1995: 549)

Moreover, apart from their personal contact with Western political and economic groups, the missionaries, through their periodicals, endeavoured to break the trade and communication barriers between the West and China, which they considered as part of the general effort to overcome the obstacles to spreading Christianity. According to Fang (1997: 268–70), Gutzlaff's *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* carried the trading price lists and shipping information related to Sino-Western business. In its comment section, *Eastern Western Monthly Magazine* frequently stressed that China should improve trading with the West and treat Westerners equally.

A more detailed example – *Wanguo Gongbao* and the SDK – demonstrates an intimate tie between the missionary press and Western secular powers. As is generally known, the SDK was an influential publisher launched by the missionaries in Shanghai in 1887. Despite the fact that the missionaries, such as Timothy Richard, Young Allen, Alexander Williamson and Ernest Faber, were largely running the organization, as Wang (1986: 36–7) points out, the SDK was a tripartite group consisting of Western missionaries, businessmen

and diplomats, along with tax officers. British, American and German councillors in Shanghai were involved in its organization. Robert Hart, a British man employed by the Qing government as Inspector-General of the Imperial Maritime customs, had been the president of the SDK for most of its time, although he never attended the annual meeting. And the head of business organizations, HSBC manager Charles Addis, a British company director John MacGregor, and the businessman J. H. Focke, had all been on the board of the SDK.

Both business and political groups were involved in *Wanguo Gongbao*, which became the SDK's organ in 1889, and in other SDK publications by sponsoring writing contests and contributing articles. It appeared that they all shared the same modern values: on the one hand, urging more trade and more Western modern innovations such as railways and telegraphs in China, and on the other, a political agenda – reforming the imperial regime to a mode of Western constitutional monarchy. Thus it was not surprising to find that many missionary journalists defended the Western expansion in China and tried to convince the Chinese that the existence of Western powers was not going to threaten but to enrich China. In the October-November 1896 issue of *Wanguo Gongbao*, Young Allen published an article, 'The Twelve Benefits of India Becoming a British Colony'. He more or less nakedly supported British colonialism and claimed twelve benefits of Britain ruling India without a single disadvantage: reducing crime, establishing legislation, lifting poverty, building railways and so on. Then he suggested that China should follow the example of India. He even set out a plan in which two provinces in southeast China could be first chosen as an experimental British colony before the whole country was ruled by the British. He firmly believed that after fifty years of colonization, the Chinese territory would remain the same but the life of the Chinese people would be improved.

Young Allen was not alone in backing Western colonialism in China. Another main contributor of *Wanguo Gongbao*, the general secretary of SDK, Timothy Richard, made a proposal to the Qing prime minister which was published in the article 'New Policy' in *Wanguo Gongbao*, April 1896. He declared that Chinese domestic politics and issues of diplomacy, enterprise, education, culture and foreign loans should be subject to advice from Western experts. In his view, there was not adequate Chinese talent then to manage the country and only the West could solve the problems of China.

It is manifest, as the historical account suggests, that there was a great deal of coherence and co-operation between the missionaries, their press and Western economic and political expansion in China. Indeed, in the Shanghai foreign settlement, on account of 'the number of [foreign] residents being small, there was not the same clear line of demarcation between the missionary and business communities as exists today' (Hawks Pott 1928: 90). This certainly adds complexity to the 'Enlightenment' role of the missionary press. To some extent, the missionary printing enterprises were mixed up with, and virtually contributed to the promotion of, Western economic and

political expansion, although it may not have been their primary goal and original intention. Therefore, it can not be denied that the Western missionaries and their periodicals played a certain role as agents and instruments of Western expansion and domination.

Nevertheless, can we assume that the missionary activities were planned and controlled by the Western economic and political powers, as Mao's notion of cultural imperialism implied?

As Schlesinger argues, there is a danger in the classical theories of imperialism, that they tell us little about the missionaries and minimize or ignore the autonomy of the missionary impulse. When the missionaries are mentioned, they are often seen as subordinate to the economic or political machine. He emphasizes that:

> whatever links the missionary enterprise might develop along the way with traders or bankers, politicians, generals, or diplomats, however much it might express in its own way the aggressive energies of the West, the desire to save souls remains distinctive from the desire to extend power or to acquire glory or to make money or to seek adventure or to explore the unknown.
>
> (Schlesinger 1974: 342)

Morrison is a good example to demonstrate the independence of the missionaries. Despite his connection with the British East India Company and government, his primary task was to spread Christianity rather than to serve the establishment. In one letter from the London Missionary Society to Morrison in 1815, it was revealed that Morrison was sacked from the East India Company because the conduct of his translation and distribution of the Scriptures might offend the Qing government:

> I wrote to you in haste on the 6th of January last, informing you of the unpleasant information we had just received, that the Directors of the East India Company had passed a vote to separate you from all connexion with them. The case was this. They had not only seen a copy of the Chinese New Testament which you had printed, but also a volume of our Transaction, in which it was stated, that you persisted in the work of translating and distributing the Scriptures, notwithstanding the edict of the Emperor. And they conceived that this might give offence to the Chinese government, especially as you were considered a servant of the Company, they determined that you should no longer be employed by them.
>
> (Morrison 1839: 418)

More evidence can be found to reveal that there was another side to missionary activities which was in conflict with Western economic and political aggression. For example, Spence (1999b: 156) mentions various Protestant

missionary societies that raised objections to the opium traffic before the Opium War. And, according to Schlesinger:

> The Colonial Office in London in the nineteenth century was under constant pressure from the missionaries and the Aborigines Protection Society to save the natives from the settlers. In China, an American diplomat saw missionaries as 'the only barrier between the unhesitating advance of commercial adventure and the not incongruous element of Chinese imbecile corruption'.
>
> (Schlesinger 1974: 343)

In the later part of the nineteenth century, many missionaries devoted themselves to broader social and health agendas: working with opium addicts, the deaf and the blind, and the victims of famine. Timothy Richard was heavily involved in famine relief in Shandong, Shan'xi and other parts of China in the 1870s, before he became the general secretary of SDK in 1891 and made an intellectual approach to the literati through journalism. Young Allen, the founder and editor of *Wanguo Gongbao*, offers another example of a missionary seeking his own way instead of being placed by the Western powers to reach the Chinese people. He did not become convinced that the press was an effective channel to promote Christianity and influence the Chinese until he experienced being a preacher, educator, translator and editor of a Chinese-language newspaper. As Bennett says, 'his particular missionary career was determined by his experience in Shanghai and his encounter with Chinese civilization' (Bennett 1983: 227). Thus it can be argued that these non-evangelical pursuits were no doubt motivated by the moral value and social concerns of Christianity rather than being planned and forced by any Western economic or political agenda. The missionaries who dedicated themselves to education, medical work and periodicals assumed they were helping to prepare the Chinese for the acceptance of Christianity, which was their ultimate goal. In this sense, their autonomy and independence from the Western powers was undeniable.

In view of this historical evidence, like the concept of cultural imperialism itself, the relation between the missionary enterprise and Western expansion contains a great deal of complexity and contradiction. It was not accidental that the missionary press produced an enormously ambiguous impact. Yet it is over-simple and inaccurate to label the missionary press as just one form of cultural imperialism.

Furthermore, to account for the various and complex missionary activities as one single category of cultural imperialism also falls into the trap of treating the missionary influence as a one-way process, which underestimates Chinese intellectual strength, not least the missionaries' dependence on the Chinese language and Chinese personnel, and a struggle over the cultural meanings involved. Whereas the missionary press bridged a crucial channel informing the educated Chinese of the values of Western modernity,

traditional learning made an important contribution to shape their transition from Confucian gentry-scholars to modern intellectuals. If we consider the missionary enterprise in the broad context of modernity, it is clear that there existed a hegemonic rivalry between the missionaries who promoted a version of modernity through their press and the Chinese gentry who stood at the centre of Confucianism.

Hegemonic rivalry: the missionaries versus the gentry

We have seen that, until the late nineteenth century, the Chinese gentry-scholars remained largely unchallenged as the leading class of the society. The classical Confucian teachings were believed and worshipped as unquestionable in their supremacy and only 'change-within-tradition' was tolerated. As Cohen puts it:

> More than any other class of Chinese, the gentry were deeply wedded both to Chinese civilization and, more generally, to the proposition that China was the seat of all civilization. They were schooled from early childhood in the traditions and values of Confucianism, and their social position and prestige rested, to a very considerable extent, on active identification with these traditions and values.
>
> (Cohen 1995: 564)

Naturally, when it was under attack by the Western missionaries, the gentry-scholars became both the obvious targets and defenders of Confucian civilization. Although some missionaries were not without sympathy with Chinese civilization, or even attempted to assimilate Confucianism to Christianity, by and large, they believed the message of Christianity was superior to the message of Confucianism. As Morrison notes:

> The multitudes of people in this country are truly, in a moral and religious view, as 'sheep without a shepherd.' Without referring to the peculiar and important doctrines of Christianity, but speaking merely of its general aspect in Protestant countries, with the qualifications and duties of its minister, in the public assemblies of the people, how vastly superior to the system of Paganism which prevails here!
>
> (Morrison 1839: 448)

In many cases, the missionaries were seen as standing in a state of battle with Confucianism in the late nineteenth century. Examining historical evidence, we have no difficulty in finding a fierce and aggressive assault on Confucianism and the Chinese gentry made by the missionaries. According to Gu (1995: 80), a typical pamphlet distributed by American missionaries in the 1870s was titled the 'incubus of Confucianism' and attacked Chinese ancestor worship. As Wang (1997: 176) summarizes, three points of criticism

of Confucianism were widely adopted by the Western missionaries. First, strong Sino-centric cultural arrogance struck the missionaries as a major fault. Second, Confucianism was criticized for its lack of spiritual transcendence and scientific concern. Being indifferent to, and even discouraging of, scientific and natural exploration, Confucianism was accused of giving rise to the growth of superstition. Third, the antiquity of Confucianism was regarded as a big obstacle to social development in China. The absolute worship of Confucian classics prevented innovation and development in the country.

In attacking Confucianism, some of the missionaries certainly tended to focus their frustrations on the most obvious representatives of Confucian ideology: the gentry-scholars themselves. One missionary wrote:

> Under the outward show of politeness and refinement imparted to the educated Chinese chiefly by Confucianism, there is almost nothing but cunning, ignorance, rudeness, vulgarity, arrogant assumption and inveterate hatred of everything foreign.
>
> (Cohen 1995: 565)

Such hostility towards the Chinese gentry, needless to say, increased tensions between the Christians and the élite class, the former frustrated at the lack of engagement of the scholars in real-world affairs; the latter often dismissive and mistrusting of the new ideas and alien religious values of the Westerners. As Wang (1997: 485–7) observes, the majority of the late Qing scholars condemned Christian doctrines, such as God's creation of the world, original sin and the Trinity, for their utter difference to Confucianism. Even a renowned broad-minded scholar-official, Xue Fucheng, remarked that both the New Testament and Old Testament were more ridiculous than the Chinese fantasy fiction *The Journey to the West*.[2] For many Confucian scholars, the lack of ancestor worship and the hierarchy between man and woman in Christianity was unacceptable and deeply offensive.

More importantly, all the vigorous criticism the missionaries made, from the Chinese point of view, was not simply attacking Confucianism and the gentry, but served the goal of replacing traditional Chinese learning with Western civilization as part of Western expansion. In other words, the presence of the Western missionaries and their attack on Confucianism implied a serious cultural threat to Chinese tradition and the monopoly the scholars had enjoyed. As Fairbank stresses:

> [The missionaries] posed an irreducible cultural threat because they were rivals of China's élite, the scholar gentry. As educators, even though in foreign ways, and privileged persons, even though under foreign protection, missionaries seemed to be essentially subversive to the traditional order both in aim and in result.
>
> (Fairbank 1974: 10)

Indeed. In hegemonic rivalry, the missionaries were fully engaged with their contestants. If we argue that the initial aim of the missionary press was to spread Christianity by promoting Western learning, it did not take long for the missionaries to target the Chinese gentry class, through the journalistic approach, to agitate for a broad social and political impact. In 1887, when the SDK was set up, the general secretary Alexander Williamson wrote a proposal stressing the vital importance of liberating the minds of the scholars. The scholar officials, especially the local gentry, were regarded as the core factor in social, political and cultural transformation. This view of Williamson's was certainly inherited and carried further by Timothy Richard, who became the general secretary of the SDK in 1891.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Timothy Richard conducted a well-known survey which counted over 40,000 gentry officials and their family members nationwide as the target readership of SDK publications. He claimed that if these people were influenced by the missionary press, it meant the rest of the Chinese population would be influenced. Furthermore, Richard formed a strategy to approach the Chinese élite. As Wang (1997: 403–5) observes, for the senior officials, Richard built up private contacts to offer the SDK's publications. For the ordinary scholars around the country, the sites of government examinations at different levels were chosen to hand out missionary publications in the form of booklets or pamphlets.

The focus and target of the missionary periodicals could not be made more explicit. While promoting SDK publications as the 'essential reading for exams' to attract the educated Chinese, *Wanguo Gongbao* contained a significant note on its cover:

> The Executive of the S.D.C.G.K. would deem it a favour if friends would place copies of the 'Review of the Times'[3] and 'Chinese Boy's Own',[4] before influential Chinamen in their neighbourhood and ask them to become subscribers.
>
> (*Wanguo Gongbao*, April 1890)

This attempt to influence the Chinese leading class and so replace traditional learning with Western modern education provoked a hegemonic rivalry. The conflict between the missionaries and gentry-scholars did not just reflect the model of 'challenge-response' presumed by the cultural imperialism thesis. The impact of the missionary press in the Chinese social and political context of the time contained a complexity that the cultural imperialism thesis fails to grasp. It can be argued that, rather than being submissive, the Chinese scholars received modernity, including the media introduced by the missionaries, as a set of instruments, which they sought to appropriate and exploit to maintain their *own* hegemony.

The media and the struggle for hegemony

The fact that hegemonic struggle is not a straightforward process raises further doubts about the argument claiming the missionary impact in China to be a matter of simple 'cultural imperialism'. In fact, the scholars, though resisting Christian doctrines, seized upon Western modernity and adopted modern forms of media – mechanically printed periodicals. By doing so, they struggled to sustain their monopoly over cultural and moral discourse, against the threat imposed by the Western missionaries. Therefore, in the context of hegemonic rivalry, interestingly, the publicly circulated press became the weapon of both sides. The emergence of the modern press in China arose within the power struggle between the missionaries and the scholars.

The Chinese élite press, enormously inspired by the missionary press, was employed as an important instrument for the scholars to campaign for social and political reform. In 1895, shortly after China was defeated in the Sino-Japanese War, the radical scholars Kang and Liang began to establish their own newspaper. In that Chinese lunar year alone, three newspapers emerged: *Wanguo Gongbao,*[5] *Zhongwai Jiwen* and *Qiangxue Bao*, in which Kang and Liang were involved, along with a number of other leading cultural and even political figures. Although all three newspapers were short-lived, their significance lies in the fact that the scholars had begun to experiment with the publication of newspapers for the purpose of propagating their ideas. In his autobiography, Kang (1953: 132) noted the motives of establishing the first newspaper: up to the time of the Sino-Japanese War, the Chinese gentry-scholars had known very little about the Western social and political systems. Kang stresses that without enlightening the high-ranking officials, it would not have been possible to reform the nation, which was why he started a newspaper in Peking. Kang's *Wanguo Gongbao* was delivered to the imperial court officials as a supplement of the official gazette, but it appeared strikingly distinctive. In every issue, it carried articles advocating Western learning, such as modern education, railways, trade, mining, postal services, journalism and so on. The publication, as Kang records, shocked the scholar officials at first, but they soon began to develop an interest in the strength of Western civilization. It became increasingly popular, and the circulation reached 3,000 after one month.

It is worth mentioning that Kang's first newspaper adopted the same name, *Wanguo Gongbao*, at least in Chinese characters, as that published by the SDK. Not only the name, but also the content, shared remarkable similarities with the paper published by the missionaries. Ma (1996) indeed sees Kang's *Wanguo Gongbao* as simply a digested version of the Western one. But the point I want to make here is not just about the heavy influence of the missionary press on Chinese élite journalism, but the strategic and selective nature of this appropriation. Their purpose was to fulfil their own political ambitions of reforming and reviving China and thus to sustain their position of being the leading class of the society.

On the surface, indeed, it seems that Chinese élite journalism was promoting the same thing – Western modernity and Enlightenment – as the missionary press. Nevertheless, the agenda suggested a plain difference. Unlike the missionary press, which challenged Confucianism and the leading position of the gentry-scholars, Kang's newspaper called for the educated élite to act as the leading force of social and political reform and also to sustain the Confucian tradition. He wrote this in the first issue of *Qiangxue Bao*. The newspaper was established in Shanghai – the meeting place for the educated élite from North and South China. As the descendants of the sage Confucius, the educated Chinese were all obliged to maintain traditional learning and serve the nation. Their mission was to revive the nation in crisis, while resisting foreign threats (Zhang 1999: 86). In addition, Kang organized the association *Baoguo Hui* in 1898, by rallying officials and scholars together to 'protect the nation's land, people and religion' (Yujiro 1997: 113–14). These acts suggest Kang's attempt to unite traditional learning with a new political agenda. As an influential radical scholar of his time, Kang's political vision and journalistic experience did inspire many Chinese intellectuals and their publications across the country.

It is undeniable that the gentry-scholars, through their adopted press, stood at the centre of the reform campaign, which can be seen, in retrospect, as a hegemonic battle with the missionaries. It was thus mistaken for Timothy Richard (1916) to declare that the barrier that had so long existed between Christian and non-Christian literature was broken down when *Wanguo Gongbao*'s circulation reached its historical record after the Sino-Japanese War. In fact, after 1895 and 1898 the emergence and rapid development of the Chinese élite press soon overtook the missionary press. Between 1895 and 1898, the number of Chinese newspapers increased to sixty and ended the dominance of the missionary press in China (Chang 1999). The flagship of the missionary periodicals, *Wanguo Gongbao*, though enjoying a large circulation until 1904, was eventually closed down in December 1907. In contrast, in 1913, the number of Chinese newspaper and periodicals increased to 487. By the period of the May Fourth Movement, despite some controversy over circulation figures,[6] journalistic publications had soared even higher. Moreover, Timothy Richard's comment proved more fundamentally inaccurate because, whatever similarities were found between the missionary journalism and the Chinese political press, it was evident that Christian doctrine and belief had, by and large, failed to be accepted. Thus the intended aim of the missionary press was left unfulfilled. For these two reasons, it can be said that the missionary press failed to sustain its dominance in the hegemonic rivalry with the Chinese scholars.

After the hegemonic rivalry

What remained after this hegemonic rivalry? If we use the approach of the cultural imperialism thesis, which has been held by many contemporary

Chinese scholars, we are unable to deal with the complex and ambiguous legacy of the missionary press. As we said earlier, we need to assemble the political implications of the hegemonic battle out of its discourse.

In the end, the Chinese scholars, though winning the battle, lost the war.

To be sure, the Chinese scholars frustrated the ultimate goal of the missionary press by resisting Christian doctrine and faith. Those Chinese who were proselytized made little social and political impact. Even those celebrated reformists during the 1870s and 1880s who were exposed to Christianity at some level,[7] were found intellectually 'scarcely Christian at all' (Cohen 1974: 199–200). Cohen makes an interesting comparison with the impact of Christianity on the Japanese:

> In telling contrast with Meiji Japan, where 30 per cent of all converts to Protestants were of samurai background and Christians played a leading part in the intellectual life of the nation, the number of educated persons in China who embraced the faith was negligible. And religious leaders of the stature of the Japanese Christian educator, Niishima Jo (1843–90), or the creator of the 'No Church' (Mukyokai) movement, Uchimura Kanzo (1861–1930), were nowhere to be found.
>
> (Cohen 1995: 558)

This dramatic contrast highlighted the Chinese scholars' massive unresponsiveness towards Christianity. In his insightful book *The Religion of China*, Max Weber explains that Confucianism ultimately 'represented just a tremendous code of political maxims and rules of social propriety for cultural men of the world' (Weber 1951: 152). And it was 'in vain [that] Christian missionaries tried to awaken a feeling of sin where such presuppositions were taken for granted' (1951: 228).

But, however determined, even violent, the resistance to Christianity was,[8] it can still be argued that the Chinese of prominence lost their contest with the missionaries, in that finally, their embrace of Western modernity owed a debt to the missionary press. Indeed, the transformation was so deep that the grip of Confucianism itself was at stake. As Chang (1999) observes, after 1895, the Chinese élite press, along with the rising new education system comprising schools, universities[9] and also study societies, formed a new communication network and acted as an important catalyst of new thinking among the scholars. With its heavy Western influences, the emergent new intellectual discourse caused a serious crisis in traditional learning.

Kang can be seen as the leading scholar who insisted on maintaining Confucianism while adopting Western learning. Nevertheless, his campaign proved a dogged pursuit and provoked criticism when an increasingly radical intellectual discourse appeared in the élite press entering the twentieth century. Kang's disciple Liang ultimately began to repudiate him in the newspaper *Xingmin Bao* in 1902:

> The advocates of the preservation of the [Confucian] cult today have identified themselves with the new learning and the new principles of modern times and say: 'This Confucius already knew and that Confucius already said.' . . . But they follow the next learning and the new learning principles not precisely because these latter are palatable to their minds but because these things secretly coincided with 'their' Confucius. Thus, what they love is still Confucius and not truth.
>
> (Liang 1970: 103–4)

Even allowing for Liang's 'mercurial' character (1970: 103–4), his criticism of Kang suggests an emerging radical intellectual attitude. At this time, Liang began to think that Confucianism was fundamentally at odds with Western modernity. It was impossible to maintain Confucianism, on the one hand, and adopt the new learning, on the other. He despised:

> The shoddy scholars who toy with words and are ever anxious to engraft Western learning upon Chinese learning under the pretext of introducing new things but who, in fact, want to preserve [the old ones].
>
> (Liang 1970: 103–4)

Liang was not only opposed to wedding traditional and Western learning, but also criticized the long-standing dominance of Confucianism in Chinese history. He blamed disputes among different schools of Confucianism for preventing intellectual breakthroughs.

Becoming an influential intellectual of his generation, Liang celebrated his contemporary intellectual world and claimed it was 'a result of freedom of thought' (1970: 103–4.) It can be said that many reform-oriented Chinese scholars, especially after the failure of the Reform Movement of 1898, became open to more sweeping ideas. Through the adopted novel mode of communication – modern newspapers – Western learning was more positively and widely employed for radical social, political and cultural change in China. The centuries-old worldview of Confucianism had at last been penetrated, and its hegemony displaced by the scholars themselves.

To sum up, though it emerged in a different context and contained different arguments from the Western intellectual discussion in the 1960s, the Chinese concept of 'cultural imperialism' in regard to the Christian missionaries in nineteenth-century China shared the same fundamental problems. It is to over-simplify to employ the notion of 'cultural imperialism' to describe the missionary press, which had an ambiguous, even contradictory, connection with Western expansion and was employed by both the missionaries to pursue, and the Chinese élite to maintain, political and cultural hegemony. The result of this struggle was that Chinese élite journalism surpassed the missionary press after the turn of the century. But more importantly, the Chinese communication network, the intellectual landscape, and the imperial social and political institutional structure experienced the most profound change ever.

Conclusion

My intention in this book has been to explore the origins of the modern Chinese press. The activities of the Protestant missionaries, particularly in the latter part of the nineteenth century, have clearly been the central theme in this story. Their influence – in introducing innovations in printing technology; Western technical, scientific, historical, geographical and political thought; new understandings of the existence of societies in time and space; and a glimpse of the possibility of an autonomous 'public sphere' of critical communication – was enormous. It can, without exaggeration, be said to have changed within decades a communicational landscape that had existed in China for over a thousand years. More than this, in their influence over key sectors of the gentry-scholars – particularly in opening up cultural horizons, undermining the edifice of Confucian orthodoxy, and introducing a new sense of cultural-national identity – the missionaries can be seen as agents of change in a much broader process of social, economic and cultural modernization coinciding with the end of the Qing dynasty and the rise of the first republic of China.

But as we have seen, this was not at all a straightforward story of triumphant and unopposed Western influence. The missionaries certainly did not have it all their own way, nor did the gentry-scholars simply passively imitate the cultural and communicational model provided for them in the missionary press. As we saw in Chapter 7, the influence of the missionaries on the reformist gentry-scholars was intimately entwined with a complex set of debates and struggles played out within Confucianism during the nineteenth century, and the shape élite Chinese journalism took at the end of the century was a result of this complicated fusion of influence.

Within all of this, we cannot ignore the issue of cultural imperialism in considering the impact of the missionary press. Indeed, as we saw in the last chapter, there existed an ambiguous relationship between missionaries and the wider Western economic and political circle, in which we can find, for example, 'startling example[s] of opium and the Bible operating together' (Collis 1997: 74). Yet for all this, the autonomy of the impulse of many of the missionaries cannot be denied. It is beyond dispute that the ultimate purpose of the missionary press was an evangelical pursuit: that of converting the

Chinese to Christianity. If this evangelism is understood as an attempt at cultural imperialism, it is one that manifestly failed. To be sure, the missionaries became the vehicles for the cultural transmission of Western modernity across a wide front in the late Qing. But these far-reaching consequences cannot disguise the failure of their fundamental aim of creating a Christian China:

> Where the missionaries of the late nineteenth century were least successful was in selling to the Chinese the proposition that Western learning and institutions, and the wealth and power that accompanied them, were somehow rooted in Christianity.
>
> (Cohen 1995: 589)

In the short term at least, the missionaries must be judged to have failed in their mission.[1] What the Chinese scholars inherited from them was largely a rational-instrumental modernity rather than a Christian one. And it was in this instrumental context that the Chinese élite adopted the press to discharge their political ambitions, ultimately contributing to the disintegration of the traditional society-state relationship.

But what more can be said of the lasting legacy of the missionary journalists? In considering this, I want to return to the issue which, as I said in my introduction, was the stimulus for this study: the continuing struggle to establish a free press in China.

The missionary press: liberty of the press?

The rise of the early independent Chinese periodicals, whilst having a far-reaching social and political impact, was not a smooth one. As we have seen, many of the titles were short-lived. This was undoubtedly because they emerged within a hostile political environment, given to suppression, and this points to the fact that the principle and the political institution of a free press had failed to be constitutionalized.

The missionaries had managed to publish independently of control by the Qing government. In fact, many missionary publications, such as *Wanguo Gongbao*, were published inside the foreign settlement in Shanghai, which had its own independent governing council called the 'Shanghai Municipal Council'[2] (Hawks Pott 1928: 64). Thus missionary publications such as *Wanguo Gongbao* became an arena for social and political criticism.

Nevertheless, the press freedom enjoyed by the missionaries was highly conditional and not, in fact, legally constitutionalized. The missionary press was tolerated beyond the treaty ports and allowed to develop in China only because the Qing government had been defeated in the war against the Anglo-French invasion and forced to recognize the treaties of Tianjing in the 1860s. The Western missionaries were thereafter allowed to travel throughout China. In this sense, the missionary press can be said to have flourished on the

back of Western gunboat diplomacy: without the success of the Western military invasion, its enormous impact in China would have been difficult to achieve. Living in the Shanghai foreign settlement qualified them even more as the privileged social group in China. So the freedom the missionary press had achieved, to some extent, was 'given' rather than 'struggled for', 'imported' rather than 'driven' by an inner force.

It is not only these historical circumstances that explain the peculiar and frail nature of this 'free press', but also the cultural agenda of the missionaries. Their ultimate religious purpose, and the 'package' of instrumental modernity that was their vehicle, did not cherish the essential idea of liberty of the press at its core. As the case study of *Wanguo Gongbao* has demonstrated, although this periodical carried a great deal of social and political criticism,[3] it did little to stress the key liberal concepts that were formative in the idea of the press as the 'Fourth Estate' (Briggs and Burke 2002: 192). These ideas – individual rights, truth-seeking, utilitarianism, 'the free market place of ideas' and so on – were at the core of the works of nineteenth-century Western liberal thinkers such as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. But they involved thinking that was fundamentally challenging to certain obvious articles of faith of the missionaries. In his much-celebrated *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill was, to say the least, ambivalent about the spread of Christianity:

> Christians were cast to the lions, but the Christian church grew up a stately and spreading tree, overtopping the older and less vigorous growths, and stifling them by its shade.
>
> (Mill 1971: 93)

Mill went on to condemn the ethnocentrism of Christianity:

> the world, to each individual, means the part of it with which he comes in contact; his party, his sect, his church, his class of society; the man may be called, by comparison, almost liberal and large-minded to whom it means anything so comprehensive as his own country or his own age. Nor is his faith in this collective authority at all shaken by his being aware that other ages, countries, sects, churches, classes, and parties have thought, and even now think, the exact reverse. He devolves upon his own world the responsibility of being in the right against the dissentient worlds of other people; and it never troubles him that mere accident has decided which of these numerous worlds is the object of his reliance, and that the same causes which make him a Churchman in London, would have made him a Buddhist or a Confucian in Peking.
>
> (Mill 1971: 80)

It is easy to see why the Protestants avoided mentioning the works of Mill and other liberal thinkers and so, perhaps, why they never took deep root in the institutional development of Chinese journalism. In practice, it can be

seen that the missionary press failed to challenge the imperial regime and to emancipate the state-dominated press at its root. In other words, the missionary press initiated the modern press in China, but did not promote the drive for a free press which had taken place in Western Europe and America.

Instead, the missionaries avoided a clash and conflict with the imperial court. In his reform scheme for Wong Tong-he, the Chinese Prime Minister, Timothy Richard (1916: 256) proposed four vital requirements for China – educational reform, economic reform, internal and international peace, and spiritual regeneration – but did not mention political reform. Indeed, the idea of 'internal and international peace' illustrated the missionaries' agenda of maintaining both the imperial regime and Western dominance in China. Not surprisingly, for example, rather than criticizing the extremely lavish sixtieth birthday celebration of the Empress-Dowager, the centre of the corrupt government, the missionary community was very willingly involved, presenting a gift – a specially made New Testament – to impress the Dowager. As Timothy Richard wrote:

> It is of great interest to record the presentation by the Christina women of China of the New Testament to the Empress-Dowager on her sixtieth birthday, in which we had no small share.
>
> (Richard 1916: 225)

Moreover, in *Wanguo Gongbao* (Vol. 67, 1894), there appeared two messages: 'In Praise of the Empress-Dowager' and 'Intermission of Penalties in commemoration of the Empress-Dowager's birthday'.

Besides a lack of sustained criticism of the authoritarian character of the imperial regime in their press, the missionary activists, such as Richard, encouraged the Chinese reform newspaper – *Shiwu Bao* – to become the official organ of the government (Richard 1916: 262) rather than fighting for institutional independence of the press. By and large, the missionaries and their press failed to deal with the issue of legal struggle for a free press. Their contribution did little to improve the long-standing absence of explicit state legislation on publication and the press.[4] The state's capacity for manipulation of the press remained unchallenged and unchanged.

For the missionaries, what seemed important was not fighting for liberty or freedom from state control in China, but importing Western experts while integrating with the state. Among the great measures Richard put forward to the Chinese prime minister was:

> The establishment of an intelligent Press with experienced foreign journalists to assist Chinese editors for the enlightenment of the people.
>
> (Richard 1916: 256)

The Western experts, in the view of the missionaries, were the key to reform, in other words, to China's transformation. In the same proposal, Richard

recommended 'two foreign advisers to the Throne' and 'the eight-ministers-Cabinet should have half foreign officials who would know about the progress of all the world' (1916: 256). As a result, Richard's suggestion failed to be recorded by the prime minister and presumably failed to reach the emperor.

It is safe to say, then, that the origins of the modern Chinese press – the missionary press – though existing largely free of state interference, did not imply the triumph of a free press in China. Its survival and development relied hugely on the success of Western military invasion. With its religious and instrumental-modern agenda, the missionary press failed to fight for, or to encourage Chinese scholars to fight for, the liberty of the press and to establish it in legal institutions. During the times of political turbulence, such as the suppression of the Reform Movement in 1898, many young reformist newspapers and periodicals were brutally destroyed by the Qing government. The Chinese media was thus destined to fight a long battle for a sustainable independent voice.

The struggle for a free press in the twentieth century

At the turn of the century, the Chinese press made substantial advances, with more and more diverse newspapers and periodicals. As the government press dwindled, the reformist press continued to have great influence, and this was accompanied by a rapidly growing revolutionary press and by various specialist and entertainment periodicals. These in total reached around 200 titles and spread from the treaty ports to the interior in 1900–5 (Fang 1997: 669). At the same time, there was a noticeable decline in the influence of the Western missionaries, not only in a journalistic sense but also in their role as entrepreneurs for Western knowledge in China. Chinese scholars were henceforth to play the leading role in the intellectual field. As many of them went to study in Japan after the Sino-Japanese War, curiously, they translated many Western works from their Japanese versions to Chinese. According to Xiong (1995: 640–1), between 1896 and 1911, 1,014 books, mostly of Western origin, were translated from Japanese to Chinese, which far outnumbered the total number of books from the West translated during the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition, it is worth noting again that the translation by Yan Fu of some major Anglo-European works – T. H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, J. S. Mill's *On Liberty*, Herbert Spencer's *The Study of Sociology*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Montesquieu's *Spirit of Law* and others[5] – produced considerable impact among Chinese scholars.

The reformist press revived after the Reform Movement of 1898. Liang Qichao continued his reform and enlightenment campaign, and established the most influential reform organs from his refuge in Japan: *Qingyi Bao* (December 1898 to December 1901), *Xinmin Congbao* (February 1902 to November 1907), *Xin Xiaoshuo* (November 1902 to January 1906). In these publications, Liang demonstrated his wider and deeper understanding of

Western learning. For example, in *Xinmin Congbao*, he advocated the ideas of free thinking and equality of all citizens by introducing Rousseau's theory of the 'social contract' and Montesquieu's ideas of the division of power to a Chinese readership. In fear of the growing impact of the reformist press, the Qing government, under the control of the Empress-Dowager, exercised strict censorship. In February 1900, the circulation of Kang and Liang's publications was officially banned. Both Kang and Liang were accused of being criminals and traitors' and a reward of 100,000 taels was offered for their assassination (Britton 1933: 107). But these attempts at control were in vain. As Fang (1997: 655–66) observes, *Xinmin Congbao*'s radical views of breaking away from the Confucian-dominated traditional society were to influence many young intellectuals including Wu Yuzhang, Zhou Taofen and, significantly, Mao Zedong. In addition, a number of new reformist publications – *Dagong Bao* (1902–49) in Tianjin, *Dongfang Zhazhi* (1904–48) and *ShiBao*[6] (1904–39) in Shanghai – produced considerable social and political impact.

Alongside the revivified reformist press, the revolutionary press emerged to challenge the Manchurian government. Unlike the reformists, who mostly were constitutional monarchists in principle, the revolutionaries led by Sun Zhongshan were determined to overthrow the Qing dynasty and build a republic. Nevertheless, the exploitation of the press was central to both of them. In 1900, *Zhongguo Ribao* was established in Hong Kong as the organ of the revolutionary association Xinzhong Hui headed by Sun Zhongshan. Before long, more radical revolutionary newspapers appeared in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Canton, Wuhan and other cities. In 1905, several revolutionary associations merged to become Tongmen Hui and established *MinBao* as their organ, published in Tokyo. Soon *MinBao* and *Xinmin Congbao* staged a series of intense debates between the revolutionists and reformists on their different political approachs concerning the future of China.

Following the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911, the Chinese media at last began to enjoy freedom of speech, when the principles of a free press and association were formally legalized for the first time in the Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China. As a result of this, the total number of newspapers quickly increased to as many as 500 across the country (Ge 1935: 184). But the liberty of the press was short-lived. As the Republic fell into the control of warlords, censorship quickly returned, in some cases with the application of extreme force. In 1926, two well-known journalists, Shao Piaoping and Lin Baishui, were executed without trial in Peking by the warlord government.

Both the Nationalist Party in the 1930s and 1940s, and the Chinese Communist Party after 1949 established autocratic or totalitarian systems. But, of course, the most severe political control and censorship of journalism was during the era of Communist China. Chu Anping,[7] the 'Fabian Confucianist', was an eminent journalist under both the Nationalist and Communist regimes. Unfortunately, his prediction, made in 1947 before the Communists took power, proved to be true:

> To be honest, under the Nationalists our fight for freedom is really over the question of 'how much freedom'. If the Communists come to power, the question is going to be 'will we have freedom at all?'.
>
> (Lee 2001: 240)

According to an estimate by Chang and Halliday (2005), well over seventy million Chinese, including Chu Anping, perished under Mao's rule during peacetime after 1949. This still fails to appear in any Chinese journalistic publication.

After Mao's era, China adopted its open-door policy of economic reform. In the 1980s, the state began to relax its control of the press, and some elements of media reform took place. Once again, history seemed to repeat itself: the crusade for press freedom, the construction of journalistic laws and the call for independent newspapers constituted some of the main thrusts of the intellectual discourse of the 1980s. However, with the crushing of the pro-democracy movement in June 1989, media reform suffered a major setback both in terms of journalistic practice and theoretical discussion. By 1992, commercialization started rapidly to penetrate every aspect of media operations in China. Chinese media has recognized the contradictory existence of the 'propagandist/commercial model' (Zhao 1998). For the Chinese journalists, the liberty of the press remained an unrealized aspiration. Despite the notable recent growth of investigative journalism in China, as Hugo de Burgh (2003: 104) observes, 'most journalists live in the world as it is constructed for them by their political masters, and probably jog along as best they can'.

From the perspective of the twenty-first century, we can see that the modern Chinese press experienced an extraordinary and as yet unfinished developmental process. Though it played a pivotal role in China's transition from a traditional to a modern society, it consistently failed to establish its political independence from state control: something seen in democratic societies as perhaps *the* key to the media's existence as a sustainable autonomous institution. In many respects, these developments and underdevelopments can be traced back to the enormous influences and heritage of the missionary press in the late nineteenth century. For over one hundred years, Chinese intellectuals have been seeking a free press in turbulent times. This struggle continues today. But it is one of the enigmas of China's distinctive modernity that no one is able to predict, at least in the short term, a successful outcome to this struggle.

Notes

Introduction

1 Cohen (1961, 1962) examines the anti-Christian tradition in China and anti-missionary sentiment in the late Qing dynasty.
2 *North China Herald* (weekly), known as *Beihua Jiebao*, was established in 1850. *North China Daily News*, known as *Zilin Xibao*, was set up in 1864. While both were founded by British businessmen and focused on commercial advertisement, trading and shipping information, *North China Daily News* also carried political comments.

Chapter 1

1 Hereafter abbreviated 'LMS'. LMS was founded in 1795 during the evangelical revival as a non-denominational body dedicated to spreading the Christian faith around the world. It was largely associated with the Congregationalist movement in England and the United States.
2 There is another explanation of '*Spring and Autumn Annals*' – 'spring' and 'autumn' represent the four seasons and therefore refer to the general records of the year (Zhu 1988: 24).
3 Known today as Xi'an.
4 One document dated around AD 887 is kept in the British Library and the other one, dated around AD 876 is held in the French National Library in Paris. See Zhang Guogang (1986) 'The Studies of Two Dunhuang Official Documents' in *Research Monthly*, July 1986.
5 According to Lou (1940: 25–6), before Emperor Qin, post-relays had been built and can be traced back to the Zhou dynasty.
6 According to Zhu and Lu (2000: 20–2), there was a tradition for Chinese scholars of hand-copying the official *DiBao*. The earliest hand-copied version of *DiBao* found in China was from the 'Wanli Reigh' Ming dynasty.
7 For studies of commercial publishing sectors in imperial China, see Lucille Chia (2003); Timothy Brook (1998); Kai-wing Chow (1996); and Ellen Widmer (1996).
8 'Oriental' here means 'Asiatic', includes the Near East, India and China (Wittfogel 1959: 1).
9 In the Qing, China's local administration – exclusive of special administrative areas such as Mongolia and Tibet – was of four kinds: Province, Circuit, Prefecture and District (Hsu 1990: 55). Here I choose to use the equally common term 'County' instead of 'District'.
10 This small percentage of officialdom is a result of the sharp increase of the population in the eighteenth century. In the previous dynasties, the official percentage

among the whole population was higher, such as 0.13 per cent in the Ming Xianzhong, 0.04 per cent in the Ming Hongwu (Jin and Liu 1993: 48).

11 According to Ho (1962: 18–19), in the Ming-Qing Period, the 'degraded people' amounted to a small fraction of one per cent of the total population and were legally emancipated by the edicts of the Yong-zheng Emperor (1723–35). This group consisted of prostitutes, actors, entertainers, certain types of government messengers and so on.

12 Ho (1962: 107–25) treats his figures with caution on account of the difficulties of obtaining reliable statistics and complexities in interpretation. He classified the commoner families into two categories: Category A consists of candidates whose families during the three preceding generations had failed to produce a single holder of the elementary degree, let alone any office or official title. Category B consists of candidates whose families during the three preceding generations had produced one or more Sheng Yuan but no holder of a higher degree or office.

13 That is, the emperor.

Chapter 2

1 The nineteenth-century Protestants continued for decades the debate on the 'Rites Controversy' among the Jesuits long before in China. Three contentious aspects were identified: the 'term question' of how to translate the word 'God' into Chinese and how to deal with the rites for Confucius and the ancestral rites. Although the scholarly missionaries like James Legge adopted as tolerant and broad an approach as Ricci, the majority of Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century were Christian pietists with less intellectual training (Treadgold 1973: 42–4).

2 Ricci presented a clavichord to the Ming Emperor Wanli in 1601 and taught his eunuchs to play a few pieces.

3 The science historian Joseph Needham called Ricci 'one of the most remarkable and brilliant men in history' (1954: 148).

4 Mathematically trained Jesuits, such as Johann Adam Schall von Bell (Tang Ruowang 1592–1666) and Ferdinand Verbiest (Nan Huairen 1623–88), held prominent positions in the Imperial Astronomy Bureau for over 150 years.

5 According to Collis (1997: 4), the Qing government reduced the number of its open ports partly due to discovering that the Jesuits harboured secret plans for undermining the Confucian system.

6 According to Alexander Wylie (1967), by 1867, the Chinese publications by the Protestants amounted to about 787 items, including tracts, translations of scripture, periodicals and so on.

7 Article in File Box 3, China Personal, CWM/LMS, library of the School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London.

8 The Taiping Rebellion was a domestic revolution during the period 1850–64. The leader of the Taiping Rebellion, Hong Xiouquan, was influenced by Christianity and it became, though in a peculiar form, an aspect of the revolutionary ideology of the movement. Hong Xiouquan was inspired by a set of tracts 'Good Words Exhorting the Age' (*Quanshi Liangyan*), compiled by an early convert Liang Fa, an assistant of Morrison and Milne.

9 Treadgold, Donald W. (1973: 39–41) expresses doubts about the quality of Morrison's translation of the Bible and in his mission in general in China.

10 As the East India Company declined to have Morrison on board, he had to sail from London to New York to seek help. In May 1807, a free passage to China was given to Morrison by an American merchant and ship owner.

11 Milne arrived in Canton in 1813. He was the second Protestant missionary sent by the London Missionary Society to China.
12 According to Harrison (1979: 20), Britain had agreed to return Java and Malacca and other Southeast Asian possessions to Holland by the London Convention of August 1814.
13 According to Su (2000: 161; 79–93), one page – part of the news section – found in the *China Monthly Magazine* in the British Library was printed with movable type. Between 1815–23, Morrison's *A Dictionary of the Chinese Language* was printed in the East India Company Printing House in Macao using metal movable type.
14 Samuel Kidd (1799–1843) returned to Britain in 1832 and became the first professor of Chinese Language and Literature in the University of London (Fang 1997: 262).
15 The English translation is from Confucius's Analects XV, xii in Lau (1979: 134).
16 In 1898, in order to strengthen Hong Kong's development, the British 'leased' an area of the Chinese mainland adjacent to Hong Kong island known as the New Territories for 99 years. In the 1980s, the Chinese government declared its refusal to renew the lease. As the British realized that Hong Kong was not militarily defensible, they decided to meet the Chinese demand and hand back both the New Territories and Hong Kong island to China in 1997 (Spence 1999: 675).
17 In the three treaty ports, the most well-known missionary publishing house was, 'The Chinese and American Holy Class Book Establishment' set up in Ningbo in 1845. It moved to Shanghai in 1860 and changed its name to 'The Presbyterian Mission Press'. For further discussions see Chapter 6.
18 Wylie is well known for translating and editing a large number of scientific books into Chinese, including introductions to mathematics, geometry and astronomy.
19 According to Spence (1999: 205), the modern Chinese vocabulary of chemistry owed a large debt to John Fryer and his Chinese collaborator, the scholar-mathematician Xu Shou, who worked together for decades. Their work, along with the journal *Chinese Scientific Magazine*, was vital to the development of industrial applied chemistry in China.
20 The publishing history of the *Chinese Scientific Magazine* was not continuous. It started in 1876 and was then suspended between 1878–80. It restarted in April 1880 but came to a halt in 1882. In 1890, the journal was resumed as a quarterly and existed until 1892 (Xiong 1995: 419).

Chapter 3

1 Its origin was *Church News* established in 1868, then *Church News* was renamed as *Wanguo Gongbao* in 1874. After that, *Wanguo Gongbao* had two English titles. During 1874–83, *Wanguo Gongbao* was called '*The Chinese Globe Magazine*'; between 1889–1907, *Wanguo Gongbao* was given a different English title: '*A Review of the Times*'. For the sake of clarity, *Wanguo Gongbao* is used here as a generic name to refer to both English titles unless specifically mentioned.
2 In the 1860s, the British diplomat Thomas Wade and the Qing government employee Robert Hart gave the Zhongli Yamen advice on foreign relations techniques and the adaptation of Western innovations, which played a crucial role in stimulating and assisting the Self-strengthening Movement. The famous Hart-Wade memorandum of 1865–6 strongly suggested internal reforms and the implementation of Western technological advances, such as the railway, the telegraphy and machine-worked mines (Kuo Ting-yee and Liu Kwang-ching 1995: 513).
3 The opening issue of *The Chinese Globe Magazine* was counted as Vol. 301 following the previous *Church News*.
4 '*Bao*' in Chinese means newspaper or periodical.

5 One of the most influential Protestant publication organizations in nineteenth-century China. According to Liang (1978: 89–90), the SDK can be traced back to the Scottish Presbyterian 'Chinese Book and Tract Society' (Tongwen Shuhui) organized by Alexander Williamson in 1884. Then a printing studio was set up in Shanghai but the 'Chinese Book and Tract Society' was dissolved. In 1887, Williamson re-established 'Tongwen Shuhui' in Shanghai with the remaining printing facilities and help from other expatriates and missionaries. While the original Chinese name 'Tongwen Shuhui' remained the same, the English name was changed to the 'Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese' (SDK). In 1892, 'Tongwen Shuhui' was changed to 'Guangxue Hui', but the English name SDK remained unchanged. In the early twentieth century, SDK was renamed as the 'Christian Literature Society'. As Liang suggests, the name and regulations of the SDK were very much influenced by the organization the 'Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge in India'.
6 See Cohen (1957) for a discussion of missionary approaches adopted by Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, and Timothy Richard.
7 In Kiangnan Arsenal Translation Bureau, Western missionaries such as Alexander Wylie and John Fryer played an important role. Allen joined in 1871 and many of his translations were based on the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Bennett 1983: 73).
8 Many modern scholars such as Lee (2002: 147) attack the eight-legged essay, 'Ba guwen', as a meaningless writing format adopted in traditional government examinations. It has been often accused of being 'one of the reasons for China's cultural stagnation and economic backwardness in the nineteenth century' (Elman 2000: 380). However, Elman also stresses that the eight-legged essay, the classical essay on the Four Books and Five Classics since mid-Ming times, derived from earlier literary style and has been mistreated with 'unconcealed modern contempt' (2000: 380).
9 Before Liang, Kang Youwei set up an 'anti-foot-binding society' (Buguo zhuhui) in his home town in 1883 (Zhang 1987: 170). He was very probably inspired by reading *Wanguo Gongbao*.
10 The proposal here is slightly different from the original proposal which appeared in the article 'New Policy' (*Wanguo Gongbao*, Vol. 87, 1896).
11 In the writing contest, Kang Youwei used the name of 'Kang Changsu' instead of his real name, according to the seventh annual report of SDK (see *Wanguo Gongbao* Vol 73 February 1895).
12 In October 1894, with the recommendation of Wang Tao, the article 'A Proposal to Li Hongzhang' by Sun Zhongshan appeared in *Wanguo Gongbao*.

Chapter 4

1 The term 'élite' is used here to distinguish the serious, politically oriented press from the popular, commercial press. Generally speaking, there were two lines of journalistic development in nineteenth-century China: one led by the missionaries, which played a major role inspiring the Chinese educated élite; the other, a commercial-oriented enterprise established by the Western business circle.
2 The majority of the translators were educated in missionary schools. Yuan Dehui studied in a Catholic school at Penang and attended the Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca. Liang Jinde was the son of Liang Fa, the assistant to Robert Morrison and William Milne, the first Protestant priest in China.
3 According to Britton (1933: 32–3), when Lin was dismissed in 1840, another active scholar Wei Yuan continued Lin's attempt at understanding Western nations and made use of the translations. Lin's translated pieces were compiled to be published under the name of *Macao Press* (Aomen Xinwenzhi). *Macao Monthly* (Aomen

Yuebao), a polished version of *Macao Press*, was said to have reached the Emperor Daoguang and appeared in Wei Yuan's *An Illustrated Gazetteer of the Maritime Countries* (*Haiguo Tuzhi*) which also drew materials from the missionaries' Chinese publications (Fang 1997: 457–8). Contrary to the intention of the Protestants to make China open to the West, Lin, Wei and a few other scholars exploited the Protestant literature on world geography and history in an attempt to limit and control foreign influence (Barnett 1971: 129–49).

4 Hong Rengan was a relative of Hong Xiouquan, the Taiping Rebellion Chief. For three years 1855–8, Hong Rengan was employed as a catechist and preacher in the London Mission in Hong Kong. He worked closely with a number of Western missionaries, including James Legge (Britton 1933: 36–7).

5 In the late 1860s, Wang Tao was invited to spend two years in Scotland to assist James Legge translating the *I-Ching*, a classic Chinese divination book. As the first visiting scholar abroad in the late Qing dynasty, Wang Tao made a speech on comparative culture between China and Europe at Oxford University. He also visited many European cities, such as London and Paris, and published his travel diary after returning to Hong Kong.

6 About 1870, Wang Tao wrote three essays on 'Reform and Self-Strengthening' (Bianfa Zhiqiang) in which he stressed 'four reforms affecting the selection of scholars, the training of troops, the school system, and the legal code' (Teng and Fairbank 1982: 136; Zhu 1998a: 33–9).

7 More details on trends within Confucian will be discussed in Chapter 7.

8 Xuehai Tang was a school founded by the well-known scholar Ranyuan, governor-general of Canton. It was, as noted by Chang (1971: 58), 'the citadel of Han Learning and a centre of the late Qing eclectic movement to combine Han and Song Learning'. For three years, Liang remained there as a devoted and outstanding student.

9 The total number of signatures on the petition remains controversial. According to Kang's autobiography (1953: 130), there were 1,200 signatures of provincial graduates collected for the petition. However, as the first petition was turned down by the Qing government, many scholars withdrew their signatures. That was why only 604 signatures, as some scholars claim, can be found in the petition. For more details, see Zhang (1971: 192).

10 The name means the 'Study Society for National Strengthening'. Abbreviated to QXH hereafter.

11 According to Zhang (1971: 176–7), before the QXH, there were some study societies in existence in China but none of them were set up by the Chinese. Western missionaries were responsible for the majority of the study societies, such as the Shanghai Literary and Scientific Society 1858; the School and Textbook Series Committee 1877 in Shanghai; the YMCA 1885 first in Fouzhou then spreading to other cities; and the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese 1887 in Shanghai.

12 Disputes remain as to when QXH was set up. For details, see Fang (1997: 545).

13 Kang Yu-wei was the older Wade-Giles system mandarin spelling. Kang Youwei is the contemporary pinyin Romanization.

14 This means the QXH.

15 According to Levenson (1965: 24), *Shiwu Bao* was very well received among the scholar officials. The Nanking Governor General Liu Kun-I recommended it to subordinates and scholars in areas under his jurisdiction, and in the fourth month (13 May to 10 June) memorials on its behalf were submitted by Wuchang Governor General Chang Chih-tung, Chihli Governor General Wang Wen-shao, and Sheng Hsuan-huai of the Court of Judicature and Revision (Ta-li ssu).

Chapter 5

1 For example, the 267-year-long Qing dynasty (1644–1911) had ten emperors in power and the actual calendar date was punctuated by the period each of their reigns. In the official gazette *JingBao*, the year 1826 appeared as Dao Guang Year VI, because the emperor Dao Guang began his reign in 1821; the year 1889 was called Guang Xu XV and thus you can work out that the Emperor Guang Xu started his reign in 1875.
2 Wang Ermin (2003: 370–400) traces the long and complex linguistic history of the word 'Zhongguo'.
3 According to the year of the death of Confucius, 1896 was post-Confucius 2373.
4 Ancient Chinese thought holds that there are five elements in the universe: Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth.
5 Because of the belief in 'the celestial and human union', natural disasters or phenomena that could not be explained, such as eclipses, were thought of as the sign of moral misconduct of the emperor. It is not surprising therefore that several emperors in the Han Dynasty made confessions when an eclipse of the Sun occurred. When serious natural disasters, such as drought or flooding took place, the emperor might even dismiss ministers (Jin and Liu 2000: 62).
6 From February to May 1899, *Wanguo Gongbao* (Vols 121–4) published 'Datong Xue' translated and abridged by Timothy Richard and Cai Erkang. According to Ye (1996: 119), this was one of the earliest articles introducing social Darwinism to Chinese readers.
7 Anthony Smith, however, adopts a less severely modernist approach than some, stressing the long-standing ethinic roots of nationality amongst the complex multi-dimensional constitution of national identity: 'an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a common, mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members' (1991: 14).
8 In *Imagined Communities*, part of Anderson's discussion is however devoted to Southeast Asia.
9 According to Jin and Liu (2000: 172), the number of suicides in the late Ming and early Qing reached a historical record. About three thousand eight hundred people gave up their life because of the termination of the Ming Dynasty, while their family members, relatives and servants who died were not counted.
10 The number of international news stories varies in every issue. But it was common for over 20 pieces of international news to appear in an average issue of *Shiwu Bao* between 1896–8.
11 According to Thompson (1999: 70), 'by the first decade of the eighteenth century, there were an estimated three thousand coffee houses in London alone, each with a core of regular clients. Many of the new periodicals were closely interwoven with the life of the coffee houses, as they were read and debated by individuals who came together to discuss the issues of the day'.
12 Habermas quotes a speech which Charles Fox made in the House of Commons. In which he used the phrase: 'to give the public the means of forming an opinion' (Habermas 1999: 66).
13 The theme of 'public sphere' in early modern China has been explored in several historical studies: In her book *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865–1911*, Mary Backus Rankin (1986) notes that in the lower Yangzi region after the Taiping rebellion, the élite-led public sphere played a major role in the political modernization. William Rowe's book *Hankou: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City 1796–1895* (1989) traces how a complex tripartite structure – public, state and private – of governance evolved in Hankou during the late-Qing Period. See also Frederic Jr. Wakeman's article 'The Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate: Western Reflection on Chinese Polit-

ical Culture' in *Modern China* Vol.19 No.2 (1993); Rowe, William (1990) 'The Public Sphere in Modern China' in *Modern China* Vol.16 No.3; Wagner, Rudolf (1995) 'The Role of the Foreign Community in the Chinese Public Sphere' in *The China Quarterly* June, 1995; Wagner, Rudolf (2001) 'The Early Chinese Newspapers and the Chinese Public Sphere' in *European Journal of East Asian Studies* Vol.1.1, 2001.

14 Punishment for 'casual whispers' and 'libel in the abdomen' was recorded in the history of the Qin Dynasty, but some other dynasties, such as the Tang, had a more relaxed policy towards the control of public opinion.

15 The title of the article is 'Lun Zhong-guo Ji-ro You-yu Fang-bi' (On China's serious weakness being due to its aiming to forestall troubles).

16 This notion was introduced into Chinese intellectual discourse, largely through Herbert Spencer's book '*The Study of Sociology*' translated by Yan Fu as *Qunxue Yiyan. Qun Xue* is in effect the first sociology text to be translated into Chinese. As Wang (2003: 33–4) observes, the original meaning of 'Qun' (Society) became associated with a social Darwinist model, particularly in the context of China's national crisis. More broadly, 'Qun' was interpreted as a popular political concept connecting the rights of society and the individual, as for example in Yan Fu's translation of John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* published in 1903. The Chinese title was *Qunji Quanjie Lun* ('On the boundary between the rights of society and rights of the individual') (Schwartz 1964: 142).

Chapter 6

1 There is much greater consensus amongst Chinese scholars on the date of the introduction of moveable type cut from clay, wood or metal was from the Song Dynasty (Xiao 2001: 70–91). Though as Tsien (1987: 217) notes, controversy still surrounds the techniques involved, for example, 'whether metal movable type for traditional printing in China was cast from moulds or engraved individually'.

2 Rawski quotes from an English translation by Gallagher (1953) of Trigault's 1615 Latin version of Ricci's work. Quotations here are also from Gallagher.

3 The process of making type begins with the punch-cutter, who produces a steel punch in the shape of each letter required. The punch is hardened and then driven into a block of soft copper to form a 'matrix' or mould from which the type can be cast.

4 Martin Luther described the new printing press as 'God's highest gift of grace' (Briggs & Burke 2002: 28).

5 Medhurst had been to Canton to edit and publish *World Report* (Geguo Xiaoxi) in 1838.

6 Hereafter LMSP. It was known in Chinese as Mohai Shuguan. It derived from Robert Morrison's printing house in Malacca. In the early 1840s, it was relocated to Hong Kong under the supervision of James Legge. Soon in Shanghai, Medhurst set up another branch of London Missionary Society publishing house.

7 According to Su (2000: 234–6), the number of secular books and periodicals published by the LMSP in this period amounted to only 23 compared to over 220 religious subjects. However in Xiong's account (1995: 188), 33 scientific and historical titles are identified in contrast with 138 religious books.

8 According to Reed (2004: 42), around 1864, LMSP in Shanghai was shut down and all its printing went to the American Presbyterian Mission Press.

9 Hereafter the APMP.

10 As Reed (2004: 45) explains, 'Electrotypes were created by making a wax mould of the typeform; after the mould was separated from the form, copper or nickel was precipitated onto the inside of the mould. The new copper or nickel matrix was separated from the wax and given a type-metal backing'.

11 'Meihua type' is also called 'Song type'. According to Xiong (1995: 482–3), Gamble's invention was highly regarded by contemporary Chinese scholars. Two poems praising Gamble's invention were published in *Church News* (before it was renamed as *Wanguo Gongbao*) October, 1869 and August 1870.
12 According to Tsien (1987: 207), Chinese character sorting in the traditional wood-block printing process had existed for a long period. Wang Chen, a magistrate in the Song Dynasty recorded the use of two revolving tables to keep the movable type in order – one for the type from the official book of rhymes and the other for the special type of most-used characters. The typesetter could select type as needed, and put them back into their proper rhyme-compartments after they had been used. A special list of characters was prepared according to the book of rhymes, and the characters were all numbered. A man holding the list called for the type by number, while another took them from the compartments on the table and placed them directly in the form.
13 An abbreviation of Zhongli Geguo shiwu yamen (Office for the general management of affairs concerning the various countries) which was set up in Peking 1861.

Chapter 7

1 'Han Learning' means the Confucianism of the Han dynasty. In the Qing dynasty, many Ming loyalists rejected the Manchu's regime including the Song learning supported by the Manchurians. Instead, they promoted so-called 'Han Learning' hoping to create a new intellectual ambience and eventually restore the Ming dynasty.
2 The argument between the New Text School and the Ancient Text School will be discussed as the third period of intellectual trends in the Qing.
3 It is well known that Gu's mother starved herself to death refusing to submit to the Manchu regime and in her dying words urged Gu not to serve the Manchu government (Spence 1999: 62).
4 *Hai-guo Tu-zhi* was based on the *Gazetteer of the Four Continents* (Sizhou zhi) compiled by Lin Zexu. It consists of four parts: 'part one deals with the history, geography, and recent political conditions of Western countries; part two, the manufacturing and use of foreign guns; part three, shipbuilding, mining, and miscellaneous descriptions of the practical arts of the West; and part four, methods of dealing with the West' (Hsu 1990: 276).
5 The slogan 'Chinese Learning as Ti, Western Learning as Qi' has been widely regarded as formulated by Zhang Zhidong (1837–1909), an important Qing Self-strengthener, in 1896 (Chang 1976: 147).
6 It means 'History of the Nineteenth Century', one of the most influential articles in *Wanguo Gongbao*, discussed in Chapter Three.
7 After the Sino-Japanese War, the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed in 1895.
8 It is worth noting that not all Chinese gentry scholars embraced Western learning after 1895. Behind the most violent mass riots against Christianity (and Westerners) which occurred during the period 1895–1900, is revealed a hard core of traditional ideologists among the gentry scholars (Jin and Liu 1993: 114–15).
9 See the article 'On the principle of succession of monarchy by popular rule' (Lun jun-zheng min-zheng xiang-shan zhi li) *Shiwu Bao* Vol. 41, 1897.

Chapter 8

1 It is perhaps worth mentioning briefly the heated debate among American China specialists since the end of the 1960s on the issue of imperialism related to early modern Chinese history. In his well-documented book, Cohen (1984: 97–148)

summed up the debates in two periods. By the first half of the 1970s, the focal point of the controversy was modernization theory, which had become embedded as one of the main assumptions in American historical studies on China and other developing countries. It was heavily criticized by many intellectuals, among whom James Peck (1971) (*The Roots of Rhetoric: The Professional Ideology of America's China Watchers*) was one of those most outspoken. After 1977, much attention turned to the 'world economy' approach initiated by Frances Moulder (1979) (*Japan, China and the Modern World Economy*). Through exploring the different consequences of Western influence in Japan and China, Moulder concluded that Japan's successful economic development benefited from its relative autonomy within the world economy. In contrast, China's underdevelopment was primarily caused by being dependent on the world system.

2 This is one of China's most beloved novels: a religious quest and picaresque adventure published in the 1590s, the late Ming dynasty.
3 The English title of *Wanguo Gongbao* at that time.
4 One of the periodicals published by the SDK.
5 As noted earlier, in August 1895, a newspaper *Wanguo Gongbao* was launched by the Chinese reform-oriented scholars in Peking. It shared the same Chinese title as the well-known missionary periodical *Wanguo Gongbao* and also contained articles reprinted from it. In December 1895, *Wanguo Gongbao* was renamed as *Zhongwi Jiwen* and became the official organ of Qiangxue Hui (Study Society for Self-Strengthening).
6 According to Chang (1999), the figure for newspapers and periodicals was 840, as estimated by the *China Year Book* published at the time of the May Fourth Movement; others estimates were 1,134 by *Sheng Bao* and 2,000 by Samuel I. Woodbridge in *Encyclopedia Sinica* (1917).
7 Cohen (1974: 199) examined eight renowned reformists during the 1870s and 1880s – Yung Wing, Ho Kai, Wang Tao, Ma Chien-chung, Ma Liang, Cheng Kuan-ying [Zheng Guanying], Tong King-sing and Wu Ting-fang – who were to some extent, 'products of the Western missionary effort in nineteenth century China. Six of them, as boys, attended missionary schools. Two worked closely with missionaries during portions of their adult careers. And at least five were, at some stage in their lives, bona fide practicing Christians.'
8 According to Cohen (1995: 559), the Protestants who promoted Christian religious reading at the government examination sites might sometimes face the danger of being physically harmed.
9 According to Xiong (1994) and Chang (1999), from 1895 to 1920, statistics show that eighty-seven new colleges and universities were established, including the most well known, Peking University, Qinghua University. They accounted for four-fifths of the colleges and universities by the time of 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded. So it is safe to say that the new colleges and universities from the transformative period 1895–1920 formed the foundation of modern Chinese higher education.

Conclusion

1 Although their long-term influence cannot, of course, be dismissed in accounting for an estimated thirty-five million practising Protestants in China today. Christian revival in China has been remarkable after the repression of Mao's era (Lim 2004).
2 After the Treaty of Nanjing signed in 1842, the British government built the first foreign settlement in Shanghai. Soon the French and American governments followed suit. The majority of the Protestants involved in journalism and publication lived in the British and American settlements, which were referred to together as the International Settlement (Hawks Pott 1928: 10–13; 64–6).

3 Although these were not central parts of its content, *Wanguo Gongbao* described the liberal policies of democratic nations, including the role of newspapers, as a critical forum for monitoring the government along with brief discussions of the regulation of Western newspapers (see *Wanguo Gongbao*, June 1875: 'yi minzhuguo yu geguo zhangcheng ji gongyitang jie' (Defining the terms of democratic nations, constitutions and parliament); September 1893: 'Xibao Lianggui' (Rules of Western newspapers); July 1891: 'Yinmei xinwenzhi tongyi lun' (The comparison between British and American newspapers).

4 According to Fang (1997: 947–9), there was no specific and consistent legal reference to publication and the press during the long legal discourse of imperial China. In the only general law of the Qing dynasty (Daqing Luli), illegal publications and unauthorized press were rather oddly categorized in the section on burglary. It stated that anyone who created or spread 'evil publication or speech' would be prosecuted and executed. But it did not define what 'evil publication or speech' meant, which gave the state complete flexibility and control over the public media.

5 The first years of publication of Yan's translated works were between 1895 and 1909 (Jin and Liu 2000: 51).

6 See Judge (1996) for an examination of *ShiBao* and the culture of reform in late Qing China.

7 According to Lee (2001: 240), Chu Anping worked for the *Central Daily News*, the official organ of the Nationalist Party as an editorial writer during the Anti-Japanese War. His pro-Communist stance eventually led to his appointment in 1957 as the chief editor of the *Guangming Daily*, the official organ of the Communist Party. His death only seventy days after he took up the editorship remains a mystery. This was the time of a severe political purge following the 'Hundred Flowers' Movement.

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