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The Life of Reverend Wong Fook-ping
(Huang Fuping 黃福平, 1892–1966):
A Testimony of Faith in God
and Love for Country

TERESE WONG

Abstract

This paper traces the life of a Chinese Anglican priest, Wong Fook-ping (*Huang Fuping* 黃福平, 1892–1966), and considers how the Christian gospel was promulgated in the era of Republican China from the perspective of a Chinese Christian. This paper focuses on events relating to the experience in the Anglican churches in the Kong Yuet Diocese (*Gang-Yue jiaoqu* 港粵教區) under the organization of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui (*Zhonghua shenggong hui* 中華聖公會) and considers Rev. Wong's thoughts and belief through his writings in the context of the events during the era of Republican China and the early years of the People's Republic of China up to the cultural revolution.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper traces the life of a Chinese Anglican priest, Wong Fook-ping (*Huang Fuping* 黃福平, 1892–1966), and considers how the Christian gospel was promulgated in the era of the Republican China from the perspective of a Chinese Christian. China covers a vast area populated with numerous communities with diversified ethnicity and experience. The development of the Christian communities and the organization of the churches in China are likewise widely diverse and complex. The scope of this paper focuses on events relating to the experience surrounding Rev. Wong Fook-ping in the Anglican churches in the Kong Yuet Diocese (*Gang-Yue jiaoqu* 港粵教區, also known as the South China Diocese, *Huanan jiaoqu* 華南教區) under the organization of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui (*Zhonghua Shenggonghui* 中華聖公會) and considers his thoughts and belief through his writings in the context of the historical events in China.

ANCESTRAL ROOT AND EARLY ENLIGHTENMENT

The Hakka Ancestral Root

Wong Fook-ping (also known as *Huang Fuping* 黃復平) was born in China in 1892, at the turn of the twentieth century in late Qing Dynasty. His ancestors were migrants from the central region of China settling in Guangdong known as the Hakka people. The name Hakka (*Ke-jia* 客家) denotes the meaning of “guests” or “strangers.” The Hakka people have their distinctive custom and language and were often considered a marginalized tribe as “outsiders” by ethnic Guangdong native people (*punti / bendi ren* 本地人).¹ The Hakka people are thought to have close association with Christian missions ever since the mid-nineteenth century when there was an influx of Hakka seeking

¹ Nicole Constable, “Christianity and Hakka Identity,” in *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, ed. Daniel H. Bays (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 160.

refuge in the Basel mission after the defeat of the Taiping Rebellion campaign. The campaign was associated with Christianity when its leader, Hong Sau-chuen (*Hong Xiuquan* 洪秀全), also a Hakka, was said to have been converted to Christianity after reading a pamphlet distributed by a missionary. Wong recounted his grand-uncle's encounter with Christianity in the midst of the Taiping Rebellion in Nanjing. His grand-uncle returned home and invited a German missionary in their hometown to explain the gospel to his clan. The gospel continued to be promulgated in his clan and Wong's father became a missionary. Wong viewed his Christian heritage as an example of indigenization of the church and effective propagation of the Christian gospel in the Guangdong province.²

Education and Theological Training

Wong received early Christian education at a primary school run by the Basel mission. In the midst of the Xinhai Revolution in 1911, he followed his uncle to Sabah to further his studies in the English and German languages.³ His language skill later proved to be useful when he helped a priest from the Church Mission Society to translate bible commentaries.⁴ When Wong returned from his studies in 1914, imperial China was transformed into a republic. He enrolled to study theology at a Lutheran seminary only to be interrupted by its closure because of the war in Europe. He then worked as a teacher in Lingshan 靈山 county in Guangxi 廣西. In 1918, Wong met the Anglican bishop Gerald Heath Lander during the bishop's inspection of the Anglican mission project in the Nanning 南寧 region.⁵ This meeting became a turning point for Wong that paved his way to enter the Anglican

² Wong Fook-ping, "Feichang shiqi zhong Jidu shizhe ying dao nali qu?" 非常時期中基督使者應到那裏去? [Where Should Christ's Messengers Go in the Time of Crisis?], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao / Shenggonghui bao* 聖公會報 31, no. 13 (1938): 11.

³ Zhou Jiarong 周佳榮 and Huang Wenjiang 黃文江, *Xianggang Shenggonghui Sheng Baoluo tang bainian shi* 香港聖公會聖保羅堂百年史 [Century History of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui St. Paul's Church] (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shu ju 中華書局, 2013), 33.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Chung Yan-lup (Zhong Renli 鍾仁立), "Zhonghua Shenggonghui Huanan jiaoqu bainian shilue" 中華聖公會華南教區百年史略 [Brief History of the South China Diocese of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui], (n.p.: Bishop House of Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui / Zhonghua Shenggonghui huidu fu 中華聖公會會督府, n.d.). See p. 22 for Bishop Lander's visit to Nanning region.

Church when he was recommended by Bishop Lander to enroll at the Canton Union Theological College in Guangzhou (*Guangzhou Xiehe shenxue yuan* 廣州協和神學院).

The Canton Union Theological College was founded in 1914.⁶ Its name “Union” reflects the joint efforts of its founders, comprising eight mission societies and three Protestant churches: American Presbyterian Mission, Canadian Presbyterian Mission, New Zealand Presbyterian Mission, London Mission Society, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Congregational Church), United Brethren in Christ (American), Church Mission Society (CMS), Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society of England; and the Canton Synod of Church of Christ in China, the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui (South China Diocese) and the Chinese Methodist Church. Later four more churches joined: the Baptist Convention of Guangdong and Guangxi Province, the Lutheran Synod of Guangdong and Jiangxi Province, Basel Mission, and Rhenish Church.⁷ This reflects the willingness of the Protestant churches to collaborate with each other to promote theological education in recognition of the need to train Chinese Christians to carry out mission work in South China.⁸ The constitution of the college only required the members to subscribe to “Evangelical truth as summarized in the Apostles’ Creed.”⁹ Apart from subjects for theology and biblical studies, the college also taught other general subjects such as geography, physics, biology, mathematics as well as Chinese studies and music to ensure the students had a broad base of knowledge.¹⁰ Wong mentioned his mentor in Chinese studies,

⁶ It is now the Guangdong Union Theological Seminary. See “The Profile of Guangdong Union Theological Seminary,” accessed June 1, 2016, <http://www.gduts.org/show.asp?id=56>.

⁷ Mai Lingsheng 麥靈生, “Yi Guangzhou Xiehe shendao xuexiao” 憶廣州協和神道學校 [Remembering Guangzhou Union Theological College], in *Guangzhou wenshi cunqao ziliao xuanbian* 廣州文史存稿資料選編 [Selected Historical Data of Guangzhou Manuscript], ed. Li Qinian 李齊念 and Guangzhou shi zhengxie wenshi ziliao weiyuanhui 廣州市政協文史資料委員會 [Guangzhou Subcommittee of Cultural and Historical Data] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi 中國文史, 2008).

⁸ John Stewart Kunkle, “History of the Canton Union Theological College: 1914–1924,” in *Canton Union Theological College, the First Ten Years: 1914–1924* (Hong Kong: The Commercial Press, 1924), 35, reprint, microfilm collection from internet archive, accessed May 26, 2016, <https://ia801406.us.archive.org/8/items/MN42046ucmf1/MN42046ucmf1.pdf>.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁰ Tso See-kai (Cao Sikai 曹思楷), “Guangzhou Jidujiao Xiehe gaodeng shendao xuexiao gailue” 廣州基督教協和高等神道學校概畧 [Brief Introduction of the Union

Au-yeung Shau-shek (*Ouyang Shoushi* 歐陽壽石), in a letter to his youngest daughter dated September 30, 1957 in which he also enclosed some manuscripts of his assignments. Au-yeung Shau-shek was a scholar qualified as a *xiu cai* 秀才 during the late Qing Dynasty.¹¹ He had been the general editor of a journal in Guangzhou *Kak Wan Daily News* (*Juehun ribao* 覺魂日報).¹² He was tutoring Chinese studies at the college in the Department of Chinese Literature and had helped Wong gain an insight into classical Chinese thought as well as contemporary thinking in a modern China emerging from traditional feudal system seeking reform into modernity.¹³

Wong's early works show the development of a contextual theology responding to the intellectual currents of the new republican China, which are viewed as the Chinese Enlightenment characterized by critique of tradition.¹⁴ This era is epitomized by the May Fourth Movement in 1919, when Chinese intellectuals took the lead in the effort to modernize the nation. In one of his assignments at the theological college, Wong compared the concept of universal love (*jian ai* 兼愛) propounded by the classical Chinese philosopher, Mozi 墨子 and God's universal love in Christ (*bo ai* 博愛).¹⁵ The Chinese revolutionary leader Dr. Sun Yat-sen (*Sun Yixian* 孫逸仙) is said to have once remarked that the principle of universal love was also found in the Chinese tradition advocated by Mozi in the fourth century BC.¹⁶ Wong's essay seems to echo Dr. Sun's comment and demonstrates his ability to contextualize his Christian faith with reflections on Chinese classical thoughts. However, his essay also demonstrates a critical mind, distin-

High Level Education College of Divinity], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* (December 1917): 21–25.

¹¹ *Xiu cai* 秀才 is a title for a scholar who passed the county level imperial examination in imperial China. This was a civil servant examination and was discontinued in 1905 by an imperial memorial under the reform known as "New Policies."

¹² Kunkle, "History of the Canton Union Theological College," 75.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁴ Wong's papers enclosed with his letter to his daughter are now archived in the library of the Christianity and Chinese Culture Centre in Cheung Chau, Hong Kong. Some of Wong's paper could have been published in the journal *Juehun ribao* 覺魂日報 as there are markings in Wong's paper "deng *Juehun*" 登覺魂, meaning "publish in *Juehun*."

¹⁵ Wong Fook-ping, "Lun bo'ai yu jianai zhi bie" 論博愛與兼愛之別 [The Difference between God's Universal Love and Mozi's Universal Love], unpublished manuscript, n.d., retrieved from Christianity and Chinese Culture Research Centre.

¹⁶ Jean-Pierre Charbonnier, "The Colonial Period: Ambivalent Expansion," ch. 22, "Christians for Progress," in *Christians in China, A.D. 600 to 2000* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius, 2007), 379.

guishing the differences between the Chinese philosophical concept and the Christian faith. He explained that the concept of universal love propounded by Mozi was based on human love out of kindred spirit whereas God's love involved loving the enemy. He saw that the love of God had a spiritual dimension demonstrated through Jesus Christ dying on the cross. He also distinguished between the salvific power of Christ's death propounded in Christianity and human endeavors in saving lives.¹⁷

In another essay, Wong discussed the compatibility of Christianity with science. He opined that there was no conflict between Christianity and science: Christianity promoted ethics whereas science promoted knowledge and neither one was dispensable. He disagreed with comments from philosophers in the previous century that criticized Christianity as being susceptible to obviation within a hundred years. In his counter argument, he cited scientists who initially criticized Christianity but eventually changed their views to admit that the world could not do without religion as ethics were founded on religion. Wong further argued that many misunderstandings of religion in ancient time were due to ignorance and that humankind would benefit from science in gaining knowledge about the creation and in turn be able to marvel at God's creative power, thus science could in fact help promote Christianity. On the other hand, science could also benefit from the Christian teaching of the one and only God who controls all things, refuting superstitious beliefs in popular folklore religion. He concluded that there was no conflict between Christianity and science as both were based on historic facts and experience.¹⁸ His paper reflects influence of Western Christian apologists in the European Enlightenment period.

¹⁷ Wong, "Lun bo'ai yu jianai zhi bie."

¹⁸ Wong Fook-ping, "Jidujiao yu kexue shifou chongtu lun" 基督教與科學是否衝突論 [Is There Any Conflict between Christianity and Science?], unpublished manuscript, n.d., retrieved from Christianity and Chinese Culture Research Centre.

EARLY MINISTRY AND VISION OF THE NATION (1920'S)

Spouse and Family of a Chinese Clergy

Wong married Lee Yan-chi (*Li Enci* 李恩賜) in 1921 in the Christian Church of Our Savior in Guangzhou (*Guangzhou jiuzhu tang* 廣州救主堂). The ceremony was administered by the then Reverend Mo Sau-tsang (*Mo Shouzenseng* 莫壽增) and the best man to the groom was Mu Yong-yin (*Mu Rongxian* 慕容賢), both of whom later became bishops in the diocese.¹⁹ Lee also came from a Christian family. Her father, Lee Sen-chi (*Li Shenchi* 李慎芝), was a medical missionary who studied theology and medicine in England. He also taught Chinese to foreign missionaries when he returned to China. He was said to have assisted Dr. Sun Yat-sen in the Xinhai Revolution and was martyred. Lee had a vivid memory of the night when her pregnant mother bid farewell to her father as they were ushered away by her father's comrades just before he was captured and executed.²⁰ Having already been trained as a teacher, Lee furthered her education to become a mid-wife after she was married. Her training came to be very useful for her role as the wife of a pastor. Her children were full of fond memories of a cheerful and loving mother helping their father in their parish home. Her youngest daughter recounted that the busiest day would be on Sundays when their mother taught Sunday school and led the singing playing the old organ.²¹ The children would help "set up" the church for worship by picking wild flowers to put before the altar and clean the floor. Some of the parishioners would have to walk for hours to attend worship. So a simple lunch would be prepared for them after the service so that they would not be hungry on their journey home.²²

¹⁹ Ma Guoying 馬繼英, *Enhuai baizai muzhe qing* 恩懷百載牧者情 [Tribute to Pastors in the Past Hundred Years with Thanksgiving] (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui St. Mary's Church, 2012), 6.

²⁰ Account from Lee Yan-chi's youngest daughter, Wong Kuk-yu (Huang Juru 黃菊如), "Wujin de ai: Yi xianmu Huang Li Enci" 無盡的愛——憶先母黃李恩賜 [Endless Love: Memory of My Mother Wong Lee Yan-chi], unpublished manuscript, 2009.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Recollection from Wong's fourth daughter, Wong Wong Kuk-hing (Wang Huang Juxing 王黃菊馨), "Remembering My Father Wong Fook-ping," unpublished manuscript, 2015.

Parish Ministry and Concerns for the Nation

After graduation from seminary in the summer of 1922, Wong was assigned to assist in the Anglican St. Mary's Church and St. Paul's Church in Hong Kong. He was ordained as deacon in December 1923. As a deacon, he was responsible for the ministry of the then missionary areas including home visits, leading evening prayers, bible study and fellowship groups. He had close relationship with parishioners. Wong remembered fondly the generosity of a member of St. Mary's Church who presented a kidskin covered golden-edged Bible as a gift for the commemoration of the evening prayer service and bible study.²³ There were then five Chinese parishes operating in Hong Kong, namely St. Stephen's Church, St. Paul's Church and St. Mary's Church in the Hong Kong Island; and Holy Trinity Church and All Saint's Church in the Kowloon Peninsula.²⁴ The Chinese parishes worked closely together, while the clergy took turn to preach among the five churches by rosters.²⁵ A weekly periodical *Lingduo zhoukan* 靈鐸週刊 was established in 1924 by Chinese Anglicans to report on the works of the five parishes and Wong was one of the founding editors. The periodical was also a platform for sharing biblical expositions and sermons. To Wong the *Lingduo zhoukan* was an important literature for the Anglican Church in the South China region.²⁶ Wong also took time to help in other Christian publications. He had been editor for a monthly Chinese Christian periodical *Fengxing yuekan* 奮興月刊, established in 1914.²⁷ He later reminisced that if not for his busy parish work, he would have

²³ Philip L. Wickeri (Wei Keli 魏克利) and Chen Ruiwen 陳睿文, *Wandai yao cheng nai you fu: Xianggang Shenggonghui Sheng Maliya tang shi* 萬代要稱妳有福——香港聖公會聖馬利亞堂史 [All Generations Shall Call You Blessed: The History of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui St. Mary's Church (1912–2012)] (Hong Kong: Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture, 2014), 42.

²⁴ These five parishes remain important parishes in the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui today. Holy Trinity Church has become Holy Trinity Cathedral for the Eastern Kowloon Diocese and All Saint's Church has become All Saint's Cathedral for the Western Kowloon Diocese.

²⁵ Wong Fook-ping, "Wo yu Sheng Maliya tang" 我與聖馬利亞堂 [St. Mary's Church and I], March 25, 1949, *Sheng Maliya tang zhusheng shengtang tekan* 聖馬利亞堂祝聖聖堂特刊 [Special Issue on the Consecration of St. Mary's Church on March 25, 1949] (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui St. Mary's Church, 1949).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Liu Yuesheng 劉粵聲, *Xianggang Jidujiao shi* 香港基督教史 [History of Hong Kong Christianity] (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Baptist Church, 1996), 250, 254.

devoted more time in writing, notwithstanding that he had already made considerable efforts in his contributions to many Anglican publications including *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* (*Shenggonghui bao* 聖公會報) and *Kong Yuet Diocesan Echo* (*Gang-Yue jiaosheng* 港粵教聲).²⁸

A couple of months before his ordination to priesthood in 1926, Wong wrote about a prayer service of the youth group at St. Stephen's Church, where prayers were offered for the Chinese nation in the midst of conflicts. Wong lamented the rocky path of the nation split by diverse ideologies when he noted the "barely over a hundred" attendance in the prayer service. However, he found consolation in the sight of the cross at the altar that seemed to have radiated a ray of hope in the dim church.²⁹ No doubt Wong's sentiment reflects that of many Chinese Christians in his time. The 1920's was a turbulent time in China. While intellectuals in the country were absorbing Western ideas, there were also waves of anti-foreign and anti-Christian movements as a reaction to foreign enfranchisement. Chinese Christians were often caught in the middle and accused of betraying their countrymen in following the foreign religion. However, to Wong, being a Christian did not conflict with his national identity. In a sermon recorded in the *Lingduo zhoukan* expounding a biblical passage from the Gospel of Luke (19:41), Wong considered why Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem. He suggested that Jesus was weeping over the state of the Jewish nation in Jesus' own time: for its decline from its past glory now buried in history; for its people once revered as God's chosen people but had become enslaved and subjected to colonial rule under the Roman empire; for its faith which had been reduced to legalism and hypocrisy; and for its people betrayed by corrupt political and religious leaders. Wong saw that Jesus also had a patriotic sentiment that was truthful and humane. Wong thought that Christians should also have such sentiment towards their nation.³⁰

To Wong, a patriotic sentiment is not mere nationalism but love and concern for the state and welfare of his country and people. His view can be seen in his articles on the National Day.³¹ In the earlier days of

²⁸ Letter from Wong Fook-ping to his youngest daughter, Wong Kuk-yu, dated September 30, 1957.

²⁹ Wong Fook-ping, "Wei guo qidao ji" 為國祈禱記 [Memoir on Prayer for the Nation], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 19, no. 13 (1926).

³⁰ "Yesu weihe er ku?" 耶穌為何而哭? [Why Did Jesus Weep?], *Lingduo zhoukan* 靈鐸週刊 25 (1927).

³¹ It should be noted that the National Day in Wong's articles referred to October 10, which commemorated the establishment of the Chinese republic established by Sun

the new republic in 1927, Wong was full of hope for the nation to turn a new page for a bright future when he wrote in *Lingduo zhoukan* calling for his fellow Christians to celebrate the National Day with joy and thankfulness.³² As the republic entered into its twenty-fifth year in 1936, Rev. Wong voiced his concern in another article in *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* for the “double calamity” faced by the country: firstly internal corruption and extortion by officials within the fragmented government and secondly external threat of invasion by Japan. He called for his fellowman to renew their mindset to strive for the betterment of their country and people rather than pursuing personal interests, and to nurture the next generation to strengthen the country.³³ Twelve years later in 1948, Rev. Wong wrote again on the eve of the National Day, reflecting on the country’s struggle over nearly four decades and calling for prayers for the nation: firstly with thanksgiving for the nation’s survival in the war; then with remembrance of the forerunners, those of the Christian faith who had helped to bring salvation to the country and those who had fought to defend the land; and further with supplications for God’s forgiveness for its fallen and corrupt state, and petitions for God to inspire the country’s political leaders and people to reform the society. Lastly he prayed with hope for a better future for the nation and his people.³⁴ These articles reflect the sentiment of a Chinese Christian who was concerned about “national salvation” in a revolutionary climate.

Yat-sen after the Xinhai Revolution. The communist People’s Republic of China later set October 1 to be its National Day whereas Taiwan continued to celebrate on October 10. Since the communist regime was not yet established in the time of Wong’s articles, the reference to October 10 as the National Day did not imply any political preference in the Kuomintang-Communist conflict.

³² Wong Fook-ping, “Jidutu duiyu guoqing ri yingyou de biaoshi” 基督徒對於國慶日應有的表示 [What Should Christians Do on National Day], *Lingduo zhoukan* 40 (1927). This article was republished in *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 22, no. 19 (1929).

³³ Wong Fook-ping, “Shuangshi guoqing yu shuangzhong guonan” 雙十國慶與雙重國難 [Reflection on the National Day of October 10], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 29, no. 22 (1936).

³⁴ Wong Fook-ping, “Wo duiyu guoqing de gannian he qiwang” 我對於國慶的感念和祈望 [My Reflection and Prayer for the National Day], *Kong Yuet Diocesan Echo* 港粵教聲 (resume publication) 2, no. 13 (1948).

MINISTRY IN THE CHUNG HUA
SHENG KUNG HUI (1930'S-1940'S)

Overseas Posting

After his ordination, Rev. Wong became the priest-in-charge of St. Paul's Church and later of St. Mary's Church in Hong Kong, but he was soon posted to the then Anglican Diocese of Singapore to work in a parish for Chinese migrants (*Xinjiapo Yueqiao tang* 新加坡粵僑堂) in December 1927.³⁵ Rev. Wong remained in touch with the Kong Yuet Diocese during his overseas posting and wrote to report on his works in the then small colonial city of Singapore.³⁶ In an annual report of his work in 1928, he described the works of the Anglican bishop and his wife keeping close contact with parishioners through home visits. Rev. Wong was also full of praise for the dedications of lay volunteers who took leave from their own livelihood to pay visits to other parishioners in need. Much effort had also been done to encourage youth participation in worships and establishment of home prayer meetings to foster fellowship among parishioners and their families. Rev. Wong described an ecclesiological model of social engagement whereby the church was actively involved in social welfare initiatives, establishing schools and homes for the elderly. This model is still evident in the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui today.

In 1932, Bishop Ronald Owen Hall was elected Bishop of Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui. In the same year, Rev. Wong, with his family of then four young children, returned to China to serve as the pastor-in-charge at St. Luke's Church in Beihai (*Beihai Sheng Lujia tang* 北海聖路加堂), Guangxi. The parish served two hospitals

³⁵ Zhou and Huang, *Xianggang Shenggonghui Sheng Baoluo tang bainian shi*, 33; Wickeri and Chen, *Wandai yao cheng nai you fu*, 33.

³⁶ Wong Fook-ping, "Xingzhou Yueqiao Shenggonghui yijiu nianba nian jiaowu baogao" 星洲粵僑聖公會一九廿八年教務報告 [Work Report of the Singaporean Chinese Anglican Church 1928], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 22, no. 45 (1929). See also "Xingzhou Yueqiao Shenggonghui de zhuangkuang" 星洲粵僑聖公會的狀況 [The Condition of Singaporean Chinese Sheng Kung Hui], *Kong Yuet Diocesan Echo* 1, no. 1 (1930). And "Xinjiapo Zhonghua Shenggonghui gaikuang" 新加坡中華聖公會概況 [Recent Situation of Singapore Sheng Kung Hui], *Kong Yuet Diocesan Echo* 3, no. 1 (1932).

established by the CMS: the Pakhoi Hospital (*Beihai yiyuan* 北海醫院) and Pakhoi Leper Hospital (*Beihai mafeng yiyuan* 北海痲瘋醫院) (also known as Po Yan Hospital / *Puren yiyuan* 浦仁醫院 and Po Yan Leper Hospital / *Puren mafeng yiyuan* 浦仁痲瘋醫院 respectively), and a school.³⁷ Due to shortage of clergy within the Guangxi region, Rev. Wong initially had to serve two more parishes within the region that reached as far as Nanning.³⁸

*Visions of Church Development:
The Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui*

The organization of the Anglican communities was as diverse and complex as other denominations of Christian churches in China. Anglican communities in different regions of the country were organized in dioceses. Their jurisdictions were determined by the various Anglican missions operating them, respectively from Britain, America, and Canada. In 1909, a representative group of Anglican bishops, clergy, and laity from different key regions in China connected with the various missionary societies came together and agreed to the formation of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui (*Zhonghua Shenggonghui* 中華聖公會), which were to have a national General Synod (*zong yihui* 總議會) while the individual dioceses had their own diocesan synods.³⁹ The first General Synod Meeting of Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui was held in April 1912 where the Constitution and Canons were drawn and approved, the General Synod were to meet every three years. Mandarin, the Chinese “court language” (*Kuan-hua / Guanhua* 官話, which became the national language—*Guoyu* 國語, now known as *Putonghua* 普通話) was the official language in the Synod.⁴⁰ The formation of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui marked an effort to unite the Anglican

³⁷ Luo Su 羅素, “Puren yiyuan shilue (yiba baliu nian—yijiu sanliu nian)” 普仁醫院史畧 (一八八六年—一九三六年) [Brief History of Po Yan Hospital (1886–1936)], *Kong Yuet Diocesan Echo* 7, no. 3–4 (1936). The hospital has become one of the historical sites in the city today. See website of Beihai Municipal Government, accessed November 28, 2015, <http://www.beihai.gov.cn/21/relic.htm>.

³⁸ Wong Fook-ping, “Wushi nian lai Qinlian Shenggonghui de gaikuang” 五十年來欽廉聖公會的概況 [Chiu Nim Sheng Kung Hui in the Past 50 Years], *Kong Yuet Diocesan Echo* 7, no. 3–4 (1936): 4.

³⁹ Chung, “Zhonghua Shenggonghui Huanan jiaoqu bainian shilue,” 22.

⁴⁰ G. F. S. Gray, *Anglicans in China: A History of Zhonghua Shenggong Hui (Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui)* (n.p.: The Episcopal China Mission History Project, 1996), 22.

communities to form a local Christian church. By 1930, the Lambeth Conference formally recognized the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui as an independent and self-governing member of the worldwide Anglican Communion.⁴¹ It continued to function after the establishment of the communist regime of the People's Republic of China until 1958.⁴²

While Rev. Wong was busy with his parish work, he was also very concerned about the development of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui. He showed a clear understanding of the relationship between the different Chinese dioceses with the respective missionary societies and was in support of the idea of self-sufficiency for the dioceses so that they could eventually be financially independent from their sponsoring missions.⁴³ In 1937, he became the General Secretary of the regional Kwong Siew (*Guang-Zhao* 廣肇) joint parish council, and later became the vice-chairman after the war.⁴⁴ He had found many opportunities to share his views on the future development of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui, in particular the Kong Yuet Diocese, with Bishop Hall and his colleagues during Bishop Hall's visits to the region and meetings in Hong Kong.⁴⁵ He was also concerned about the need for training local clergy and church workers in face of a disparity between the rural area and the cities. He advocated for closing the gap by utilizing resources in the cities to train clergy and encouraging trained clergy to go to the

⁴¹ Ibid., 42.

⁴² Paul Kwong, "The Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion*, eds. Ian S. Markham and others (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 253. Victor E. W. Hayward, *Christians and China* (Belfast: Christian Journals Limited, 1974), 63. The denominational structure of Protestant churches was abolished in 1958 when all the Protestant churches were brought under the administration of the Three-Self Committees.

⁴³ Wong Fook-ping, "Xiaijing yihui zhi jingguo" 轄境議會之經過 [Report on the Meeting Regarding Jurisdiction of the Kong-Yuet Diocese], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 19, no. 22 (1927). See also "Gang-Yue jiaoqu yu Zhonghua Jidujiao Chuandaohui" 港粵教區與中華基督教傳道會 [Kong-Yuet Diocese and the Chinese Christian Missionary Societies], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 30, no. 17 (1937): 9.

⁴⁴ Chung Yan-lup, "Huang Fuping mushi: Shengping jianshu" 黃福平牧師——生平簡述 [Brief Biography of Reverend Wong Fook-ping], *Hong Kong and Macau Echo / Gang-Ao Jiaosheng* 港澳教聲 158 (1966).

⁴⁵ Wong Fook-ping, "Zhonghua Shenggonghui Gang-Yue jiaoqu zhi jianglai" 中華聖公會港粵教區之將來 [The Future of Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui Kong-Yuet Diocese], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 30, no. 13, 15 (1937).

rural areas to support the less educated so as to pave way for establishing indigenized local churches.⁴⁶

Rev. Wong did not only advocate financial self-sufficiency, in an issue of *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* in June 1937, he posted the question “Should the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui be registered as a legal entity?” and discussed whether the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui should be registered as an independent legal entity under the regime of the republic. His article revealed the reality of how the Christian church was generally perceived in a Chinese society deeply shrouded with an anti-foreign sentiment from the past. He observed that notwithstanding that the church was called “Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui” (“Chung Hua” meaning “Chinese”), the church and the Christian faith were still associated with foreign nations. Missionary works were given protection by the various international treaties viewed by local people as unfairly imposed on their country in the late Qing Dynasty. Rev. Wong shared his experience of being perceived as disloyal to his own country and culture when some local people hurled the slogan “Down with the imperialist—Down with the running dog of the imperialists!” outside the church while he preached the Christian gospel. Rev. Wong realized that such attitude would persist if the church were to continue to be dependent on foreign missions closely identified with the foreign nations that had humiliated and divided their country for decades. He argued that if the Chinese church were not registered as a legal entity in its own right with the Chinese government, it would always be considered a foreign enterprise affiliated to its sponsoring mission, as its legal affairs such as acquisition of land often had to be carried out through the Foreign Office. He argued that the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui should demonstrate that it was truly a Chinese church by acquiring an independent legal status in its own country and be dissociated with the “protectorate treaties.”⁴⁷ This issue on the registration of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui was not a new topic and had been on the agenda of the General Synod ever since 1934. However, the progress seemed to be slow.⁴⁸ Rev. Wong’s view seems to reflect the sentiment at the

⁴⁶ “Kuangye de husheng” 曠野的呼聲 [Cry of the Wilderness], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 33, no. 1 (1940).

⁴⁷ “Zhonghua Shenggonghui youwu qude faren zige zhi biyao” 中華聖公會無取得法人資格之必要 [Is There a Need for the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui to Be Registered as a Legal Entity?], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 30, no. 12 (1937).

⁴⁸ General Synod of Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui, “Report of the Eighth Meeting of the General Synod of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui Held at Wuhu,” (n.p.: Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui, 1934). See Resolution 15 on p.14.

time to press for the issue to be resolved. In the ninth General Synod Meeting taking place in Fuzhou 福州 later in 1937 the Synod resolved to instruct the Standing Committee to proceed with the registration process.⁴⁹

At the advent of the ninth General Synod Meeting, Rev. Wong submitted another article expressing his “aspirations” (*xiwang* 希望) for the synod meeting, reflecting his vision for the Chinese church.⁵⁰ He viewed the General Synod as the highest executive body for the Anglican Church in China exercising the role of prophets, apostles, and elders for the Church. He set out four “aspirations,” three of which relate to the internal organization and administration of the Church, namely:

1. The establishment of a system of church administrators with appropriate knowledge and experience in administration to handle the administrative works (such as fund raising matters; maintenance of church properties and resources; and management of church institutes such as schools and hospitals) while the clergy could then concentrate on “spiritual” matters (such as administering the sacraments, confirmations, ordinations, preaching and leading spiritual revival meetings and retreats);
2. Engagement of paid staff to administer the church’s official bulletin—*Sheng Kung Hui Bao*;
3. The establishment of a central secretariat to liaise and promote collaborations among the dioceses within the nation.

It is noted that by the next General Synod held in Shanghai a central secretariat was formally established in Nanjing with a bishop as General Secretary to deal with issues of national level.⁵¹ However, what is more notable is Rev. Wong’s call for the church to give up the protection under the “protectorate treaties” for Christian missions. He argued

⁴⁹ “Report of the Ninth Meeting of the General Synod of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui Held at Foochow,” (n.p.: Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui, 1937). See Resolution 39 on p.16.

⁵⁰ Wong Fook-ping, “Wo duiyu jinnian zongyihui zhi xiwang” 我對於今年總議會之希望 [My Aspirations for the General Synod in This Year], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 30, no. 6 (1937).

⁵¹ The decision was made in a meeting of the House of Bishops, see Zong Gao 宗羔, “Zhujiayuan huiyi baodao” 主教院會議報導 [Report on the Meeting of the House of Bishops], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 35, no. 1 (1946): 3. Note also Resolution 2 of the Resolutions of the Tenth General Synod that set out the formal structure of the Central Secretariat Office: General Synod of Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui, “Report of the Tenth Meeting of the General Synod of the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui,” (n.p.: Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui, 1947).

that throughout the salvation history recorded in the Bible and in the times of the apostles in the early church, the Word of God had been sown and grew in the midst of trials and tribulations, with the time of Nero counted as one of the worst apart from Christ's crucifixion. During these periods there had not been such a thing as protectorate treaty for the church. He pointed out that Jesus had resisted the temptation to call upon angels to save him from persecution. He further submitted arguments that the threats faced by the missionaries in China could not match those faced by early Christians in the times of Nero in Rome. He remarked that while the lives of the evangelists and missionaries were valuable, so too was Jesus'. Yet Jesus the Son of God, as well as the prophets and the apostles, had not sought political protection. He challenged fellow Christians to compare the situation in their own context and ask themselves if they were in such dire situation as in the days of Nero. He acknowledged that the treaties were not initiated by the demand of missionaries in the mission fields, as such the church should abandon the reliance of such protection. Rev. Wong further pointed out that time had changed in China since the time of the treaties and the constitution of the Chinese republic had already granted freedom of religion for the country. Rev. Wong's arguments reflect the paradoxical reality of the political protection given to Western Christian missions. He saw that the treaties associated with the "blemish" of the history of colonization and enfranchisement in fact hindered the development of the Church in China. He stressed that the Church should place her trust in none other than God. He believed that the abandonment of the "treaty protection" would in fact foster the growth of the Church in China.⁵²

In the conclusion of his article, Rev. Wong asked: "Where does the danger lie? Where is safety? Apart from God, who would know? If such is unknown to man, why seek man's protection?" He remarked that "Even if they offer protection, they would not be able to protect. . . ." taunting the futility of relying on political means instead of faith in God. His questions seem to reverberate in the cry of war when the Japanese troop invaded China in the summer of 1937 defeating Shanghai followed by the massacre in Nanjing. The General Synod did not meet again until 1947 after World War II.⁵³

⁵² Wong, "Wo duiyu jinnian zongyihui zhi xiwang."

⁵³ Bai Ji 百吉, "Di shi jie zongyihui huigu" 第十屆總議會回顧 [Review of the Tenth General Synod Meeting], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 36, no. 8 (1947): 1.

Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui in the Times of War

The destruction to the numerous Chinese lives caused by the Japanese invasion could hardly be fully comprehended. A report from Rev. Wong published in a winter edition of *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* in 1939 could only give a glimpse of the situation in the Guangdong region during the past two years of Japanese invasion. The border between the British colony of Hong Kong and Guangdong was closed, many had become refugees in Hong Kong while their families were still in the mainland. Rev. Wong was able to gather news about the Anglican communities between the two places through clergy working within the region. He gave various accounts of many of the clergy and church workers barely escaping Japanese assaults. One of the accounts told of a clergy hiding under the staircase in his own house throughout the night barely daring to breathe while Japanese soldiers camped upstairs. However, having settled their families in relatively safe places, many of the clergy returned to Japanese occupied parishes to check on their parishioners, and many of their churches were to become refuge centers such as mid-wife stations and medical centers. Rev. Wong's family, which by then had grown to seven children, found refuge in Lingshan, Guangxi, while he and some other clergy travelled between the cities such as Guangzhou, Beihai, Nanning and Shiqi to supervise and co-ordinate relief works. Such precarious activities would sometimes lead to some clergy being stopped and interrogated under suspicion of spy activities. The continuous travel would also mean prolong separation from their families. Rev. Wong recalled that when he returned to his family after over a year's separation, his sixth daughter, Kuk-ying (*Juying* 菊英), just stared at him speechless while his youngest daughter of barely two years old, Kuk-yu (*Juru* 菊如 also called *Juyi* 菊儀), did not even recognize him and called him "laoban" (老闆).⁵⁴ Her mother thought that a parishioner had come to visit when she heard her daughter calling "laoban." Little Kuk-yu probably picked up the word while her mother was addressing some parishioner.⁵⁵

In the beginning of 1938, Rev. Wong and his family moved to Hong Kong via Beihai upon the bidding of Bishop Mo Shau-tsang and Bish-

⁵⁴ "Laoban" 老闆 is a Chinese colloquial address of boss.

⁵⁵ Wong Fook-ping, "Feichang shiqi de Gang-Yue jiaoku" 非常时期的港粵教區 [The Kong-Yuet Diocese in a Time of Crisis], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 32, no. 18 (1939).

op Hall. Rev. Wong's stay in Hong Kong was for the preparation of the re-establishment of the Shiqi parish while he also continued his work in coordinating the settlement of refugees. In April 1938, Rev. Wong settled his eldest son of twelve years old and two daughters to study as boarders at the Anglican schools, Holy Trinity School and Heep Yunn School, in Hong Kong. He then set off with his wife and the other four younger children to return to Shiqi amidst curious look from bystanders at this strange entourage wondering why they would come back at this perilous time.⁵⁶ A few months later in the beginning of 1939, Shiqi was also under Japanese occupation, the whole family could not reunite again until after the war.

When the Wong Family arrived at Shiqi in 1938, Shiqi Christ Church was half demolished, Sunday service was conducted on the third floor of the Anglican-run Shiqi Overseas Chinese Hospital (*Huaqiao yiyuan* 華僑醫院), which was later taken over by the Japanese military and Sunday service had to be conducted at another church. The congregation of Christ Church was mostly from the nearby villages many of whom were illiterate. Sometimes, home thanksgiving meetings would be held at parishioner's home in the rural area, which meant leaving early in the morning and only returning at sunset.⁵⁷

Due to shortage of clergy under Japanese occupation, Rev. Wong would also need to travel to other towns such as Daliang 大良 and Jiangmen 江門, as well as going across what was then the Sino-Portuguese border to Macao to administer Holy Communion.⁵⁸ By 1940, Rev. Wong was also taking part in Bishop Hall's relief initiatives to set up refugee camp near Macao with around a hundred refugee most of whom were children. Among his co-workers was Li Tim-oi (*Li Tian'ai* 李添愛), she helped to set up daily prayers and catechumen classes at the refugee center. In the same year, Japan formed an ally with Germany escalating the conflicts in Europe and Asia Pacific to become World War II. On December 25, 1941, Hong Kong came under Japanese occupation while Macao, being a Portuguese colony, became neutral territory and it had become very difficult to cross the Macao border that had then become Japanese military checkpoint. By then Li Tim-oi was already ordained as deacon

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Wong, "Remembering My Father Wong Fook-ping."

⁵⁸ Bishop Ronald Hall, "Gang-Yue jiaoqu huiwu jinkuang" 港粵教區會務近況 [Report on the Recent Situation of the Kong-Yuet Diocese], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 34, no. 12 (1941).

in Macao, and Rev. Wong proposed to Bishop Mo Shau-tsang to exercise his discretion to grant Li Tim-oi special license to administer Holy Communion to the Macao congregation while he continued his work in the Mainland. Li Tim-oi was later ordained by Bishop Hall to become the first woman Anglican priest.⁵⁹

When the Japanese force occupied Hong Kong, Rev. Wong's mother went to take his two daughters in Heep Yunn School back to Shiqi while his son followed another clergy to Beihai where the Holy Trinity School relocated its operation. As the war proceeded it became impossible to send stipends to clergy in their parishes in the Mainland, and the family had to rely on their own resources in their daily living.⁶⁰ The children remembered their father as a man of principle. Although Rev. Wong worked at the relief center, he would not take any relief material for his family. Their mother often reminded them that they had to behave better than the other children in the neighborhood because they were a clergy's daughters. The young children learnt a lesson of putting their trust in God's provision when they went to bed hungry one night without dinner and heard their mother crying after their father had prayed to God for guidance as they had nothing left. The next morning, the children heard someone banging on the door and calling for Reverend Wong. They heard their father answered the door and talked to someone for a while. He then came to them elated, exclaiming "We are saved!" Their father told them that a friend he once helped had sent them some money from Shanghai through diver means.⁶¹

Christian churches' relationship with the Japanese regime was complex. It is thought by some scholars that the churches were able to hold a position of certain degree of neutrality during the Japanese occupation as they were accommodated by the Japanese regime in a strategy

⁵⁹ Ibid., 4. See an account of the events leading to Li Tim-oi's ordination: Sze Yuk-kay (Shi Yuqi 施玉麒), "Funu shengzhi baogao shu" 婦女聖職報告書 [Report on Ordination of Women Clergy], in *Handbook for the Tenth Synod of the General Synod of Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui*, ed. General Synod of Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui (n.p.: Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui, 1947), 20–24. See also Florence Tim-oi Li, *Shengming de yudian* 生命的兩點 [The Raindrops of My Life] (Hong Kong: Religious Education Resource Centre, 2010), 45–49.

⁶⁰ Wong, "Remembering My Father Wong Fook-ping."

⁶¹ Wong Wong Kuk-hing (Wang Huang Juxing 王黃菊馨), Lai Wong Kuk-wing (Lai Huang Jurong 賴黃菊榮), and Wong Kuk-yu (Huang Juru 黃菊如), "Fuqin Huang Fuping shengping" 父親黃福平生平 [Life of Our Father Wong Fook-ping], unpublished manuscript, 2009.

to foster co-operation from the Chinese people.⁶² However, to Rev. Wong when a Japanese soldier visited him from time to time asking him to pray for him, it could be a matter of putting into practice what he preached about “love thy enemy” while the Japanese soldier was probably in genuine need of spiritual solace in a time of conflicts.⁶³

After the war ended in 1946, Rev. Wong set off to raise fund to re-build Shiqi Christ Church. He attended to every detail including drawing up sketches for the building.⁶⁴ The completion of new Shiqi church was celebrated on May 29, 1949, the centenary anniversary of the Kong Yuet Diocese.⁶⁵ In the same year on October 1, 1949, the People’s Republic of China was established.

POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION AND INDEPENDENCE (1945–1949)

The end of the World War brought about new hopes for the future, while the nation resumed its struggle for reconstruction. With the retreat of the common enemy, the war torn country had to turn back to face the fundamental problems that polarized the nation. The wide spread corruption that already existed before the war was by then compounded by war time opportunistic activities that drove the moral standard of the society to the ground. The Kuomintang, which had relied heavily on the privileged landed and capitalist classes and the “imperialist” West, was by then discredited in the eyes of the majority of the Chinese mass, both intellectuals and peasants alike. Many Chinese Christians found their Christian conscience taxed by the government’s fascist tendencies and aggressive repression on dissenting voices.⁶⁶ The church found that one of its important tasks was calling for spiritual revival and teaching ethical Christian values to battle secularism and materialism.

⁶² See Timothy Brook, “Toward Independence: Christianity in China under the Japanese Occupation, 1937–1945,” in Bays, *Christianity in China*, 327–335.

⁶³ Wong, “Remembering My Father Wong Fook-ping.”

⁶⁴ Wong and others, “Fuqin Huang Fuping shengping.”

⁶⁵ Chung, “Zhonghua Shenggonghui Huanan jiaoku bainian shilue,” 37.

⁶⁶ Hayward, *Christians and China*, 47. See also Katharine Hockin, *Servants of God in People’s China* (New York: Friendship, 1962), 47, 54.

In the first issue of the resumed publication of the Anglican bulletin, *Kong Yuet Diocesan Echo*, Rev. Wong considered the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31). He considered the concepts of poor and rich, and precious and cheap in the eyes of the secular world. He considered how these concepts would be viewed under different political and philosophical ideologies, such as communism; Dr. Sun Yat-sen's "Three People's Principle" (三民主義 *Sanmin zhuyi*); western democracy; and Nietzsche's "transhumanism." He considered how the rich man and Lazarus would be treated in the different political systems. Turning back to the parable, Rev. Wong pointed out that when both the rich man and Lazarus eventually died there was a reversal of fortune in the new world. In this world Lazarus was rich and precious in the eyes of Abraham whereas the rich man had to suffer. He concluded by asking his readers to read the Bible story with a discerning eye and seek the path of righteousness. In this article Rev. Wong differentiates the merits of the diverse secular ideologies in his time but saw a higher set of values in the Christian teachings that would sustain beyond this world.⁶⁷ This reflects Rev. Wong's belief that the salvific power of the Christian gospel transcends secular philosophical thoughts and economic models.⁶⁸ Many of Rev. Wong's writings throughout his ministry echo such viewpoint, showing a constant theme of striving for spiritual growth and disciplined life, following the footsteps of Christ to care for and share with the community to demonstrate his sacrificial love, instead of pursuing for one's own pleasure.⁶⁹

There was also much discussion in the Church on the need for training dedicated and committed servants of God to promulgate the gospel that is relevant to the context of their time. Rev. Wong offered detailed suggestions to his fellow workers for self-improvement to equip themselves to be effective workers for the church.⁷⁰ On the other hand, Rev.

⁶⁷ Wong Fook-ping, "Pinfu guijian" 貧富貴賤 [Rich and Poor], *Kong-Yuet Diocesan Echo* (resume publication) 1, no. 1 (1946).

⁶⁸ For example, see "Jicai yu tian" 積財於天 [Gather Your Wealth in Heaven], *Kong-Yuet Diocesan Echo* (resume publication) 1, no. 11 (1947); "Jidu zhuyi he minsheng zhuyi" 基督主義和民生主義 [Christian Ideology and the "Min Sheng" Ideology], *Kong-Yuet Diocesan Echo* (resume publication) 2, no. 10 (1948).

⁶⁹ For an example of exposition on the Lord's Prayer, see Wong Fook-ping, "Qiu shenme?" 求甚麼? [What Do We Pray For?], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 31, no. 14 (1938). For a reflection of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness, see Wong, "Kuangye de hushing."

⁷⁰ Wong Fook-ping, "Jiaohui gongzuo renyuan de jinxiu" 教會工作人員的進修 [Continuing Development for Church Workers], *Kong-Yuet Diocesan Echo* (resume publication) 2, no. 7, 10, 12 (1948).

Wong also found it important to nurture spiritually mature lay congregations. In an article on the question of what kind of a church member should a Christian be he called for Christians to be committed church members and should be actively involved in the affairs of the church. All of these suggestions reflect the urge to make the church spiritually self-sufficient for self-promulgation of the gospel.⁷¹

POST-LIBERATION ERA (1950'S)

Three-Self principles and Three-Self Movement

The idea of the “Three-Self” principles for indigenization of church mission: self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation, first propounded by the CMS missionary Henry Venn, was not new to the Chinese Christians. Discussions among Protestant churches in the nation on the independence of the Chinese church were already in earnest as early as in the 1920s.⁷² Like many Chinese Christians at the time, Rev. Wong supported the principles of indigenization of the church mission for the sake of the promulgation of the gospel to the local Chinese and appreciated the virtue of self-sufficiency. On the other hand, he also recognized the universal catholic church as a united body of Christ and held benevolent sentiments towards foreign Christian churches in the region, however the relationship was to be based on mutual brotherly love on equal footing.⁷³ Unfortunately, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement developed in a different direction from Rev. Wong’s aspirations for the “Three-Self” principles when the path of the nation changed into a different context—when anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist sentiments gave the term “Three-Self” a new meaning in the political development of the country.⁷⁴

⁷¹ “Jidutu yingzuo zenmeyang de jiaoyou?” 基督徒應做怎麼樣的教友？ [What Kind of a Church Member Should a Christian Be?], *Kong-Yuet Diocesan Echo* (resume publication) 2, no. 5 (1948).

⁷² Daniel H. Bays, “The Growth of Independent Christianity in China, 1900–1937,” in Bays, *Christianity in China*, 308–309.

⁷³ Wong, “Zhonghua Shenggonghui Gang-Yue jiaoku zhi jianglai,” *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 30, no. 13 (1937): 5.

⁷⁴ Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 159–160. See also “The Christian Manifesto,” May 1950, in

The advance of the People's army of the Communist Party and the flight of the Kuomintang from the mainland to Taiwan ended the civil war. On October 1, 1949 the People's Republic of China was established. This development gave a sense of relief to many who longed for stability and peace.⁷⁵ However, Chinese churches were in a precarious position under an atheist regime. Opinions were divided among Christians as to how to respond to a government that professes disbelief in any religion, let alone Christianity. Those against compromise generally saw the Communist government as the Anti-Christ, while some observed that the Christian faith had faced suppression throughout history and had survived and opined that the Church should nonetheless carry on its mission to promulgate the gospel under such regime.⁷⁶ A group of church leaders entered into talks with Prime Minister *Zhou Enlai* resulting in the signing of a Christian Manifesto that signified the Three-Self Patriotic Movement.⁷⁷ In a paragraph titled "The Task in General," the manifesto stated that:

Christian churches and organizations give thorough-going support to the "Common Political Platform" and, under the leadership of the Government, oppose imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism, and take part in the effort to build an independent, democratic, peaceable, unified, prosperous and powerful New China.

The manifesto continued with a strong anti-imperialist tone and called for churches to take effective measures to "cultivate a patriotic and democratic spirit" and advocated "self-criticism" and "all forms of Christian activity to be re-examined and re-adjusted" to achieve the goal of reformation in the church.⁷⁸ It was estimated that about half of

Documents of the Three-Self Movement: Source Materials for the Study of the Protestant Church in Communist China, eds. Wallace C. Merwin and Francis P. Jones (New York: Far Eastern Office, Division of Foreign Missions, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, 1963). See also Philip L. Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 114–133, where the author considers how a "Christian movement concerned with indigenization and ecclesiastical renewal" has developed into a mass organization that is caught up in the political movements of the country.

⁷⁵ Gray, *Anglicans in China*, 47. See also Hockin, *Servants of God in People's China*, 55; and Hayward, *Christians and China*, 47–48.

⁷⁶ Hockin, *Servants of God in People's China*, 49.

⁷⁷ For the background of the "Christian Manifesto," see Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 127–131.

⁷⁸ Merwin and Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 19–20.

the Protestant Christians numbering around 400,000 signed the manifesto while many others were hesitant.⁷⁹ Instead of signing the manifesto collectively, the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui decided to issue a pastoral letter to its members after a joint meeting of the House of Bishops and the Standing Committee of the General Synod on July 5, 1950. The letter set out in general terms and more religious tone and style the Anglican church's stance against imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic-capitalism, considering them to be fundamentally against the faith of the Church. It stated its support of the Three-Self principle of self-governing, self-support, and self-propagation and stressed that the church should aim to "on one hand positively promote the spiritual life and religious education so to enable us all to have the Christ-like personality and family, and on the other pay attention to productive labor and social service."⁸⁰ It is thought that the letter has dampened the political tone and set out the context of concern for the wider Christian fellowship. This method seems to reflect the Anglican tenet of *via media* that seeks to find a common ground supporting the true "Three-Self" principle for an independent church and the Common Platform on the premises of the guarantee of freedom of religious belief.⁸¹

While the Three-Self Patriotic Movement took momentum in the midst of enthusiasm for reform, Rev. Wong maintained that true reform should start from within the heart of each individual. In a devotional article in *Sheng Kung Hui Bao*, he appealed to his readers to focus on serving God and following Christ's example rather than seeking self-interest in the materialistic world.⁸² In an ordination service at the Christian Church of Our Savior in Guangzhou in 1956, Rev. Wong gave a sermon entitled "Way of Eternal Life" (*Yongsheng zhi dao* 永生

⁷⁹ Gao Wangzhi, "Y. T. Wu: A Christian Leader under Communism," in Bays, *Christianity in China*, 344.

⁸⁰ Merwin and Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 21–22. See also Minutes of the Meetings of the House of Bishops and the Standing Committee Leading to the CHSKH Pastoral Letter of 1950, Church Missionary Society Archives, CHg 01, transcribed by Michael Poon, assessed June 2, 2016, www.anglicanhistory.org/asia/skh/post1949/bps1950.html. See also Hayward, *Christians and China*, 48–51.

⁸¹ Hockin, *Servants of God in People's China*, 92. See also Hayward, *Christians and China*, 48–51. See also Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 131.

⁸² Wong Fook-ping, "Kuangye de shengli" 曠野的勝利 [The Triumph of the Wilderness], *Sheng Kung Hui Bao* 40, no. 2, 3 (1951).

之道).⁸³ In his sermon, he expounded the meaning of the gospel as the way of eternal life using the concept from Daoist thoughts of “*san cai* 三才,” namely the three cosmic elements: heaven, earth, and human-kind (*tian di ren* 天地人) in the context of Chinese ethics. He explained that the heaven pointed to God, the ethical teachings of Jesus pointed to the earth and the practice of Jesus’ teaching based on love pointed to human relationships. He further pointed out that the true spirit of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement was to enable the gospel to be explained in the context of the Chinese culture. He expounded that the practice of the way of eternal life should be rooted and inspired by the Triune God: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the way that our heart should be guided by God in heaven (*yi tianli wei xin* 以天理為心), our conducts should be guided by ethics taught by Jesus to serve the earth/world (*yi didao fuwu* 以地道服務) and our relationship should be based on humane values (*yi rendao huxiang jiaoji* 以人道互相交際). In this sermon, Rev. Wong had drawn parallel from the Chinese Daoist concept of *dao* with the Greek concept of *logos* in the New Testament, while at the same time he was making reference to the contemporary ideology of the Three-Self Movement to explain the Christian faith.⁸⁴ Rev. Wong’s sermon demonstrates an attempt to explain the Christian faith in the context of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement on the basis of contextualization of the Christian faith rather than from the political perspective.⁸⁵

“Denunciation Movement”

The Communist regime was very much aware of the destabilizing power of sectarian popular religious movements, however the prime

⁸³ Manuscript draft of the sermon is kept by his youngest daughter Wong Kuk-yu. The draft indicated that the sermon was to be delivered in the Thanksgiving Service on the last Sunday of the Trinity season in the liturgical year.

⁸⁴ It should be noted that the Greek *logos* used in the Gospel of John in the New Testament is translated in Chinese as way (*dao* 道) in the Chinese version of the Bible.

⁸⁵ The social and political issues surrounding the Three-Self Patriotic Movement are complex and there have been many controversies on the merit of the movement for Christianity in China. Such discussions are beyond the ambit of this essay. For the present purpose, it is sufficient to note that many Chinese Christians at the time of the movement supported the ideal of self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation, for example, see Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 114–133; and Li, *Shengming de yudian*, 65–66.

concern for the newly established Communist government was not so much about eradication of religions but to bring them within its jurisdiction and regulate their activities under its designated monitoring bodies.⁸⁶ It was perhaps with this understanding that many Chinese Christians felt it possible to have a dialogue with the Communists to seek common goals in the reconstruction of the nation. The Chinese Premier at the time, Zhou Enlai, seemed to be sympathetic to the Christians' cause when he was engaged in talks with the Christian leaders. However, the Premier was adamant that all relationship with foreign enterprises should be severed.⁸⁷ The pressure for the churches to separate themselves from "imperialist connections" mounted as the relationship between the Communist regime and the West soured, particularly after the start of the Korean War in 1950. In 1951, the parishes in the then British colony of Hong Kong and Portuguese colony of Macao, originally under the jurisdiction of the Kong Yuet Diocese of Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui, had resolved to separate themselves from the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui to form the Hong Kong and Macao Diocese (*Shenggonghui Gang-Ao jiaoqu* 聖公會港澳教區).⁸⁸

Tension was further heightened by the "Denunciation Movement" which was initially launched as a reform initiative that encouraged Christians to sever their connection with imperialism and undergo self-examination. This campaign involved holding "accusation meetings" to expose church members who were unrepentant. Instructions were even offered to ensure a "successful" accusation meeting by the Y.M.C.A Secretary Liu Liangmo.⁸⁹ Many people who were "accused" in these meetings would be required to show their penitence by writing a confession (*huiguo shu* 悔過書).

⁸⁶ Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*, 159–160.

⁸⁷ Philip L. Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China: K. H. Ting and the Chinese Church* (New York: Orbis, 2007), 97–99.

⁸⁸ "Shenggonghui Gang-Ao jiaoqu changwu weiyuanhui tongqi" 聖公會港澳教區常務委員會通啓 [Notice of the Standing Committee of the Hong Kong and Macao Diocese of the Anglican Church], *Monthly Bulletin of Hong Kong and Macao Anglican Church / Gang-Ao Shenggonghui yuekan* 港澳聖公會月刊 1, no. 3 (1951).

⁸⁹ Merwin and Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 49–50. See also Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 134–140.

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND
REV. WONG'S FINAL YEARS (1958–1966)

The distrust of the West continued to escalate and accumulated to the anti-rightist movement in the late 1950s and dialogue between the Christian churches and the state became more difficult. As the political tension began to peak after the beginning of the Great Leap Forward movement in 1958, most churches were shut down, among them was Shiqi Christ Church. Many intellectuals together with many clergy were required to co-operate with the Great Leap Forward initiatives and joined the rural communes to promote productions.⁹⁰ Rev. Wong and his wife together with his eldest son's family, were required to move to share a two-storey house with two other families of clergy, occupying the upper floor, while the church and the vicarage were commissioned by the state for other purposes.⁹¹

Rev. Wong had long been suffering from chronic hypertension, and he retired on April 1, 1958. In a letter to his youngest daughter who was then studying in Hong Kong, Rev. Wong indicated his plan to move to Macao in order to seek better medical treatment. However, his plan was overtaken by the events in China. The strong anti-rightist sentiment during the Great Leap Forward Movement had developed into a denouncement propaganda campaign where people were encouraged to denounce anyone with “bourgeoisie” background. Even many Christian believers succumbed to the pressure to report on their neighbors and fellow Christians. Rev. Wong became one of the targets for denouncement and was accused of being an “imperialist running dog” (*diguo zhuyi de zougou* 帝國主義的走狗), a longstanding anti-foreign term which has taken up a new political meaning under the denouncement campaign.⁹² The proof was photographs of him with foreign clergy

⁹⁰ Li, *Shengming de yudian*, 74–75; see also Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Twentieth Century outside Europe: The Americas, the Pacific, Asia and Africa: The Emerging World Christian Community*, vol. 5 of *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age: A History of Christianity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969), 403.

⁹¹ Wong, “Remembering My Father Wong Fook-ping.”

⁹² See Hung Chang-tai, *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2011) for the explanation of the term “imperialist running dog.”

taken while he was posted in Singapore and in Hong Kong. He was put in a virtual house arrest and was required to report to the authority every day to answer questions and study the *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong* (commonly known as the *Little Red Book*) when he resisted the coercion to write his “confession.”⁹³ By then, all of Rev. Wong’s children were in Hong Kong, they were thus able to escape the ordeal. The eldest son and the second eldest daughter had married and three of his other daughters were working as nurses, and were able to send money back to support their parents’ living. In his letters to his daughters, Rev. Wong expressed that he found comfort in news about his children’s life in Hong Kong. He also found spiritual solace in sharing many of his writings and sermons and constantly prayed for their future.⁹⁴

The year 1966 was marked in historical records as the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in China.⁹⁵ In the autumn of the same year, Rev. Wong passed away after he was sent home from hospital where he received treatment for hypertension. His daughters in Hong Kong arranged a memorial service at St. Mary’s Church with a sermon delivered by his long-time friend and colleague, by then an Archdeacon, the Venerable Chung Yan-lap (*Zhong Renli* 鍾仁立).⁹⁶ In his sermon, Ven. Chung recounted Rev. Wong’s life and concluded that Rev. Wong had fought a good fight and remained faithful under the worst circumstances. He commented that while Rev. Wong’s battle had ceased, it was for the later generations to follow his footsteps.⁹⁷

⁹³ Wong, “Remembering My Father Wong Fook-ping.”

⁹⁴ Letters from Wong Fook-ping to Wong Kuk-yu dated April 26, 1956 and September 30, 1957. He requested the letters to be circulated among the children so that they would each be well informed.

⁹⁵ The Cultural Revolution was a mass campaign of complex social and political issues plagued with political power struggles as well as class struggles, mismanagement, and corruptions where numerous people including both Christians and non-Christians alike were affected. As such, this topic is beyond the scope of this essay.

⁹⁶ Copy of Order of Service of Memorial Service of Reverend Wong Fook-ping, November 8, 1966.

⁹⁷ Chung, “Huang Fuping mushi.”

CONCLUSION:
 REVEREND WONG FOOK-PING:
 A TESTIMONY OF FAITH IN CONTEXT

Reverend Wong Fook-ping lived at a pivotal time when China was in a revolutionary age. As the country was transformed from an ancient imperial dynasty into a modern state, the Chinese people struggled to establish a new order to regain their national integrity and independence from foreign enfranchisement. This process of reconstruction was not simply a replacement of the past with a new political system but involved the transformation of social and cultural values. The unprecedented open-mindedness towards new ideologies and values provided an opportunity for the promulgation of the Christian gospel.⁹⁸ However, the question remains whether the Christian faith can take root as a fabric of the Chinese society.

Veteran historian on the history of Christianity in China, Jessie Lutz, commented that:

The history of Protestant Christianity in China was more than the story of heroic efforts by Western missionaries and resistance by Chinese, for Chinese Christians themselves had played a crucial role in propagating and interpreting Christianity.⁹⁹

Reverend Wong Fook Ping's life is among testimonies of many Chinese Christians of his time who were prepared to dedicate their lives to practice the Christian faith in the context of their time seeking spiritual enlightenment, responding to the needs and serving the community regardless of the obstacles.

To Rev. Wong, for the gospel to take root in the place where it is propagated, it is crucial to understand and grasp the context of the situation and seek to practice the Christian faith in that context. He once wrote in an article to St. Mary's Church in Hong Kong on the church's

⁹⁸ See Latourette, *The Twentieth Century outside Europe*, 377–382, for a historical account of the growth of Christianity in that period.

⁹⁹ Jessie G. Lutz, "China and Protestantism: Historical Perspectives, 1807–1949," in *China and Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future*, eds. Stephen Uhalley and Wu Xiaoxin (Armonk, NY: An East Gate Book, 2000), 180.

mission in the context of its time and place. He wrote that the Christian faith is like a seed that needs a spiritually enlightened person to promulgate and cultivate. It grows and prospers wherever the sun and the moon shine and wherever the rain falls and the wind blows, be it in summer or winter. He remarked that, for Jesus the context of time and place was 4 BC in Judea, and one would understand why Jesus had to die on the cross in Jerusalem if one understood the context. He then considered the early Christians in the time of Nero in Rome and viewed that it was through spiritual enlightenment that enabled them to survive the onslaught of the devil in the midst of persecution. He urged the congregation to take hold of the context of their church in their time and place.¹⁰⁰

The socio-political climate of Rev. Wong's time in China inspired him to develop a contextual theology presenting the Christian faith as capable of being understood in the context of the Chinese culture with a staunch belief that the destiny of the nation and the growth of the church were in the hands of pious believers through the salvific power of the Christian gospel independent of foreign mediation. No doubt, the efforts of generations of missionaries cannot be dismissed in the spread of the Christian faith in China. Perhaps their efforts should not be seen as success or failure against the external circumstances in the process. To Rev. Wong and many of his contemporaries, the resource for transformation is through spiritual enlightenment from within rather than dependence on the external.

¹⁰⁰ Wong Fook-ping, "Jidu zhuyi yu shidi" 基督主義與時地 [Christianity in the Context of Time and Place] (source and date unknown).