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A French University in China ? The Forgotten History of Zhendan University (Université Aurore, 震旦大學, *Zhendan daxue*)

Steven PIERAGASTINI *

Résumé

Cet article a pour objet l'histoire de Zhendan University (Université Aurore), une université jésuite fondée à Shanghai (1903-1952) dans le contexte du développement de l'enseignement supérieur en Asie. Shanghai et sa concession française ne faisaient officiellement pas partie de l'Empire français. Les Jésuites ont toutefois coopéré avec l'État par l'intermédiaire du ministère des Affaires Étrangères, présentant Zhendan comme une université française en Chine pour recevoir un financement public. Cette revendication était cependant des plus sujette à caution. La souple alliance nouée entre l'Église et de l'État, qui s'explique par le contexte de la concession de Shanghai, a permis à l'université de s'épanouir, certainement bien plus que si elle avait été placée en une situation clairement coloniale.

Mots clés : Troisième République, Chine, enseignement colonial, Université Aurore, Église catholique, les Jésuites.

Abstract

This article examines the history of Zhendan University (Université Aurore), a Jesuit University that existed in Shanghai, China from 1903-1952, in relation to French higher education in Asia. Although Shanghai and its French Concession were not formally part of France's Empire, the Jesuits cooperated with and received funding from the French state through the ministère des Affaires Étrangères, and sought to present Zhendan as a French University in China to ensure continued support, though this claim was dubious. Nevertheless, the flexible alliance of Church and State afforded by the settlement context of Shanghai allowed the university to flourish to an extent that would likely have been impossible in a purely colonial context.

Keywords: Third Republic, China, colonial education, Zhendan University, Catholic Church, Jesuits.

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France's imperial ventures in China during the treaty port era (1842-1943), when remembered at all, are generally seen as a failed attempt to match British financial, commercial, and military strength in the Middle Kingdom. France often ran a trade deficit with China and its attempts to build a profitable sphere of influence along the southern Chinese border with Tonkin never developed into the hoped-for rival to British Hong Kong ¹. As a result of these failed commercial imperial efforts, France instead invested in the cultural project; that is, the vaguely-defined, presumed duty of European nations to bring the benefits of modern education, medicine, and industry to their colonies. In the French case, this also generally included inculcating values of rationalism and secularism, which would allow colonial subjects to gain mastery over nature, disease, ignorance, and tyranny ². However, as has been shown in the French Empire proper, the context of China was defined as much by local conditions as by any coherent notion of what exactly the « civilizing mission » it ought to entail ³. In China, due to a lack of funds and interest in the metropole, the governments of the Third Republic had to rely on Catholic missionaries, already dispersed throughout the Qing Empire from soon after the First Opium War (1839-1842), to carry out this « civilizing mission ». Through the vehicle of the French Religious Protectorate, which at its peak provided a diplomatic and military umbrella over Catholic missionaries of all nationalities in China (and eventually Chinese Catholics), along with subventions and other means of financial support, the French Legation in China aided Catholic educational, charitable, and medical institutions as a means of spreading French language, values, and culture ⁴. At the same time, whereas anticlericalism reverberated noticeably in Indochina and other parts of France's empire, « laïcité » in France had minimal effect upon the arrangement between Church and State in China ⁵. Nowhere was this more evident

1. For its part, French Indochina in fact maintained a healthy surplus in trade with China when measured in piasters, but because profits were usually transferred into francs, it resulted in a nominal trade deficit. The most comprehensive study on the subject of French economic imperial interests in China concludes that, though the French could not hope to match British industrial exports to China, French capital investments in China, often guided by the state, especially the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, were relatively more successful. Robert Lee, *France and the Exploitation of China, 1885-1901: a Study in Economic Imperialism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 267.

2. Alice Conklin, *A mission to Civilize: the Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 5-6.

3. James P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 5-6, 19.

4. The history of the Religious Protectorate is expertly covered in Ernest P. Young, *Ecclesiastical Colony: China's Catholic Church and the French Religious Protectorate*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 30, specifically addresses the Protectorate's relationship to the rhetoric of a civilizing mission.

5. The effects of laïcité in Indochina are discussed in Charles Keith, *Catholic Vietnam: A Church from Empire to Nation*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2012, ch. 2, « Conflict in a Colonial Church », as well as James P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided, op. cit.*, ch. 3, « Civilizing and Its Discontents ».

than Shanghai and the lower Yangzi delta (Jiangnan). There, the French Jesuits who managed the Jiangnan Mission (Vicariate Apostolique du Kiang-nan 江南代牧區), established hundreds of hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages, and schools, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century⁶. Although secular efforts to spread France's « civilizing mission » did eventually appear in Shanghai, such as the Institut Pasteur, these were far outstripped by the older, larger, and more numerous institutions managed by the Jesuits and other Catholic religious orders.

One of the most impressive works of the Jesuits' mission was the Université Aurore (震旦大學, *Zhendan daxue*), originally founded in 1903. By the 1940s, the institution had grown to become one of the largest, if not the largest, among Shanghai's private universities and included faculties of Law, Medicine, Sciences, Applied Sciences, and Literature, along with a Preparatory Course, Women's College, nursing program, dental training, a renowned natural sciences museum (Le Musée Heude), and a number of associated collèges and lycées in Shanghai and other cities throughout Jiangnan. Zhendan was not directly administered by the French government and the French Concession in Shanghai was not a colony; therefore, the university did not fall under the purview of colonial administrators and was excluded from broader French Republican-imperial educational imperatives in the early twentieth century. Also, unlike the state-administered system in French colonies, the Jesuits sought to use education as a means of evangelization, though they were more circumspect in this regard than might be expected. Most of the university's students were not Christian⁷ and students were not required to participate in religious activities; Chinese government certification, as well as the concerns of French diplomats who sought to not appear overly helpful towards the clerics, required this. Thus, as either a manifestation of a secular French or Catholic « civilizing mission », Zhendan would appear to be a poor archetype. Nevertheless, Zhendan did serve many of the same intended functions as an archetypal colonial university, and arguably did so better than any of the institutions that existed in France's formal empire. The university succeeded in producing graduates who became commercial, scientific, diplomatic, political, and cultural leaders in China (whether they did so while advancing French cultural influence is another question). As an educational institution, Zhendan was remarkably effective, despite being largely forgotten today, even in China. A comparison of Zhendan with colonial higher education pro-

6. In doing so, the Jesuits were influenced by the methods of the early modern Jesuit mission to China, as well as the same contemporary trends in European thought that informed the rhetoric of the civilizing mission mentioned above. They also drew on local sources of inspiration, namely the charitable efforts of local gentry and Chinese Catholics in alleviating poverty in Jiangnan. David Mungello, *Drowning Girls in China: Female Infanticide in China since 1650*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2008, p. 7.

7. Those who Christian were entered the university as Christians; the number of students baptized as a result of their time at Zhendan was extremely small.

jects in the formal French Empire suggests that such projects succeed best at the periphery of the empire, close enough to benefit from the resources that could be provided by empire-building initiatives, but just beyond the structures of bureaucratic administration.

1. Early History of Zhendan

Immediately following the First Opium War and the opening of Shanghai as a treaty port, there was no territorial distinction among the foreign traders and residents in Shanghai ; the small foreign settlement running along a stretch of riverside north of the walled city resembled the warehouses that had existed in Guangzhou prior to the Opium War. But in 1849, administrative disputes led the French Consulate to create the Shanghai French Concession by breaking off from the British and American community, who formed the International Settlement (the two areas shared a *Conseil municipal* until 1862, when the *Conseil d'administration municipale* was established)⁸. This was a curious decision since there was essentially no French community in Shanghai aside from the Jesuits, and as the French Concession consisted of little more than land belonging to the Mission du Jiangnan, but the move reflected the depth of Anglo-French imperial rivalry at the time and a hope that more French traders would arrive in the coming years. The division of the foreign settlements in Shanghai, along with a sense of anxiety from the French Consulate over the flagging efforts to attract settlers to Shanghai, led to the desire to prepare a class of agents among the Chinese population who would be friendly towards France⁹. The French Consulate had been eager since the 1850s to establish a school to train interpreters for diplomatic work, but lacked the resources to do so. A French course was established at the *Collège Saint-Ignace* (徐匯公學), a thriving institution founded by the Jesuits in Xujiahui (徐家匯 or Zikawei in Shanghainese) beyond the borders of the foreign concessions in the rural hinterland of the city¹⁰. However, this only

8. Charles Maybon et John Fredet, *Histoire de la concession française de Changhai, publiée sous le haut patronage de s. e. m. le ministre des Affaires étrangères, du Conseil d'administration municipales de la concession français et de la Chambre de commerce française de Chine*, Paris, Plon, 1929, ch. II : La première organisation municipale (1862-1865).

9. The Chinese population of the French Concession, by far the largest portion of the population, were officially subjects of the Qing Emperor, and later citizens of the Chinese Republic, but fell under the purview of the rather light French administration, and organized themselves primarily through extra-governmental bodies such as native place associations, or political and labor organizations.

10. The Jesuits established a headquarters at Xujiahui, when foreign missionaries were allowed to enter the newly established treaty ports, including Shanghai, following the First Opium War. The land belonged to the descendants of Xu Guangqi (徐光啓), a leading statesman and scholar of the late Ming era who had been converted to Catholicism by the Jesuit Matteo Ricci. From the 1840s, Xujiahui would become the most recognizable location of Chinese Catholicism both domestically and internationally. While Xujiahui was roughly four miles from the territory of the original French Conces-

provided a small number of students with the skills to act as translators, and the Consulate, in 1886, went into a partnership with the Jesuits to co-found the *École Franco-Chinoise* (its management was later transferred to the brothers of the Society of Mary). This institution was created with the sole purpose of teaching the French language to Chinese boys resident in the French Concession. Though it developed slowly at first, by the 1930s it had grown substantially, moving several times to accommodate a growing student body, which reached over one thousand pupils on the eve of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)¹¹. The fact that the Legation had to rely on the Jesuits to help finance and staff the *École Franco-Chinoise* demonstrates the compelling benefits of the Religious Protectorate, however odd the arrangement would have seemed to visitors from the metropole¹².

The *École Franco-Chinoise* was successful in graduating students who were competent in the French language, but the school's focus on commercial training meant that graduates tended to go into business and industry rather than diplomacy (or the clergy). This was a primary reason that there was still interest among both the Jesuits and the Legation in creating a French-directed institution of higher learning. Nevertheless, the genesis of Zhendan University was mainly due to the efforts of Ma Xiangbo¹³, a figure known in China today primarily as an educator, but who was also a government official, committed patriot, and devout Catholic. Born to a wealthy Catholic family in Danyang County, near Zhenjiang in Jiangsu Province, Ma studied the Confucian classics as a child but absconded to Shanghai at the age of eleven or twelve and entered the Jesuit *Collège Saint-Ignace*. Ma was precocious and excelled in his study of Western philosophy and languages, including French, being offered employment as a translator by the French Consulate. But he also exhibited rebellious behavior, praising the Jesuits who came to China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as more respectful of Chinese culture than his contemporaries and challenging the attitude of the school's mostly-French faculty, who disregarded Chinese philosophy¹⁴.

sion, the authority of the Concession authorities was continually stretching beyond its formal borders because of the Religious Protectorate. Eventually, the French Concession reached out to the boundary of the Catholic district, but Xujiahui was never incorporated into the French Concession out of consideration for Chinese nationalist opposition (and, seemingly, the tax preferences of the Jesuits).

11. N.a., *A Guide to Catholic Shanghai*, Shanghai, T'ou-Sè-Wè Press, 1937, p. 33.

12. A much more thorough account of Zhendan's early history is provided in « Une Université Française en Chine », *Relations de Chine*, juillet-octobre 1918, p. 69-74. A scholarly treatment is provided in Ruth Hayhoe, "Towards the Forging of a Chinese University Ethos: Zhendan and Fudan, 1903-1919," *The China Quarterly*, n° 94, June 1983, p. 323-341.

13. 馬相伯, which is his courtesy name ; he was known as Ma Jianchang, 馬建常, or Ma Liang, 馬良, during his lifetime.

14. Wu Xiaoming (Zhu Weizheng trans.) "Statesman and Centenarian: Ma Xiangbo as Witness of China's Early Modernity", in Ruth Hayhoe and Yongling Lu (eds.), *Ma Xiangbo and the Mind of Modern China, 1840-1939*, Armonk, NY, M.E. Sharpe, 1996, p. 19.

Due to his deep knowledge of the Chinese classics, Ma was recruited to begin teaching at the age of fourteen, after which he joined the inaugural class of the Jesuit seminary at Xujiahui in 1862¹⁵. Drawing on his own experiences « between two worlds » and the dramatic turmoil of mid-late nineteenth century China, including the capture of his hometown by the rebel army of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Ma began to question the wisdom of Qing bureaucrats and search for a synthesis of Chinese and Western ideas (including Catholicism) that could propel China towards modernization. In 1870, he earned his doctorate from the seminary, was ordained as a Jesuit, and began missionary work before returning two years later to his *alma mater* (Saint-Ignace) to serve as principal of the school. As principal, he maintained the Chinese classics as part of the curriculum and encouraged students to sit for the imperial examinations, while also developing his own idiosyncratic philosophy that straddled Chinese and Western astronomy, mathematics, and political thought. Ma's tenure was short, however, as he often clashed with the college's faculty over the importance of Chinese culture and English-language study in the curriculum, among other issues, and he was relegated to the Jesuit astronomical observatory in Xujiahui. Soon afterwards, he left the Jesuit order to protest the attitude of foreign missionaries and pursue a career in government.

Not yet forty years old, Ma was already an accomplished thinker and educator when he left the Jesuits, but he was in fact just beginning his career as a public figure, a career that would put him in contact with many of China's leading intellectuals of the late Qing and Republican periods. As an unapologetic Catholic (a political liability at the time) who had never passed the provincial level of the notoriously difficult imperial civil service exams, Ma's formal rank was lowly, but his abilities and knowledge of foreign languages earned him the support of the high Qing official Li Hongzhang, who already employed Ma's equally multilingual brothers (his younger brother, Ma Jianzhong, even served as a diplomat in Paris, where he also managed to earn a diploma, at the *École Libre des Sciences Politiques*, the first Chinese to do so). Li set Ma to work on experimental ventures which allowed him to skirt the hierarchy

Ma was supported by the young Italian Jesuit Angelo Zottoli, the chief administrator of the school, and another Italian Jesuit, Francesco Adinolfi. The relative openness of Italian Jesuits towards Chinese culture was likely a combination of their home territory's geopolitical weakness compared to France, an adoration for the seventeenth century Italian Jesuits, and the influence of the "Chinese Seminary" that had existed in Naples during the period of religious suppression in the mid-Qing. However, a facile dichotomy between French and non-French does not account for the arrogant behavior of Italians and other non-French missionaries throughout China, nor the evenhanded approach towards Chinese culture from certain French Jesuits, such as Auguste Colombel, who was also a friend of the Ma brothers.

15. The seminary was also managed by Zottoli : Yongling Lu, "Standing between Two Worlds: Ma Xiangbo's Educational Thought and Practice", in Hayhoe and Lu (eds.), *Ma Xiangbo...*, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

of the official bureaucracy¹⁶. After serving in several capacities in eastern China, Korea, and Taiwan, Ma traveled across the United States and Europe before returning to Shanghai, where he reconciled with the Jesuits, and turned over most of his money and property (some 3,000 *mu* 畝 of land, roughly 394 acres or nearly 2 km²) to them with the intention of founding an elite Chinese university that could compete with Western universities¹⁷. Aiming to craft a curriculum that combined the best of Western and Chinese educational models, including the study of foreign languages, liberal arts, and sciences, Ma and the Jesuits founded the Zhendan Academy (震旦學院) in 1903¹⁸.

The school was outwardly a success, attracting promising students, some of whom had already passed the provincial-level imperial exams, as well as the support of leading Chinese intellectuals such as Cai Yuanpei and Liang Qichao, along with the French Embassy in Beijing¹⁹. But Ma and the Jesuits were soon locked in familiar disputes over education, especially what Ma perceived as a lack of respect for Chinese culture. They also clashed on the structure and administration of the school, with the Jesuits preferring a comprehensive university with a strong central administration (on the French model), set curriculum, and lecture-based learning, and Ma preferring the Confucian model of close relationships between teachers and students, practical application of learning, flexible curriculum, and decentralized administration²⁰. Finally, Ma and the Jesuits disagreed on the place of prosely-

16. He was drawn into the camp of Li Hongzhang and Zeng Guofan by his older brother Ma Jianxun (馬建勛), who managed grain allocation for Li's Huai Army (淮軍糧台), and his younger brother, Ma Jianzhong (馬建忠), who was another of Li's protégées. Like Ma Xiangbo, his brothers had gone through the Jesuit educational institutions in Shanghai and excelled at foreign languages. Due to their skills with foreign languages, all three brothers served as translators and advisers for Li Hongzhang on foreign matters, including diplomacy and technology. They were also involved in managing some of the Self-Strengthening Movement's showpiece modernization projects in Fujian, Shandong, and Shanghai. These connections are discussed more fully in 賈熟村, 李鴻章與馬建忠弟兄, 清史研究 [Jia Shucun, "Li Hongzhang and Ma Jianzhong," *Research on Qing History*], 1997, 3, p. 77-84].

17. This effort given extra impetus by both the failed Hundred Days Reform period of 1898 (which Ma supported) and the fallout from the Boxer Uprising, which provoked a series of eleventh-hour reforms at the end of the Qing Dynasty. Ma first sought to establish a translators' school that would produce Chinese diplomatic officials before turning his attention towards working with Liang Qichao to create a national academy on the French model, which failed in the short term but did inspire the eventual founding of the Academia Sinica (中央研究院), based in part on the model of the Académie Française, in the late 1920s. Wu, "Statesman and Centenarian", p. 34 ; Lu, "Standing between Two Worlds: Ma Xiangbo's Educational Thought and Practice", p. 156-157, in Hayhoe and Lu (eds.), *Ma Xiangbo...*, *op. cit.*

18. The characters in the school's name 震旦 refer to an ancient Sanskrit name for China in Buddhist texts and can be interpreted as evoking the image of a rising sun, hence the French name l'Aurore.

19. The history of Zhendan is closely related to that of two other universities in Shanghai founded in the same era, St. John's University, managed by American Anglican missionaries, and Shanghai Jiaotong University, a government-run university.

20. Jean-Paul Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations: Shifting Models of Mission among Jesuits in China," *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 83, n° 4, Oct., 1997, p. 670.

tization in the institution (though himself a dedicated Catholic, Ma wanted the academy to be strictly secular)²¹. By 1905, tensions were so severe that Ma appealed to leading Chinese intellectuals to create a new school along the lines he had originally imagined, and left Zhendan to found the Fudan Academy (復旦公學), the basis for Fudan University, now one of China's most prestigious²². Still, Ma's break with the Jesuits was not complete, as he continued to finance Zhendan when it was re-established under the exclusive control of the French Jesuits, who guided the institution towards the model of a continental European university²³. As part of this renaissance, the university was relocated from Xujiahui to a location inside the French Concession at Lujiawan (盧家灣) in 1909. Afterwards, Zhendan came to resemble other missionary universities in China as well as universities in France. However, unlike most other missionary universities (including Fu Jen Catholic University of Beijing 輔仁大學), Zhendan adopted a more obvious national character, promoting French language and culture against the competing influence of Protestant Universities and Chinese Academies²⁴.

2. The University's Relationship with the French State

Although Zhendan was not founded with the intention of being a French (nor a Catholic) university, merely a Chinese university that taught courses on Catholic theology and the French language, the Jesuits worked to emphasize the school's French identity. Most students at Zhendan were Chinese, but the university was not exclusively reserved for them, and there were small numbers of foreign students in the 1930s and 1940s (including Belgians, French, and White Russians, who were more numerous than French citizens in the Shanghai French Concession). Nonetheless it was effectively an institution to produce cohorts of Francophonic, Francophile, elite Chinese students who would go on to careers in diplomacy, politics, finance, and commerce, often getting their start as translators for the French Legation or as compradors for French companies operating in Shanghai. While courses in English, Latin, and Chinese were included in the curriculum, particularly in the later years of the university's existence, French was

21. Patrick Taveirne, CICM (*Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae*), "Catholic Higher Education in China," *Tripod*, vol. 26, n° 142, Autumn 2006, http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/en/tripod_en/en_tripod_142_02.html

22. The name is a reference to the Confucian *Analects*, but could also be read as "revived Zhendan."

23. Officially, Zhendan was initially an academy 學院, then in 1912, a grand academy 大學院, then in 1930, a university 大學. In reality, it had already adopted a continental European-style university structure while still labelled an academy.

24. 刘贤, "两所大学与两个时代--天主教震旦大学与辅仁大学比较, (1903-1937)," 世界宗教研究, 2009 (04) [Liu Xian, "Two Universities and Two Times: A Comparison between the Catholic Aurora University and Furen University (1903-1937)", *Studies in World Religions*, 2009, 04, p. 26].

the primary language of instruction and a thorough knowledge of French was required of all students ²⁵.

Zhendan maintained this unsettled, complex character – as simultaneously French, Chinese, and Catholic without exclusively being any of these three – throughout its history. As the population of the French Concession exploded (from some 297,000 in 1925, to nearly 500,000 by the end of 1935, to over 800,000 by 1942), the administrative apparatus of the Concession likewise expanded to provide a modicum of government services for its residents. In addition to public works and public health initiatives, the *Conseil d'administration municipale*, an extension of the French Legation, devoted increasing funds towards education, including for Zhendan ²⁶. Aside from the prominence of the university as a « French university » in China's largest city and the lack of a robust public educational system in the French Concession, some additional background information is necessary for understanding this phenomenon. World War I had helped to repair relations between France and the Vatican, which had been cut off in the first years of the twentieth century. Also, the war had endeared France towards the Chinese, not only the tens of thousands of laborers who came to France but also supporters of the French cause in China, including Shanghai-nese Catholics like the industrialist Zhu Zhiyao (Nicholas Tsu 朱志尧), who provided supplies to the French military and volunteered his son, Zhu Binhou (朱斌侯), whose French name was Etienne, for the *Aéronautique militaire* on the Western Front ²⁷. More problematically for the Jesuits, the war led to financial and logistical problems for the French Catholic missions in China (200-300 of the roughly 850 French missionaries in China returned to Europe during the war to serve as military chaplains or in other support roles and many never returned), permitting American Catholic money and missionaries to rapidly become more prominent in the China mission field ²⁸.

All of these factors combined to create both the desire and political flexibility for the French Legation to provide greater assistance to Zhendan. In addition to regular small subventions to offset the Conces-

25. 王薇佳, “独辟蹊径: 一所与众不同的大学 - 上海震旦大学研究, (1903-1952)” [Wang Weijia, “To Blaze a New Trail: an Outstanding University. Research on Shanghai Zhendan University (1903-1952)”], PhD Diss., Central China Normal University Modern History Institute, 2003, p. 27.

26. Statistics from Christine Cornet, “The Bumpy End of the French Concession and French Influence in Shanghai, 1937-1946,” in Christian Henriot and Wen-Hsin Yeh (eds.), *In the Shadow of the Rising Sun: Shanghai under Japanese Occupation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 261; Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN), Shanghai A-44 Rapports commerciaux, 1935-1936, Concession Française – Rues, Maisons, Population et CADN Shanghai A-45 Rapports commerciaux, 1936-1937, La Population de Shanghai au mois de Juillet dernier, 1935.

27. For more information on the Zhu family, see Yi-sheng Zhu, Zhao-ning Zhu et Guy Brossollet, *Chronique d'une illustre famille de Shanghai: les Zhu, 1850-1950*, Paris, Éditions Rive droite, 2002.

28. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Christian Missions in China*, New York, Russell & Russell, 1967, p. 705.

sion's property tax on the university's rather extensive landholdings, extraordinary grants were supplied for specific projects. During the war, in 1915, the *Conseil municipal* provided 300,000 francs to Zhendan for dedicated faculty chairs, as well as the relocation of the Jesuits' observatory and natural history museum to Xujiahui, on the condition that the university « maintain its French character » by teaching most courses in French, ensuring a French majority among the faculty, and continuing to appoint French directors of the university ²⁹. The university also modified its logo to prominently feature a Gallic cockerel (coq gaulois) and its preparatory course was granted equivalence with the French Baccalauréat. In 1919, an additional 630,000 francs were given to the university in grants and subsidies directly from the French government via the *ministère des Affaires étrangères* (not from the French Concession's coffers), including a one-time gift of 450,000 francs for the construction of new facilities, with an additional 477,000 francs provided in 1920. The timing of this deep collaboration between the Jesuits and the French state in Shanghai was no coincidence ; as mentioned above, World War I helped repair relations between the Third Republic and the Vatican and provide added impetus for the French state to aid missionaries in China. Building on the basis laid in the 1910s, Zhendan received hundreds of thousands of francs annually from the French government (the *ministère des Affaires étrangères [MAE]* and the *Conseil municipal*) in subsequent decades, including funds from France's share of the Boxer Indemnity, to pay for student scholarships, laboratory and library facilities, and the salaries of professors (including missionary professors) ³⁰. Subsidies were also given to the university (and other Catholic charitable and educational enterprises) with the expectation that they would benefit French commercial interests in Shanghai. For instance, when the university wanted to add a new building in 1936, the French Concession donated Ch\$400,000 with the understanding that a French firm would be hired to construct the building ³¹.

29. The Jesuits also had to make the university's library and museum open to the public, cede some land to the Concession for road construction, and accept up to 10 Chinese students per year who were recommended by the Concession authorities. Archives françaises de la Compagnie de Jésus (AFSI), FCh 323, « L'Aurore », Untitled typewritten note, dated 1915.

30. AFSI – FCh 323, Histoire de la maison, 1919-1920 ... *Mentio fiat de liberalitate amicorum in suppellectilia* ; Also, Wang Weijia, "To Blaze a New Trail," *op. cit.*, p. 80 and Wiest, "Bringing Christ to the Nations," *art. cit.*, p. 677-678.

31. Wang Weijia, "To Blaze a New Trail," *op. cit.*, p. 82. The monetary history of China in this period is maddeningly complex, especially in Shanghai, where Chinese silver taels (a measurement of weight rather than value per se), silver dollars, "Mexican" or "Spanish" dollars derived from silver mined in the Americas, British pounds, French francs, Japanese yen, and American dollars could all be found in circulation. As the minting of coins was decentralized in the 1910s, there were regional variations of hard currency, including a "Shanghai tael." Chinese banks began issuing paper notes in the 1920s and, in 1935, the Nanjing Government instituted a new paper currency, the *fabi* (法币), to which the figure cited here is most likely referring.

The significantly increased funding was especially intended to help the university expand its courses of medical training, carried out at the university-affiliated *Hôpital Sainte-Marie* (*Guangci Yiyuan* 廣慈醫院, today the Ruijin Hospital of Shanghai Jiaotong University's Medical School). The French Legation was especially concerned about the influence of American-funded Rockefeller Foundation hospitals (the renowned Peking Medical Union and a planned Shanghai medical school that never came to fruition), along with American missionary medical training programs, and sought to raise Zhendan's medical school to an equivalent number of faculty chairs as the *Institut français* in Beirut. There were more local and immediate concerns for the French Concession authorities; the medical faculty and students from Zhendan were crucial for staffing the hospitals of the foreign concessions. Given the domestic politics of France at the time, the Catholic Church seems an odd vehicle for dispensing France's medical knowledge, but the Jesuits and other Catholic mission orders were in fact involved in the founding or management of many of Shanghai's largest hospitals and the Church managed dozens of dispensaries in the city and throughout Jiangnan. Though the *Conseil Municipal* did manage to establish a renowned *Institut Pasteur*, in the later years of the Concession and had its own limited public health bureaucracy, periodic concerns about possible infectious disease epidemics caused the Council to rely on Catholic medical services for vaccination efforts, despite the reservations of some bureaucrats about the easy opportunities for proselytization to accompany such medical missionary work³². Cooperation with Zhendan faculty and students, on the other hand, minimized such problems because of the school's laissez-faire approach towards religious proselytization.

The deluge of funding for Zhendan from the *Conseil municipal and the ministère des Affaires Étrangères* allowed Zhendan to not only increase the number and quality of physicians trained, but also to eventually add training programs for nurses and dentists. The result was that, by the late 1940s, Zhendan published its own medical journal, its graduates were well-regarded in both missionary and secular hospitals in the coastal cities of eastern China, and some three-quarters of doctors in Catholic hospitals throughout China were Zhendan alumni. For their

32. The relationship between the Institut Pasteur and Catholic medical institutions was generally cooperative, particularly when it came to training medical students, some of whom went on to work for the Institut. In fact, the Institut Pasteur in Shanghai was founded and supported through France's portion of the indemnities to foreign powers following the Boxer Uprising. The Japanese military removed most of the Institut Pasteur's equipment in 1945 and the institution closed. A new Shanghai Institut Pasteur was opened in 2004 in collaboration with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (中国科学院上海巴斯德研究所). Zhendan also collaborated with the Sino-Belgian Radium Institute, which was the first institution to offer oncological services in China. General Central Intelligence Agency Records, CIA-RDP80-00809A000600040047-6, "Medical Training at Aurora University/Research Facilities," April 21, 1953.

part, the Jesuits, in correspondence with the Legation, were always consistent in claiming that all of their efforts were meant to expand the glory and prestige of France. Of course, this was an exaggeration given the explicitly religious nature of most of their other institutions in Jiangnan, but it is certain that without the influx of funds from the French state, Zhendan would have never developed to the extent that it did, and may have been forced to close during the Second World War due to financial difficulties ³³.

3. Confronting Nationalism and Anti-Imperialism

However, as the Chinese nationalist movement progressed, especially following the May 4 (1919) Movement, which was primarily a student movement, greater attention was paid to respecting Chinese culture and emphasizing the Chinese character of the university. Unlike most other missionary universities, Zhendan weathered the storms of the nationalist Anti-Christian Movement of the mid-1920s without major disturbances or an interruption of classes, but the specter of growing student nationalism forced the administration to make tacit concessions. Though the Jesuits were concerned about any challenge to discipline, they did not try to suppress anti-Japanese demonstrations at Zhendan in the wake of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 ³⁴. The university's administrators even approved and attended a military-style rally organized by the Anti-Japanese Association of Zhendan, though they did so reluctantly, facing student strikes and condemnation in the local press if they had prevented it ³⁵. Shanghai was an important center of anti-Japanese efforts, including a boycott which was devastating to

33. Wang Weijia, "To Blaze a New Trail," *op. cit.*, p. 81. Though proselytization was rare, there were questions of Catholic doctrine, which differed according to the university's leadership at a given time, and reflected wider debates among the Jesuits in China. The question of whether and how to teach Darwinism and evolution was especially fraught. The fact that French Jesuits in China (particularly Teilhard de Chardin) themselves contribute to the study of human evolution made this issue even more pointed and personal. During his tenure as Rector, Georges Germain was more lax than his predecessor (Pierre Lefèvre), and during his era religious studies courses openly discussed Daoism, Buddhism, and Islam, and even open debate on the existence of God. *Ibid*, 88-89. Regarding medical ethics, the Jesuits published far less than Protestant medical missionaries, but their single contribution to the field was a massive tome, P.G. Payen, S.J., *Déontologie médicale d'après le droit naturel, devoirs d'état et droits de tout médecin*, T'ou-Sè-Wè, Shanghai, Imprimerie de la Mission Catholique, 1922, published explicitly for Zhendan students in 1935 at the mission's press at Tushanwan in Xujiahui. Though informed by Catholic doctrine, the discussion of moral quandaries is surprisingly even-handed and leaves some questions unresolved; for example, allowing space for a moral basis for the termination of a pregnancy if the doctor determines the mother's life to be in danger.

34. As during the Anti-Christian Movement, the Jesuits could at least pride themselves on keeping classes in session, unlike the majority of universities in Shanghai, which closed due to student demonstrations in late 1931.

35. In fact, military drill had long been encouraged by the Jesuits at Zhendan and the boys' secondary schools in Shanghai, as it was seen as useful in developing one's moral

Japanese firms in the city, and Sino-Japanese tensions in the city led to a brief but bloody war in January-March 1932, in many ways a preview of the much larger Battle of Shanghai five years later that would partly signal the start of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

The Sino-Japanese conflict pulled Zhendan closer to the Chinese government and an embrace of the Chinese side of its identity in several ways. The first was that in both the 1932 and 1937 conflicts, the university's students, particularly those with medical training, committed themselves to relief work among wounded soldiers and the waves of refugees who fled to Shanghai's foreign concessions to escape the fighting. After the fighting ended in 1932, Generalissimo Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-Shek) met with Catholic representatives from Shanghai, including those from Zhendan, to express his gratitude for their charitable efforts; soon afterwards, the university received certification from Jiang's Republican Government in Nanjing, a largely symbolic move, as Zhendan was located in the French Concession beyond the formal authority of Nanjing, but one which enhanced the university's prestige and legitimacy in the eyes of Chinese nationalists³⁶. As part of the certification process, Zhendan established a council composed of prominent Shanghaiese Catholics, the French Consul (Auguste Wilden), the Bishop (Auguste Haouisée), and the Superior of the Jesuit Mission (Pierre Lefèbvre), to determine the future organization and direction of the institution³⁷. In line with the Nanjing Government's new regulations, the council decided to modify the university's leadership structure and appointed the university's first (and last) Chinese Director, Hu Wenyaoyao (胡文耀), to act as an intercessor with the Chinese government while the Rector, always a French Jesuit, continued to act as the university's leader in most matters, including relations with the French Concession administration³⁸.

The Sino-Japanese conflict placed the university in a difficult position, though being in the French Concession meant that it was more isolated from the effects of the war than some other universities in Shanghai. The Japanese had conquered the Chinese-administered areas of Shanghai by the end of 1937, but only encroached on the foreign concessions in December 1941, hours after Japanese planes bombed

and physical discipline. « L'Association anti-Japonaise à l'Aurore », *Relations de Chine*, vol. 30, n° 2, avril, 1932, p. 108-110.

36. The university had been officially recognized by the Republican government based in Beijing from 1912, but this was a dead letter after the national government relocated to Nanjing in 1928 and instituted stricter controls over education. « Échos et Nouvelles : L'Aurore » *Relations de Chine*, vol. 29, n° 4, octobre, 1931, p. 565.

37. Wang Weijia, "To Blaze a New Trail," *op. cit.*, p. 60-61.

38. Though a majority of the members on the council were Chinese, this arrangement can be seen as permitting the French Jesuits to retain authority while superficially making a concession to Chinese nationalism. Perhaps because of this unequal structure, Hu Wenyaoyao became an ally of the Communists in the late 1940s, denouncing the Jesuits' "imperialism" and becoming the national lay leader of the "Patriotic" Chinese Catholic Church.

Pearl Harbor. However, as the Consulate was by that time a representative of the Vichy regime, the Japanese only ensured the right for their troops and military police (*Kempeitai*) to traverse the territory and allowed the French to continue to administer the concession, with oversight, until 1943. The university's rector, Georges Germain, was continually visited throughout the war by a commissar and other Japanese military representatives seeking to gauge the political attitudes of students, faculty, and staff³⁹. But Zhendan was able to maintain a degree of autonomy⁴⁰. In the summer of 1943, France's concessions in China were returned to Chinese sovereignty under Japanese pressure in an attempt to boost the legitimacy of the Chinese collaborationist regime in Nanjing. However, elements of the French administration were left intact and continued to work in concert with the Chinese collaborationist government and Japanese occupation forces as before. The real watershed was March 1945; with Vichy defunct and the remnants of French administration in Indochina in the process of being overthrown, Zhendan was occupied by Japanese troops and fortified, while the university's library, laboratories, and other materials were moved piece-by-piece to a temporary location.

Until the French Concession was dissolved in 1945-46, the *Conseil municipal* continued to deliver subventions to Zhendan in the form of tax exemptions and donations; by 1943, the final year of the Concession's existence, these had reached a value of over Ch\$100,000, more than double the 1940 figure (an increase explained mostly by rapid wartime inflation)⁴¹. According to Germain's postwar account, Zhendan's « refusal to submit » deprived it of subventions after 1943, leading to even greater financial difficulties than before (professors took a pay cut to help keep the university open). Nevertheless, the university continued to flourish in a sense; between the preparatory course, the various faculties, and women's college, Zhendan had over 2,400 students by 1943⁴². But the university was imperiled in the fallout from World War II. Because Zhendan remained open throughout the war, unlike other Chinese universities which closed down or moved inland to stay within « free China », and because the administration was accused of suppressing nationalistic and Communist student movements on campus (though there is little concrete evidence to support

39. AFSI FCh 322 – Aurore Diaire, 1908-1948. Also, Georges Germain, S.J., « L'Aurore et le Guerre : aux anciens élèves restés en Chine libre, » *Bulletin de l'Université l'Aurore* (震旦雜誌), t. 6, n° 3, 1945, p. 569.

40. For example, after the war Germain bragged that the flag of Jiang Jieshi's Guomindang government was never removed from the university's gates (unlike many other Catholic missionary institutions, the French tricolor was not used to deter the Japanese).

41. Shanghai Municipal Archives (désormais SMA) U38-1-378, Subventions – Université L'Aurore.

42. « Chroniques et nouvelles (avril, mai, juin 1943) », *Bulletin de l'Université l'Aurore*, t. 4, n° 2, 1943, p. 547. 乔恩·W·亨勃尼著, 郭太风译, 上海震旦大学, (1903-1952)《上海地方志》1994年第五期 (Originally published as Jon W. Huebner, "L'Université L'Aurore, Shanghai, 1903-1952," *Papers on Far Eastern History*, Issue 40, 1989.

such a claim), the Jesuits were criticized by leftists after the war for collaborating with the Japanese.

4. Civil War, Revolution, and Reorganization

In the last period of the school's existence following World War II, Zhendan maintained its complex character but became more thoroughly integrated with Chinese culture and society. Although the French Concession no longer existed and its former territory was now under Chinese jurisdiction, and the Religious Protectorate had been rendered feeble by the revocation of the unequal treaties between China and foreign powers, the Jesuits' missionary enterprise was larger than ever and maintained a close relationship with the French Consulate, which did continue to function in Shanghai. The university's bulletin continued to be printed in French, though it increasingly included articles in English, Chinese, and occasionally other European languages. However, Chinese language publications were increasingly produced for both current and former students. Local and national alumni networks developed, connections with the Chinese government deepened, more Chinese faculty were recruited (so that Chinese professors formed a majority by the late 1940s), and more classes were taught in Chinese. Overseeing many of these changes (with the approval of the Jesuits) was Hu Wenyao, who had taken over much of the university's daily administration during the war. Such moves towards the sinization of Zhendan were the obvious and sensible direction for the future ; not only had the treaty ports and the treaties which produced them been abrogated, the Catholic Church was itself going through a process of sinization, establishing a national hierarchy in 1946. Though some of the Jesuits and French diplomatic officials might have been reluctant to admit it, these reforms signaled that the end of both the imperial and the missionary era of China was nigh ; any attempt to maintain the notion of a French university in China would be both obstinate and futile.

Beginning in the late 1920s, the university established a similar relationship with the Chinese government that had previously existed with the authorities of the French Legation in Shanghai. The Chinese Republican government collaborated with Zhendan and other missionary universities in a nationalist modernization project, which was then inherited and reorganized into a state-led model of socialist modernization by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Zhendan's identity crisis remained something of an open question in the 1940s and was only definitely solved quite forcefully by the Communists following their victory in 1949. Since it was one of the largest universities in Shanghai, was a major landholder, and was seen as one of the most politically problematic universities in China, the Communists considered Zhendan a high priority and the groundwork for its takeover was laid early.

Well before Liberation in May 1949, the Party found allies at all levels of the university's administration, staff, and student body who provided the party with a strong foundation to pursue reforms⁴³. Critically, the CCP was able to gain the support of Hu Wenyao, who was sympathetic to the CCP's agenda of New Democracy under the banner of the United Front and anti-imperialism⁴⁴. Starting in the first months after Liberation, Hu submitted continuous reports to the nascent East China and Shanghai offices of the Communist government's cultural and administrative authorities regarding the university's administrative structure, finances, assets, daily operations, curriculum, and the political orientation of the faculty, staff, and students⁴⁵. Changes to the curriculum were made almost immediately, such as mandatory courses on Marxism, Mao Zedong Thought, and Soviet history and as well as optional Russian language courses (while courses on Western languages and religion were reduced steadily).

In February 1951, the last remaining foreign missionaries were removed from Zhendan's faculty (some non-missionary foreigners remained on the faculty) and foreign funding to the university was completely severed⁴⁶. The school was bankrupted by the Land Reform campaign, which had redistributed the university's landholdings, and the student body was riven by divisions between devout Christians and Communist activists. Aside from Land Reform, Zhendan and other universities were faced with two additional movements that set the stage for their

43. Policies that would be applied in Shanghai were initially tested out in missionary universities Beijing and Tianjin in the early months of 1949, and an office of cadres and students was set up within the Military Control Commission in early May 1949, before PLA troops even entered Shanghai. Because of such careful planning, private universities could be said to have already been taken over when the PLA entered Shanghai. 张恂如, “接管上海高校,” 中共上海市委党史研究室编, 接管上海, 下卷—专题与会议 (上海: 中国广播电视出版社, 1993) [Zhang Xunru, “The takeover of Shanghai's Higher Education,” in Chinese Communist Party Shanghai Municipal Committee Party History Research Office (ed.), *The Takeover of Shanghai, vol. 2 – Special Topics and Conferences*, Shanghai, China Radio and Television Publishing House, 1993], p. 233-244.

44. Hu became a leading figure, both in Shanghai and nationally, in the Catholic Reform movement that sought to reduce the influence of foreign missionaries and the Vatican within the Church. This movement ran into a great deal of opposition, especially in Shanghai, and was only firmly established in late 1957. Many contemporary and later accounts doubt the sincerity of Hu's religious beliefs as he was a convert late in life and may have only converted out of deference to Germain and other important mentors. Hu's son was a member of the Communist Party in the Civil War period (1946-1949).

45. Religious instruction was still permitted, but could not be mandatory and had to be conducted before or after regular school hours, the same arrangement as under the Guomindang. Though overall student enrollments decreased, membership in party organizations, particularly the New Democratic Youth, expanded and the rhetoric of the CCP was much more prominent on campus. The “Patriotic Education” campaign was universal in Shanghai's universities, but at Zhendan was mostly geared towards counteracting the influence of the Legion of Mary, a Catholic lay organization. SMA BI-1-2161-41 – “私立震旦大学概况 1949 年” [“The Situation of Zhendan University in 1949”]. SMA Q244-1-277, “私立震旦大学四五月份工作报告” [“Zhendan University May (1951) Work Report”].

46. SMA Q244-1-291, Untitled, Hu Wenyao (胡文耀) to East China Education Ministry (华东教育部), August 5, 1951.

eventual dissolution. One was the Thought Reform movement, which intensified earlier changes in curriculum in order to inculcate social values of serving the people while also eliminating remnant imperialist and bourgeois influence among intellectuals⁴⁷. The other was the Three and Five Antis campaigns, ostensibly aimed at rooting out corruption and inefficiency, though in fact anti-corruption efforts were often used as a cover to remove problematic students and faculty when the Thought Reform Movement encountered opposition⁴⁸. Only after a majority of students and staff were accused of some sort of financial malfeasance (anything from stealing a library book to embezzling funds) at Zhendan was the intended disciplinary effect achieved. By late 1952, students and administrators eagerly demanded the university's partition into the new Soviet-style system (院系调整) and Zhendan's students, faculty and resources were divided between several universities, including Fudan University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, and the newly-established East China Normal University. Unlike Fudan, a distinctly Chinese university, Zhendan was not allowed to survive under the new regime. The somewhat artificial French identity that had been so carefully laid onto the university by the Jesuits and their allies in the French Legation proved to be the university's ultimate undoing.

Conclusion

Many scholars, even scholars of French imperialism or modern Chinese history, would be surprised to learn that there was once a French-Jesuit university in China, and that it was one of the largest and most prominent universities in China when the Communists came to power in 1949⁴⁹. The university's French identity could be exaggerated, considering that it was located in China and the vast majority of its students were Chinese. But the close cooperation between the Jesuits and the French government, in founding and sustaining the institution

47. In order to carry out thought reform in Shanghai, the universities in the city were divided into three groups on the basis of their perceived political reliability. Group 2, the most troublesome, included Zhendan, along with St. John's University (圣约翰大学), Huijiang University (沪江大学), Datong University (大同大学), and Shanghai Municipal Industrial College (上海市立工业专科学校).

48. Group 1 included Shanghai Jiaotong University, Fudan University, East China Normal University, and Shanghai Medical College. Group 3 included law schools and technical colleges. “上海第一，第二批高等学校教师思想改造情况。”《内部参考》1952.05.30 [“The Situation of Thought Reform among Teachers in Shanghai Group 1 and 2 Higher Education Institutions,” *Internal Reference*, May 30, 1952, p. 260-262].

49. The institution's history has largely been forgotten because it was closed in 1952 and never reestablished on Taiwan (unlike some other private Chinese universities) and because, in mainland China, any association with the “imperialist” university was a political liability for many years. It therefore left an unacknowledged but nonetheless important impact on Shanghai's educational scene, especially Fudan, Shanghai Jiaotong, and East China Normal Universities.

does lend some legitimacy to this claim. Except for the final years of the university, French nationals (many but not all Jesuits) composed the largest portion of the faculty and most courses were taught in French. Such an arrangement between Church and State not only differed from the metropole, where anticlericalism and Church-State tensions peaked in the early twentieth century, it was also quite distinct from other parts of the French Empire.

James P. Daughton has convincingly shown that, in the wake of anticlerical legislation beginning in the late 1880s, missionary orders and organizations recast themselves as faithful servants of the empire. However, while the Jesuits in Shanghai did portray themselves as loyal Frenchmen in order to secure the French government's largesse, the Third Republic's semi-colonial project in Shanghai was much more limited than in most parts of the empire and, as shown above, almost entirely reliant on the Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries from the very start. The history of Zhendan University also shows that French education in China differed from that in colonial possessions such as Indochina, where Church and State sometimes cooperated but also clashed over the issue of education, particularly when the state tried to compete with or even eliminate private educational institutions⁵⁰. Furthermore, cultural conflict was less pronounced at Zhendan than in French educational institutions in the colonial empire, and was also less intense than at other Chinese universities during periods of unrest, such as the Anti-Christian Movement of the 1920s. Ironically, this relative tranquility was likely the result of the cultural conflict which *did* occur very early in the institution's history; the split between Zhendan and Fudan left a rump institution with a more conservative character, designed to educate the children of Shanghai's comprador class who consciously sought a continental European-style university education with an emphasis on foreign languages and culture. The administration's flexibility on allowing restrained expression of nationalism, so long as it did not disrupt classes, also helped to reduce cultural conflict.

The model of education in Shanghai, represented by Zhendan University, was neither associationist nor assimilationist, nor quite the Republican model argued for by Alice Conklin in her study of West Africa⁵¹. Instead, the « civilizing mission » produced by the alliance of Church and State in Shanghai was based on a vague sense of shared

50. Gail Paradise Kelly, David H Kelly, *French Colonial Education: Essays on Vietnam and West Africa*, New York, AMS Press, 2000, p. 61. 1995.

51. Conklin, *A mission to civilize, op. cit.*, p. 74-75. While the Jesuits did promote, and contribute to, the application of modern science, technology, and medicine in addressing the problems facing China, and some were even willing to countenance understandings of human history and evolution antithetical to Church dogma, they also coupled their scientific efforts with specifically Catholic notions of spiritual and ethical fulfilment. In this, they were informed more by debates within the Catholic Church on how to reconcile Catholic theology with modern science, than with intellectual debates in France about the ethics and contradictions of the civilizing mission.

goals. The Church and State had their own, differing motivations for wanting to spread French language, culture, and scientific knowledge, but they did unambiguously share this common interest, allowing all other disagreements to be papered over. Operating at the edge of empire, the French Legation could pursue the spread of French culture and influence at limited cost and headache, since the Jesuits managed the day-to-day administration of education. By avoiding conflicts between Church and State, and obvious contradictions for Chinese students who were expected to accept colonial subjecthood within a Republican Empire nominally committed to equality, the semi-colonial environment of Shanghai produced a *better* educational model than the more centralized education system in the formal empire.