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From the late Qing Dynasty (viz. mid–nineteenth century to 1911) to the early Republic of China (1911–1920s), the Catholic Church introduced a large number of religious paintings to display in churches and for individual believers, including the importation of icons from Europe as well as painting production from local Catholic institutions such as the Tou-se-we Painting House.[1] Among them, only a few images were in a Chinese style. Some of these are documented in Daniel J. Fleming's *Each with His Own Brush: Contemporary Christian Art in Asia and Africa* and in an article by Shen and Roberts in *The Chinese Recorder*. Fleming notes that "among the earliest modern Chinese Christian paintings are those in the hospital of the Church Missionary Society, Hangchow, produced a few years before 1900,"[2] while the article informs us about two small-scale groups of artists, the St. Luke Society and the Church Art Cooperative Society, who collaborated to produce a number of "Christmas cards, such as the Adoration of the Magi and the Madonna of the Radiant Sun."[3] Apart from such sporadic records, it is difficult to find the traces of these Sino-Christian paintings today. Of course, this also shows that they did not reach a critical number in production, sales, and popularity at the time. This

stands in stark contrast to the Christian paintings produced by Chinese Catholics at Fu Jen University in the 1930s and 1940s. Although the Fu Jen Catholic artistic practice from 1930 to 1940 was forced to end along with the Fu Jen Catholic University in Mainland China, its creative characteristics were distinctive, its output reached a certain scale, and its influence extended far beyond, to Europe and the United States. More importantly, the substantive issues the Fu Jen paintings articulate map well onto the bigger picture of the inculturation of Christianity in China.

Besides introducing the Fu Jen Catholic paintings and their creators, I will answer two questions in this paper: First, why did Fu Jen artists undertake to fight a "losing battle" in creating old-fashioned Chinese Christian paintings that were at odds with the antitraditional and anti-Christian sentiment of their era? Second, why were the reactions from Western and Chinese audiences so different—that is to say, appreciation and praise from foreign audiences, on the one hand, and indifference and even rejection from Chinese people, on the other? I will argue that first, although Fu Jen was a missionary university during the Chinese anti-Christian movement in the 1920s, the university's educational philosophy was to teach Chinese culture and modern academic subjects on a *non*-religious basis. At the same time, the contemporary Chinese art scene advocated Western-style realistic painting, while rejecting traditional Chinese painting. Against this background, the Fu Jen painters were marginalized in two ways: because they were Catholics and because they were traditional painters. It was in this dual predicament that Fu Jen painters, encouraged and instructed by Western missionaries, tried to represent classic Christian themes in the form of traditional Chinese visual art in order to find a way out of their identity crisis. In the process, their "split-identities" as traditional Chinese painters and Christian believers grew together and, in their combination, gained a new strength and meaning for them. Second, while European modernism was working hard to create the primacy of spiritual vision and anti-illusionism, modern Chinese reformers precisely sought to offload this artistic burden. The

difference between the responses of Western and urban Chinese audiences was fundamentally caused by this opposing stance on visual modernity. Furthermore, for Christian believers, the difference was rooted in a theological disagreement. Western viewers deeply rooted in their Christian tradition could allow themselves more tolerance for grasping the Christian spirit in the new Chinese form, while their Chinese counterparts saw the Chinese features in Christian paintings as syncretistic, combining Christianity and Chinese traditions (notably Buddhism and Confucianism).

I. Main Figures

A. S. E. Celso Costantini (1876–1958): an Apostolic Delegate of the Roman Catholic Church in China

Since 1840, the far-reaching spread of European colonialism provoked a growing Chinese enmity and suspicion towards foreigners, including missionaries. The Boxer Rebellion of 1900 marked the violent climax of this hostility, in which Christians became the target of severe persecution. At the same time, the year 1900 became a turning point for Christian missions in China. The missionary movement entered a new era of opportunity, spurred by its efforts of inculturation. Protestant missionaries participated in educational, medical, and charitable work, thus converging with the reforming currents of early twentieth-century China. As a result, the period 1900–1920 saw a substantial growth in all aspects of Chinese Christianity. Although Roman Catholic missions started their efforts on inculturation later than the Protestant churches, they too expanded rapidly in the post-Boxer years.[4]

In 1919, Pope Benedict XV issued the apostolic letter, *Maximum Illud*,[5] which has been regarded as the beginning of the Catholic inculturation in the twentieth century.[6] The letter proposed to rekindle and renovate the Catholic missions by increasing the number of local clergy and by being more active in the local social framework. Three

years later, the pope appointed Celso Costantini as the first apostolic delegate to China to implement all dimensions of *Maximum Illud*. As soon as he arrived, he intentionally kept a distance from the political forces of Western countries,[7] and went deep into the dioceses of Northeast China, North China, and Central South China to find out about Chinese people in the real-world situation.[8] In the years that followed, Celso Costantini was devoted to enabling the Chinese church to adapt to Chinese conditions by training and ordaining Chinese priests, reforming the administrative systems of the dioceses and cultivating Western missionaries with Chinese language and etiquette, etc.[9]

Celso Costantini's inculturation measures were not limited to church affairs. In terms of culture, he advocated that the Catholic faith should be integrated with the local Confucian culture in China, since in his view, Confucianism was "the gateway to education, the front porch of conversion."[10] Among issues of culture, what he was most committed to changing was the state of Chinese Catholic art.[11] After getting to know ancient Chinese art, he realized that "in a country with ancient artistic traditions and true artistic values, Catholic art should complement the initiatives to reform mission."[12] In 1923, he wrote to apostolic vicars, discussing in detail the issues of Catholic art in mission areas in China, and pointed out the necessity of adopting Chinese-style religious images. The apostolic letter emphasizes the problem that Catholicism had not been effectively contextualized during the previous four hundred years, from the end of the Ming Dynasty to the Republican era. This problem became particularly prominent after the Opium War, and even became an "original sin" of Catholicism in China.[13]

Maximum Illud marked the launch of a Vatican Catholic inculturation movement around the world, which promoted the development of local churches of various ethnic groups. Without a doubt, it was one of the most important innovations in the process of Catholic modernization. Celso Costantini's effort shows that as the promoter of the Vatican in China, he implemented the modernization and reform consciousness of Catholicism as measures to free Chinese Catholicism

from its complicity in imperialist colonialism, specifically the power of the French. Among these measures, expressing the Chinese features of Catholicism in China through the inculturation of visual arts and architectures was one of the most important ways to highlight the Chinese identity of Catholicism in China. As Clarke writes: "Costantini wished to develop acceptance for Chinese expressions of Catholic faith that would incorporate the key features of the Chinese Catholic identity, including Marian devotions. "[14] This is the first "top-down" reform of Catholic art in Chinese Catholic history.

During his time in Peking, Costantini, whose own professional background was as an artist and art critic, visited almost all the Chinese painting exhibitions held there. In 1929, he became acquainted with Chen Yuandu, a famous painter in north China, through a small individual exhibition.[15] Costantini highly appreciated Chen's paintings and encouraged him to try Christian themes in Chinese style. He also lent Chen "copies of the best examples of Christian paintings from the Italian schools . . . together with the New Testament."[16] Thus, Chen began to engage in Christian painting. In 1932, Costantini baptized Chen and appointed him as a professor of the art department at Fu Jen Catholic University in Peking.[17] After Costantini left China, Chen was influenced and supported by the Belgian missionary painter Br. Berchmans Bruckner, who was also a teacher in the art department at Fu Jen. Afterwards, Chen was not only engaged in religious painting, but also organized the Catholic Artists' Home painting art group, which was also named Beijing Catholic Painting School.[18] As a result, the art department at Fu Jen University became the forefront of the movement to develop Chinese Christian art. Within a few years, the Artists' Home had created thousands of Chinese Christian paintings,[19] which were exhibited at home and abroad, as close as Peking, Tianjin, Shanghai, as far as Eastern Europe, Paris, and the Vatican.

B. Chen Yuandu (1902–1967): a Chinese painter in Fu Jen Catholic University

Chen Yuandu is a scholar-painter who excelled at painting landscapes, ladies, and Guanyin (bodhisattva of great mercy) using traditional Chinese techniques. In 1926, Chen Yuandu participated in the founding of the "Hu She Painting Society," which adhered to the artistic concept of preserving the quintessence of Chinese culture via the "intensive study of ancient methods and extensive selection from new knowledge."[20] This purpose is also something to which Chen Yuandu consistently adhered in his artistic creation. However, in the Chinese painting circles of the 1920s, advocating and insisting on preserving Chinese traditional culture was no easy task. At that time, the painting world was actively promoting the tradition of Western painting. From concepts of painting to the model of education, huge changes were taking place.

During the New Culture Movement of the 1910s–20s, due to the emphasis on accurate perspectival representation and the two-dimensional visual representation of anatomy in Western painting, the intelligentsia of that time equated Western visual arts with science, while classifying traditional Chinese painting that did not stress the "authenticity" of things as "unscientific" and in need of resistance and abandoning. Represented by Chen Duxiu's claim that "to improve Chinese painting, we must adopt the realistic spirit of Western painting" [21]and Cai Yuanpei's "applying scientific methods to fine arts,"[22] the key to "art" here is observing nature. Therefore, the Western painting method, which is mainly realistic, gradually became fashionable in Chinese painting circles. Under the influence of this New Art Reform, the literati paintings of the Ming and Qing Dynasties and fine brushwork painting from the Song Dynasty onwards were rigorously deprecated. In fact, even the term *Guohua* (traditional, classical, or national style of Chinese painting) came into use in the early twentieth century, "at a time when many Chinese intellectuals had lost faith in the traditional social, political, and cultural systems and sought to embrace that which was foreign and therefore perceived as modern."[23]

Against this background, Chen Yuandu, who insisted on the tenet of "studying ancient methods," had become a hidebound "stifling conservative" who went against the grain. Chen tried his best to advocate learning from the ancients, laying a foundation of traditional painting skills, and improving Chinese painting by combining fine brushwork with freehand painting.[24] In 1947, it was because of this insistence on tradition that Chen, who was then a teacher in the traditional Chinese painting group at Peping Art Academy, had a conflict with Xu Beihong,[25] the president of the academy. Xu Beihong was determined to substitute the traditional way of copying classical paintings and calligraphy with Western realism in the whole educational system in the academy. Three teachers of the Chinese painting group, including Chen Yuandu, were very resentful of this radical reform. They refused to teach and issued a declaration against Xu Beihong's destruction of Chinese painting as a protest, expressing an artistic philosophy completely different from Xu and other radical reformers.[26]

Artists choose different ways of artistic presentation, which not only expresses their different artistic and teaching concepts, but also affirms their identities. Chen Yuandu, who had never studied in a modern Western-style school, initially accepted the master-apprentice teaching model based on imitation. In addition, he had a profound mastery of Chinese traditional culture, and was skilled in transforming the essence of it into his paintings. Therefore, his adherence to the traditional expression of Chinese painting is also a recognition and expression of his own traditional literati identity. In the atmosphere of valorizing Western painting above all in the fine arts world at that time, various external stimuli made him more strongly express himself as a traditional scholar and a traditional Chinese painter.

It was an important event in Chen Yuandu's life to meet Celso Costantini and gain his appreciation. While the reformers in China took Western painting and the "scientific nature" represented by its art form as the standard of art, Costantini was a Western artist and church leader who praised pure Chinese painting and encouraged Chen. Chen then internalized this into a self-conscious sense of

identity and insisted on the artistic presentation of it. Celso Costantini hoped that Chen could develop a Chinese way of expressing the Catholic faith as a trait that fit with the Catholic identity in China.[27]

At that time, Chen was not a Christian and knew little about the Catholic faith. Costantini invited him to the pontifical representative office for a talk and introduced the Bible and related Italian religious paintings to him. In 1932, Chen wrote to Costantini, expressing the hope to "learn more Catholic truth."[28] On Pentecost 1932, Costantini baptized Chen and gave him the Christian name Luke. Since then, Chen Yuandu's paintings have often been signed with "Luke Chen's devotional painting." Under the guidance of Costantini, Chen not only showed his awareness of his identity as a traditional Chinese painter, but also gained a new identity: as a Christian. Several of the main painters in the Artist's Home, such as Lu Hongnian,[29] Wang Suda,[30] and Xü Jihua,[31] were all Chen's students in Fu Jen, and had similar experiences: they became interested in Christianity in the process of creating Christian paintings, and then decided to convert.

The identity of the Guohua painters such as Chen Yuandu and others was marginalized in the wave of the New Art Reform at that time, while the religious identity of a Chinese Christian implies an extremely complex mix of characteristics in the semicolonial context. Christianity was regarded as an accomplice of colonial imperialism, especially in the Anti-Christian Movement in the 1920s. The situation of Chinese Christians was very difficult. When Chen started teaching in Fu Jen, his mixed identity placed him in a dilemma. Although Fu Jen University was a Catholic university, its purpose was not to promote religion but to revitalize Chinese classical culture.[32] As a Chinese professor, it was no easy task for Chen to express his positive opinions on Chinese art invoking foreign religious themes, nor did it seem to attract others. During the first five years of Catholic painting practice and teaching, Chen Yuandu did not find any other artist or student who was attracted by Catholic themes.

After Costantini returned to Rome in 1932, the management of Fu Jen University changed in 1933, and Chen Yuandu's own artistic practice

also entered a period of slow development. It was not until the fall of 1934 that missionary painter Br. Berchmans Bruckner suggested that several students in the fine arts faculty should choose Christmas themes for paintings to be displayed in the art exhibition held regularly during Christmas in Fu Jen. Wang Suda and Lu Hongnian, who were still students at the time, accepted the proposal, followed by Xü Jihua. To the painters' surprise, these works were particularly favored by foreign visitors at the exhibitions that year and later in 1935, and all of them found buyers. One of them even received a new commission.[33] This unexpected success and commercial opportunity offered Chen a means out of the dilemma of his two identities as Guohua painter and Chinese Christian. It also opened a creative space for the teachers and students of the art department at Fu Jen who were interested in Chinese Christian painting.

II. Chinese-Western Hybrid Style of Fu Jen Catholic Painting

Western religious paintings since the Renaissance have used the principle of perspective to enable paintings to approach "reality" as far as possible. In contrast, scattered-point perspective is used in Chinese painting tradition, for the understanding of fixed-point perspective had not been introduced to China until the end of Ming Dynasty. In brief, Western painting pursues the effects of visual expressiveness and visual impact, while the mode of expression, together with the habits of aesthetic appreciation in the Chinese tradition, is very different from the Western way.

In the 1930s, Western paintings had long been familiar to urban Chinese, and there were many Chinese artists who adhered to the practice of Western painting. More attempts were made to combine Chinese and Western fine arts.[34] When Chen and other painters of Fu Jen Catholic University tried to indigenize Christian art, they also hoped that through the combination of Chinese and Western styles, Christian paintings would have a strong power of expression, and conform to the aesthetic of Guohua painting as well.

The most obvious thing was that these paintings were partially westernized in composition and spatial form. Some works borrowed from the Western composition on the same theme. For example, Chen Yuandu's *Our Lady, Star of the Sea* (Figure 1) and Raphael's *The Sistine Madonna* (Figure 2) are both triangular in composition. In both paintings, the positions of the Madonna and Child are above the vertical center of the picture, and even the standing posture of Madonna and the posture of holding the baby are similar. If the two paintings are adjusted to the same scale and placed on top of each other, the proportions and position of Madonna and Child in the two paintings are completely consistent.[35]

FIGURE 1. *Our Lady, Star of the Sea,* Chen Yuandu in Sepp Schüller, *Neue Christliche Malerei in China* (Düsseldorfe: Mosella-Verlag, 1940), 56.

FIGURE 2. *The Sistine Madonna*, Raphael, 1513–1514, The Sistine Chapel, Rome. Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain.

When Costantini first told Chen the story of the Virgin Mary in the Gospel, he also introduced to him many religious paintings by famous Italian painters, and asked him to use these paintings for reference. The theme of the Madonna and Child had been common in Christian paintings in Europe, especially the Italian painters such as Luca della Robbia, Fra Filippo Lippi, Francesco Francia, Antonio Corregio. It was the works of Fra Filippo Lippi an Italian Carmelite monk, that had a decisive influence on Chen's first Catholic painting *Madonna Venerating Baby Jesus* (Figures 3 & 4).

Figure 3 .*The Adoration in the Forest*, Filippo Lippo, 1459. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin. Image: Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain.

FIGURE 4. *Madonna Venerating Baby Jesus.* By Chen Yuandu, 1928, in Sepp Schüller, *Neue Christliche Malerei in China* (Düsseldorfe:Mosella-Verlag,1940), 66.

Chen later introduced these famous Western paintings to his students, which led to some works of other painters in the Artists' Home also showing clear reference to the composition of Western paintings. For example, Wang Suda's *Assumption of the Virgin* (Figure 5) and Murillo's *Immaculate Conception* (Figure 6) both place the Virgin on the upper center of the picture, and the Virgin is surrounded by angels ascending. The Virgin's gesture of raising her hand to the sky and the winged angel pulling the Virgin's skirt are exactly the same. Unlike

FIGURE 5. *The Assumption,* Wang Suda,1946, in Fritz Bornemann, *Ars Sacra Pekinensis-Die Chinesisch-Christliche Malerei an der Katholischen Universität in Peking* (Mödling bei Wien: Druck und Verlag Missionsdruckerei St. Gabriel, 1950), 141.

Figure 6. *Walpole Immaculate Conception*, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, c. 1680, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Image :Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain.

from the Western style, Fu Jen painters do not pay attention to the principle of perspective. In composition, they mostly use the S-shaped layout commonly used in Chinese painting, so as to present the spatial relationship between figures and scenery.

With regard to the subjects, the Holy Family and the Virgin Mary with the child Jesus accounted for a high proportion. Chen Yuandu's *Madonna Venerating Baby Jesus* was reproduced in various church magazines and the Vatican even published a set of commemorative stamps.

FIGURE 7. *Madonna and Baby Jesus*, Lu Hongnian, 1947. Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, Boston College. Used with Permission.

In the following two decades, a large number of paintings with the theme of the Virgin Mary and child Jesus emerged. The image of the Virgin Mary in these paintings is similar to the image of Guanyin in Chinese folk Buddhism. For instance, the poised and dignified Virgin Mary is like the Sun-Moon Guanyin, the elegant and quiet Virgin is like the Water-Moon Guanyin, the simple and plain Virgin is like the Fish-Basket Guanyin, and the majority hold babies like the Sender of Sons Guanyin (Figures 7 & 8). The holy family is also a subject often

FIGURE 8. *Madonna with Virgin Musicians*. Chen Yuandu, 1938, in Fritz Bornemann, *Ars Sacra Pekinensis-Die Chinesisch-Christliche Malerei an der Katholischen Universität in Peking* (Mödling bei Wien: Druck und Verlag Missionsdruckerei St. Gabriel, 1950), 59.

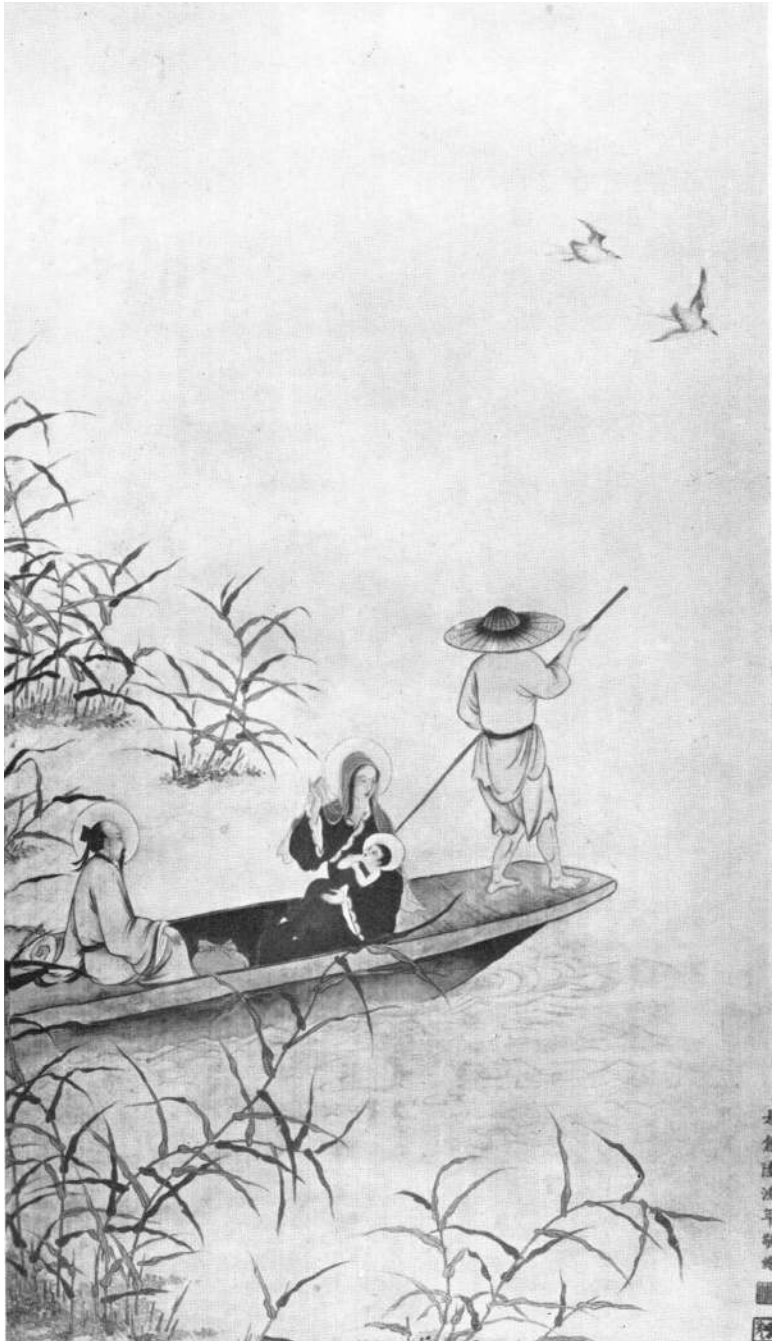

FIGURE 9. *Crossing the River on the Flight,* Lu Hongnian, 1934, in Fritz Bornemann, *Ars Sacra Pekinensis-Die Chinesisch-Christliche Malerei an der Katholischen Universität (FU JEN) in Peking* (Mödling bei Wien: Druck und Verlag Missionsdruckerei St. Gabriel, 1950), 153.

chosen by painters. Lu Hongnian's *Crossing the River During the Flight* (see Figure 9), Wang Suda's *He was Subject to Them* (see Figure 10) and Chen's *The Sacred Baby* (Figure 11) are all excellent works of this kind.

Whether the *Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus* or the *He Was Subject to Them*, these themes are full of strong emotional appeal, especially

FIGURE 10. *He was Subject to Them*, Wang Suda, 1940, in Fritz Bornemann, *Ars Sacra Pekinensis-Die Chinesisch-Christliche Malerei an der Katholischen Universität in Peking* (Mödling bei Wien: Druck und Verlag Missionsdruckerei St. Gabriel, 1950), 127.

FIGURE 11. *The Sacred Baby,* Chen Yuandu, date unknown. In *The Life of Christ by Chinese Artists* (Westminster: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1938), 5.

focusing on the happy family atmosphere. The emphasis on family ethics is quintessential to traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, even with other themes, the painters at Fu Jen Catholic University tended to add children to their paintings. For instance, Chen's *Jesus and Children* depicted Jesus with many children. In the history of Western religious painting, certain stock subjects of the Madonna and Child, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and so forth have been depicted again and again by masters such as Titian, Da Vinci, and Fra Angelico, creating a canon of the same subjects in different styles. However, in the Christian paintings by Fu Jen faculty, these popular Western themes have not been equally developed. A large number of works focus on the family themes, while the use of other themes is relatively rare. As Celso Costantini rightly put it: "The theme of family is so rich in a human touch with the sweetest feeling, even the non-Christians can easily understand."[36] It is obvious that Celso Costantini had already realized the importance of family ethics and kinship as of the essence of traditional Chinese culture. Expressing the core of Christian thought through paintings from the perspective of family ethics can highlight a loving God within family-like relations, and showing the resonance between the Christian God and the traditional Chinese way of heaven.

From the perspective of painting media and techniques, Fu Jen painters chose *kiginu* (raw silk) instead of paper as the vehicle for their paintings, with fine brushwork as the main skill. Kiginu has the ideal quality of being water-absorbent. It is different from the *xuan* paper, which is suitable for freehand brushwork, an expression of the painting in a relatively comprehensive way, while the rice xuan paper is for fine brushwork. The water-absorbency of kiginu is in between these two materials, and is able to show the dual functions of narration and expression. This silk painting tradition was often used in mainstream Chinese painting before paper technology was improved, especially before the freehand literati painting took on its own unique style. Thus, kiginu enables the painters to control the contrast in the form, and express the basic principles of Western painting, while also

realizing the strengths of traditional Chinese painting in terms of composition and tone.

Another striking feature of these paintings is the use of visual symbols from traditional Chinese paintings, such as pine and bamboo, cloud and water, and moon-shaped courtyard doors. On Chen's first Christian painting, *Madonna Venerating Baby Jesus*, in the medium distance behind the main characters, there appear pines and cypresses symbolizing fortitude and moral integrity, and the noble peony, an auspicious and rich symbol in traditional brushwork. In the distance, we see green mountains and rivers, which are no different from the conventional expression of visual symbols in silk paintings of the Song Dynasty. In another of Chen's paintings, *Jesus and Children*, not only are Jesus's clothes completely Chinese, but the image of the children is full of folk influence from traditional Chinese New Year paintings and engravings. In addition, the background also uses bamboo, an indispensable spiritual symbol of in traditional Chinese literati's paintings.[37] They are integrated in a painting expressing Christian religion, showing the pioneering artistic power of the painter. In contrast, Lu Hongnian is more inclined to express pure Chinese traditional folk images. An example of his typical works is *Our Lady's Lantern Festival* (Figure 12). Many of the children in these two paintings carry colorful lanterns around the Holy Mother and child Jesus. This is a typical festival image of the Lantern Festival. Lu is also very good at expressing the daily life scenes of the Holy Family with the distinct sense of the four seasons, which is also a common visual symbolic technique in Chinese landscape painting.

Nevertheless, the visual elements in Fu Jen paintings are not entirely drawn from traditional Chinese paintings. They also often use visual symbols from Western Christian paintings, such as the dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit, lilies in the hands of angels (see Lu Hongnian's *The Annunciation to Mary* on the front cover), and the crescent moon at the feet of the Virgin symbolizing her virginity. Fu Jen painters have fine-tuned these Western visual symbols in thought-provoking ways. In Chen's paintings, the lilies in the hands of the Virgin or

FIGURE 12. *Our Lady's Lantern Festival*, Lu Hongnian, 1936, in Fritz Bornemann, *Ars Sacra Pekinensis-Die Chinesisch-Christliche Malerei an der Katholischen Universität (FU JEN) in Peking* (Mödling bei Wien: Druck und Verlag Missionsdruckerei St. Gabriel, 1950), 171.

angels are sometimes replaced by oleander, which is more familiar to Chinese people. The crescent moon is sometimes turned into a bright round moon, similar to the traditional Buddhist paintings of the Water-Moon Guanyin. Lu Hongnian also tended to show many pigeons in his paintings, in order to imply simultaneously the Holy Spirit in the Christian tradition, the image of birds in Chinese flower-and-bird painting, and the happy meanings of festival scenes in Chinese folk painting.

III. The Different Responses of Western and Chinese Audiences

Celso Costantini was the initiator and advocate of this Catholic art reform movement. When he saw the series of Chinese Christian paintings created by Chen Yuandu, he commented, "Luke Chen made the Chinese ancient style brighter. Chinese art held religious themes up in a beautiful sacred style, and religious themes brought Chinese artists into a new realm: noble, bright, powerful, and one that would enable them to complete the 'artistic renaissance' of China."[38] Celso Costantini saw the perfect combination of Catholic themes and the form of ancient Chinese paintings in Chen's paintings, and the Catholic subjects gained rare Chinese features in artistic expression. He was excited to collect these works and send them to Pope Pius XI. Like Celso Costantini, the pope was overjoyed when he saw these works. He spoke highly of these works, saying, "In the field of Chinese religious art, the true Catholic ecumenical spirit has been found. Abandoning the imported style of Western Europe, Chinese Christian painting has made great strides forward."[39]

The Christian paintings of Chen Yuandu and his companions were presented at the Third International Religious Art Exhibition held in Rome in 1934, and the following year they were exhibited in Shanghai for the first domestic Christian painting exhibition, which attracted many visitors.[40] It took only three months to prepare for this exhibition in Shanghai, but more than one hundred pieces were exhibited, including twenty by Chen, and more than eighty by students. The

second exhibition was held in Fu Jen University in December 1936, with a total of fifty works on display. Among them, there were eight new paintings by Chen, and the rest were from Wang Suda, Lu Hongnian, Xu Jihua, and Li Mingyuan.[41] In March 1938, the third exhibition was held in Fu Jen, showing the latest paintings of teachers and students in the past year.[42] Since the Shanghai Art Exhibition of 1935, the religious paintings of Fu Jen were shown at the American Language Schools and Protestant Universities in Jinan, Tianjin, and other places for touring exhibitions. From 1934 to 1938, they received many exhibition invitations from foreign Christian organizations. For example, in 1936, Fu Jen's "Chinese-style Sacred Religious Paintings" were invited to Manila to participate in the special exhibition of the Eucharistic World Congress. Among them, seventeen paintings were sent to the Mission Pavilion of the 1937 Paris International Expo.[43] In 1938, the exhibition was displayed again at the Eucharistic World Congress held in Budapest. Later, there were plans to hold a large-scale exhibition in Vienna, but this was called off due to the outbreak of World War II.[44] The paintings have also been permanently exhibited in various public and private collections, such as Misionero Ethnological Museum in Rome, the Paris headquarters of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and the Exner Exhibition in Vienna.[45] In just a few years, Chen and others held many exhibitions at home and abroad, forming a certain influence. However, if we further explore the feedback after the exhibitions, as well as the purchase and dissemination of paintings, we can find that people's attitudes and evaluations towards these Christian paintings are not consistent, and the responses of audiences and religious groups at home and abroad formed a sharp contrast.

Westerners and missionary groups generally showed great interest and appreciation for the paintings. Pope Pius XI and Bishop Celso Costantini, respectively the leaders of the global and Chinese Catholic Church at that time, took the lead in admiring these works. Adelbert Gresnigt, a Dutch Benedictine who taught at Fu Jen, also believed that this inculturation attempt was of great significance, and its development "was as important as would be the appearance of a new method

before the critics of the Royal Academy in London or corresponding circles in New York, Paris or Berlin."[46] Judging from the purchase and dissemination of paintings, Western Catholic churches, various missionary groups, and even Protestant churches in China and abroad were keen to purchase these paintings, which made the exhibition a commercial success. For example, in 1935, one hundred paintings exhibited in the first exhibition in Shanghai were all bought by the Salesian priest Carlo Braga.[47] Prints of these works were also sent to Europe and the United States, often as gifts from the missionaries to their home churches. Thus, these paintings also attracted the attention of missionary circles in the missionaries' hometowns, and became best-selling works of art in the hands of art dealers.[48] In terms of dissemination, the Western missionary groups also played a very important role. As early as 1933, before the Fu Jen art exhibition, the Lazarists had already printed four of Chen's paintings in large quantities at 45 x 60 cm. These printed copies were spread in northern China through Lazarist missionaries.

The exhibitions in 1935 and 1936 provided an especially large market for these paintings. From 1937, Severin Tauber, the head of the printing house of Fu Jen University and the clergyman of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), began to print and publish these paintings, including Wang Suda's thirty-six catechism murals, which were published in large quantities as six-color prints. In response to European demand, the Christian Art Press in Munich gave permission to publish twenty-five images from Fu Jen in 1937.[49] The German SVD also published an exhibition catalog, distributing miniature versions of the best paintings as a calendar, and republished these paintings in *Monumenta Serica*, a journal of Fu Jen Catholic University, and other missionary magazines for Chinese and European readers.

Discussions on Fu Jen Christian paintings mainly appeared in Western missionary magazines and pamphlets, which were not limited to the Catholic community. For example, in 1938, the famous American mission community journal, *The Chinese Recorder*, published related articles, along with photographs of the painters Chen Yuandu and Lu

Hongnian, as well as black and white reproductions of several paintings.[50] Afterwards, related academic works by German scholars Sepp Schüller, Fritz Bornemann, and American scholar Daniel J. Fleming came out, which systematically introduced and analyzed the Fu Jen Christian paintings.

Compared with the concern and research enthusiasm of foreign missionary groups and researchers, almost every circle in China kept silent, including church communities, Christian believers, artists, and scholars. Apart from the Fu Jen Student Newsletter, there was a complete lack of Chinese-language materials on the paintings. Present-day fieldwork conducted by Jeremy Clarke in Beijing and Shanghai in 2005 and 2010 shows that there is a pronounced dislike of Chinese Christian imagery in the contemporary church, and a common view expressed that Fu Jen Christian paintings did not gain the acceptance of Catholic community in the Republican era.[51] The investigator attributed this phenomenon to the fact that Chinese Catholics gradually forgot the history of local-style Catholic images before 1949, so the images that had been considered widely accepted among the believers were no longer favored.[52]

However, did the Fu Jen Christian paintings gain the acceptance of the domestic Catholic community during 1930–1940s? Jeremy Clarke does not provide enough evidence to reach this conclusion, and most indicators would seem to contradict it. First of all, the *Virgin of Donglu* and the *Virgin of Sheshan*, which are regarded as official images of the Virgin by Catholic communities in China, both originated in Republican China and are still venerated by Catholics today. If the Virgin of Fu Jen had been as popular as those two local Virgin images and had become the orthodox image, there would be at least some record; secondly, the campaign to promote local art led by Celso Costantini had been opposed by many church members from the very beginning, including missionaries, local clergy, and lay people. In fact, many people preferred colonial-style church buildings and European-style Christian paintings.[53] The criticism of Fu Jen's painting can also be read in some documents.[54] For example, a contemporary who participated

in the Shanghai Art Exhibition in 1935 recorded: "These pleasing painting techniques are mature, the colour is appropriate, the composition and proportion are good. However, the question is: can we consider them Christian art?"[55] Similar records in other publications of that year confirm the negative attitude of Chinese people, both Chinese priests and lay persons, towards these paintings.

The available materials at least cannot prove that the Fu Jen Catholic images were widely recognized in the Catholic community at that time. On the contrary, there is evidence showing negative local responses from the exhibitions. As some researchers have concluded, the Fu Jen paintings caused "two groups of relatively concentrated and distinct reactions, namely, praise from foreign audiences and indifference and even rejection from Chinese people."[56]

IV. Analysis

A. The Image as Symbol

From Chen Yuandu's notes, we can see that he and his students were disappointed with the audience's response to the exhibition: "On the second day, the visitors came, and since then there has been an endless stream of visitors. Some people came out of curiosity, and some others took photos. I was frustrated and realized that our paintings did not really attract people's interest. At least, that is our point of view. Some people pointed out our shortcomings, many more praised and encouraged us. But I do feel a lot of people responded behind our backs with harsh criticism. We do not feel satisfied. Many Catholics lack the ability to appreciate Catholic art. Among the visitors, many just come to have a look, and others regard these pictures as strange things, looking at them casually. They neither understand these pictures nor the art contained in them."[57] More than half a century later, Dr. Gu Weimin, a contemporary religious historian, quoted Chen's assertion and also fully attributed the frustrating results to the lack of artistic and cultural education of the audience.[58]

The exhibition attendees are also the decoders. Since there were

only simple inscriptions instead of detailed text descriptions on these paintings, it was difficult for the audiences to decode the meaning of the images. Those who were seeing these paintings for the first time were confronted with a complex web of meaning, composed of many symbols. The traditional symbols themselves and their composition methods are familiar to the Chinese audiences, and the meanings of these familiar cultural symbols can be easily interpreted—as traditional. The new Christian meaning, however, can only be decoded by *some* beholders after being interpreted. For example, as mentioned above, Fu Jen painters often use the Guanyin image to represent the Christian Virgin Mary. Guanyin as a symbol in Chinese culture surely shares overlapping aspects of meaning with that of the Virgin Mary, both symbolizing kindness and compassion. However, the Virgin also expresses obedience to God's plan for salvation, her Immaculate Conception, and her sorrow at her son's death, aspects that are not shared with the symbol of Guanyin. At the same time, the Guanyin symbol also brings a prescribed fixed set of meanings from Chinese Buddhist tradition. Loss of meaning or juxtaposition of multiple meanings inevitably occurs when one is substituted for the other. It is no wonder Fu Jen's local style images are often criticized for one important reason: as one Chinese critic put it, these paintings "have strong characteristics of traditional Buddhist and Daoist religious paintings, but it is difficult for us to see that the images belong to the new form of Chinese Christian painting."[59]

The use of the theme of the Holy Family illustrates another problem. Chinese people who pay attention to family ethics can ascribe a cultural interpretation of "sharing the joy of family" according to their own perceptions when they see a warm and affectionate family scene. In the Christian tradition, paintings with the theme of the Holy Family not only express worldly happiness and human love, but also refer to heavenly bliss. Without the eternal dimension, the family scene in Chinese tradition has a much thinner meaning than that of the Holy Family and the transcendent meaning is lost.

According to Ernst Gombrich, styles of artistic presentation

embed within them the interests of the culture that produced them, and the creation of images is a learning process that involves tricks of illusion, but also how the beholder understands and accepts the image presented.[60] The context of images must rely on the support of various predictive interpretations based on tradition. If not, communication between artist and audience will be interrupted. The interactive process that occurs between artists and audiences is a process of trial and error. On one side, the Christian symbolic meaning of Fu Jen images represented by the traditional Chinese visual language or "schemata," is actually far beyond comprehension for most Chinese people. On the other side, the Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian symbolic meanings are very clear to Chinese audiences of the Fu Jen images. The communication of Christian symbolic meanings between Fu Jen artists and their Chinese audiences is thus interrupted. By contrast, the Chinese religious symbolic meanings in the Chinese visual language do not disturb Westerners, because these meanings do not exist in their cultural context. It is much easier for Western audiences to identify Fu Jen images as Asian-styled Christian paintings than their Chinese counterparts.

B. The Dispute on Visual Modernity

From the perspective of the dispute between Chinese and Western painting in the Republican era, the binary opposition between Chinese tradition and Western modernity was already defined during the New Culture Movement. Later, the cultural reformers, who gradually became the mainstream orthodox, also suppressed the conservatives in the name of modernity, and then shaped themselves into cultural leaders, maintaining a stance of breaking away from tradition, thus pushing it into a weak and marginalized position. For example, Fu Jen Catholic University recruited Pu Xuezhai (1893–1966), a cousin of the former Qing emperor, to teach Guohua in the art department, which was condemned as "extremely conservative" by the painting circles at that time. Under this particular circumstance, when Fu Jen Catholic

artists tried to inculturate Christian paintings, they had to face the modernity of visual representation in China's special context.

The process of inculturation of an abstract concept is always very subtle, and complex, and the process is related to identity and expression in a specific time and space. If the inculturation of Christian painting took place in Ming and Qing Dynasties, the situation it faced would be completely different from that in the semicolonial Republican era. The China of the Republican era—especially in cities with prominent semicolonial characteristics such as Shanghai—was full of collisions, confrontations, wrestling, and fusion of different cultural elements from ancient and modern China and the West. For example, the success of *Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial* in the late Qing Dynasty can be attributed to its westernized image features and "its timely news reports and public interest."[61] The ubiquitous Shanghai urban modernity "here and now" of the *Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial* strengthened the identity of its readers—citizens of the treaty port Shanghai. Here, there is no pure "West" or "East" that can ease modernity's passage through cross-cultural transmission. The yearning for Western modernity depends on the positioning and absorption of the "local" in the transmission process. And it is this semicolonial, fragmented, and volatile subject, Chinese urbanites, that determines "the multiplicity, fluidity and internal alterity of Chinese modernity."[62] The traditional style of the Fu Jen paintings clashed with Chinese urbanites' demand for visual modernity, especially when the exhibition was held in Shanghai.

So why were Fu Jen paintings highly praised by Westerners, including church leaders, missionaries, and scholars? One of the reasons lies in the different understanding of visual modernity in the West. Eugene Wang puts it this way:

> If we follow the general understanding of modernism as a radical mutiny around the beginning of the twentieth century against the authority of tradition, we find that Western modernists and their Chinese counterparts were confronted by different traditions, and hence also different tasks. Euro-

> pean modernism broke away from mimetic illuminism by constructing a utopian purism of subjectivity and sensation. Reformers of Chinese art, however, faced a different burden of tradition. The primacy of spiritual vision and anti-illusionism that European modernism was working hard to create was precisely the burden of the literati tradition that modern-minded Chinese radicals were trying to unload. In fact, the Academic Realism that was an anathema to European modernism was at one point envisioned by some leading radical reformers as the needed corrective to what was perceived as the moribund tradition of Chinese paintings.[63]

That is to say, while China's leading reformers were holding high the banner of science and eager to identify the representation of realism in Western painting as a scientific way of artistic expression, their counterparts in the West were attracted by the spirituality and the exotic charm of the Chinese art tradition. Consider how Western modernist artists, such as Van Gogh and Gauguin, were inspired by East Asian art. This dislocation of visual modernity between China and the West paradoxically led to the different responses to Fu Jen paintings at home and abroad.

C. The Controversy on Theological Orthodoxy

In addition to the issue of visual modernity, the Fu Jen paintings also caused controversy in the Catholic community at a theological level. Some Catholics, especially the priests, held a rigid theological position with regard to the appropriate way of portraying Catholic themes. A document printed by Tou-se-we publishing house in 1950 shows this. It records a symposium on catechisms at the Aurora College of Arts and Sciences in Shanghai. At the meeting, a Chinese priest rudely criticized Chen Yuandu's paintings, saying: "I do not have a favorable impression of Fu Jen's Chinese Style Christian paintings, even more, they turn me off. They are contrary to historical reality and easily cause misunderstanding."[64] Fr. Zhu Xuefan also held

a similar opinion: "The creative spirit of Fu Jen's large set of national portraits is certainly praiseworthy; however, to change the Jewish terrain to Chinese scenery, and to dress Jewish characters with Chinese ancient costumes, all of the efforts seem out of place for those knowing a little bit of history and geography."[65]

The main reason why the two priests opposed Chen's Christian paintings is that the Chinese style image goes against historical authenticity. In fact, even Celso Costantini himself later expressed this unease: "Recently, we found Orientalized images of Jesus and the Virgin Mary, and we do not encourage such works; on this issue, we must make it clear that we should not ignore the traditions of the church, forget historical truth, and lack due respect by painting the portrait of Jesus as Chinese or Indian people."[66]

Does it sound strange that this remark came from Celso Costantini, who took such great pains to promote the inculturation of Chinese Catholic art? Behind his remark is a long history of issues around icons and orthodoxy in Christian history. For Christians, the Fu Jen Christian paintings are not regarded as secular art having only aesthetic value, but images that should be adored with great reverence. In order to form normative orthodox theological teachings, the Catholic Church has imposed strict regulations on icon painting in history, especially in the Middle Ages. Although since *Maximum Illud,* the missionaries began to promote Catholic reform and Celso Costantini also supported the inculturation of Christianity in China, the extent to which the Catholic painting as icon can be localized remains a controversial issue. Therefore, in Fu Jen Christian paintings, especially those of Chen Yuandu, the costumes of figures and the background of houses are all Chinese, but the faces of Jesus and the Virgin are quite different from the Chinese. We can see it clearly in Chen's first Catholic painting: the Virgin's hair is brownish-blonde, the facial features are treated like a woman of mixed Chinese and Western race, and the Son's face and hairstyle are also obviously not those of a Chinese baby, showing the characteristics of Mongolian children instead. Some critics believe that

this is because Chen did not have a deep understanding of Catholicism at that time, so whether he created the Virgin Mary or Jesus Christ, it was a "proposition composition" for him: "It was difficult to distinguish whether the faces in the painting were Chinese and Western, mainly because the painter had only a superficial understanding of Catholicism at that time, and even held some misunderstandings."[67] Compared with this "theory of misunderstanding," the more likely reason why the painter treated the figures in the painting ambiguously is that the painting was completed under the guidance of Celso Costantini. Costantini asked for the standardization of a Chinese icon: "We do not dare to change a typical Chinese image into a Jesus or Virgin at random. As for clothing, it is a secondary issue, and there is more freedom in this, so it is still appropriate to keep the ancient Chinese clothing. As for the face, it is better not to take Europeans as the model, but to take a more realistic face close to Palestinians."[68] It would be rather difficult for Chen Yuandu to know exactly what the face of a Palestinian was like, let alone how to express it in traditional Chinese painting. He could only make a compromise between Chinese and Western faces and hairstyles, and he used a completely classical Chinese presentation of the clothing as Celso Costantini permitted.

Fu Jen Catholic artists both faced prescribed restrictions on the images from theological orthodoxy, yet were also expected to exert their imagination within such restrictions so as to make the images lively and respectful and show sufficient Chinese features. They struggled to strike a balance between the artistic imagination of enculturated Christian images and the theological norms on the orthodoxy of icons. Unfortunately, when they put on Chinese classical costumes for Jesus and the Virgin, made compromises between Chinese and Western faces, and transformed the scenes, landscapes, houses, and furnishings totally into Chinese style, they were still often criticized for making too radical a break from historical facts *and* further transgressing the rules of Christian icons because of their excessive use of artistic imagination.

It should be further noted that the Confucian approach to the image of Jesus in Fu Jen paintings is also closely related to the missionary approach of the German Society of the Divine Word (SVD) and its missionary strategy in China, since SVD was in charge of Fen Jen University after 1933. In the nineteenth century, like other missions in China, the German SVD rejected Confucian tradition as a religion allied with other Chinese folk religions. But since the 1930s, when communism, secularism and Buddhism could mobilize transnational networks and resources to challenge Christianity, missionaries realized that they needed to change their approach in this new global situation. One way to deal with it was to ally with the Confucian tradition, because they believed it would provide a way for Christianity to establish a new bond with the Chinese people.[69] It was not only a strategy. The SVD missionaries were also genuinely attracted by Confucianism, and even tried to show their recognition and admiration for ancient Chinese culture and its intellectual traditions. In the 1930s, the main mission of the SVD focused on using local classical and traditional resources to deal with global modernity. During that period, the Fu Jen Christian paintings were widely used in the publications of SVD, which was also a manifestation of this tendency. It again proves that, according to certain circumstances, Western audiences in the Christian community deeply rooted in their religious tradition could allow themselves more tolerance for grasping the Christian spirit in the new Chinese form, while their Chinese counterparts saw the Chinese features in Christian paintings as syncretising Christianity and Chinese traditions (notably Buddhism and Confucianism), with "mixed artificiality and the element of relative mediocracy", when both "lack natural and authentic expression."[70]

Fu Jen Catholic artists all focused on creating "Chinese features" that are different from Western Christian paintings in terms of subject matter, composition, painting method, medium and detail. For Western audiences, they achieved this purpose very well. And yet most Chinese were not satisfied with them. Among the Chinese audiences, non-Christians could not easily recognize the Christian themes

of these paintings, and furthermore, the Guohua form of the paintings might be too old-fashioned for them, given the overwhelming context of the pursuit of visual modernity. Although Christian audiences might grasp the Christian themes of these paintings, a Confucius-style Jesus and a Guanyin-style Madonna still strongly challenged them on two grounds: visual modernity and theological orthodoxy. It is precisely in this double paradox of form and substance—visual modernity and theological orthodoxy—that these Fu Jen Christian paintings encountered a dilemma. The substantive issues that they articulate map well onto the bigger questions of the inculturation of Christianity in China, such as: how to truly understand Chinese characteristics, how to deal with the relationship between tradition and modernity, and how to adapt to the local culture but still remain legitimate, rather than fall into the trap of syncretism. Although Fu Jen Catholic artists, the pioneers of modern Chinese-style Christian arts, did not give us clear answers, their efforts left us important reference materials and inspiration. After all, as Masao Takenaka writes, "Return to the traditional heritage is not an end in itself but a means to revitalize self-expression, today and in the future. "[71]

Endnotes

1. Joseph de La Serviére, *Nouvelle mission du Kiang-nan (1840–1922)*, vol. 2, trans. Catholic Diocese of Shanghai Historical Translation and Writing Group (Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1983), 294; Zhu Boxiong, *Chen Ruilin, Fifty Years of Chinese Western Painting (1898–1949)*, (Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1989), 29.
2. Daniel J. Fleming, *Each with His Own Brush: Contemporary Christian Art in Asia and Africa* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957), 11.
3. T. K. Shen and Frances M. Roberts, "Christian Art in China," *The Chinese Recorder* 68, no. 3 (1937): 164–66.
4. In 1901, 1,075 foreign and 500 Chinese priests served a Catholic community estimated at 721,000 communicants. By 1920 there were 1,500–2,000 European priests, approximately 1,000 Chinese priests, 1,000 foreign nuns, 1,900 Chinese nuns, a claimed 2,000,000 communicants, 13,000 Chinese catechists and teachers, and 180,000 students enrolled in Catholic schools. See Albert Feuerwerker, "The Foreign Presence in China," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 12, Republican China, 1912–1949, Part I* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 167.

5. Pope Benedict XV, *Maximum Illud* (1919), http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xv_apl_19191130_maximum-illud.html.
6. James Kroeger, "Papal Mission Wisdom: Five Mission Encyclicals," in Stephen Bevans, ed., *A Century of Catholic Mission* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2013), 93–100.
7. Liu Guopeng, *Celso Costantini and the Inculturation of Chinese Catholic* (刚恒毅与中国天主教的本地化) (Beijing: Social Science Publishing House, 2011), 108.
8. Celso Costantini, *Con I Missionari in Cina: The Memoir of the Card. Celso Costantin, Delegate Ap. in China 1922–1933, Founder of the Conger. D.D. and Secretary Gen. of Congr. Prop. F. 1935–1953*, trans. and ed. Liu Jiaxiang (Taipei: Congregatio Discipulorum Domini, 1980), 101–14.
9. Ibid., 115–212.
10. Celso Costantini, *Induite Vos Armaturam Dei,* trans. and ed. Congregatio Discipulorum Domini (Taipei: Congregatio Discipulorum Domini, 1980), 149–60.
11. Celso Costantini, *Con I Missionari in Cina,* 30–42.
12. Celso Costantini, *Chinese Catholic Fine Arts* (中国天主教美术), trans. Sun Maoxue (Taipei: Kuangchi Program Service, 1968), 12.
13. Ibid.
14. Jeremy Clarke, *The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities in Chinese History* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 153.
15. There is still a dispute about the time when Celso Costantini met Chen Yuandu. As Costantini himself stated in the book *Chinese Catholic Art* that the time of the exhibition was 1929, most researchers took this as the time when they met and when Chen began to create Christian paintings. However, historical data show that Chen had published a Catholic painting in the Catholic Daily since 1928, so it is possible that the two met in 1928. The year of 1929 might be a mistake of Costantini's memory. For more details, see Shenlu, *Image and Existentialism: Interpretation on the Original Context of Fu Jen Christian Paintings* (图像与生存：北平辅仁艺术团基督宗教绘画的原始语境解读), (Ji'nan: Post-doctoral Report at Shandong University, 2019), 34–37.
16. Anonymous, *Le Bulletin Catholique de Pèkin* 229 (September 1932): 431–32.
17. Fu Jen Catholic University was the only private university in China at that time that had a fine arts department specializing in traditional Chinese painting. There were four teachers in this department who taught calligraphy, traditional Chinese painting, Chinese seal cutting and European art history respectively. Chen was one of them. The first three-year courses were extended to four years in 1941. From 1943, the curriculum was divided into two parts: one was traditional Chinese painting, which was taught by seven teachers, and the other was European painting, with five teachers. See Fritz Bornemann, *Ars Sacra Pekinensis-Die Chinesisch-Christliche Malerei an der Katholischen Universität* (FU JEN) in Peking (Mödling bei Wien: Druck und Verlag Missionsdruckerei St. Gabriel, 1950), 5.
18. In *Farewell to Beiping*, Leopold Leeb names this painter group "Beijing Catholic Painting School." He also points out that this school was mainly influenced by Br. Berchmans Bruckner. Leopold Leeb, *Farewell to Beiping: Austrian Priest Painter Berchmans Bruckner*

in 1949 (别了，北平：奥地利修士画家白立鼐在1949), (Beijing: New Star Publishing House, 2017), 4.

19. According to *Farewell to Beiping*, there were about 2000 Fu Jen Christian paintings. The originals have been spread all over the world. Br. Berchmans Bruckner keeps 350 photographs of them. See Leeb, *Farewell to Beiping*, 7.
20. Jin Cheng, "The Speeches of Jin Gongbei," *Painting Journal* 3 (1920): 12.
21. Zhang Xiaobin and Fan Li, *Chinese Modern Fine Arts* (中国现当代美术概览), (Lanzhou: Gansu People's Republishing House, 2013), 20.
22. Ruan Rongchun and Hu Guanghua, *The History of Chinese Modern Fine Arts* (中国近现代美术史), (Tianjin: Tianjin People's Fine Arts Press, 2005), 46.
23. Claire Roberts, "Tradition and Modernity: The Life and Art of Pan Tianshou (1897–1971)," *East Asian History* 15/16 (June/December 1998): 68.
24. Lü Peng, *Research on Hu She* (湖社研究), (Beijing: Culture and Art Publishing House, 2010), 8.
25. Xu Beihong (1895–1953), an influential Chinese artist and art educator who, in the first half of the twentieth century, argued for the reformation of Chinese art through the incorporation of lessons from the West. He is regarded as the pioneer of modern Chinese painting. See Q. L. Wan and Edwin Lai Kin Keung, "Xu Beihong," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* www.britannica.com/biography/Xu-Beihong; Ronald Y. Otsuka and Fangfang Xu, *Xu Beihong: Pioneer of Modern Chinese painting: Selections from the Xu Beihong Memorial Museum* (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2011).
26. Beijing Art Academy, ed., *The History of Beijing Painting* (Beijing: People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 2007), 186.
27. Clarke, *The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities*, 153.
28. Anonymous, *Le Bulletin Catholique de Pèkin* 229 (September 1932): 431–32.
29. Lu Hongnian (1914–1989) was a student of the Department of Fine Arts of Fu Jen Catholic University in 1930s. After his graduation in 1936, he was appointed as a lecturer there. In 1950, he was baptized and named John Lu. From 1953, he taught at the Central Academy of Fine Arts. See Yang Zhishui, "Lu Hongnian and Others I know," ("我所知道的陆鸿年及其他") in Xü Jun, ed., *Anecdotes 3* (掌故第三集) (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2018),60–69.
30. Wang Suda (1912–1963) was born in a Buddhist family but was attracted by Catholicism since studying in Fu Jen University in 1933. He converted to Catholicism in 1937 and took the Christian name George. After graduation from Fu Jen University, he became a teacher there. See Bornemann, *Ars Sacra Pekinensis*, 87–88.
31. Xü Jihua (1912–1937) received a degree from the art department at Fu Jen University in 1935. When he was a freshman, he was baptized into the Catholic Church. In addition to the postcard series of the Twelve Apostles, he also painted more than twenty Christian paintings. Unfortunately, he suffered from lung disease shortly after graduation and died young in 1937. In the last days of his life, he still painted, hoping to continue the inculturation of Catholic art after his recovery. See Luke Chen, "Notes for a Portrait," *Fu Jen Magazine* (7), March, 1938, 34.

32. John Shujie Chen, *The Rise and Fall of Fu Ren University* (Beijing: Catholic Higher Education in China; New York & London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003), 145–50.
33. Bornemann, *Ars Sacra Pekinensis*, 8–9.
34. During that period of time, Chen Baoyi, Feng Gangbai, Ni Yide, Pan Yuliang, and other painters adhered to the Western painting, while Wang Yuezhi, Liu Haisu, Lin Fengmian, Guanliang, Xu Beihong, and Wang Yacheng were excellent in the combination of Chinese and Western painting. See Ruan Rongchun and Hu Guanghua, *History of Modern and Contemporary Chinese Art* (中国近现代美术史) (Tianjin: Tianjin People's Art Publishing House, 2005), 132–44.
35. For the analysis of the similarity between the two works in details, see Shenlu, *Image and Existentialism*, 84–86.
36. Celso Costantini, *Con I Missionari in Cina,* 385.
37. In China, bamboo most commonly symbolizes the qualities that a gentleman should possess, such as modesty, temperament, uprightness, and not being afraid of intimidation.
38. Celso Costantini, *Chinese Catholic Fine Arts* (中国天主教美术), 13–14.
39. Ibid., 18.
40. Mary S. Lawton, "A Unique Style in China: Chinese Christian painting in Beijing," *Monumenta Serica* 43 (1995): 469–89, 477.
41. Bornemann, *Ars Sacra Pekinensis*, 12.
42. Ibid.
43. Sepp Schüller, *Neue Christliche Malerei in China* (Düsseldorfe: Mosella-Verlag, 1940), 12.
44. Bornemann, *Ars Sacra Pekinensis*, 12.
45. Schüller, *Neue Christliche Malerei in China,* 12.
46. Marie Adams, "A New School of Christian Art," *The Chinese Recorder* 69, no. 12 (December, 1938), 618.
47. P. Carlos Braga was later the Provincial of China.
48. Fritz Bornemann, *Ars Sacra Pekinensis*, 9.
49. Ibid., 11–14.
50. Marie Adams, "A New School of Christian Art", 615–18.
51. Clarke, *The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities*, 195, 197, 247n8.
52. Ibid., 196–99.
53. Liu Guopeng, *Celso Costantini and the Inculturation of Chinese Catholic*, 520.
54. Daniel J. Fleming, *Each with His Own Brush*, 17.
55. "Quelques considerations sur l'art religieux Chinois," *Collectanea Commionis Synodalis*, 9, no. 2 (February 1936): 211.
56. Shenlu, *Image and Existentialism: Interpretation on the Original Context of Fu Jen Christian Paintings,* 122.
57. Luke Chen, "An Appreciation of the Catholic Art Exhibit in Shanghai," *Fu Jen Magazine* Vol. 2, 1936, 83.
58. Gu Weimin, *The History of Modern Chinese Christian Art* (近代中国基督宗教艺术发展史), (Hong Kong: Taofengshan Christian Center, 2006), 154.

59. Yanfei, *Chen Yuandu and His Paintings* (陈缘督及其绘画研究), (master's thesis, Zhejiang Science and Technology University, 2012), 42.
60. Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 181–202.
61. Chen Pingyuan, *Selections from Dian Shi Zhai Pictorial* (点石斋画报选) (Guiyang: Guizhou Educational Publishing House, 2000), 15.
62. Laikwan Pang, *The Distorting Mirror: Visual Modernity in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007),10.
63. Eugene Wang, "Sketch Conceptualism as Modernist Contingency," in *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 103.
64. Chinese Catholic Centre Bureau, ed., *Chuanjiao Lingzhua* (传教鳞爪), (Shanghai: Tou-se-we Publishing House, 1950), 1245.
65. Ibid., 1243.
66. Celso Costantini, *Chinese Catholic Fine Arts*, 50.
67. Shenlu, *Image and Existentialism*, 44.
68. Celso Costantini, *Chinese Catholic Fine Arts*, 48.
69. Albert Monshan Wu, *From Christ to Confucius: German Missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the Globalization of Christianity, 1860–1950* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), chapter 6.
70. Masao Takenaka, *Christian Art in Asia* (Tokyo: Kyobunkwan, 1975), 25.
71. Ibid., 20.