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Towards Building Direct Educational Partnership: The Foundation of Shanxi University in 1902

Abstract The foundation of Shanxi University is a prime example of the collaborative efforts in higher education between the Chinese and British in late Qing China (1842–1912). Both sides made compromises, with the Chinese adapting their ideas of educational sovereignty, and the British agreeing to work under the supervision of the local government. Such a collaboration was made possible by the individual personalities of the two founders and their visions for China's higher education. The dual structure of the university, with one department to teach Chinese learning and the other to teach Western learning, showed that, at a local and personal level, these officials and missionaries opted for direct cooperation, despite the myriad changes and upheavals following the Boxer Movement. In addition, by allowing foreign missionaries into critical roles in a government university, the principle of *ti-yong* dualism was gradually being adapted. The formation of Shanxi University not only demonstrates the dynamics of the Sino-Western educational relationship and the roles individuals played in it, but also stimulates reflection on China's contemporary cross-border partnerships in higher education.

Keywords Shanxi University, Sino-foreign cooperation, missionary education, cross-border partnership, higher education reform

Introduction

Shanxi University, founded in 1902 as an institution run jointly by the Shanxi provincial government and a group of British missionaries, was an early example of Sino-foreign partnership in higher education. It was the result of a series of negotiations between the two groups during which both sides slowly changed

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their attitudes towards each other. On the one hand, the Shanxi officials were willing to allow foreigners key roles in the management of the university; on the other, the missionaries adjusted their strategy to cooperate with the Chinese authorities. The resulting institutional structure distinguished Shanxi University from its contemporaries. This dual-department structure featured two separate yet equally important departments: the Chinese Department, to safeguard Chinese learning, and the Western Department to introduce Western learning. These two departments were managed by the local officials and foreign missionaries, respectively, but the provincial government maintained overall control of the institution, with the Governor of Shanxi province as the head of the university. This structure was intended to accommodate different educational philosophies under the same roof, aiming to disseminate practical Western knowledge among the learned Chinese students while at the same time containing the spread of the Christian message. At a glance, the university still followed the principle of *ti-yong* dualism (discussed in the next section), while adapting it by sharing decision making with the Westerners, and giving equal footing to Western learning.

This paper focuses on the negotiation process to establish Shanxi University. The main players were Timothy Richard, a British Baptist missionary, and Cen Chunxuan, the Governor of Shanxi. Both of them exerted significant influence throughout the founding process, and indeed had critical roles in the development of Shanxi University. However, they were constrained by the historical conditions: The outbreak of the Boxer Movement in 1900 led the missionaries to adjust their approach to disseminating their message among the Chinese, and the successive failures of the Qing government to defend the country against the Western powers demanded that the Chinese reconsider the role of Western learning in strengthening China. After the Boxer Movement was pacified, the Qing government set up a framework of reform at the national level but the details remained to be worked out. Consequently, changes taking place at the local level might not be approved by the central government, adding to the uncertainty of the situation.

Cen and Richard carefully weighed their plans against this backdrop. They navigated the delicate political, economic, and cultural situation, and finally settled on a plan that was expected to benefit Shanxi province in several ways. They both compromised during the negotiations, and the final results did not

align exactly with either of their original plans. Their negotiations and subsequent decisions reflected the reality of Sino-Western interactions in education in the final decade of the Qing dynasty: Chinese learning was still important and educational sovereignty continued to be a sensitive issue, but the role of Western learning and Westerners was starting to change.

This paper begins with a brief introduction of the Sino-Western educational relationship in the late Qing dynasty, and positions Shanxi University in that particular historical context. This is followed by a description of Shanxi University's unique dual-department structure. The next sections detail the backgrounds of Cen and Richard, followed by discussions of the entire negotiation process, and the considerations and decisions of the two founders at each stage. The paper concludes with a discussion of why the foundation process of Shanxi University is important, both in its historical context as well as in relation to contemporary higher education in China.

Sino-Western Educational Relationships in the Late Qing

The foundation process of Shanxi University reflected the features of late Qing Chinese society: the urge to change in face of the wider armed and diplomatic conflicts, the doubts about both foreign practices as well as traditional learning, and China's persistence on the maintenance of educational sovereignty. Accompanying these concerns was the spread of foreign educational ideas and methods, usually initiated by Westerners and sometimes supported by Western force. Research by Hayhoe (1989) and Altbach (1989) reminds us that, despite being under intense diplomatic and military pressure, China had a different experience from colonized countries during the expansion of the West, as it was never a colony. Therefore, China was able to retain independence in the arena of educational development. Hayhoe also proposes that more attention deserves to be given to "situations where educational and cultural influences can be seen to diverge from economic or political patterns of domination" (Hayhoe, 1996, p. 16).

The experience of missionary education in China might be seen as an exemplar of the point that economic and political dominance do not necessarily translate to cultural and educational dominance. When it comes to Western influence on China's education and China's transformation to an industrialized society, missionary institutions played a special role. Missionary education acted

as an important vehicle that transmitted Western educational practices and ideas to China (Garrett, 1970; Lutz, 1971; Teng & Fairbank, 1963). However, these activities were met with resistance and sometimes hostility by the Chinese (Pepper, 1996). Numerous factors constrained the development of missionary schools, including the fact that they first arrived alongside the imperial expansion of the West (Esherick, 1987; Latourette, 1929), and this often triggered negative memories of loss at the hands of the Westerners (Biggerstaff, 1961; Lutz, 1971; Pepper, 1996). The curricula in these schools were inevitably filled with Christian messages (Davin, 1987; Garrett, 1970; Latourette, 1929), and thus did not attract the attention of national leaders when reforming the education system (Borthwick, 1983; Hayhoe, 1989). Moreover, these institutions did not follow the traditional form of Chinese teaching and they certainly did not provide the training needed to pass the Civil Service Examination that would lead to a place in the bureaucracy (Cameron, 1963; Pepper, 1996). As pointed out by Lutz in her study of Christian colleges in China, they were generally isolated from Chinese society, and marginalized by the traditional Chinese educational system (1971). Missionary educators were attempting to change the situation by developing partnerships. However, as also mentioned by Lutz, it was other Christian denominations that they cooperated with, instead of the Chinese authorities (Lutz, 1971). Collaboration with the Chinese authorities seemed too unorthodox to be considered at the time.

At the same time, the Chinese were searching for remedies to keep their traditional education institutions, while transforming them to suit the industrializing world. Western knowledge was gradually introduced into traditional Chinese schools (Su, 2007). New colleges were set up to train specialists in certain areas (Biggerstaff, 1961; Chu, 1933). These reforms were often part of the political reform agenda and their execution largely relied on the attitudes of the participating officials (Bailey, 1988; Biggerstaff, 1961; Chesneaux, Bastid, & Bergère, 1977; Weston, 2004). The guiding philosophy for educational policy during this period was *ti-yong* dualism (Su, 2007, p. 16), the most famous advocate being Zhang Zhidong, who publicized this dualism in his 1898 *Quanxue Pian* (Exhortation to Learning). This maintained that Chinese learning should be upheld as *ti*, the foundation or substance, while Western learning should be held as *yong*, for its utility or function. Chinese learning was held in higher regard, while Western knowledge would be used “only to defend the core of Chinese civilization, and it would not impinge upon it” (Levenson,

1968, p. 59).

The Chinese officials' application of the *ti-yong* dualism in higher education institutions can be understood through the writings of Sun Jianai, the then Education Minister, when campaigning to establish the Imperial University in Beijing (*Jingshi Daxuetang*). He emphasized that Chinese learning should be treated as the base, the essence, and the source of guidance, while Western learning was considered as a useful supplement (Weston, 2004, p. 29). The influence of Western learning was to be limited, and the role of Westerners was subject to scrutiny. Even when foreign experts were consulted, they were never allowed into the heart of the operation (Davin, 1987). Rather, they were treated as guest advisers (see Spence, 1969).

Alongside these initiatives by the officials, there were also Chinese individuals who started non-traditional educational institutions. Zhang Jian, a champion in the Civil Service Examination and an influential entrepreneur, established a variety of educational institutions in his hometown, catering for the development of the local economy (Bastid, 1988). Ma Xiangbo founded Zhendan University, which incorporated French patterns into Shanghai's higher education. His faith as a Catholic did not stop the university from admitting young radical students, thus allowing for the development of an institution that accommodated traditional and revolutionary ideas (Hayhoe, 1983).

It has already been noted that Shanxi University deserves a unique place during this period in that it was the only institution with a significant British connection, thus giving it a definite British imprint (Davin, 1987; Hayhoe, 1996). Furthermore, it was also a good example of the constant efforts of the Chinese to signify foreign universities (Wang, 2006). This paper extends previous work to investigate the negotiation process between the founders and the structure they created, which in fact laid the foundation for the swift sinification of the university after the provincial government took over the Western Department in 1910. This foundation process is a vital chapter in the history of Shanxi University but lacked in-depth investigation due to "the linguistic gap, or the fact that the documents are scattered around the world" (Li, 2013, p. 20). Through a detailed examination of the negotiation process, we can see the dilemma the Shanxi officials were facing: how to contain the influence of Western learning whilst simultaneously allowing it room to develop. Meanwhile, the British missionaries were attempting to distance the institution from foreign expansion, and came to realize that collaboration with the local government was a

reasonable and sensible choice in order to effectively disseminate Western learning to the Chinese. The interactions between these points of view, in parts conflicting and in parts concurring, led to a unique adaptation of *ti-yong* dualism, where, although under the Chinese control, Chinese and Western learning were given equal importance in Shanxi University. This provides a case in point of Chinese independence in educational matters despite international pressure.

The University

Shanxi University was founded in Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi province, in 1902. It arose as a merger of two universities: Shanxi Provincial University and the proposed Sino-Western University.

The foundation of the Sino-Western University was a part of the settlement of the Shanxi Missionary Case, the massacre of missionaries and their Chinese converts during the Boxer Movement in Shanxi in 1900. It was estimated that in Shanxi province at least 171 foreigners were killed (Edwards, 1904, p. 100), as well as some 4,500 Chinese Christians (Edwards, 1903, p. 135). After the Boxer Movement was pacified, the Protestant missionaries, represented by Timothy Richard, and the Shanxi officials, represented by Cen Chunxuan, started negotiations on the compensation for the loss of lives and properties of the Protestant missions. These negotiations were independent from those conducted by the central government and foreign government representatives, and their scope was confined to Shanxi province. The indemnity in this settlement, which was to be used to fund the Sino-Western University and, later on, the Western Department of Shanxi University, came from Shanxi provincial finances, and was not included in the general indemnity specified in the Xinchou Treaty¹.

Shanxi University was composed of two departments as shown in Fig. 1, the

¹ After the Boxer Movement was pacified in Beijing, the foreign powers (Austria-Hungary, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States) subsequently demanded reparations of the casualties and destruction from the Qing government. The final settlement between the Qing government and the foreign powers, known as the Xinchou Treaty (辛丑条约) in China or the Boxer Protocol in English-language materials, included a large indemnity (450,000,000 taels of silver, a sum equivalent to £67,500,000) and other severe penalties imposed on the Qing government. See Final protocol between the foreign powers and China for the resumption of friendly relations (1902). In *Treaty Series* (No. 17; pp. 7–14). London, England: Harrison and Sons; R. P. Scott (1923), The Boxer Indemnity and its relation to Chinese education. *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, 2(4), 149–167.

Chinese Department, which was originally the Shanxi Provincial University, and the Western Department, which was the proposed Sino-Western University, originally to be run by missionaries. Under the dual-department structure, the Chinese and Western Departments adopted two different curricula and employed different teams of staff. The Western Department focused on teaching Western subjects. Like other contemporary institutions that offered Western learning, it offered courses in humanities, law, natural sciences, and medicine (Collection, 1902). In addition, because Shanxi province was abundant in coal, the Department also launched specialized programmes in engineering, mechanics, industrial art, mining, and geology (Collection, 1902). Laboratories were built to support the science and engineering courses, and sports were compulsory for the students of the Western Department. Most of the teaching staff of the Department were foreign missionaries recruited by Richard, and English was the language of instruction, with Chinese staff in class to translate the English into Chinese.

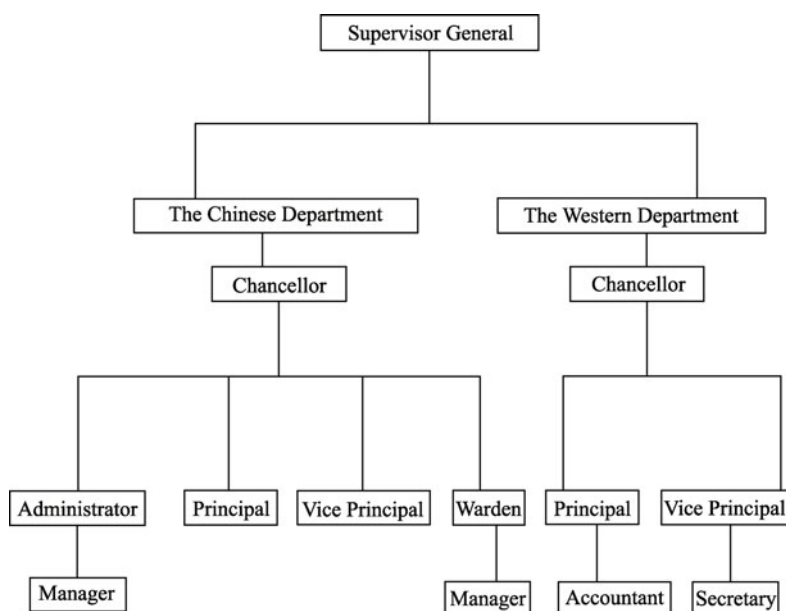


Fig. 1 Organization of Shanxi University: 1902–1904

Source: Adapted from the Organization Chart Displayed at the Exhibition of Shanxi University History, Shanxi University, Taiyuan, China.

In contrast, the Chinese Department focused on classical Chinese learning, and adopted the traditional methods of teaching. Its courses included Confucian Classics, History, General Studies, Anecdotes of the Current Dynasty, Geography, Arithmetic, and Poetry (Shanxi University Record Compilation Committee, 2002, p.10). The teachers were mainly recruited from the traditional Chinese academies with a solid background in classical Chinese learning. Before the Civil Service Examination was abolished in 1905, most of the students in the Chinese Department were studying to pass the Examination so that they would be appointed a position in the bureaucracy.

Under this administration structure, the power of the Governor of Shanxi (the Supervisor General of Shanxi University) extended beyond validating course materials and teachers' recruitment and included checking any correspondence of the Western Department that was going out of Shanxi province (Collection, 1902). In addition, any disputes involving the Western Department would be resolved within the university or Shanxi province, and no foreign authorities would be involved (Collection, 1902). In effect, the missionaries who were working in the Western Department were reporting to the Shanxi officials. Two obvious questions arise: How did such an unusual structure come about, and why would the missionaries, who were owed compensation and thus had a better position, agree to such an arrangement? To answer these questions, we must examine more carefully the foundation process, and the roles that Cen and Richard played in it.

The People

The idea of placing their two different schools of thought under the same roof, and the reason the institution was governed by the Shanxi provincial government, was the end result of a series of negotiations between Timothy Richard, a Baptist missionary from Britain, and Cen Chunxuan, the Governor of Shanxi province.

Timothy Richard was no stranger when it came to missionary influence on China's education. There is abundant research on his contributions to Chinese society, ranging from his participation in China's education (Davin, 1987; Johnson, 2001), his involvement in the late Qing reforms (Johnson, 1966; Shi & Wu, 1988), and his curiosity about China's religion (Li, 2006), to arguments that he was the first person to introduce Marxism to the Chinese (Sun, 2002; Zhu, 2011). They all recognize Richard as an influential missionary in the late Qing

period, who had an impact on educational change, and even on political reform. Indeed, in his 45 years in China, Richard actively participated in a wide range of activities.

Compared to many of his contemporaries, Richard had mastered impressive spoken and written Chinese (Garrett, 1970, p. 13), which had given him access to the lives of the general population and certainly helped him integrate into Chinese society. He created his own bonds with the people through his effort “to meet the Chinese on their own terms,” to respect the Chinese, and to accept many Chinese values (p. 19). To a degree, he was becoming Chinese and thinking like them.

Richard did not confine his activities to evangelistic work. He extended much of his energy to the arena of education. During his time in China, he lobbied the Chinese officials, the Baptist Missionary Society, the British officials, the Chinese reformers, and the Chinese populace to invest in education and educate the Chinese with Western knowledge. For example, he made a proposal to the Baptist Missionary Society that all the missionary societies unite in establishing a high-class missionary college in each provincial capital, beginning with the coastal provinces (Richard, 1916, pp. 197–198); he also proposed to the then Prime Minister, Weng Tonghe, that a Board of Education should be established to introduce modern schools and colleges throughout China (Richard, 1916, p. 256). However, many of his proposals were turned down due to their high cost. Therefore, before the invitation to establish the Sino-Western University in Taiyuan, Richard had not had a chance to realize his education plans.

His involvement in Chinese society led him to conclude that the only way to save China from its misery was to win over the officials to Western education (Davin, 1987, p. 41). As a result, he maintained close contact with the Chinese officials, who turned to him for advice on various occasions. This extensive network of connections with the officials distinguished him from the majority of the missionaries working in China, whose main contact had been with the general population. Richard’s contact with high officials showed that not all of them were hostile or indifferent towards missionaries or Western thought, and there were occasions when the two ideologies could work together. In building personal contacts with government officials, Richard opened up a new way to bring about change in Chinese society by approaching the upper classes as well as retaining contact with the masses. The officials’ acquaintance with Richard

made him a suitable person to entrust with the responsibility for settling the Shanxi Missionary Case.

Compared with Richard, Cen Chunxuan was a less well-known personality, although he was one of the most prominent officials in the late Qing. He was generally considered as a firm and determined person, who leaned towards reform (Soothill, 1924, p. 259; Mao, 2001; Wu, 2007). He took an active part in educational reform. He advised the Throne that the Qing government should promote education to avenge the humiliation inflicted by the West (Wu, 2007, p.32). He thought that “if one is thinking about building a solid foundation that a nation will firmly stand on, one should do his best to ensure that people possess a considerable amount of knowledge” (Xing, 2002). For Cen, education was no longer exclusive for those who were entitled to it. His aim was to educate the populace so that the nation as a whole would become stronger. Cen carried out educational reforms wherever he was appointed. In fact, after co-founding Shanxi University, he established Departments of Education (*Xuewuchu*) in Sichuan and Guangdong as provincial education administration headquarters. When he was in Guangdong, he also ordered the establishment of schools of specialist subjects, including law and politics, surveying and mapping, sericulture, agriculture and forestry, military and police, and teacher training, which saw the most impressive development in the province (Guo, 1988, pp. 55–56; Wu, 2007, pp. 34–36). Cen’s reforms sometimes caused hostility among local communities. As a response to such incidents, Cen usually put up public notices indicating the reasons for promoting education, and at the same time he meted out severe punishment to those who led riots (Wu, 2007, p. 38). Richard described Cen’s methods as “those of the most noted military men of China” (Richard, 1916, p.308). They were firm, harsh, and most of the time, effective.

Cen’s endeavor to develop local education was part of a wider phenomenon at the time. In late Qing China, the independence of local governments in terms of making decisions about the administration of their own province had a strong impact on educational development. Some local officials even began to perceive educational reform as part of a wider program of “local autonomy,” which would give them, rather than the bureaucracy, “control over local administration” (Bailey, 1988, p. xii). Influential officials, who gained support from the central government, were crafting plans for educational developments in their own provinces. Meanwhile, after the Boxer Movement, missionaries who were keen

to reform China's education also started to take on a more pragmatic approach, re-considering the practical value of their messages to the Chinese. The interactions of Timothy Richard and Cen Chunxuan took place against such background.

The Foundation Process

Documents in archives, libraries and a private collection, including personal diaries, letters, memorials presented to the Qing government, imperial edicts, and official documents, provided rich information on the negotiation process from the perspectives of both the Shanxi officials and the British missionaries (Li, 2013). Through a time-consuming "treasure hunt" and careful evaluation of the documents I was able to reconstruct the foundation process of Shanxi University. Here, the process is unfolded according to the timeline of the negotiations, almost in a story-telling format. Using such a structure makes it easier to follow the logical evolution of the whole process, as well as elucidate how and why the main participants adjusted their aims and demands at each step. It also allows for the simultaneous discussion of the events in this logical framework.

The negotiations to establish Shanxi University can be divided into two stages. The first stage aimed at gaining approval for the foundation of the Sino-Western University, as part of the settlement of Shanxi Missionary Case. The second stage dealt with the amalgamation of the Sino-Western University and the Shanxi Provincial University to form Shanxi University. The main disputes at both stages concerned the control of the university and the teaching of Christianity.

Sino-Western Educational Relationship in the Late Qing

The first round of the negotiations for the University was part of the negotiations for the settlement of the Shanxi Missionary Case. Here, Richard proposed that the Shanxi provincial government should allocate 500,000 taels², payable over ten years, to set up the so-called Sino-Western University as part of the settlement of the Shanxi Missionary Case. After these ten years, the university would be handed over to the Shanxi people. The aim of this was to enlighten the

² Edwards estimated that 500,000 taels of silver equaled about £66,000 at the time (Edwards, 1903, p. 123).

masses and to teach practical knowledge so that in future, officials, gentry, and common people would not be led by ignorance (Richard, 1916, p. 299; Zhu, 1984, p. 4883; Shanxi University Record Compilatio Committee, 2002, pp. 1–2). His proposal was approved by the central government, and the management of the University was placed in the hands of Richard (Richard, 1916, p. 299; Shanxi University Record Compilatio Committee, 2002, p. 2). The details of execution were to be negotiated between Richard and the Shanxi provincial officials.

Richard's initial plan was to maintain the connections between the Sino-Western University and the Church to keep the college from becoming merely a secular institution, as indicated in his letters to the Baptist Missionary Society (Richard, n.d., *Letters*, 26 August 1901). While the majority of the post-Boxer punishments were either retaliatory or pedagogical, Richard's suggestion to establish a Western style university was more "an act of forgiveness, which was farsighted and commendable" (Hevia, 1992, p. 323). Thus from Richard's point of view, the establishment of the Sino-Western University was to be interpreted as a sign of forgiveness by the missionaries, rather than as a monument to the negative memories of the Boxer Movement. However, the Shanxi officials did not agree with some parts of this plan. Contrary to Richard's proposal, Cen instead demanded that there should be no teaching of Christianity at the university, and the university should not have any connection with the Church (Hao, 1980, p. 96). In addition, he insisted that missionaries should not interfere with the administration of the university (Shanxi University Record Compilatio Committee, 2002, p. 3).

Powerful local officials such as Cen were not, in general, opposed to the involvement of new elements in educational reforms, and sometimes even actively invited these elements, as demonstrated in Cen's other educational activities. Their discomfort with missionaries' participation in education was mostly related to two aspects: the religious messages and missionaries' control of the institution. Teaching the students Christian thinking was seen as a direct challenge to Confucian ideology, and could risk the penetration of foreign ideas into Chinese society, posing a threat to the Qing rule. The participation of foreign missionaries in education was even more sensitive to the Chinese as "education is a main artery of the nation's life, and it is for the country's leaders and them alone to decide what kind of education should be given" (Hughes, 1968, p. 191). To some extent, control of the university represented control of the educated

classes. The British missionaries' efforts to run the university would, in fact, likely be interpreted as an attempt to gain control of these educated young men and therefore the future leaders of China. If these concerns could be dealt with, meaning that control of the university stayed in the hands of the Chinese, collaboration was possible. However, this would require the cooperation of the missionaries, and it would mean filtering Western practices before they reached Chinese soil.

Richard disagreed with Cen's proposal, on the grounds that the new university would not be a new model if it was not run by Westerners (Shanxi University Record Compilation Committee, 2002, p. 3). The Sino-Western University was a product of the post-Boxer settlement, and part of the compensation to the Protestant missions. It was also his own treasured creation, and a rare opportunity to turn his previous educational plans into reality. Thus Richard would not concede on these two points. The opinions of Cen and Richard were at loggerheads and the initial negotiations had reached deadlock.

Progress was only made when Cen's deputies reminded him that if the negotiations were to break down, the Missionary Case would not be closed and the international dispute would continue (Shanxi University Record Compilation Committee, 2002, p. 3). Cen acknowledged the reality that the Shanxi provincial government must be released from involvement in the international dispute: He compromised at this stage, accepting that even if he was excluded from the management of the Sino-Western University, what the Province would lose was merely the fine of 500,000 taels (Collection, 1902).

With the signing of the *Contract of Eight Articles on the Establishment of the Sino-Western University* (Shanxi University Record Compilation Committee, 2002, pp. 3–4), Richard had his new university endorsed and the settlement of the Shanxi Missionary Case was officially concluded. As specified in the Contract, no more negotiations would be carried out on the Missionary Case (Shanxi University Record Compilation Committee, 2002, p. 4). It seemed that the Shanxi government was about to hand over part of its educational authority to the missionaries. If Richard's university went ahead as planned, China's educational sovereignty might be challenged, as would the principle that Chinese learning should be upheld as the foundation. However, the Shanxi officials were finally relieved of the anxiety of dealing with the matter, since it was implied that any follow-up negotiations on the establishment of the Sino-Western University

would not be based on the Shanxi Missionary Case, with an international dispute being turned into a local matter. In concluding the Shanxi Missionary Case, the Shanxi officials removed an important bargaining chip of the missionaries, resolving the issue in the eyes of the British authorities, and thus gave themselves more leverage in future negotiations.

The Amalgamation of the Two Universities

A determined official, Cen was not ready to concede to the missionaries, particularly when some of his fellow officials repeatedly stressed that the Sino-Western University would “destroy Confucianism and force students to become Christians, give up the most sacred customs of China, and learn the evil ways of the West” (Edwards, 1903, p. 162). It so happened that during this stage of the negotiations, the central government endorsed the national educational reform proposed by several senior officials. Among the suggestions was one saying that traditional academies in provincial capitals should be converted to tertiary learning colleges (Qu & Tang, 2007, p. 7). A concrete plan was yet to be worked out, but this call to establish new institutions of higher learning gave Cen the chance to initiate competition with Richard’s Sino-Western University. In 1901, he merged two traditional Chinese academies in Taiyuan to form Shanxi Provincial University, which would also offer some Western learning (Shanxi University Record Compilatio Committee, 2002, p. 2). Thus, prior to signing the first contract and without informing Richard, Cen and his fellow Shanxi officials opened a rival university. Since the Provincial University was a response to the imperial edict, its foundation was justified. However, Cen understood it would face problems in delivering Western learning, such as the lack of suitable textbooks and the shortage of foreign teaching staff (Compiled, 1902). These issues were part of the reasons why Cen considered working with the missionaries, as he saw that cooperation with the Sino-Western University opened up the possibility of solving these problems.

The opening of Shanxi Provincial University immediately faced strong objection from Richard. He argued that such an arrangement would lead to rivalry between the Chinese and the Westerners, which was, ironically, what the Sino-Western University sought to end (Edwards, 1903, p. 162; Soothill, 1924, p.257). Moreover, it would be a waste of resources to have two

universities in the same city (Edwards, 1903, p. 162). Richard's objection led to the second stage of negotiations that started in the spring of 1902, the amalgamation of the Sino-Western University and the Shanxi Provincial University into Shanxi University (Richard, 1916, p. 300; Shanxi University Record Compilatio Committee, 2002, p. 8).

Because the new university would be an amalgamation of the proposed Sino-Western University and the Shanxi Provincial University, it was natural that, to some extent, the management would be shared between the Chinese and missionaries. The main remaining point of debate was whether Christianity could be taught (Hao, 1980, p. 97). During the first stage of the negotiations, Cen had made a major compromise on this issue. However, since the Missionary Case was now closed and the Chinese authorities would share management with the foreigners in the merged university, Cen was more insistent this time, saying that "the two institutions could only be united by some concessions on the part of Dr. Richard and Mr. Duncan" (North-China Herald, 1902, May 14, p. 945). The Chinese side was so persistent that one of them spent no fewer than eight hours debating with Richard for "a regulation to be inserted in the Constitution that Christianity never should be taught in the University" (Richard, n.d., *Diaries*, 29 April 1902; Richard, 1916, p. 300).

Shanxi officials were insistent in their efforts to gain control of Shanxi University and minimize the influence of the Christian missionaries. In their opinion, the university, like traditional academies, should contribute to the reservoir of talent upholding the rule of the Qing dynasty. The role of the Western Department was also to cultivate such talent albeit additionally equipped with some Western knowledge. These young people should retain their traditional Chinese values and certainly, they should support the dynastic rule. In other words, the educated young men were expected to be followers, defenders and preachers of the traditional values, assisted by Western methods. To this end, Chinese learning should be the foundation of their study, and they should not be immersed in what was considered as heresy; thus Westerners should not determine the education of these young men.

However, Richard rejected the request, quoting that "religious liberty had been agreed to by China in several treaties with foreign nations" and the Shanxi officials "did not have the power to supersede or abrogate the treaties" (Richard, 1916, p. 301). Richard's opposition was so strong that, eventually, the Chinese

had to drop the idea of banning the teaching of Christianity in the new university.

Nevertheless, Richard was aware of the possible hostility and resistance of the local people to Christian teachings. He put much consideration into transferring Western subjects into the local context. For him, the acceptance of the missionaries' presence and Western knowledge took priority over religious teaching or direct conversion. Indeed, he felt that to compel an entire body of non-Christian students to submit to Christian propaganda in a university established with non-Christian provincial funds would have been immoral, and have defeated its own ends (Soothill, 1924, pp. 256–257). Therefore, his attitudes during the second stage of negotiations revolved around smoothing the path for Western learning in the new university, and he adopted a more pragmatic approach than many of his fellow missionaries.

For these reasons, Richard eventually conceded on some important issues, including the de facto absence of religious teaching in the Western Department, and the control of the amalgamated university. According to the Constitution of the Western Department, teaching was restricted to the subjects explicitly listed in the agreement, which did not include religious education (Collection, 1902). Soothill mentioned that Christian theology was never formally taught in the university, and the university did not seem to him the place for religious propaganda (Soothill, 1924, p. 258). It was also reported that the subject of religious liberty was avoided (North-China Herald, 1902, July 23, p. 150). It is important to remember that Richard conceded on these fundamental points voluntarily, due to his sensitivity to the situation at hand. However, this meant that the missionaries, who were originally supposed to be in charge of their own university, in effect became the employees of the new jointly run university. Richard's compromise turned Shanxi University into a Chinese government university partially funded by the indemnity to the missionaries, with Richard and Cen as founders. Whereas the missionaries were expecting him to create a Christian university in China, Richard had established a "Chinese university with Christian characteristics" (Ng, 2008, p. 84). He was criticized for failing to set up a missionary college by those who saw it as right and just to establish a university managed by missionaries after the Boxer Movement (Soothill, 1924, pp. 256–257; Ng, 2008, p. 84). Richard responded to such criticisms by saying that Shanxi University was not founded "for the purpose of teaching Christianity but for giving general knowledge" (North-China Herald, 1903, March 5, p. 431).

Richard was not the only one who was pragmatic about the collaboration. Cen also adopted a similar attitude. In fact, he skirted around the issue of religious education, either Christian or Confucian, in his memorial to the Throne. He pointed out that the lack of qualified foreign teachers, translated textbooks, and the financial constraints would be obstacles to promoting Western learning and university education in Shanxi (Collection, 1902). For him, Westerners could be used as a means to improve the quality of university education. Instead of excluding missionaries from the management team of Shanxi University, as proposed by some local officials, Cen agreed that the British missionaries would be in charge of the Western Department. Despite arguing on various occasions that a British missionary running the Sino-Western University would constitute a violation of educational sovereignty (Collection, 1902; Zhu, 1984, p. 4884), Cen still handed over partial management of the government university to the missionaries. In fact, some Shanxi officials accused Cen of having made too many concessions and compromising the interests of the Chinese (Richard, 1916, p. 301; Xing & Li, 2002, p. 15).

At this point, it is worth mentioning the personnel change that took place around the same time in the Imperial University in Beijing. In early 1902, the foreign faculty of the Imperial University was involved in a salary dispute with the institute and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This incident ended with Zhang Baixi, Director of Educational Affairs, dismissing virtually the entire foreign faculty (Guo, 2009, pp. 134–135; Weston, 2004, p. 46), as a step to reforming the Imperial University, the highest institution of learning in the country. Zhang quoted the lack of funding as the reason for the large-scale dismissal (Guo, 2009, pp. 134–135; Weston, 2004, p. 47). However, this act arguably reflected the trend that Westerners, especially missionaries who were not professional educators, should no longer interfere with educational matters during the rise of Chinese nationalism (Guo, 2009, p. 136). It has also been suggested that the decision was made “at least in part to forestall conservative criticism” that foreigners were in charge of the university and that progressive figures were appointed to important positions (Weston, 2004, pp. 46–47). In essence, it was the continuation of the debate on the role of Westerners and Western learning in China, and a re-emphasis on the principle that the control of education should be in the hands of the Chinese. In comparison, Cen’s decision to share management responsibilities with the missionaries, although under government control,

seemed to be a bold decision. In addition, Richard's willingness to collaborate with the Shanxi officials helped the missionaries' case. Despite the drastic changes going on in the capital, Sino-Western cooperation in higher education continued to be carried on at local level.

In June 1902, the Sino-Western University and the Shanxi Provincial University were officially amalgamated into Shanxi University, with the two former institutions becoming the Western Department and the Chinese Department, respectively. By reaching this agreement with Richard, the Shanxi Provincial Government not only managed to keep the indemnity for the Shanxi Missionary Case inside the Province, but also kept control over it, directing it to local higher education.

Conclusion

The final structure of Shanxi University was an honest reflection of the situation in late Qing China, during this transitional period, both the traditional Chinese and Western education approaches, each of which had been seeking dominance in higher education in China, were re-adjusting their positions. At a time when the educational system was undergoing dramatic changes, the Shanxi officials and the foreign missionaries chose a closer partnership. It was clear that the Chinese insisted on maintaining their educational sovereignty, and Cen's defiance of the pressure from the missionaries, even from an initially disadvantageous position, was proof of this. At the same time, the Shanxi officials' understanding of educational sovereignty was changing: As long as overall control of the institution remained in their hands, sharing management duties with foreigners would not constitute a violation. This attitude provided room for negotiations with the missionaries. Coincidentally, the missionaries participating in the foundation process adopted a more flexible and pragmatic approach in handling the negotiations with the local officials. As a result, while Westerners were excluded from the educational arena in the capital, Shanxi had the opportunity to develop an international partnership in running its provincial university. Although this relationship echoed the principles of *ti-yong* dualism, it had also adapted it by allowing foreigners into key management roles in the university. At a local and personal level, Sino-foreign collaboration in higher education had started a new experiment before fundamental national educational

reform was launched.

As we have seen, Cen and Richard played an important role in the founding of Shanxi University. The resulting direct cooperation would not have been achieved without compromises from both of them, and the institution would not have been formed without their firm support. To a large extent, these two forged the unique features of Shanxi University. Their interactions represent a single example of people's efforts to change China's education, and re-affirm that influential individuals had a vital impact on the late Qing educational reform. This factor is particularly important in the study of British influence on China's education; it has been suggested that British educational influence in China was unexpectedly slight compared to its military and commercial dominance (Davín, 1987, p. 33). Since the British government was not keen on exerting systematic educational influence on China, the British legacy is more diffuse, thus making it more difficult to trace. However, as this study shows, a focus on the institutional and individual levels can reveal new insights into British participation in educational reform in early twentieth-century China.

In addition to discussing historical events in the late Qing, this study also prompts reflection on China's present-day cross-border partnerships in higher education. To this day, China is still concerned about the expansion of foreign higher education institutions within its borders (Postiglione, 2009, p. 3), and cross-border partnerships seem to continue to be used as a tool for "self-strengthening" (Adamson, 2013). Although a century has passed, China's insistence on controlling its higher education sector remains. Consequently, for a partnership to succeed, both the Chinese and overseas actors need to find their places within this framework. Past solutions and experience, such as the negotiations between Cen and Richard, can provide useful insights that may help in resolving the conflicting interests inherent in a cross-border partnership.

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