

Integration and Adaptation: The Educational Exploration of Christian Schools in Dengzhou, 1864-1904

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Abstract

The educational exploration of Christian missionary schools in modern China is an important topic of Chinese educational history, while there is a scarcity of in-depth research regarding the specific areas and influences of missionary schools. As established since the late 19th century, the missionary schools in Dengzhou of Shandong contributed to the emergence and development stage of the modernisation efforts in the educational and social dimensions of China. By involving the collection of primary and secondary historical materials from archives and libraries in Shandong, this study analyses the literature of Christian schools in Dengzhou from 1864 to 1904, a critical period marked by significant socio-political and cultural transformations in China. The missionary schools in Dengzhou played a crucial role in the modernisation of Chinese education, introducing new knowledge, and promoting social reforms. By examining first-hand and second-hand sources, this paper provides a comprehensive analysis of how Christian educational institutions in Dengzhou navigated challenges and contributed to the broader modernisation efforts in late Qing China. The curriculum and pedagogical approaches of the missionary schools also showed the integration of western educational principles with local traditions of China and showed their impact on the educational and social transitions of local society.

Keywords: Late Qing China; Dengzhou of Shandong; Missionary School; Education of Modern China; Cultural Integration.

INTRODUCTION

Christian missionary schools and their associated educational activities played a significant role in shaping both local and national trajectories in modern China. Since the end of the 19th century, missionary schools have contributed to the modernisation of Chinese education by impacting on the traditional Chinese society. According to Sun (2013), in the activities of the Christian missions, education was one of the three major contribution of Christian missionary education towards modern China. In the annals of educational history in China during late 19th century, Dengzhou College¹ - and its predecessors in Dengzhou Prefecture of Shandong

Province - emerged as one of the pioneers of innovation, resilience, and cultural synthesis. Since it was established in the 1860s, the educational career in Dengzhou embarked on a transformative journey that intertwined western educational principles with traditional Chinese values and educational modes. Amidst a landscape marked by political upheaval, social transformation, and the encroachment of western powers, Dengzhou College stood as a testament to the possibilities of cross-cultural exchange and adaptation. The institution's educational philosophy blended the rigor of western pedagogy with a deep respect for Confucian traditions, creating a unique learning environment that resonated with students from diverse backgrounds.

In the existing research works, there are not only works that focus specifically on the missionary schools in Dengzhou during the late Qing period but also works about the whole image of the missionary education in Shandong Province during that period. Among the Chinese domestic scholars, Guo Dasong has conducted a series of studies on the missionary schools in Dengzhou, covering many aspects such as the causes, characteristics, and influence of the development of church education, as well as rigorous historical research (Guo and Cao 1994; Guo 2007; Guo and Du 2012; Guo 2013). Stanley (2014; 2018) focuses the topics about the mission works in Shandong and put the female missionaries as a point of concentration. And Kaiser (2014) focuses on the transformation of English missionary Richard Timothy during his missionary career in Shandong and other provinces. In addition, Cohen (1978; 1997) shows very multi-dimensional historical research methods, which are distinguishing different types of historical materials, and having a clear understanding of different historical mind in different groups of the society. For this topic, there are also many Chinese works concentrated on the missionary schools in Shandong, especially for the Dengzhou College and later Shandong Christian University, while most of researchers of this topic were local scholars in the academies in Shandong Province. Many of the works focused on the very specific areas, such as He (2015) and Gong (2014) focus on the musical education and its relations with the missionary work; Yang (2000), Li (2000), Liu and Wang (2009), Du (2011), and Tian (2015) focus on the function of missionary schools in China-west cultural communication, and the emergence of western technology in Shandong. The existing research on Christian schools in Dengzhou and Shandong Province provides a solid foundation and background for this study. Based on these works, the proposed research specifically focuses on how these schools integrated and adapted to local traditions between 1864 and 1904, addressing the gaps in current academic research. By examining the subtle processes of cultural integration and educational adaptation, this study provides new insights into the role of missionary education in local society, thereby enriching and expanding the understanding established in previous research. In the existing research in this field, it is worth further exploring how missionary schools reconcile Western educational ideas with Chinese traditional culture in specific educational practices.

This study aims to expound the establishment, development, and contribution of the Christian missionary education in Dengzhou. For the methodology, this article mainly uses the approach of historical analysis, including conducting a comprehensive review of primary sources, including first-hand archival documents, correspondence, and official records related to practices in Dengzhou's missionary schools. Additionally, for the content analysis, this study analyses published materials such as textbooks, educational manuals, and student publications to gain insights into the pedagogical approaches and ideological influences at Dengzhou College. And for the case study, this article also examines specific episodes or events in Dengzhou College's history that illustrate its approach to integration and adaptation with traditions, also the importance of integrating and adapting Christian missionary schools with local traditions, including their impact on the formation of China's modern education system. There are also some newspapers, diaries and letters by the missionaries, and other relevant

sources such as the biographies of the missionaries helps the textual research and demonstration of this paper.

For the research scopes, the geographical scope of the study is the Dengzhou of Shandong Province, China. The time scope of this study is from the establishment of Dengzhou Boys' Boarding School in 1864 to its relocation of Dengzhou College's university education to Weixian in 1904. The aim of the study is to explore the educational practice of the missionary school in Dengzhou, its integration and adaptation process with local traditions, and its impact on modern education in China. As it is delved into the educational career in Dengzhou from 1864 to 1904, we can uncover a rich tapestry of cultural exchange, intellectual exploration, and human endeavour. Through the lens of this pioneering institution, we can gain insight into the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity, the East and West, shaping the course of education in China during a pivotal period of history.

THE FOUNDATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN DENGZHOU, 1864-1877

After the Second Opium War in 1860, according to the Tianjin Treaty between the Qing court and western powers, Christian missionaries had been allowed to enter China on a larger scale, and Dengzhou became one of the treaty ports and opened to the foreigners. With the continuous expansion of Christianity in the coastal areas of China, missionaries began to arrive in the Shandong Peninsula. Afterwards, Shandong also established a system of missionary schools starting from the 1860s' Dengzhou, gradually covering a relatively complete education system from basic and special education to higher education. From Boarding School to the High School, and then establishing the college, the missionary education in Dengzhou shows a gradual and smooth route of Christian church to develop educational career in China and set a successful example of the integration between the missions and local society. The establishment of Christian missionary school in Dengzhou by the North American Presbyterian Church was the beginning of the Protestant church's education in Shandong, while Dengzhou College is also considered the origin of modern higher education in China (Tian 2015, 69).

In addition to domestic factors in China, the entry and development of Christian churches in China also have a background from the Western world. The Second Great Awakening in the late 18th century in America sparked a revival of the Christian church, which reached its peak in the mid-19th century. Inspired by this, a group of overseas missionaries from America came to China and thought they were shouldering the "sacred mission" of educating Chinese people (Hao 2016). And this trend also had an impact in European countries, the founder of China Inland Mission in Britain strongly called for the importance of missionary work in China, to save "souls" of Chinese people (Taylor 1887).

The material foundation of the American missionary movement in China is the donations and support of American businessmen, as well as their widespread appeal and outstanding organisational and leadership skills in society. The overseas missionary movement of America has gained strong organisation and leadership, and its scale and influence continue to expand. But overall, missionaries did not set out for commercial purposes when they came to China, but focused more on spiritual pursuits, namely spreading American culture centred on Christianity and transforming China with Christianity (Hao 2016).

The first Christian missionary to come to Dengzhou was J. B. Hartwell, who was affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention of America. Hartwell visited Penglai² in 1861 and was received by local government officials - when Hartwell first arrived in Dengzhou, he rented an idle pawnshop with the permission of the local government - and Dengzhou thus became the earliest Protestant missionary base in northern China (Guo and Du 2012). In the summer of the same year, when reverends Gayley and Danforth from the Northern Presbyterian

Church in America arrived in Dengzhou, local officials designated several Buddhist temples on the outskirts of the city as their residences, which were later used by the Presbyterian Church and were not forcibly taken back by the local government (Lian 1940, 160). The local gentry and people in Penglai also demonstrated a tolerant attitude towards foreign Christian churches at that time (Guo 2007). Then, Charles Mills and his wife arrived Dengzhou from Shanghai in 1862, and Hunter Corbett and Calvin Mateer also arrived Dengzhou in 1864. The early Presbyterian missionaries who arrived in Dengzhou, besides Mateer who directly participated in the construction of the school, the other two also searched for space for missionary Mills to build the school building. Corbett explored cities and rural areas throughout Shandong, committed to establishing missionary schools in broader areas outside Dengzhou to expand the influence of the church (Eaton and Woods 1902, 240). Corbett and his wife later built some primary schools and kindergartens in the open port of Yantai (Eaton and Woods 1902, 169-172).

During that period, the Southern Baptist Church of America was the “largest and most vibrant Protestant denomination in America” (Hyatt 1976, 3), and its Shandong Missionary Society is also the earliest Protestant Missionary Society established in Shandong, slightly earlier than the Presbyterian Church. However, from the later work and development of Protestantism in Shandong, it can be seen that its cause, especially in cultural education, healthcare, and talent cultivation, is far inferior to that of the Northern Presbyterian Church in America. The Northern Presbyterian Church in America, although not the earliest missionary organisations in Shandong and Dengzhou, developed rapidly and was already the largest and most powerful missionary organisation in Shandong in the early 20th century (Guo 2013). That achievement was also related to the concerted efforts of Presbyterian missionaries. On the other hand, the attitude of locals in Dengzhou towards outsiders is indeed “more friendly” than many people in other parts of China (Fisher 1911, 71). successful practice provided better conditions for missionaries to learn Chinese, thus making more missionaries willing to develop their missionary careers in Dengzhou.

After the arrival of Calvin Mateer and Julia Mateer, the establishment of a school was placed as an urgent agenda. In September of 1864, a boy’s boarding school in Penglai was opened, and only six children were enrolled, none of them were Christians at the time of their enrolment and none of them had any education (Fisher 1911, 129). In 1869, the school started to teach in two levels, while thirty students were distributed into junior class and senior class. In 1873, Calvin Mateer transformed the name of Boy’s Boarding School into Boy’s High School, providing twelve-year education (Guo and Du 2012). the boarding schools at that time did not have religious education as their sole goal of education. At the Missionary Conference held in Shanghai in 1877, Calvin Mateer gave a report on the relationship between Protestant missions and education. He believed that objectives of education in the missionary schools was not only to make students believe in Christianity, but also to develop comprehensively in terms of intelligence, morality, physical fitness, and psychology, so that students can better adapt to society (Fisher 1911, 128). This also reflects that the missionary schools in Dengzhou were implementing the concept of liberal arts education.

With many of the students lacking a foundation of knowledge and being sceptical of missionary education, some did not make it to graduation, and finally in 1877, thirteen years after the start of the school, three students finally graduated. One of the three graduates went to work in a mission school in Hangzhou; another went to Yantai to teach in a Scottish Presbyterian school; and the third went to help Nevius in his missionary work in the rural areas of Shandong (Fisher 1911, 159-160). As can be seen, students from the early missionary schools were still engaged in Christian-related occupations after graduation.

THE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE OF THE MISSIONARY SCHOOLS IN DENGZHOU, 1877-1899

The educational mode of the missionary schools in Dengzhou includes curriculum design, teaching methods, and management mode. This section aims to introduce the teaching methods of the College, such as graded teaching, emphasis on experiments and internships, and advocacy of applying what has been learned, then analyse its challenges and innovations to traditional Chinese educational methods. And this part concludes that the educational mode of the missionary schools in Dengzhou combines traditional Chinese culture and Western scientific knowledge to form a unique curriculum system.

As the development of the boarding school, Calvin Mateer decided to start the trying of higher education. In 1877 was the Dengzhou Boy's High School was upgraded as "Dengzhou College"³, and stated to offer the courses at the university level, but this change was only Calvin's personal action and did not receive authorisation or recognition from the higher-level church (Guo and Du 2012). The college held a graduation ceremony for the first three graduates. After practices for several years, in 1881, the Presbyterian Shandong Mission applied to the board in America, planning to upgrade the college into university. The motion was admitted by the American Presbyterian Church in 1882, and the Dengzhou college successfully renamed as "The College of Shantung"⁴ (Fisher 1911, 207).

After the reform by Calvin, the teaching system after upgrading included the branches of *Bei Zhai* (primary school), *Zheng Zhai* (middle school), and university (college). The study period of primary school was three years; for middle school and college, the study period was six years. The modules of high school included psychology, ethics, public policy, *Yi Jing* (one of the *Four Books*), reading, calculus, chemistry, astronomy (Lyu 1999); and for the college, the curriculum included "The Four Books and Five Classics"⁵, Chinese and Biblical history, mathematics, physics, political economics, mental and moral study, and Bible reading Christianity (Fisher 1911, 207; Liu 1960, 74). According to the principle of Calvin, the teaching language in the schools and college should be Chinese, so he translated and edited textbooks in American schools from English to Chinese (Fisher 1911, 207-208; Han 1993). In addition, the missionary schools also provide students with education in art, such as music. Julia Mateer (wife of Calvin) wrote the music textbooks for children, including church music and popular songs popular in Europe and America, such as *Auld Lang Syne* (He 2015, 56). Julia believed that it was necessary to implement music education, because cheerful songs could promote the development of morality, intelligence and temperament of the students, and can also help them awaken national consciousness, and thus improve the spirit of the Chinese nation (Gong 2014, 73-76). According to Julia, the music education should preserve the own style of local music, because the culture of the Chinese nation has a strong spirit and vitality (Mateer 1896, 107). This also proves that missionaries fully respected the local cultural characteristics in the educational process and were good at designing teaching plans from the perspective of students.

After setting up the basic and higher education, the Christian mission also started to focus on the educational rights of disabled groups. In 1887, Charles Mills and his wife founded the Deaf School in Dengzhou (*Qi Yin Xue Guan*), which was also the first school for the deaf children in China (Guo and Cao 1994). As a professional teacher of a school for deaf mutes in America, Madam Mills served as a teacher. In addition, she hired a Chinese who knew English as an assistant teacher. The school uses modern Western teaching methods to teach deaf children to speak, sing, and do simple arithmetic. (General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China 1890). Although the Presbyterian Mission stopped funding deaf school after Charles Mills' death in 1895, Madam Mills continued to actively raise funds in America

and Europe. In 1898, with the support of deaf school in Rochester, Mills reopened a deaf school in Zhifu⁶ (Entrican 1900).

Financial and material resources are indispensable for the development of education. Strong support from the missionary's hometown was also an important backing for the development of the missionary schools in Dengzhou. At the beginning of missionary education in Dengzhou, the school's financial support was still affected by the American Civil War, but the financial dilemma was alleviated after the end of the war (Fisher 1911, 80). With the continuous development of missionary schools in Dengzhou, missionaries also began to hope that their cause could receive more support from their own country. In 1892, Julia Mateer (Calvin Mateer's wife) returned to America from Denver for vacation and participated in a social event in Pennsylvania. At that time, Julia shared her views on missionary work for Chinese women and combined her missionary experience in Dengzhou. Her sharing received praise and support from other attendees (*Harrisburg Telegraph* 1892).

Dengzhou College not only pioneered the introduction of a modern education system from primary school to university in China, cultivating a group of talents who have contributed to the modernisation of education in China, but also designed, manufactured, or purchased modern production machinery and tools such as coal ball machines for the residents and familiar merchants. They also purchased and produced many necessary experimental equipment for modern higher education, translated and edited a large number of modern school textbooks at all levels and types, which have high academic value and social influence. Calvin first adopted international symbols such as Arabic numerals and addition and subtraction signs, and directly applied Arabic numerals to equations, which played an important role in the transition from Chinese to Western calculation methods in modern Chinese mathematics (Fisher 1911, 162-163). In terms of curriculum development, Calvin at Dengzhou College follows a curriculum structure that combines Western science, Chinese classics, and religious guidance; In terms of Western science, the Dengzhou College offers courses in geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, physiology, astronomy, geology, and other subjects (Fisher 1911, 139). Among them, mathematics included algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus, as well as surveying and navigation, which were at the forefront of Chinese schools at that time. Calvin not only values the teaching of science courses, but also values students' experimental abilities. The school often holds geography knowledge tours, astronomical observations, physics experiments, and so on. Calvin also prepared laboratories, astronomical telescopes, power generation equipment. In addition, he also collected some books and instruments. In addition to equipment from America, Calvin even designed and manufactured some of the instruments himself, and taught students to manufacture instruments together and learn how to conduct experiments - this way of teaching scientific knowledge received positive feedback from students and achieved good educational results (Fisher 1911, 212-213). Thanks to Calvin's efforts, Dengzhou College was ahead of other Christian schools in China at the time in terms of curriculum design, teaching methods, and faculty development (Guo and Du 2012). By the end of the 19th century, the Dengzhou College was hailed as the best church university in China in the 19th century (Hyatt 1976, 183).

FACING THE BOXER REBELLION AND CROSS-MISSION EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION, 1899-1904

Starting from Dengzhou, Shandong's Christian missionary education in the late 19th century achieved a larger scale. As of 1898, over 200 Christian churches in Shandong had established nearly 300 boarding schools for boys and girls, with a total of nearly 4000 students enrolled (Presbyterian Mission Press 1899). This also laid the foundation for the survival and further development of missionary schools in the early 20th century after being impacted by

the Boxer Rebellion. On the contrary, with the success of Christian missionaries in Dengzhou and other regions of China, more and more Protestant missionaries came to China. In Shandong, the influence of missionaries also began to expand from the coast to the inland, but also encountered some setbacks. In the 1890s, due to anti-Christian sentiment in the inland mountainous area of Yizhou Prefecture, local missionary activities were hindered; In 1897, during the Juye Incident in Caozhou (another inland prefecture), missionaries were killed by local anti-Christian elements (Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Board of Foreign Missions 1922).

From 1899, in some areas of northern China, the Boxer Rebellion broke out. In 1900, the rebellion started to spread in many places of Shandong, missionary education in the inland areas of Shandong was greatly impacted. During the rebellion, some of the local Christians were killed but the foreign missionaries were not harmed (Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Board of Foreign Missions 1922). In the Shandong Peninsula, especially in the Dengzhou area, due to the fact that the Boxer Rebellion did not affect this region, local missionaries had a safe time and even accepted missionaries who had evacuated from inland areas (Tian 2015, 74). At the same time, due to the belief that missionaries also suffered immense physical and mental pain during the rebellion (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions 1901, 107), governments of the western states decided to launch a war against China and successfully invaded the capital of the Qing Empire. After the failure of the war, the Qing government began to surrender and promised to suppress the Boxer Rebellion.

From the establishment of the missionary schools in Dengzhou, its 40 years of teaching practice constantly revised and improved, and contributed to the establishment Arts and Sciences College of the Protestant University in Shandong. After the Boxer rebellion and its damage, the Christian missions in Shandong started to rebuild the missionary schools and set up a new university under the united support of the denominations from different states. In 1901, after the war between China and Foreign armies, the Qing Government and the western powers signed the *Xin Chou Treaty*. In the treaty, The Chinese government paid compensation for the murder of foreigners during the uprising and punished officials who took part in the riots or were ineffective in stopping the violence, and it agreed to reimburse countries for damages suffered and military expenses (The Office of the Historian, United States Department of State 1900). A portion of the reparations was used to rebuild mission school campuses. Of the total 450 million taels of silver reparations, the missionary school in Weixian of Shandong received 14,773 taels of silver for reconstruction, and the Presbyterian Church of America of America donated about 30,000 taels of silver for reconstruction (Song, Li, Xiu and Gao 1995). The missionary school in Dengzhou did not receive any compensation because it was not directly damaged. In 1902, the Baptist Church of England used the Qing government's indemnity to establish Shanxi University, which inspired Christian churches in other provinces including Shandong, and used the indemnity to establish education, initiating a wave of building Christian universities (Wang 2014). In this specific social and political environment, in addition to preaching, the social functions of missionary schools also began to accelerate.

Since 1902, under the lead organisations of the American Presbyterian Mission and the British Baptist Mission, it was decided to establish a Protestant university in Shandong, with three colleges in various parts of the province: the College of Arts and Sciences (in Weixian), the Theological Seminary (in Qingzhou⁷), and the Medical College (the site of which was to be determined). By 1904, a document of agreement was reached among the missions, which regulated eight aspects of the university's objectives, management policies, management systems, and property ownership (Chen 2017, 182-184).

In 1904, the university portion of Dengzhou College was moved from Weixian to become part of the newly established College of Arts and Sciences at the Protestant University of Shandong. All of the foreign teachers had a Western educational background, and most of

the native teachers graduated from parochial schools such as Tempe College. Before the College of Arts and Sciences moved to Weixian, Robert Mateer (Calvin's brother) had already established a missionary school of some size in the late 19th century (Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Board of Foreign Missions 1922). As late as 1904, the Boxer Rebellion's destruction of the Weixian's campus was still being rebuilt, but the rebuilt campus would have had a larger campus and more facilities than the original: laboratories, instrument rooms, and libraries for physics, chemistry, and biology (Han 1993). Courses and textbooks were arranged and written by the university itself, entrance exams included Chinese classics, geography, mathematics, Western history, and the Bible, and undergraduate studies were routinely four to five years long, with students able to participate in student societies such as debate (Lutz 1971). It can be seen that the management model and facilities of the missionary university in Shandong during the early 20th century were refined and developed from the model of the missionary schools in Dengzhou in the late 19th century. This highlights the exemplary and leading role of the missionary schools in Dengzhou.

THE IMPACT OF DENGZHOU COLLEGE TOWARDS MODERN CHINESE EDUCATION

As one of the birthplaces of modern higher education in China, Dengzhou College had a positive and profound impact on the aspects of teacher and student training, institutional influence, cultural dissemination, then contributed to the modernisation of China's educational career.

In the aspect of teacher and student training, the missionary schools in Dengzhou, whether primary, secondary, or tertiary, have trained numerous talents for Shandong and other provinces in China, serving various industries including but not limited to education. For the alumni of Dengzhou College, from 1877 to 1892, among 47 graduates and 20 students who did not graduate, most people engaged in the doctors, priests, missionaries, teachers, education management, and the their working locations not only limited to cities and counties in Shandong province, also included Tianjin, Hangzhou, Nanjing and other areas out of Shandong Province (Catalogue of Tengchow College 1891; Wang and Liu 1913). Because of the early development of Christian education, there were also graduates of Dengzhou College became teachers in missionary schools in Northeast China (Ross 1903). Even in the early stages of establishing university education, the Christian missionary schools in Dengzhou were able to cultivate students' abilities to work in different fields and regions, and export well-educated talents to areas outside Shandong Province. In the teaching style of the missionary schools in Dengzhou, the embrace of western knowledge was not divorced from its Chinese roots - rather, it was carefully woven into the fabric of traditional Confucian teachings, fostering a balanced approach to intellectual inquiry and moral development.

In terms of school management system, the missionary education in Dengzhou also set an example and demonstration for modern schools in China, including school management system, curriculum design, and management mode. For example, the educational mission of Dengzhou College was the cultivation of character and leadership. Students were not only encouraged to excel academically but also instilled with a sense of social responsibility and ethical conduct. Through a combination of classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, and community engagement, graduates emerged as principled individuals equipped to navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world.

The missionary schools in Dengzhou also primarily introduced the features of liberal arts education in western school to Shandong local society and sharing similarities and intersections with traditional Chinese Confucian educational thoughts. As Calvin Mateer's viewpoint was quoted earlier in this article, the missionary schools should provide students

with multiple aspects of improvement and development, including knowledge, physical, and mental well-being. It is also summarised that the liberal arts education aims to develop the human intellect in a holistic manner, raise the spiritual level of human beings, impart various kinds of knowledge and skills to the recipients, and cultivate a sense of social responsibility and humanism in the students. (Cheng 2017). It is precisely because it coincides with the Confucian concept of “Cultivate one's moral integrity, govern the country and level the world (*Xiu Shen, Qi Jia, Zhi Guo, Ping Tian Xia*)”, which is not only the pursuit of personal happiness but the pursuit of a higher level of meaning in life (Cheng 2021). Due to this inherent fit, the liberal arts education philosophy of missionary schools could be accepted and take root in Shandong during the late Qing Dynasty, a region with strong traditional thinking. The missionary schools in Dengzhou made tremendous contributions to the development of modern science education in China, especially the graduates of Dengzhou College, who played an immeasurable role in the education reform process in late Qing Dynasty China. Among the Western style teachers initially selected by the Imperial University, there was only one who was not a graduate of Dengzhou College. In the wave of establishing modern schools, the demand for students in Dengzhou College exceeded supply, and they were appointed as teachers in universities and middle schools in various provinces, with their presence spread throughout sixteen provinces in China (Wang and Liu 1913, 4). The contribution of the missionary schools was also relative with the public-supported education in Shandong: Shandong University was established in just one month by some foreign teachers and students from Dengzhou College.

After the Boxer Rebellion and the failure of war with western powers, the Qing Government decided to start another reform, and put educational reform as a significant part. The new styles of schools were encouraged, one policy was encouraging the provinces to have their own universities. In the early years of the 20th century, establishing new-style schools based on the educational model of Christian missionary schools was a very urgent task for the Qing government, as it was related to cultivating more talents to meet the needs of modernisation development for the empire, in order to maintain the rule of the court. In September 1901, Empress Dowager Cixi ordered that all provinces should establish universities in their provincial capitals (Zhu 1984). In Shandong, as chief governor of Shandong, Yuan Shikai was appointed to establish a new public university in Jinan, called “Shandong University”, Watson Hayes from American Presbyterian Mission was invited to attend the preparation of the university. Yuan recommended Hayes to the court to be appointed as the chief instructor of the university, on the grounds that Hayes had good character, academic knowledge, had been managing the school in Dengzhou for many years, had a good reputation, and was competent in practical investigation. Hayes came to China in 1882 and then taught at Dengzhou College for many years, he was also the school master of Dengzhou College from 1896 to 1901. After came to Jinan, Hayes learned from the experience of Dengzhou College, transplanted the teaching methods and content of Shandong Missionary School to the freshman school, and received praise and awards from the Empress Dowager Cixi, and this measure was also encouraged to operate in universities in other provinces of China. In October 1901, Hayes accepted Yuan Shikai's invitation and led some teachers and graduates of Dengzhou College to follow the teaching methods of Dengzhou College. In less than two months, they built China's first provincial-level government run university and enrolled the first batch of 300 new students (Han 1993). Furthermore, the regulations of the newly established university also on the foundation and style of the regulations of Dengzhou College. One example is that the university implemented the Sunday holiday system in the school, which was the earliest official school in the Qing Dynasty (Han 1993). In March 1902, the Qing court ordered all provinces to establish school management rules modelled after the regulations formulated by Shandong

University and required provincial officials to be aware of the need for reform and talent, and not to wait, delay, or be perfunctory (Qu and Tang 2007).

In the aspect curriculum setting, Dengzhou College also provided significant reference to the Shandong University. After its establishment, Shandong University offered courses in history, philosophy, acoustics, optics, electricity, chemistry, and other fields. It also founded the Physical and Chemical Instrument Manufacturing Institute (Guo 2012). In terms of humanities and social sciences, Hayes followed Dengzhou College's example in its school charter and offered courses in history, geography, foreign languages, politics, arts, forming a curriculum system that combines Chinese and foreign knowledge. But only less than one year after the establishment of the Shandong University, Hayes decided to resign, because he disagreed with the university's policy of setting the worship of Confucius as a compulsory activity for students (Hereen 1940). In 1902, Yuan got his new position in Zhili province, and the newly appointed governor of Shandong insisted on "Chinese Learning as Substance, Western Learning for Application (*Zhong Ti Xi Yong*)", advocate learning new knowledge while adhering to old morals. Specifically, teachers and students are required to worship the Empress Dowager, the Emperor, and Confucius. The foreign teachers represented by Hares opposed the new regulation, and the conflict between Hershey and the Shandong authorities gradually became acute. In final, Hayes resigned from his position as the Chief Instructor of Shandong University, which also reflected that although missionary education had positive exchanges and interactions with local society in many aspects, it would encounter some difficult difficulties when it came to deeper internal conflicts between Chinese and Western cultures.

Furthermore, the missionary schools in Dengzhou also helped support the educational right of female and disabled groups. In the perspective of missionaries in China and missions in the western countries, although their primary goal was to spread the gospel and attract more and more believers in Christianity, many of the missionaries aimed to provide a chance for Chinese people to improve their life, and even save the destiny of their nation, while poor people - including the females, children, and disabled people - were the social groups they were focusing especially. In this dimension, the Christian missionary schools also had a positive impact on spreading the concepts of gender equality and modern human rights in Shandong and even throughout China and promoting ideological emancipation in local society. For example, the deaf school founded by Madam Myles has been passed down to this day and is now the special education school of Yantai, continuing to contribute to the education of disabled children in Shandong.

CONCLUSION

This article introduces and discusses the achievements and difficulties of the Christian missionary school in Dengzhou, China during from 1864 to 1904. it could be concluded that the missionary schools in Dengzhou set a successful model of the modern educational mode in transforming China during that period. Despite facing some conflicts and setbacks, the teaching model of missionary schools represented by Dengzhou College had successfully influenced the educational model of modern Chinese higher education and became a significant force in promoting the modernisation of Chinese education. As China's earliest modern school in higher education level, the Dengzhou College contributed significantly to the development of Chinese education, it successfully combined the local traditions and new elements from the foreigners. The education of Dengzhou college was based on respecting the characteristics of Shandong people and made people accept things they were not familiar with in a gentle and persuasive way.

The early Christian missionary education in Shandong Province, represented by Dengzhou College, provided a path for the integration and fusion of Chinese and Western education in the future. At the same time, the Christian Church also provided support and guidance for opposing traditional feudal ethics in China, but this also led to conflicts with local conservative forces under the historical conditions at that time, resulting in some limitations in cooperation. The exploration of Dengzhou College built a solid foundation to the educational career in the early 20th century, especially for the higher education. The practices of Dengzhou College also provided reference and inspiration to the educational career held by the Christians in other areas of China, and made the missionary schools one of the important forces driving social transition in China during the early 20th century. At its core, the development of Dengzhou College is one of integration and adaptation. The college's curriculum encompassed a wide range of subjects, including mathematics, natural sciences, humanities, and theology, reflecting a commitment to holistic education.

This study has found an important factor for the development and growth of missionary schools during that period. The strong power and national wealth Protestant countries such as Britain and America provides a strong backing for the development and growth of the missionary schools. Economic and military strength, enough financial resources for missionaries to cross the ocean and build schools in China, enough military strength to force China to open the door gradually, allow foreigners to obtain more rights and interests and convenient conditions for missionary work in China, and even use the compensation of the Qing government to rebuild schools. The economic assistance of domestic entrepreneurs and the support of other people from all walks of life have helped the development of Christian schools. Although most missionaries who set up schools are only appointed by the church rather than the government, and have their own ideals, beliefs and benevolence, they cannot ignore the political, economic and other national factors behind them. The insights gained from this study encourage a reassessment of the role of missionary schools in shaping modern and contemporary education models in China and urge a more careful study of how missionary schools use liberal arts education and other methods to influence students' learning and life concepts.

For this study, there is still imitation the comparison of the missionary educational career among Dengzhou, Shandong and other areas of China. In the future study of this topic, researchers can explore how other similar missionary education activities in China operate in other communities or compare the exploration of Christian churches in education between different regions of China (such as provinces, cities, and rural areas). In addition, the roles played by Christian churches and missionaries in the cultural transformation of modern Chinese society, as well as their interactions with political power, deserve further investigation to understand the potential impact and limitations of religion on the process of social development. Through the study and analysis of more first-hand historical materials, this research elucidates the mutual influence between the Christian church and local society in education and other aspects from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, thus enriching our understanding of the impact of missionary schools on social norms, as well as the localisation (or improvement) of Christian missions in modern China.

NOTES

¹ Dengzhou Fu (Prefecture) is the area around today's Yantai city of Shandong Province and is also spelled as 'Tengchow' or 'Teng-chou' in some primary historical sources and research works (Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Board of Foreign Missions 1922). This article mainly uses the spelling of "Dengzhou", except citing fist-hand archives and existing studies.

² Penglai was the administrative centre of the Dengzhou Prefecture, today it is a district of Yantai City.

³ According to Guo (2013), the naming of the Tengchow College should have occurred in January 1877 in the Western Gregorian calendar, that is, at the end of the second year of Guangxu (1876) in the Chinese traditional calendar. This is a misunderstanding caused by the difference between the Chinese and Western calendars. In case of misunderstandings caused by differences, this article adopts the Gregorian calendar method.

⁴ Also called “Shantung College”. “Shantung” was the romanised spelling of Shandong Province during that period.

⁵ Also called “*Si Shu Wu Jing*” in Chinese, including are nine works that cover philosophy, ethics, history, poetry, and other aspects of thought. They were the main subjects of teaching in ancient China to impart Confucianism thoughts and values.

⁶ At that time, foreigners in Shandong translated it as “Chefoo”, today it is Zhifu District of Yantai city.

⁷ Qingzhou Prefecture was located 200 miles west of Dengzhou and was the centre of English Baptist missionary activity in Shandong in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Kaiser 2014).

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