


## Article

# A Historical Review of the Comparative Study of Mohism and Christianity during the Late Qing and Republican China Periods

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**Abstract:** This study provides a fresh understanding of the historical development shaping comparative studies between Christianity and Mohism during the late Qing and Republican China periods. It traces the foundation of these studies to both the idea that ‘Western knowledge originated from Mohism’ and to the Mohism studies by the Qian-Jia School 乾嘉學派 during the Qing Dynasty. This study spotlights the groundbreaking proposition by Zou Boqi 鄒伯奇 in 1844, who first suggested that Western knowledge, including Christianity, originated from Mohism, a widely accepted view among Chinese literati. The article then explores the paradigm shift initiated by Liang Qichao 梁啟超, influenced by Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 and his *Mozi Jiaogu* 墨子閒詁 (The Works of Mozi with Commentaries), which broadened the comparative perspective. The significant influence of the Qian-Jia School’s Mohism studies on both Chinese and non-Chinese scholars is analyzed, along with the diverse approaches and contributions of key figures like Joseph Edkins, James Legge, Ernst Faber, Alexandra David-Néel, Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, Huang Zhiji 黃治基, Wang Zhixin 王治心, Zhang Chunyi 張純一, Mei Yi-Pao 梅貽寶, and Wu Leichuan 吳雷川. The article underscores these scholarly groups’ dynamic interplay and varied objectives, shaping a vibrant and contentious academic landscape.

**Keywords:** Mohism; Christianity; Late Qing and Republican China periods; Qian-Jia School; missionaries; eastward transmission of western learning



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## 1. Introduction

In the late Qing and Republican China periods, a diverse array of individuals, including Chinese literati, missionaries, sinologists, and Chinese intellectuals with Christian backgrounds, embarked on comparative studies between Christianity and Mohism. These extensive research endeavors served as a foundational cornerstone for subsequent academic inquiries in this field. Recently, scholars have shown significant interest in revisiting the historical landscape of these comparative studies during this period, resulting in the publication of various articles and books sharing their research findings.

Nonetheless, the prevailing discourse primarily centers around the contributions of missionaries, sinologists, and Chinese intellectuals with Christian backgrounds during the Republican China period<sup>1</sup>. It has largely attributed the inception of these comparative studies to missionary Joseph Edkins, often neglecting the influence of the Qian-Jia School 乾嘉學派’s Mohism studies from the Qing dynasty<sup>2</sup>. While a few studies do focus on the comparative studies of Christianity and Mohism by Chinese literati in the late Qing period, they tend to overlook the unique role played by Zou Boqi 鄒伯奇 (1819–1869) as “the pioneer of this comparative studies in late Qing China”<sup>3</sup>.

Considering this research gap, this article seeks to engage in a new understanding of the comparative studies of Christianity and Mohism carried out by Chinese literati prior to missionary involvement. It also aims to explore the interactions among Chinese literati, missionaries, sinologists, and Chinese intellectuals with Christian backgrounds from the late Qing to the Republican China period. A central objective is to elucidate how the Mohism studies of the Qian-Jia School influenced their research endeavors. This study endeav-

ors to offer a fresh perspective by reevaluating the origins of comparative studies between Christianity and Mohism during the late Qing to the Republican China period while assessing the pivotal role of the Qian-Jia School's Mohism studies in shaping the trajectory of this research.

## 2. Chinese Literati of the Late Qing Period

The comparative study of Mohism and Christianity during the late Qing and Republican China periods can be traced back to the work *Xueji yide* 學計一得 (Reflections on Learning Mathematics and Physics), written by Zou Boqi in 1844. In the preface of *Xueji yide Volume I*, he mentioned: "I have always wished to integrate and interpret the knowledge of China and the West (嘗欲會通中西之法，盡取而釋之)" (Zou 1995, pp. 1–974b). Although the main content of the book is physics, in the article "On Western Knowledge Being Originally Ancient China 論西法皆古所有" in *Xueji yide Volume II*, he pointed out:

Boqi argued that Western astronomy might not be originally from Confucius, but even with all their techniques, they still could not surpass the knowledge of Mozi [...] Westerners excel in making devices, their cleverness relying on mathematics, mechanics, and optics [...] Yet, the main essence is also found in *Mozi*. In "Explanations B", the description of balancing wood for lifting weights and the method of rotating weights with two wheels are discussed. Optics, which emphasizes magnifying the microscopic and bringing distant views closer, is detailed in Johann Adam Schall von Bell's explanation of the telescope. However, the crucial mechanism is also Mozi's. In "Canons B": "When something is near a mirror and upright, one is small and changed (inverted), and one is large and upright". and in "Explanations B": "In a plane mirror the image (shadow) is small", these sections sufficiently cover it. As for the Western worship of God and the Buddhist understanding of cause and effect, these are merely different manifestations of the same principle of "Heaven's Intention" and "Percipient Ghosts". [...] Therefore, it can be said that the origins of Western knowledge may also be traced back to Mozi<sup>4</sup>.

The uniqueness of Zou's comparison between Christianity and Mohism is that he did not compare their religious philosophies. He first posited that Western astronomy was within Mozi's 墨子 scientific and technological knowledge. Then, by citing content related to science and technology from Mozi, he demonstrated that Western scientific and technological advancements were already present in *Mozi*. Therefore, he believed that the inception of Chinese scientific and technical development preceded that of the West. Based on this chronological development order, he argued that Western science and technology originated from *Mozi*. He used the example of the missionary Johann Adam Schall von Bell's (1591–1666) telescope from the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, citing *Mozi*, to illustrate that Schall von Bell's scientific techniques also stemmed from *Mozi*. Based on these deductions, he suggested that both Western (Christianity) worship of God and Buddhism were similar to "Heaven's Intention 天志" and "Percipient Ghosts 明鬼" in *Mozi*. Christianity and Buddhism are different branches originating from Mohism. Therefore, he considered Western knowledge (including but not limited to religious thought) to originate from Mohism.

The idea that "Western knowledge originated from China 西學中源" was not new to the Chinese society of the time. As early as the 4th century AD, Chinese texts mentioned Laozi 老子 traveling west to civilize the barbarian tribes after completing the *Daodejing* 道德經. Some Chinese individuals believed that the outcome of this enlightening endeavor led to the emergence of Buddhism itself, which was fundamentally grounded in the Chinese classic attributed to Laozi (Lackner 2008, p. 185). With the introduction of Western knowledge to China during the Ming Dynasty, this sparked interest among scholar-officials such as Xu Guangqi 徐光啓 (1562–1633) and Li Zhizao 李之藻 (1571–1630). Once Xu understood Western scientific knowledge, he recognized its superiority over Chinese knowledge. Consequently, he proposed to Emperor Chongzhen 崇禎 (1611–1644)

the idea of translating Western texts. This would enable Chinese people to learn Western knowledge through these translations and integrate the knowledge of China and the West, thereby surpassing the West in intellectual prowess. For example, works such as *Elements of Geometry* 幾何原本, *Taixi shuifa* 泰西水法 (Hydromethods of the Great West), and *Lingyan lishao* 靈言蠡勺 (Humble Attempt at Discussing Matters Pertaining to the Soul) were the results of collaborative translations by Xu and missionaries like Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) and Francesco Sambiasi (1582–1649). Alongside these translation efforts, Xu also leveraged Western knowledge in writing his own books, including *Celiang yitong* 測量異同 (Similarities and Differences in Measurement) and *Gougu yi* 句股義 (Principles of the Right Triangle) (J. Zhang 2022, pp. 85–86). However, by the late Ming Dynasty (mid-17th century), a new conservatism emerged within Chinese society. This perspective viewed the technical expertise of Westerners as bearing an uncomfortably close resemblance to traditional Chinese divinatory practices. As a result, neither the new technical arts introduced by the Jesuits nor the ancient divinatory arts of China were deemed worthy of introspection or exploration by the Chinese people. In this context, late Ming and early Qing literati who maintained allegiance to the waning Ming Dynasty, figures like Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–1695), Fang Yizhi 方以智 (1611–1671), and Wang Xichan 王錫闡 (1628–1682), all held the belief that European knowledge was appropriated by the West from China (Lackner 2008, p. 186). Among them, Fang Yizhi even used Confucius' saying "When the Son of Heaven has lost his officials, knowledge about the officials remains among the aliens of the four quarters (天子失官，學在四夷)" to describe this situation (J. Zhang 2022, p. 87).

The claim that "Western knowledge originated from China" spread not only among Chinese literati loyal to the Ming Dynasty but was also later endorsed by Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (1654–1722) of the Qing Dynasty. Aside from learning Western knowledge from Jesuit missionaries, Kangxi, on the recommendation of his mentor Li Guangdi 李光地 (1642–1718), had read the works of Mei Wending 梅文鼎 (1633–1721), a Chinese mathematician and astronomer. In his work *Lixue yiwèn* 曆學疑問 (Problems of Calendrical Knowledge), Mei suggested that Chinese knowledge formed the foundational elements or seeds of Western knowledge, albeit somewhat vague. Subsequently, Kangxi and Mei met in 1705 and agreed that Western knowledge originated from China (Lackner 2008, p. 187). After that, Kangxi commissioned the compilation of *Shuli jingyun* 數理精蘊 (Collected Essential Principles of Mathematics), which stated:

During the Wanli reign of the Ming Dynasty, Westerners first entered Zhongtu (the Central Plains, or China). Those who were proficient in mathematics included Matteo Ricci, Nicolas Trigault, and others. [...] Since the establishment of our dynasty, foreigners admiring our culture have increasingly come. Missionaries like Johann Adam Schall von Bell, Ferdinand Verbiest, and others successively revised the calendrical system and clarified mathematical studies. The principles of measurement were elaborately enhanced. However, when inquired about the origins (of their knowledge), they all claimed it derived from traditions transmitted in Zhongtu. [...] By the end of the Zhou Dynasty, Chinese astronomers and calendrical scholars lost their official positions and dispersed. Following the burning of books by Qin, many canonical texts in the Zhongyuan (the Central Plains, or China) were lost or damaged. Meanwhile, the teachings that spread overseas were able to preserve the true legacy. This is the reason why Western knowledge originated from Zhongyuan<sup>5</sup>.

In *Shuli Jingyun*, it is mentioned that missionaries claimed Western learning originated in Zhongtu 中土. In fact, the missionaries only stated that their algebraic knowledge was 'from the East', referring to regions such as Arabia or India. However, their statement was simplified in Chinese translations as 'donglaifa 東來法' (methods from the East). The actual geographical location of 'the East' became obscured and was even mistakenly interpreted as China (Lackner 2008, p. 187; J. Zhang 2022, p. 89). Michael Lackner suggests that before the Opium Wars, the Chinese perspective on the origins of Western scientific knowledge might have been just a 'curious footnote' in the history of the global diffusion of ideas.

However, after the Opium Wars, this view became a reaction to the ‘humiliation’ brought by the West. Confronted with the West’s overwhelming superiority in areas traditionally excelled by China, such as military arts, mathematics, and cartography, as well as in fields beyond these, including chemistry, physics (especially optics, acoustics, mechanics, and electricity), engineering, and international law, the Chinese aspired to catch up swiftly. This aspiration involved fortifying the fields they perceived the West had appropriated from China. Indeed, while aiming to enhance these disciplines, China had admittedly overlooked them. The belief was that only through such efforts could China regain its former status of being “rich and strong” (Lackner 2008, p. 189).

This scenario indicates that Zou’s use of *Mozi*’s technological knowledge, positioning it as the foundation of Western technology (specifically mentioning Johann Adam Schall von Bell’s explanation of the telescope), and his effort to demonstrate that Christianity also originated from Mohism have dual interpretations. Initially, it corresponds with a trend established during the Kangxi era of the Qing Dynasty. The Chinese interpreted the missionaries’ claim that their algebraic knowledge originated ‘from the East’ as a reference to China, thereby considering China the ultimate source of all Western knowledge and culture, including technology and religion. Concurrently, in response to the dominance of Western nations over China after the Opium Wars, there was an endeavor to explore scientific knowledge within Chinese classical texts, areas traditionally thought to be less explored by China. This effort was directed towards establishing that Western scientific knowledge originated in China, in an attempt to restore national dignity.

In mentioning *Mozi*’s technological insights, Zou drew from *Mozi*’s ‘Explanations B 經說下’ and ‘Canons B 經下’. The exploration of *Mozi*’s ‘Canons 經’ and ‘Explanations 經說’ necessitates a recognition of the contributions made by the Qian-Jia School of the Qing Dynasty in the kaozheng 考證 (search for evidence). In the Qianlong 乾隆 and Jiaqing 嘉慶 periods (1736–1820) of the Qing Dynasty, China witnessed a new wave of scholarship in kaozheng, distinct from the Confucian studies prevalent since the Tang and Song Dynasties. This movement was propelled by several factors, including criticism by some Chinese literati who blamed the fall of the Ming Dynasty on the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties 宋明理學, prompting a shift towards philological research methods of xungu 訓詁. The early Qing government’s enforcement of ‘literary inquisitions 文字獄’ and increased ideological control, along with their encouragement of evidential research, also influenced Chinese literati to engage in this scholarly approach. The socio-economic stability and growth of the early Qing era provided a conducive environment for deep engagement in kaozheng and xungu. During the Chinese literati’s detailed analysis of Confucian classics, they noticed *Mozi*’s extensive references to the *Shijing* 詩經 (Classic of Poetry) and the *Shujing* 書經 (Book of Documents), which served as corroborative evidence for their kaozheng and xungu of Confucian classics. This insight prompted a heightened emphasis on annotating and collating *Mozi* (Xie 2017, pp. 13–14).

The Qianlong and Jiaqing periods marked a revival of *Mozi* studies in the Qing Dynasty. According to Zheng Jiewen’s research, fifteen varieties of *Mozi*’s texts, including published editions, annotated versions, and notes, appeared during these eighty-five years. Significant contributions to ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ include Bi Yuan’s 畢沅 (1730–1797) *Mozi zhu* 墨子注 (Annotations of *Mozi*) and Zhang Huiyan’s 張惠言 (1761–1802) *Mozi jing-shuo jie* 墨子經說解 (Explanations of *Mozi*’s Canons and Explanations). Bi Yuan built upon the annotation work of Lu Wenchao 盧文弨 (1717–1796), Sun Xingyan 孫星衍 (1753–1818), and Weng Fanggang 翁方綱 (1733–1818), completing his comprehensive annotations of *Mozi*, known as *Mozi zhu*. This was the only complete annotated edition of *Mozi* during the entire Qianlong and Jiaqing periods. Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929) noted that one of Bi Yuan’s significant contributions was suggesting a ‘parallel reading 旁行’ approach for reading and understanding ‘Canons’. This method offered people at that time a preliminary understanding of how to read the ‘Canons’ (Zheng 1999, pp. 40–41). Following this, Zhang Huiyan’s *Mozi jingshuo jie* provided specialized interpretations of *Mozi*’s ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’. Zhang adopted the method of Lu Sheng 魯勝 (?-?), the earli-



est known annotator of *Mozi*, which involved “attaching explanations to the corresponding canons 引說就經”. Zhang dissected the contents of ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’, comparing them item by item. This approach made the traditionally challenging ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ more readable (Xie 2017, p. 16). The contributions of the Qian-Jia School, especially the work of Bi Yuan and Zhang Huiyan in developing reading approaches for *Mozi*’s ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’, played a crucial role in Zou’s *Xueji yide*. Their insights enabled Zou to reference ‘Explanations B’ and ‘Canons B’ of *Mozi*, forming the basis of his argument that Western science and technology had roots in Mohism and leading to his conclusion that Christianity similarly originated from Mohism. This groundwork was vital in shaping his overall argument.

Although since the eastward transmission of Western learning 西學東漸 during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the notion that “Western knowledge originated from China” had already become popular in Chinese society, the specific claim that “Western knowledge originated from Mohism” was first proposed in Zou’s *Xueji yide*. (Chuan 1935, pp. 58, 64). Zou’s approach of citing *Mozi*’s ‘Explanations B’ and ‘Canons B’ to demonstrate that “Western knowledge (including science, technology, and Christianity) originated from Mohism” not only reflects an attempt by Chinese literati to rebuild national dignity post-Opium Wars by highlighting scientific knowledge recorded in ancient Chinese classics but also represents a continuation of the achievements in studying *Mozi*’s ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’ by the Qian-Jia School. In essence, without the methodologies developed by Bi Yuan and Zhang Huiyan for reading *Mozi*’s ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’, Zou (and his contemporaries) might not have been able to comprehend the content within these texts. Therefore, without this understanding, Zou might not have been able to put forward the novel idea that “Western knowledge originated from Mohism”, using *Mozi*’s ‘Explanations B’ and ‘Canons B’ as foundational evidence.

Subsequently, Zou’s friend Chen Li 陳澧 (1810–1882) agreed with Zou’s viewpoint in his work *Dongshu dushu ji* 東塾讀書記 (Records on Reading by the Eastern School) and added more arguments to support the idea that “Western knowledge originated from Mohism” (Chuan 1935, p. 65). However, although Chen cited content from *Mozi*’s “Heaven’s Intention II” and pointed out that Zou considered this to be equivalent to the “Western concept of God (西人天主之說)”, he believed that *Mozi*’s concept of Heaven and the “Western concept of God” were different. This is because *Mozi* condemned offensive warfare 非攻, whereas Westerners were fond of attacking other countries 好攻. Therefore, even though Western practices seemed similar to *Mozi*’s teachings in many aspects, religion was an exception (Chen 2012, pp. 231–32). This reflects the nuanced differences in stance among Chinese literati, who, post-Opium Wars, adhered to the view that “Western knowledge originated from Mohism”. Zou emphasized that Western knowledge, encompassing science, technology, and Christianity, all stemmed from Mohism. However, Chen, perhaps swayed by and influenced by Western aggression towards other countries, including China, concurred that a significant portion of Western knowledge was derived from Mohism but contested the belief that Christianity was a product of Mohist thought. While both Zou and Chen might have advocated the Mohist origins of Western knowledge as an expression of national dignity, it did not imply a uniform acceptance of Christianity’s genesis in Mohism.

After Zou’s *Xueji yide*, the next person to propose that Christianity originated from Mohism was Zhang Zimu 張自牧 (1833–1886). Zhang’s works, *Yinghai lun* 瀛海論 and *Lice zhiyan* 蠡測卮言 were published around the late 1870s (Pan 2000, p. 113). The former posited that Western chemistry, mechanics, optics, and military technology all originated from Mohism, while the latter pointed out that Christianity derived from Mohism (Chuan 1935, pp. 70–72; J. Wang 2010, p. 28). In *Lice zhiyan*, he mentioned:

By the end of the Western Han dynasty, Jesus was born and became the patriarch of Christianity, claiming himself as the Son of God, known as the Lord. Upon examining the name of the Lord (of Heaven), it is found in the *Records of the Grand Historian* as one of the eight spirits that existed from the time of the Great Duke.

It needs to be clarified in which year it was introduced to the Western Regions and adopted by Jesus [...] His teachings, emphasizing kindness and compassion, align closely with the doctrines of Mohism. Jesus' two greatest commandments: one is to love the Lord your God with all your soul, which echoes the principle of "Percipient Ghosts", and the second is to love your neighbour as yourself, embodying the principle of "Universal Love". All European arts and literature are recorded in the "Canons A" of *Mozi*; from this, it can be deduced that Mozi is the progenitor of Western knowledge<sup>6</sup>.

Zhang noted that the term "Lord" in Christianity and one of the eight spirits that existed from the time of the Great Duke in the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian) share the same name, suggesting that the Christian "Lord" is the same as the spirit of Ancient China. He then compared the teachings of Jesus with those of Mozi, concluding that Jesus' two greatest commandments align with Mozi's "Percipient Ghosts" and "Universal Love". Additionally, he stated that European arts and literature are reflected in "Canons A" of *Mozi*. Based on these arguments, he considered Mozi the progenitor of Western knowledge. Furthermore, in *Lice zhiyan*, he also pointed out:

Mozi advocated universal love as benevolence [...] Nowadays, the Western ethos still highly values kindness and charity towards others, exemplified not just by the service of the Missionary Society in England. However, the scourge of opium has deeply penetrated, blinding and harming countless millions with its unseen deadly force. Firearms, representing extreme cruelty, often lead to tens of thousands of deaths in a single battle, with bodies scattered and blood spraying like rain. The horrific and bizarre nature of this ever-evolving and endlessly emerging firearms is beyond imagination. Yet, those not fatally wounded are then treated and healed. If this is considered benevolence, then it is beyond my understanding.

Nevertheless, the use of machinery in warfare indeed originates from Mozi. During his competition with Lu Ban, Mozi successfully defended against Lu Ban's nine attacks [...] His commitment to universal love is also evident from this<sup>7</sup>.

From the above, it can be inferred that Zhang saw contradictions in the Western manifestation of Mohist philosophy. On the one hand, the West advocates charity and aid to others, but on the other hand, Western opium and weaponry have brought unimaginable harm to humanity. Although Zhang does not consider the Western production of opium and weapons, which cause harm to humans, as benevolent actions, he points out that the use of weapons for military purposes indeed originates from Mozi. He notes that Mozi successfully defended against Lu Ban's nine attacks (without retaliating), and this capability to retaliate but choose not to do so embodies universal love. Differing from Chen's viewpoint, Zhang agrees that Christianity originated from Mohism and also recognizes that Christianity advocates a form of universal love. However, the main difference between Western civilization and Mohist thought is that while Mohism possesses the capability to attack others but chooses not to, Western opium and weapons have caused widespread devastation. Therefore, the universal love of Mohism is consistently practiced, in contrast to Western civilization, which, although it advocates universal love, fails to implement it fully. Interestingly, Zhang also mentioned James Legge's (1815–1897) translation of Chinese classics in *Lice zhiyan*. While he praised Legge for introducing Chinese classics to his fellow countrymen and referred to him as a "man of great character (豪傑之士)", his views completely contrasted with those of Legge regarding which is superior between Christianity and Mozi's concept of "love" (Z. Zhang 1877–1897, vol. 11, p. 505b). The perspectives of James Legge will be discussed in the section "Non-Chinese Missionaries and Sinologists".

As for Guo Songtao 郭嵩燾 (1818–1891), a friend of Zhang Zimu, he concurred with the Christian doctrine of 'treating others as oneself (視人猶己)', equating it to the Mohist concept of 'universal love'. However, he believed that Christianity originated in Buddhism.

In his diary entry dated 6 March 1879 (the 14th day of the second month in the Chinese lunar calendar), Guo wrote:

In Chinese tradition, a healing practice is “Zhuyou ke”. Jesus Christ is regarded capable of miraculous healings, reputedly resurrecting the dead. [...] The central tenet of Jesus’s teachings is the love for others, advocating for treating others as one would treat oneself, closely aligning with the Mohist concept of universal love. [...] Confucianism emphasizes familial affection and benevolence towards people and advocates extending these principles globally, based on the premise that all humans share an intrinsic nature. However, Confucianism also recognizes a hierarchical application of these principles, from the individual to the family, then to the state, and ultimately to the world, acknowledging distinct duties in different relationships. Thus, in Confucian thought, benevolence and righteousness are interlinked. While acknowledging benevolence, Buddhism does not strongly emphasise righteousness, often discussing self-sacrifice for the world’s salvation. The concept of world salvation in Jesus’s teachings is rooted in Buddhist doctrine. [...] Nevertheless, both these teachings fail to adequately comprehend the complexities of human relationships, making them effective in fostering closeness but insufficient for world governance. [...] Jesus’s doctrine also promotes harmony with the heavens, viewing all human life as originating from the same source, a perspective less intricate than Buddhism but still profoundly contemplative. Jesus’s role was primarily that of a healer, helping people through mastery of a specific art, and qualifying as a skilled practitioner<sup>8</sup>.

This illustrates that although Guo recognized the Christian principle of ‘treating others as oneself’ as akin to the Mohist concept of ‘universal love’, he believed that Christianity essentially originated from Buddhism due to their shared emphasis on ‘self-sacrifice for the salvation of the world (捨身救世)’. Additionally, Guo opined that Christian doctrines were not as profound as Buddhism’s. He noted that Buddhism’s understanding of benevolence without a corresponding grasp of righteousness rendered it inferior to Confucianism, which acknowledges benevolence and righteousness. While Guo considered Christian teachings worthy of deep contemplation, he regarded them as less comprehensive than Buddhist and Confucian teachings.

Just as Zhang Zimu had become aware of James Legge’s translations of Chinese classics in his comparative analysis of Christianity and Mohism, Guo also engaged with Western perspectives early on. In 1856, he visited The London Missionary Society Press 墨海書館 in Shanghai, established by the missionary Walter Henry Medhurst (1796–1857), and received several copies of the “Chinese Serial 遐邇貫珍” newspaper. At the London Missionary Society Press, not only did he meet figures like Medhurst, Alexander Wylie (1815–1887), Wang Tao 王韜 (1828–1897), and Li Shanlan 李善蘭 (1810–1882), but most importantly, he encountered Joseph Edkins (1823–1905), who became the first non-Chinese in the late Qing Dynasty to conduct comparative studies of Christianity and Mohism three years later (Guo 2012, vol. 1, p. 31). Guo served as a Qing minister to Britain and France, acquiring extensive experience in Western travel and observation (Guo 2012, vol. 3, p. 462). Nevertheless, despite these exposures, he maintained that Christianity originated from the East and was significantly inferior to Chinese Confucianism in terms of philosophical depth and cultural relevance.

From Guo’s experience, it is evident that journeys to Western countries and living experiences there were insufficient for Chinese literati to regard Christianity as a religious thought not originating from the East compared to Mohism. Many Chinese literati of the time, who had experiences in Western countries or Japan, believed Christianity originated from Mohism. This includes figures like Song Yuren 宋育仁 (1857–1931), Xue Fucheng 薛福成 (1838–1894), Li Shuchang 黎庶昌 (1937–1898), and Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲 (1848–1905), who all proposed the viewpoint that Christianity originated from Mohism (Chuan 1935, pp. 68–71; J. Wang 2010, p. 66).

In 1904, Liang Qichao serialized “Zimozi xueshuo 子墨子學說 (Master Mozi’s Theories)” in *Xinmin Congbao* 新民叢報 (New People’s Gazette) (Y. Zhang 2001, p. 358). One of the highlights of “Zimozi xueshuo” is its comparison between Christianity and Mohism, without asserting that Christianity originated from Mohism (or any other Eastern religion/philosophical thought). In “Zimozi xueshuo”, Liang conducted a comparative analysis of the concept of ‘love’ in both Eastern and Western religions and philosophies. The subjects of comparison included Mohism, Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism (as a religion) 儒教, Yang Zhu 楊朱, Aristippus, and Epicurus, etc. While Liang categorized Mohism and Christianity under the umbrella of ‘equal and indiscriminate love, universally applicable to all humanity’, he did not mention Christianity as originating from any other religion or philosophical thought. He emphasized that since love is an innate nature that no one is exempt from, every religion’s founder or proponent of a philosophical thought would base their doctrines on love (Liang 1936, pp. 30–31). Therefore, it can be understood that Liang perceived similarities in the concept of love between Mohism and Christianity, attributing this to the inherent nature of love in humans rather than suggesting that Christianity derived from Mohism.

To understand why Liang had such a unique perspective in his comparative studies of Christianity and Mohism, distinct from earlier Chinese literati, one must consider the background of Liang founding the *Xinmin Congbao*. Liang, well-known for his advocacy for reform and modernization following the Qing Dynasty’s defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), proposed reforms to Emperor Guangxu 光緒 (1871–1908) with Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927) (Y.-C. Huang 2012, p. 3). He had already recognized that China’s weakness stemmed from the populace’s ignorance of global affairs and lack of knowledge about other nations. He believed the populace’s unfamiliarity with Western knowledge was a primary reason for China’s global subordinate position. To address this, he proposed the establishment of schools to teach Western languages and translate Western books into Chinese, hoping to popularize Western knowledge and strengthen China (Ding and Zhao 2010, p. 58). After the 1898 Hundred Days’ Reform 百日維新 failed, Liang went into exile in Japan. During his time in Japan, he extensively read Japanese books and realized that Japan’s success in the Meiji Restoration 明治維新 was due to a pursuit of spiritual and cultural enlightenment. He emphasized enlightening the public with Western knowledge, not just to educate but to eradicate the nation’s slave mentality and enable people to fully realize their potential as individuals. Liang disseminated his ideas through journalism, initially founding the *Qingyi Bao* 清議報 in November 1898 (which ceased publication in the winter of 1901) and later establishing the *Xinmin Congbao* (Y.-C. Huang 2012, pp. 6–8).

In *Xinmin Congbao*, Liang serialized a series of articles from 1902 to 1906, including discussions on new people, public virtue, national thought, initiative, rights, freedom, self-governance, progress, self-respect, cooperation, profit-sharing, and perseverance. These articles were later compiled into a book titled *Xinmin shuo* 新民說 (Y.-C. Huang 2012, p. 7). In “Shi xinmin zhi yi 釋新民之義 (The Definition of the New People)”, Liang elucidated the concept of ‘Xinmin 新民 (New People)’. He argued that the term did not imply completely abandoning Chinese traditions for Western culture. Instead, it meant refining traditional Chinese virtues and incorporating what was lacking. A nation’s ability to stand in the world, he believed, was contingent on its unique national qualities. Liang’s conception of ‘Xinmin’ was not centered on indiscriminately embracing Western customs and forsaking the millennia-old Chinese ethos, scholarly traditions, and social norms. Conversely, it was not about rigidly adhering to these age-old Chinese traditions either (Liang 1994, pp. 7–9). He contended that neither extreme approach would enable China to stand strong globally. If we consider the perspective of previous Chinese literati, who viewed Western culture and knowledge (including Christianity) as originating from Mohism as an expression of national dignity, then Liang’s unique method of comparing Christianity and Mohism can be seen as his effort to rejuvenate traditional Chinese virtues while incorporating elements from Western culture to address the shortcomings in traditional Chinese thought. The



comparative studies of Christianity and Mohism by Liang and the previously mentioned Chinese literati can be interpreted as a response to China's experience of being attacked by other countries. However, Liang's perspective was unique as he did not concentrate on Chinese or Western thought superiority. Instead, his approach emphasized amalgamating the best elements of both cultures, aiming to mitigate their weaknesses.

Regarding why Liang compared Mohism thought with Christianity and other Eastern and Western religions and philosophies, it is crucial to recognize the influence of Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 (1848–1908) on him. Sun's *Mozi jiangsu* 墨子閒詁 (The Works of Mozi with Commentaries) is recognized as the most significant work on Mohism during the late Qing period. Sun's *Mozi jiangsu* not only consolidated the Mohism studies outcomes of the Qian-Jia School but also incorporated the achievements of Chinese Mohism studies from the Qing Dynasty and earlier. This makes *Mozi jiangsu* a compendium of two millennia of Chinese Mohism studies. Sun included a vast amount of annotations and corrections in *Mozi jiangsu*, far exceeding in quantity those in Bi Yuan's *Mozi zhu*, which served as the foundational text for his work (Zheng 1999, pp. 43–44). Following its publication in 1893, Sun sent a copy to Liang (K.-w. Huang 1996, p. 49). In his letter to Liang, Sun highlighted that *Mozi* was an integration of compassionate ideas from religions like Buddhism and the grandeur of Western technical skills, representing a synthesis of various philosophical thoughts. He deemed Mohist ideology to be of significant import, akin to Aristotle's deductive reasoning, Francis Bacon's Baconian method, and the Buddhist theory of causality. Consequently, he encouraged Liang to delve into the study of Mohism to achieve substantial scholarly accomplishments (S. Fang 2015, pp. 226–27). Liang greatly esteemed Sun's annotations and corrections on *Mozi*, stating, "Since the publication of this book, *Mozi* has become understandable to everyone. The revival of modern Mohism studies can be traced back to the release of this book. Indeed, none surpass this work among all who have annotated *Mozi* through the ages". He also mentioned in his writings that he was just twenty-three years old when he received *Mozi jiangsu* from Sun, which sparked his lifelong interest in studying Mohism (Liang 1983, p. 230).

It is noteworthy that when Sun discussed *Mozi* in relation to other philosophical or religious thoughts with Liang, he never mentioned Mohism as the origin of other philosophies or religious ideas. Conversely, he did not suggest that other philosophies or religious ideas were the sources of Mohism. In addressing the similarities between Mohist thought and other philosophies or religions, he merely emphasized that Mohism was a synthesis of the essences of various thoughts (rather than their origin). Although Sun did not mention Christianity directly, as Liang indicated that his study of *Mozi* was influenced by Sun, it is likely that Liang's approach of treating Mohism and Christianity on an equal footing in his comparative analysis was also influenced by Sun. Thus, when exploring the impact of Liang's concept of 'Xinmin' on his comparative studies between Christianity and Mohism, it is critical to also consider the significant influence of the Sun on Liang. Regardless, Liang's "*Zimozi xueshuo*" indeed represents a paradigm shift in the comparative studies of Mohism and Christianity among Chinese literati.

### 3. Non-Chinese Missionaries and Sinologists

In 1859, Joseph Edkins, a missionary who is mentioned in the section "Chinese Literati of Late Qing Period", published an article titled "Notices of the character and writings of Meh Tsi (Mozi)" in the *Journal of the North-China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*. This publication marked the official beginning of modern comparative research between Mohism and Christianity by non-Chinese missionaries and sinologists from the late Qing period.

At the beginning of his article, Joseph Edkins addressed and refuted the criticism by Mencius 孟子 of Mozi's concept of 'equal and universal love'. He pointed out, "Mencius charged Meh tsi withholding that all men should be equally loved, and that thus he took away the obligation to love our parents more than others". Edkins argued that this interpretation was somewhat unjust to Mozi. He believed that Mozi's 'equal and universal love' was a comprehensive principle, demanding people to love others as they love themselves,

which evidently includes the reciprocal virtues stemming from father-son relationships and prince and subject. He recognized Mozi as the most influential of Confucius's early opponents. Edkins suggested that the followers of Confucius and Mencius opposed Mozi due to concerns about his growing influence (Edkins 1859, pp. 165–66). He compared Mozi's 'the doctrine of equal and universal love' with the Christian New Testament's 'the doctrine of love'. He observed that the coincidence between the two was surely not a little remarkable. However, he also emphasized significant differences between them. While Christianity's 'the doctrine of love' is based on religion and morality, encouraging Christians to emulate God's love, Mozi's concept was grounded in political utility (Edkins 1859, p. 166). Moreover, the Christian precept of 'love your enemies' is not found in Mozi's teachings. Edkins believed that Mozi's highest point was that 'you love me as I love you; we shall both be the better for so doing'. Mozi did not view love as a spontaneous activity flowing from a heart touched with gratitude, leading Edkins to label his approach as 'Too Utilitarian'. He further noted that Mozi's views were more akin to those of the Western utilitarians Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and William Paley (1743–1805). Edkins posited that if Mozi, Bentham, and Paley were contemporaries, they would undoubtedly be considered allies (Edkins 1859, p. 167).

Edkins's exploration of Mozi's 'equal and universal love', the Christian New Testament's 'the doctrine of love', and Western utilitarianism was groundbreaking for his time. However, his refutation of Mencius' criticism of Mozi found parallels in the writings of some Chinese literati of that period. As Edkins pointed out in his article, the view of the Tang dynasty literatus Han Wen-kung 韓文公 (Han Wengong, 768–824) that the principles of Confucianism and Mohism were essentially similar indeed drew criticism from the literati of the Song dynasty (and even later periods) (Edkins 1859, p. 169). Traditionally, echoing Mencius' critique of Mozi was the prevalent approach among Chinese literati when discussing Mohism. However, as mentioned before, from the late Ming to the early Qing dynasty, Mohism began to see a resurgence as shifts occurred within traditional Chinese society. For instance, Chinese literati like Lu Wen 陸穩 (1517–1681), Bai Fenrui 白賁柎 (?–?), Zhou Ziyi 周子義 (1529–1586), and Jiao Hong 焦竑 (1540–1620) all held views on Mozi that were similar to those of Han Wengong. Li Zhi 李贄 (1527–1602), who was familiar with Jiao Hong, advanced further in his admiration for Mozi and actively refuted Mencius's criticisms of Mohism (Y. Zhang 2014, pp. 4–5, 60–65). Wang Zhong 汪中 (1527–1602) also followed the path of the Qing dynasty's Qian-Jia School of Kaozheng in his study of Mohism. He concluded that both Confucianism and Mohism originated from the Zhou dynasty's culture, illustrating that although they appear to be opposed in ideology, they complement each other in reality (Y. Zhang 2014, p. 86). Although Edkins' views on Confucianism and Mohism were somewhat similar to those of some Chinese literati, it is uncertain whether the Chinese literati influenced his perspectives mentioned above since the late Ming dynasty, as he only referred to Han Wengong in his article. Nonetheless, Edkins was certainly aware, when writing his article, that Chinese literati did not uniformly support Mencius' criticism of Mozi and that there were Chinese literati who held different views from Mencius.

James Legge, another missionary affiliated with the London Missionary Society, released his translation work, *The Chinese Classics, Vol. II: The Works of Mencius*, in 1861. Recognizing that Mencius similarly contested the philosophies of Yang Zhu and Mozi, Legge purposefully included a chapter titled "Yang Chu and Mo Ti (Yang Zhu and Mozi)" in this volume. Within this chapter, Legge undertakes a scholarly endeavor, translating and examining the pertinent discourses of Yang Zhu and Mozi. He methodically analyzes the validity of Mencius' critiques against their doctrines, interweaving this examination with perspectives drawn from Christian theology (Legge 1895, p. 92). One of the major highlights of this book is Legge's complete translation of Mozi's concept of "universal love" into English (Legge 1895, pp. 101–16). In presenting Mozi's concept of universal love to his readers, Legge explicitly emphasized that "Mo himself nowhere said that his principle was that of loving all EQUALLY". Therefore, Legge considered Mencius's interpretation

of Mozi as advocating “to love all equally and not acknowledge the peculiar affection due to a parent” to be incorrect. He further pointed out that the Confucian maxim “What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others (己所不欲，勿施於人)” is actually in harmony with Mozi’s concept of universal love. Legge believed that his view on this part was consistent with that of Han Yu (Han Wengong) (Legge 1895, pp. 118–21).

Although Legge disagreed with Mencius’s critique of Mozi, he posited that the scope of ‘love’ as defined in Christianity far exceeded the conceptualization of ‘love’ in Confucianism and Mohism. He argued that Christian ‘love’ is predicated on the existence of one living and true God, a supreme entity absent in Confucian and Mohism doctrines. Legge pointed out that only with an understanding of one living and true God as the creator and common parent of all can the Christian concept of ‘love’ be truly practiced. This form of ‘love’ in Christianity, he maintained, transcends all selfish and personal feelings, rises above all familial, local, and national attachments, and surpasses distinctions of race or religion, even extending to the love of enemies. Therefore, for Legge, Christian ‘love’ represented the true and universal love “which at once gives glory to God and effects peace on earth” (Legge 1895, pp. 121–22).

In their comparative studies of Christianity and Mohism, both Edkins and Legge sought to demonstrate that Mohism’s understanding of ‘love’ was less comprehensive than that of Christianity. Legge referenced the sources he utilized while writing about Mozi in his work. In composing this segment, he not only consulted *The Collected Writings of Han Changli with the Verbal and Critical Notes of Five Hundred Scholars* 五百家注音辯韓昌黎先生全集 by Han Yu but also used *The Philosopher Mo in fifteen Books, with one Book on the Titles of his Essay* 墨子十五卷，目一卷 (Mozi zhu), which was edited and annotated by Bi Yuan (Legge 1895, p. 123).

As mentioned, Bi Yuan is an official of the Qing dynasty who devoted over a year to the annotations and corrections on *Mozi* with the assistance of literati like Lu Wenchao and Sun Xingyan. He based his efforts on Ming dynasty manuscripts of *Mozi*, culminating in 1783 with the completion of his annotations (Defoort 2015, pp. 126–27). Concurrently, the previously mentioned Wang Zhong, who not only served as a guest of Bi Yuan but also engaged in the annotation work of *Mozi*, reportedly had his version of *Mozi*’s annotations published earlier than Bi Yuan’s. Unfortunately, Wang Zhong’s versions of *Mozi jiaoben* 墨子校本 (Mozi’s Collated Text) and *Mozi biaoWei* 墨子表微 (Mozi’s Subtle Meanings) have not survived; only his “Mozi xu” 墨子序 (Preface to Mozi) and “Mozi houxu” 墨子後序 (Postscript to Mozi) from his *Shu Xue* 述學 (On Learning) are extant (Y. Zhang 2014, p. 95).

Wang Zhong’s “Mozi Xu” had two versions: the original 1798 edition and a revised 1818 edition undertaken by his son. Carine Defoort conducted a comparative analysis of these two versions, noting that Wang’s son rendered the more incisive comments of the original text into more tactful language in the revised edition. For instance, Wang Zhong’s original statement, “The later literati who daily practiced the sayings of Mencius, yet never saw the original texts of *Mozi*, naturally rely on hearsay, which is unsurprising (後之君子日習孟子之說，而未睹《墨子》之本書，其以耳食，無足怪也)”, was notably omitted by his son in the revised version (Defoort 2015, pp. 135–36). In other words, Wang Zhong believed that to evaluate Mozi’s propositions objectively, one should not solely rely on Mencius’s critique of Mozi but rather engage in a firsthand reading of *Mozi*. When analyzing Mencius’s criticism of Mozi, Legge mentioned: “Such as it is, with all its repetitions, I give a translation of it (Mozi’s Universal Love). My readers will be able, after perusing it, to go on with me to consider the treatment which the doctrine received at the hands of Mencius” (Legge 1895, p. 101). Despite Legge acknowledging that the content of Mozi’s Universal Love was somewhat repetitive, he still chose to translate the entire content into English, hoping that readers, after thoroughly reading Mozi’s Universal Love, could reflect on Mencius’s perspective alongside him. In this regard, Wang Zhong’s and Legge’s viewpoints bear a striking similarity. Although Wang Zhong’s “Mozi Xu” had been altered by his son by the time Legge published *The Chinese Classics*, and Legge did not mention Wang Zhong’s work in his references, it is unclear whether Wang Zhong in-

fluenced Legge in deciding to translate the section on Mozi's Universal Love into English. If this is a coincidence, it is intriguing and warrants further research that two individuals, one a Chinese literatus and the other a missionary to China, who never met, shared a common thought within a hundred years. Conversely, if Wang Zhong influenced Legge, then his perspective on Mozi might have been shaped by the Qing dynasty's Qian-Jia School. Regardless, the contribution of the Qian-Jia School to Legge's comparative study of Christianity and Mohism is indisputable. Even though Legge considered Bi Yuan's *Mozi zhu* as "very imperfectly executed", it is undeniable that Bi Yuan's work, which was the only complete annotated edition of Mozi throughout the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods, served as a primary reference for Legge's translation of Mozi's Universal Love in *The Chinese Classics*.

In 1877, Ernst Faber (1839–1899), a missionary from the Rhenish Missionary Society (Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft), published *Die Grundgedanken Des Alten Chinesischen Sozialismus: Oder Die Lehre Des Philosophen Micius*. According to his account, due to Mencius's critique, Mozi's teachings had been lost for several centuries in China, leading to a disassociation from Mozi among the Chinese populace. As a result, Mozi's works became exceedingly rare in China, to the point that, despite extensive searching across various regions for over a decade, they remained elusive. He noted that it was only after Legge fortuitously discovered Bi Yuan's *Mozi zhu* at an old bookstall that he obtained a copy from Legge. Subsequently, he received six volumes of a Japanese edition of Mozi (Faber 1877, p. 6). Interestingly, in contrast to the comparative work on Christianity and Mohism by Edkins and Legge, or Legge's translation efforts, Faber leaned more towards interpreting Mozi's philosophy. He observed that, apart from the section on Universal Love, which had already been translated by Legge, other parts of Mozi had never been translated into a Western language. However, he believed that Mozi contained many redundant repetitions, and a complete translation might bore the readers. Thus, he preferred to interpret Mozi's philosophy and share it with the reader (Faber 1877, p. 7). He mentioned that at that time, the German Christian church had transitioned from a social to a state institution, amalgamating with the state in various aspects and losing its initial purpose of aiding the impoverished. Simultaneously, he viewed Mozi as an ancient Chinese socialist, advocating for 'communist love'. Therefore, he hoped that by promoting Mozi's doctrines, the church could engage in self-reflection and fulfill its social responsibilities (Faber 1877, pp. Vorrede, 30, 63–72).

In addition to Legge and Faber, the Belgian-French female explorer Alexandra David-Néel (1868–1969) also referenced Bi Yuan's *Mozi zhu* in her 1907 publication of *Socialisme Chinois: Le Philosophe Meh-Ti Et l'Idée de Solidarité*, written in French (David-Néel 1907, p. 186). In the book, she conveys Mozi's thoughts through five chapters: "Universal Love", "Public Life", "Private Life", "Religious and Philosophical Views", and "Mixtures" (David-Néel 1907, p. XIX). She postulates that the Western conception of 'love' implies impulsive passion, irrational drive, and, frequently, irrationality. However, Mozi's concept of 'love' is more grounded, purely social in essence, and aimed at the order, security, and public welfare of the state. Thus, while the Christian doctrine of loving one's neighbor as oneself is indeed part of Mozi's teachings, it is imbued with a wholly utilitarian motive, addressing the natural and legitimate selfishness of the individual, i.e., for mutual benefit. In essence, Mozi advocates 'universal love' as a wise, precautionary principle that yields results in itself rather than a celestial virtue. Mozi's 'universal love' does not endeavor to generalize exceptional and abnormal virtues among humans but accepts humanity as it is, relying on instinctual and rational selfishness, striving to demonstrate that the well-understood interest of this selfishness must lead to respect for the selfishness of others, without which neither safety, order, nor social happiness can exist. David-Néel contends that although Mozi's advocated 'universal love' is not the 'love' referred to in Christianity, this principle of mutual care for each other's common benefit parallels the values promoted by modern (of her time) sociologists (David-Néel 1907, pp. VII–X).

Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1870–1966), a lecturer at the Tokyo Imperial University and author of *Outline of Mahayana Buddhism*, published *A Brief History Of Early Chinese Philosophy*



in 1914. In this work, particularly in the third chapter titled “Ethics”, a section dedicated to “Utilitarianism” specifically analyzes Mozi’s thought in relation to utilitarianism, thereby illustrating that Mozi was a “thorough utilitarian” (Suzuki 1914, pp. 92–100). Suzuki, despite referencing the “three methods 三法” to highlight Mozi’s advocacy of “universal love and mutual benefit justified (兼相愛交相利)”, posits that Mozi, as opposed to a humanistic side, leans more towards utilitarianism (Suzuki 1914, pp. 95–97). He argues that Mozi’s economic perspectives reveal his utilitarian facet. Suzuki explains that Mozi’s opposition to practices such as “music”, “aggression”, “luxurious funerals”, and “prolonged mourning”, which do not contribute to or even harm the state’s economic productivity, demonstrates his stance against any actions that are economically unproductive. Mozi, who opposed fatalism, advocated a diligent lifestyle. Thus, Suzuki labels Mozi as a “thorough utilitarian”, who refused to yield to any sentimental extravagances. Notably, Suzuki clarifies that Mozi did not disregard the significance of sentiment; instead, he could not bear to see national and individual wealth dissipated due to mere sentimentalism (Suzuki 1914, pp. 97–100). Regarding Mozi’s utilitarian leanings, Suzuki further contrasts Mozi’s concept of “heaven” (t’ien) with the Christian concept of “God”. He notes that while Christianity regards the conception of God foremost and its worship as the paramount issue of religious life, Mozi conceded the first place to utilitarianism. The “God-idea” in Mozi’s philosophy is only relevant in the context of practicing utilitarianism (Suzuki 1914, p. 100). Although the relationship between Mozi’s philosophy and Western utilitarianism was discussed as early as 1859 in an article by Edkins, the absence of any reference to Edkins’ work or to other previous articles or books that presented similar viewpoints in Suzuki’s entire treatise suggests that Suzuki’s perspective on the connection between Mozi’s thought and Western utilitarianism may have been independently conceived. On the other hand, Suzuki’s text not only references Legge’s *The Chinese Classics* series as a bibliographic source but also mentions Faber’s *Die Grundgedanken des Alten Chinesischen Sozialismus: Oder, Die Lehre des Philosophen Micius*, and David-Néel’s *Socialisme Chinois: Le Philosophe Meh-Ti Et l’Idée de Solidarité* (Suzuki 1914, pp. 160, 171). This indicates that, by this time, their works had become indispensable for researchers studying Mozi’s philosophy and for those undertaking comparative studies of Mozi’s ideas with Christian doctrines.

Their contributions have profoundly impacted international research regarding Mozi, or comparative studies between Mohism and Christianity. In 1915, the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VIII, in its introduction to Mozi, referenced Faber’s view of Mozi as an ancient Chinese socialist and Legge’s analysis of Mencius’s critique of Mozi’s concept of “universal love”. It also recommended the works of Faber and Legge to readers interested in delving deeper into Mozi’s philosophy (Hastings 1915, vol. 8, pp. 623–24). In 1917, *The Encyclopaedia Sinica*, referencing the works of Legge and Suzuki, described Mozi as the “Chinese thinker most akin to Christianity”. The encyclopedia also introduced to its readers the works about Mozi by Faber and David-Néel, written in languages other than English (Couling 1917, p. 383). In 1931, Gerald Kennedy, a Berkeley School of Religion graduate, published an article titled “Ethical and Social Teachings of Moti (Mozi)” in *The Chinese Recorder*, a publication founded by missionaries in Fuzhou, China. In his article, Kennedy referenced Suzuki’s perspectives on the difference between Christianity and Mozi’s thoughts, noting: “If Moti (Mozi) had been setting forth the two great commandments<sup>9</sup> as Jesus did, he would have been a rather poor second. He was interested in man’s relationship with man and appealed to religious ideas to support his social suggestions” (Kennedy 1931, pp. 695, 736).

Beyond the books and articles mentioned above, during the Republican China period, numerous missionaries and Sinologists remained deeply interested in the study of Mozi and comparative studies between Mohism and Christianity, leading to the publication of books and articles on these topics. For instance, in *The Chinese Recorder*, aside from Kennedy’s article, there were other related articles including L. Tomkinson’s “Notes on the Teachings of Meh-Tse and Christianity” (1927) (Tomkinson 1927a, pp. 489–97), Carleton Lacy’s “Ethical Values in Chinese Monism” (1931) (Lacy 1931, pp. 29–32), Clifford O.

Simpson's "Motse and Fatalism" (1931) (Simpson 1931, pp. 638–45), Westwood Wallace's "Religious Elements in the Writings of Motse" (1931) (Wallace 1931, pp. 557–61), and Frank Rawlinson's "The Ethical Values of Micius" (1932) (Rawlinson 1932, pp. 93–102). Regarding other works, excluded from Henri Maspero's "Notes sur la logique de Mo-tseu et de son école" (1927) (Maspero 1927, pp. 1–64), published in *T'oung Pao*, other Sinologists have also made comparisons between Mozi and Christianity in their published works. These books included Henry R. Williamson's *Mo Ti: A Chinese Heretic* (1927) (Williamson 1927), L. Tomkinson's *The Social Teachings of Meh Tse* (1927) (Tomkinson 1927b), Wilbur Harry Long's *Motze, China's Ancient Philosopher of Universal Love* (1930) (Long 1930), and Sverre Holth's *Micius, a Brief Outline of His Life and Idea* (1935) (Holth 1935). Even as late as November 1949, shortly after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Philip L. Ralph, a professor at Lake Erie College, referenced their works in his article "Mo Ti and the English Utilitarians", published in *The Far Eastern Quarterly* (Ralph 1949, pp. 43–44).

From the existing information and research, it is challenging to ascertain the precise rationale behind Edkins' decision to draw comparisons between Mohism and Christianity, including the specific contexts in which he came to understand Mozi's philosophy, which was not widely popular in China at that time. However, it is unequivocally clear that his perspective on Mozi as a utilitarian has sparked a scholarly debate over the course of nearly one hundred and seventy years. This debate, focusing on the relationship between Mohism and utilitarianism and even consequentialism, continues to be a topic of discussion to this day<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, the achievements of the Qian-Jia School in Mohism studies should not be underestimated in their impact on missionaries and sinologists. For instance, previously mentioned figures like Legge, Faber, and Alexandra David-Néel explicitly referenced Bi Yuan's *Mozi zhu* in their writings. Chu Lijuan pointed out that the fundamental mission of missionaries in China was evangelism, and for them, the Mohism concept of 'universal love' was perceived as inferior to the Christian concept of 'love' (Chu 2017b, p. 116). However, from the content of Faber's book, it is evident that in comparing Christianity with Mohism, he was less interested in highlighting the shortcomings of Mohism's 'universal love' compared to Christian's 'love'. Instead, he aimed to introduce Mohism's 'universal love' to German readers, encouraging the German Christian church to self-reflect and fulfill its social responsibilities through the lens of Mohism.

Considering Chu's research focused solely on articles and books written in English by missionaries and sinologists, it is apparent that relying exclusively on these English-language sources fails to provide a comprehensive understanding of the missionaries' and sinologists' (regardless of the language of their writings) intentions in comparing Christianity and Mohism. This approach could lead to biased and arbitrary conclusions. On the other hand, the comparisons between Christianity and Mohism by Legge, Faber, and Alexandra David-Néel reflect the influence of Bi Yuan's *Mozi zhu* before the early 20th century, not just limited to English-language writings. Their diverse perspectives and viewpoints also demonstrate that the missionaries and sinologists at that time had developed their own interpretations and understandings of Bi Yuan's *Mozi zhu*.

Indeed, the influence of Sun Yirang's *Mozi jiangou* on missionaries and sinologists cannot be overlooked. Notable works such as Henry R. Williamson's *Mo Ti: A Chinese Heretic* (1927) and Henri Maspero's "Notes sur la logique de Mo-tseu et de son école" (1927) have mentioned *Mozi jiangou* and Liang Qichao's work as references (Williamson 1927, p. 11; Maspero 1927, p. 54). This demonstrates that the impact of *Mozi jiangou*, acknowledged as the most significant work on Mohism studies during the late Qing period, extended beyond publications written in Chinese or English. Regarding the English translation of *Mozi jiangou* by Mei Yi-Pao 梅貽寶 (1900–1997), its impact on the comparative studies between Christianity and Mohism by missionaries and sinologists, as well as on Mohism studies, is profoundly significant. The section 'Chinese Intellectuals with Christian Backgrounds' will further discuss this aspect. It is undeniable that the Qian-Jia School's Mohism studies contributed to the comparisons made between Christianity and Mohism by the late Qing Chinese literati. It also provided the necessary groundwork for missionaries and sinolo-

gists to engage in comparative studies between Christianity and Mohism. In essence, without the contributions of the Qian-Jia School in Mohism studies, the comparisons between Christianity and Mohism by these two groups might not have been as feasible.

#### 4. Chinese Intellectuals with Christian Backgrounds

The first book on the comparative study of Christianity and Mohism by a Chinese intellectual after the establishment of the Republic of China was Huang Zhiji's 黃治基 (1866–1928) *Ye-Mo henglun* 耶墨衡論 (A Comparative Study of Christianity and Mohism) (1912). Huang was a key figure in the missionary work of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Fuzhou. This book not only expressed Huang's perspectives on Christianity and Mohism but also shed light on the attitudes of late Qing missionaries towards Mohism.

As previously mentioned, Faber noted in his writings that he had spent over a decade searching for *Mozi* in China but had yet to succeed. Legge only fortuitously stumbled upon *Mozi* at an old bookstall, indicating the text's relative obscurity in China at the time. Despite Edkins and Legge identifying similarities in the concept of love between Mohism and Christianity as early as the 1850s and 1860s, this did not necessarily mean that missionaries in China widely accepted their views. Huang Zhiji, born in 1866, recounted in *Ye-Mo henglun* that his childhood teacher, who greatly admired a missionary, praised the missionary by referencing the Mohist concept of 'universal love'. This, however, provoked the missionary's ire, leading to a retaliatory debate. Regarding this incident, Huang harbored resentment towards his teacher, failing to comprehend why, despite admiring the missionary's character, the teacher paradoxically equated the missionary with Mozi, which he perceived as an insult to the missionary. From this, it is evident that Huang also had a negative attitude towards Mozi in childhood. In the autumn of 1894, Huang's perspective on Mozi began to change. At that time, he acquired and read *Mozi*, discovering that the Mohist concepts of revering heaven and loving people shared similarities with Christian teachings. Subsequently, he read articles by Han Yu and found resonance with the idea that Confucius and Mozi's thoughts were complementary. Through his reading of *Mozi*, Huang came to believe that Mencius's criticisms of Mozi, as well as the anger of the missionary (who was offended by being compared to Mozi), were unfounded (Z. Huang 1912, p. 2).

In his book, Huang particularly emphasized the religious aspect of Mohism. He argued that the Mohist concepts of 'Heaven's Intention' and 'Percipient Ghosts' had religious characteristics. Moreover, the Mohist idea of 'Against Fate 非命' was intended to dispel social superstitions. He noted that both Mohism and Christianity aimed to eradicate social malpractices. However, while Christianity succeeded in replacing Judaism and spreading worldwide, Mohism vanished for nearly two thousand years (Z. Huang 1912, p. 8). Regarding the stark disparity in the spread of Christianity and Mohist thought, Huang's friend Fang Baocan 方鮑參 (1854–1927), who was also a Christian, mentioned in the foreword of Huang's book that the global spread of Christianity signifies its inherent superiority, making it incomparable to Mohism (B. Fang 1912, p. 2). Therefore, Fang contends that the Chinese literati's perception of Confucianism as superior to Christianity, or the comparison of Mozi to an 'Eastern Jesus', is profoundly absurd (B. Fang 1912, p. 1).

Following Huang's book, an essential work during the Republican China period in the comparative study of Christianity and Mohism by Chinese intellectuals was Zhang Chunyi's 張純一 (1871–1955) *Moxue yu Jingjiao* 墨學與景教 (Mohism and Christianity)<sup>11</sup>. Although some scholars believe that Zhang had shifted his faith from Christianity to Buddhism at the time of writing this book, Zhang himself stated that he revered both Christianity and Buddhism but was dissatisfied with how Christians of his era had distorted the original doctrines of Christianity (Xie 2019, p. 60; C. Zhang 1923a, p. 10). He observed numerous similarities between Christianity and Mohism, such as the concepts of 'Heaven's Intention' and 'God'; 'Percipient Ghosts' and 'Souls'; 'Universal Love' and 'Love'. However, he believed that the true doctrine of Christianity had been lost since the Apostle Paul, over two thousand years ago, similar to the situation with Mohism. Thus, Cai Yuanpei

蔡元培 (1868–1940) encouraged him to write a book specifically comparing Christianity and Mohism. He aimed to demonstrate the commonalities and differences between them without imposing forced interpretations, thereby allowing readers to gain a genuine understanding of both (C. Zhang 1923b, p. 1). However, the comparative study of Christianity and Mohism was not merely an academic endeavor for him. In his book, he emphasized that he found certain aspects of Mohist thought to be less profound than Christianity, yet he also believed that Christian doctrines were not as complete as those of Buddhism. Yet, even Buddhism, which he considered the most complete, was incapable of addressing the social suffering of his time. Therefore, through his comparative study of Christianity and Mohism, he hoped to restore and further refine the true doctrines of Christianity. His ambition was to leverage such efforts to drive social reform and progress, thereby alleviating the calamities caused by power struggles in the world (C. Zhang 1923b, p. 1).

*Moxue yu Jingjiao* can be divided into two major parts: ‘Biao Zong 標宗’ and ‘Li Jiao 立教’. In essence, Zhang views ‘Zong 宗’ as the object of religious belief (宗者教之體 (ti) 也), representing the ultimate source of all things. Different religions have their own appellation for their object of belief; for instance, Buddhism refers to it as ‘Heart’, Mohism as ‘Heaven’s Intention’, and Christianity as ‘God’. However, he posits that these are all different names for the same object of belief (C. Zhang 1923b, p. 2). Zhang believes that ‘Jiao 教’ represents an articulation of the ineffable truth (教者宗之用 (yong) 也). He notes that any attempt to verbalize the truth will inevitably fail to encapsulate its entirety. Yet, in order to enlighten the bewildered masses (啟悟凡迷), such attempts must be made despite knowing their inherent limitations (C. Zhang 1923b, p. 19). Moreover, Zhang’s mention of ‘ti 體’ and ‘yong 用’ relates to a fundamental concept in Chinese philosophy, *tiyong 體用*, representing the dual aspects of essence/substance and function/application. This philosophical framework interprets *ti* and *yong* as two, flexibly-viewed aspects of the same single thing (Wesołowski 2019, p. 28).

Zhang posits that Mohism’s concepts of ‘Heaven’, ‘Ghosts’, and ‘Universal Love’ correspond with Christianity’s ‘Father’, ‘Son’, and ‘Holy Spirit’. Regarding the relationship between ‘Universal Love’ and the ‘Holy Spirit’, he notes that ‘Universal Love’ essentially signifies the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit, representing God’s love within all beings. ‘Love’, therefore, is based on ‘Universal Love’, leading to God’s self-sacrifice for the love of all humanity (C. Zhang 1923b, p. 19). He believes that Mohist principles like ‘Condemning Offensive Warfare’, ‘Moderation in Use’, ‘Moderation in Funerals’, ‘Against Fate’, ‘Against the Confucians’, and ‘Valuing Righteousness’ are all manifestations of Mohism’s ‘Universal Love’ in various aspects (C. Zhang 1923b, p. 31). However, he also notes that while Mohism and Christianity are mainly similar, Mohism is concerned with people’s material needs, whereas Christianity focuses on spiritual aspects. Hence, Mohism talks about benefits with limited benefits, but Christianity, while not discussing benefits, offers limitless benefits (C. Zhang 1923b, p. 5). Zhang identified a key distinction between Mohism and Christianity based on the goals pursued by Mozi and Jesus. Mozi focused on rectifying the profound issues within human society, with aspirations to foster economic affluence and material success. Conversely, Jesus’ concern lay with transforming each individual’s spirit and guiding them towards a profound relationship with God. This was underpinned by the promise of eternal life for all, a vision aimed at converting the troubled and disordered human existence, as well as the entire cosmos, into the Kingdom of God (Wesołowski 2019, p. 25).

Zhang also addresses aspects in which Christianity falls short compared to Mohism. As previously mentioned, he believed that the Christians of his era did not understand the truth of Christianity. He argued that nothing causes more significant destruction than war, making ‘Condemning Offensive Warfare’ the most crucial manifestation of ‘Universal Love’. He acknowledged differences in the teachings of ‘Condemning Offensive Warfare’ between Jesus and Mozi but regarded both as equally great. However, he pointed out that while Mohist thought promoted a profound love for peace among the Chinese, Christians had initiated the Crusades. Even though various Christian states established a Permanent



Court of International Justice to prevent war, these efforts proved to be ineffective. Zhang noted that the clergy participating in the Crusades committed numerous killings, unaware of their wrongdoing and the disgrace they brought to Christ (C. Zhang 1923b, pp. 32–33).

Even though Christianity and Mohism have their respective strengths and weaknesses in different aspects, Zhang ultimately believed that Buddhist doctrines were the most complete. For instance, he viewed the concept of ‘love’ in Christianity and Mohism as limited to humans, while Buddhist ‘compassion’ encompasses all human and non-human beings, treating them equally. This perspective, according to Zhang, makes Buddhism the most complete doctrine. It is important to note that Zhang considered the doctrines of Christianity and Mohism to be less complete than those of Buddhism. Still, he also emphasized that this ‘incompleteness’ was not the original intent of Jesus or Mozi (C. Zhang 1923b, p. 10). As he pointed out, the truth cannot be fully articulated, and the ultimate object of belief in all religions is the same, albeit known by different names. Therefore, he believed that the ‘incompleteness’ of Christian and Mohist doctrines was due to their lesser proximity to the complete expression of truth than Buddhism<sup>12</sup>. However, since the object of belief is the same across different religions, there is no inherent hierarchy.

The 1925 first edition of *Mozi zhexue* 墨子哲學 (The Philosophy of Mozi) by Wang Zhixin 王治心 (1861–1968) was compiled from his lecture notes at the Nanking Theological Seminary 金陵神學院 (Wu 1940, pp. 4–5). Echoing Zhang’s perspective, Wang stated that Mozi’s advocacies of ‘Universal Love’, ‘Heaven’s Intention’, ‘Perceptive Ghosts’, ‘Condemning Offensive Warfare’, ‘Moderation in Use’, and ‘Against Fate’ are all rooted in religiously inspired love. He closely replicated the exact wording of Liang Qichao’s categorization of the concept of ‘love’ across various religions and philosophical thoughts, as detailed in Liang’s “Zimozi xueshuo”, which is discussed in the section “Chinese Literati of the Late Qing Period” of this article (Z. Wang 1925, p. 18). In this book, Wang analyzes Mozi’s religious thoughts regarding ‘Universal Love’, ‘Heaven’s Intention’, ‘Perceptive Ghosts’, ‘Condemning Offensive Warfare’, ‘Moderation in Use’ 節用 and Condemning Music 非樂, and ‘Against Fate’ (Z. Wang 1925, pp. 18–76).

Taking ‘Universal Love’ as an example, Wang interpreted Mozi’s advocacy of ‘universal mutual love, interaction for mutual benefit’ as selfless love, similar to Christianity. He clarified that the ‘benefit’ pursued by Mozi is altruistically driven, different from the ‘benefit’ disdained by Confucianism, which is narrowly self-interested. Addressing Mencius’s criticism of Mozi for ‘to love all equally did not acknowledge the peculiar affection due to a parent’, Wang argued that the ‘love’ pursued by both Confucianism and Mohism is essentially the same. Confucian ‘love’ begins within the family, extends to the community, then to the nation, eventually encompassing universal love for all. He believed Mozi also pursued universal love for all but aimed directly at this goal, unlike the gradual approach of Confucianism (Z. Wang 1925, pp. 19–28). However, he pointed out that despite the similarity in the concept of love between Mohism and Christianity, there is a significant difference in the aspect of ‘self-sacrifice for love’. He emphasized that this does not mean Mohism lacks self-sacrifice for love. Still, Christ’s death was for atonement and the salvation of souls, while Mohist self-sacrifice was for utilitarian benefits (Z. Wang 1925, pp. 29–30). Wang’s views are not entirely novel. His rebuttal of Mencius’s criticism of Mozi and his portrayal of Mohist thought as utilitarian were points made nearly seventy years earlier by Edkins in his writing. Additionally, his mention of the differences between Christianity and Mohism in terms of soul salvation is similar to Zhang’s, who states that Christianity is concerned with the spirituality of humans, as opposed to Mohism’s focus on material needs.

Regarding Zhang’s criticism of the Crusades, Wang also attempted to defend Christianity in his book. He greatly admired Mohist advocacy of ‘Condemning Offensive Warfare’. However, he pointed out that although the Gospel of Matthew in the Bible states, “I did not come to bring peace, but a sword”, this refers to a spiritual struggle against Satan, not warfare in the physical realm. Wang emphasized that Christianity advocates ‘loving one’s enemies’ and the Ten Commandments include ‘thou shalt not kill’, both indicating

Christianity's opposition to war. He acknowledged that while many wars have occurred in the history of Christianity, such as the Crusades and World War I, these were seemingly inevitable. The emergence of various organizations promoting peace and ceasefire also reflects the Christian pursuit of peace, although he also clearly stated that these organizations have been largely ineffective (Z. Wang 1925, p. 68). It is evident that in comparing Christianity and Mohism, Wang's approach was more about synthesizing different existing viewpoints than proposing unique perspectives. His defense against Zhang's criticism of the Crusades also lacks persuasiveness.

As mentioned in the "Chinese Literati of the Late Qing Period" section, the late Qing Chinese literatus, Chen Li, held the view that Mozi's concept of "heaven" differed from the "Western concept of God". This divergence was attributed to Mozi's condemnation of offensive warfare, whereas Westerners were fond of attacking other countries. Consequently, despite superficial similarities between Western practices and Mozi's doctrines in many respects, Christianity, as a Western religion, was seen as an exception. It is evident that Chen regarded Christian doctrine and the military actions of Western countries as equivalent. However, Zhang and Wang, as Chinese intellectuals with Christian backgrounds, made distinctions between Christian doctrine and the military actions of Western countries, even though their perspectives on these actions (such as the Crusades and World War I) varied. For instance, Zhang believed that the Christians of his era did not comprehend the true essence of Christianity. He noted that the clergy who participated in the Crusades committed numerous killings, unaware of the gravity of their actions and the disgrace they brought to Christ. Similarly, Wang pointed out that Christianity advocates "loving one's enemies", and the Ten Commandments include "thou shalt not kill", both of which signify Christianity's opposition to war. In other words, both Wang and Zhang would agree that despite Western countries engaging in warfare in the real world, it does not imply that Christianity inherently promotes military aggression.

In another work, *Zhongguo Jidujiao shigang* 中國基督教史綱 (Outline of the History of Christianity in China), Wang mentioned the anti-Christian movement in the 1920s and the desire of the Chinese Christian Church to indigenize in response. Wang devoted his life to the indigenization of Christianity in China, making notable contributions and innovations in the indigenization of Christian rituals, festivals, architecture, and family practices (Xu 2004, p. 2). Moreover, he used the 'peanut' metaphor to describe this indigenization movement within the Chinese Christian Church. He pointed out that peanuts, being an imported crop, were initially known as 'foreign peanuts' in China, but over time, as they absorbed Chinese nutrients, they became locally cultivated 'foreign peanuts' (Ng 2007, p. 188). However, in *Mozi zhexue*, rather than attempting to localize Christianity in China, Wang seemed more intent on using the comparison between Christianity and Mohism to highlight the superiority of Christianity. Thus, even though Wang contributed significantly to the indigenization of Christianity in China, at least in *Mozi zhexue*, he did not offer his unique insights towards promoting the indigenization of Christianity in China. In fact, when Wang discussed in *Zhongguo Jidujiao shigang* the numerous Christian scholars who attempted to reconcile Christian thought with Chinese culture through the indigenization process, he cited several examples but notably did not mention his own works (Z. Wang 2004, p. 237). This omission suggests that while acknowledging the efforts of others in this endeavor, Wang did not explicitly associate *Mozi zhexue* with this particular aspect of integrating Christianity into the Chinese cultural context.

Even though Wang did not explicitly link *Mozi zhexue* with the aspect of integrating Christianity into the Chinese cultural context, this does not imply that he entirely refrained from responding to the ongoing anti-Christian movement at that time through *Mozi zhexue*. In *Zhongguo Jidujiao shigang*, Wang attributes the emergence of the anti-Christian movement to the outcomes of the Paris Peace Conference following the end of World War I. He notes that China's diplomatic failures led to widespread skepticism and even resentment among Chinese students and businessmen toward countries outside of China. This sentiment was further fueled by incidents like the May Thirtieth Movement and the Shakee

Massacre in 1925, where foreign military and police actions resulted in Chinese casualties. These events consolidated a perception among the Chinese people that all foreigners were imperialists with malevolent intentions. Wang argues that these circumstances cumulatively led to the intensification of hostility and animosity, ultimately giving rise to the anti-Christian movement (Z. Wang 2004, p. 227). As previously discussed, Wang, in *Mozi zhhexue*, expressed profound admiration for Mohism's condemnation of offensive warfare. He noted that while Western countries were engaged in warfare, this did not mean that Christianity inherently endorsed military aggression. Wang, a Christian and a professor at Nanking Theological Seminary, faced the escalating anti-Christian movement and attempted, in his writings, to distinguish between Christian doctrine and the military actions of Western countries. He aimed to persuade the Chinese people not to associate their animosity towards Western countries with Christianity. Indeed, it can also be interpreted that by emphasizing the similarities between Christianity and Mohism in opposing warfare, Wang aimed to foster a sense of affinity towards Christianity among the Chinese people. However, despite this, Wang appeared more focused on using the comparison between Christianity and Mohism to underscore the superiority of Christianity in *Mozi zhhexue*.

Mei Yi-Pao, a professor at Yenching University, released his translation work, *The Ethical and Political Works of Motse*, in 1929 and later published *Motse, the Neglected Rival of Confucius*, in 1934. In the latter, one chapter is dedicated to an analysis of Mozi's Religious Teaching, primarily contextualizing Mozi's teachings within Confucianism and Daoism, occasionally referencing Western philosophers like Kant, with minimal mention of Christianity (Y.-P. Mei 1934, pp. 145–63). Comparisons between Mohism and Christianity sporadically emerge in various chapters. For example, in "The Ethical Principle of Motse", Mei quotes Mozi's statement, "Hence those who desire to be filial to their parents... had best first love and benefit others' parents", and interprets this as a concrete expression of the Christian Golden Rule<sup>13</sup>: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Y.-P. Mei 1934, p. 92). Additionally, in "The Religious Teaching of Motse", Mei notes Mozi's teaching that Heaven desires universal love among people because it loves everyone initially. Employing Christian terminology, he suggests that this could be seen as an effort to realize the brotherhood of man through the Fatherhood, or at least the Masterhood, of God (Y.-P. Mei 1934, p. 158). As Mei stated in the Preface, he believed that the universes of Mozi's thought and Western philosophy and religion are too divergent, asserting that a fruitful comparison cannot be undertaken unless more attention is given to details and historical background than what is feasible within the confines of his treatise (Y.-P. Mei 1934, p. x). Consequently, he did not conduct an in-depth comparative analysis between Christianity and Mohist thought in his book.

Compared to Mei's other works, his translation of the ethical and political thoughts of Mozi in *The Ethical and Political Works of Motse* has significantly contributed to the comparative study of Mohism and Christianity. Mei recommended that readers of *Motse, the Neglected Rival of Confucius*, also explore *The Ethical and Political Works of Motse* to better understand Mozi and his teachings (Y.-P. Mei 1934, p. x). He stated that in 1783, Bi Yuan published the inaugural modern version of *Mozi*, complete with his own commentaries. This edition is still circulating and frequently utilized, though perhaps not as judiciously as possible. The most outstanding edition is undoubtedly Sun Yirang's *Mozi jiangou*. This edition integrates the Qian-Jia School's significant achievements and Sun Yirang's substantial personal contributions. Following the initial release of Sun's works in 1894 and their subsequent revision in 1907, the study of Mohism has gained considerable popularity (Y.-P. Mei 1934, pp. 51–52). He acknowledged that Sun Yirang's *Mozi jiangou* is widely recognized as the best among the Chinese texts of *Mozi* and praised the Mohism studies by Liang Qichao and Hu Shih 胡適 (1891–1962) as outstanding. Regrettably, except for Hu Shih's works, these valuable resources were written in Chinese, limiting accessibility to non-Chinese-speaking Westerners (Y.-P. Mei 1934, p. x; Y.-P. Mei 1929, p. xii). Therefore, Mei based his translation on Sun's version and meticulously reviewed Sun's commentaries. While there

were a few instances where Mei found it necessary to diverge from Sun's authority, these have been indicated in the footnotes. Emphasizing the preservation of the native color and expression of the ancient Chinese author rather than using modern idiomatic English, Mei aimed to enable Westerners to understand Mozi's thoughts more accurately through his translation (Y.-P. Mei 1929, pp. xii–xiii). In this book, particularly in the section discussing 'Universal Love', Mei also addresses James Legge's translation of 'Universal Love', which was based on Bi Yuan's edition of *Mozi*. He critiques Bi Yuan's edition as less superior to Sun Yirang's version. Moreover, Mei points out several inaccuracies in Legge's translation, systematically detailing and rectifying the areas where he believes Legge's understanding was imprecise (Y.-P. Mei 1929, p. 78).

At the time, there was a keen demand among non-Chinese missionaries and sinologists for an English translation of *Mozi*. For instance, Suzuki, author of *A Brief History Of Early Chinese Philosophy*, mentioned in his book (published in 1914) the absence of an English version of *Mozi* (Suzuki 1914, p. 171). Henry R. Williamson also mentioned in his book *Mo Ti: A Chinese Heretic* (1927) that "Publications in French and German have been issued, but in English, there is little to help the western enquirer understand the teachings of this great philosopher (Mozi)" (Williamson 1927, pp. 11–12). This claim was only partially accurate, as James Legge had already translated the 'Universal Love' section of *Mozi* into English as early as 1861. Furthermore, L. Tomkinson's 1927 publication, *The Social Teachings of Meh Tse*, was described in a review in *The Chinese Recorder* as "the most complete set (of translations of *Mozi*) we have so far seen", despite not including sections on logic and dialectics (Anonymous 1928, p. 316). However, references to Tomkinson's translations were scarce, with Frank Rawlinson's 1932 article "The Ethical Values of Micius" (Rawlinson 1932, pp. 93–102) in *The Chinese Recorder* being one of the few that cited it.

In contrast, Mei's version was frequently cited by researchers studying Mozi or engaging in comparative studies of Mohism and Christianity. Even limiting it to articles published in *The Chinese Recorder*, Mei's version was referenced in works such as Gerald Kennedy's "Ethical and Social Teachings of Moti" (1931) (Kennedy 1931, pp. 695–702), Clifford O. Simpson's "Motse and Fatalism" (1931) (Simpson 1931, pp. 638–45), Westwood Wallace's "Religious Elements in the Writings of Motse" (1931) (Wallace 1931, pp. 557–61), and Dryden Linsley Phelps's "The Bronze Mirror" (1934) (Phelps 1934, pp. 45–47). A 1938 article by Ssu-ho Chi 齊思和 (1907–1980) in the "Yenching Journal of Social Studies" summarizing William Hung's 洪業 (1893–1980) conclusions from his *Prolegomena to his Combined Concordances to Ch'un-ch'iu, Kung-yang, Ku-liang and Tso-chuan* 春秋經傳引得 also cited Mei's translation (Chi 1938, pp. 49–73). Furthermore, Philip L. Ralph, in his late 1949 article "Mo Ti and the English Utilitarians" in *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, praised Mei's version over Tomkinson's, acknowledging its scholarly quality and its facilitation in evaluating Mozi's thought for English and American readers (Ralph 1949, p. 44).

It is evident that, despite not conducting a comparative study between Christianity and Mohism, Mei's English translation of *Mozi* significantly facilitated the research efforts of missionaries and sinologists. In fact, a comparison of the number of related research articles published in *The Chinese Recorder* before and after the release of Mei's translation reveals a pivotal shift. Following the publication of his translation, *The Chinese Recorder* in 1931 alone featured three articles on the comparative study of Christianity and Mohism, all referencing Mei's translation. Thus, if Mei considered the publication of Sun Yirang's *Mozi jiangou* as making Mohism studies popular, then similarly, the release of his English translation also sparked a heightened interest among missionaries and sinologists in related research.

In fact, Mei Yi-Pao did encounter opportunities in his lifetime to engage in comparative studies between Christianity and Mohism. Following the publication of *The Ethical and Political Works of Motse* and *Motse, the Neglected Rival of Confucius*, Mei was invited to write a book on the relationship between Christianity and Mohism. However, due to his demanding commitments at Yenching University, he could not undertake this project and



passed it on to Wu Leichuan 吳雷川 (1870–1944). The resultant work, authored by Wu, was the 1940 publication *Modi yu Yesu* 墨翟與耶穌 (Mozi and Jesus) (Wu 1940, p. 1).

Although Wu Leichuan wrote *Modi yu Yesu* at the behest of Mei Yi-Pao, the content and objectives discussed in his book diverge significantly from Mei's approach. Wu appears to compare the lives and thoughts of Jesus and Mozi, but his actual intention is to promote his vision for social transformation. He views both Jesus and Mozi as figures imbued with a religious spirit and grand ambitions for social transformation, advocating for the principles of 'love', 'righteousness', and 'diligence and frugality'. 'Love' is about self-sacrifice for the well-being of all humanity; 'righteousness' is about being morally correct and justifiable throughout one's life; and 'diligence and frugality' involve each member of society contributing according to their ability and receiving as per their needs, without greed for wealth or idleness in work (Wu 1940, pp. 5, 11, 153–55). Wu argues that advocates for social transformation are invariably at odds with existing organizations and regimes in their societies. He points out that both Mozi and Jesus, as proponents of social transformation, faced obscurity or martyrdom without fully realizing their ideals. Wu emphasizes that the apparent prosperity of the Christian churches at that time is deceptive, as their collaboration with regimes contradicts Jesus's pursuit of social transformation. The more prosperous these churches become, the more they deviate from Jesus's true teaching (Wu 1940, pp. 157–58). Wu observes the rampant corruption, distrust, and deception in Chinese society, warning that national rejuvenation would be unattainable without timely change. He underscores that Jesus and Mozi, although existing in different eras and locales, shared strikingly similar advocacies, which he believes are enduring principles that can perennially guide social development (Wu 1940, pp. 158–59). He hopes that the religious spirit of Jesus and Mozi will inspire the populace to emulate their great characters and follow the principles of 'love', 'righteousness', and 'diligence and frugality'. To achieve national rejuvenation, he suggests the government should first abolish private property rights to ensure everyone contributes and receives according to their needs. In the long term, Wu hopes young people will embrace the teachings of 'love', 'righteousness', and 'diligence and frugality' advocated by Jesus and Mozi, preparing for future transformation in national and social systems (Wu 1940, pp. 162–65).

In the introduction of his book, Wu Leichuan critiques Huang Zhiji's *Ye-Mo lunheng*, Wang Zhixin's *Mozi zhexue*, and Zhang Yijing's 張亦鏡 (1871–1931) 1911 article "Ye-Mo Bian 耶墨辯 (The Debate between Christianity and Mohism)", for their apparent focus on conducting a comparative study between Christianity and Mohism. However, he points out that these works still emphasize the superiority of Christianity. Wu aims for his book to differ from their works, drawing inspiration from the maxim in "Han Feizi: Five Vermin 韓非子·五蠹" — "Policies should adapt to the times and measures be tailored for social needs (故事因於世而備適於事)" (Wu 1940, pp. 4–5). As he mentioned in the preface, his encouragement for the youth to prepare for social transformation through the teachings of Mohism and Christianity had already been expressed in his 1936 publication *Jidujiao yu Zhongguo wenhua* 基督教與中國文化 (Christianity and Chinese Culture) (Wu 1940, pp. 1–2). In *Modi yu Yesu*, he suggested that Jesus's concept of 'establishing the Kingdom of Heaven' actually meant transforming the old society and establishing a new one in the material world (Wu 1940, p. 127). This interpretation was criticized by Chao Tzu-ch'en 趙紫宸 (1888–1979), author of *Yesu zhuan* 耶穌傳 (Life of Jesus) (1935), in response to Wu's earlier work, noting that the Bible frequently emphasizes "My kingdom is not of this world". Thus, Chao argued that the 'Kingdom of Heaven' pertains to a spiritual dimension of life, unrelated to material world policies and unachievable through social transformations in the physical realm. Chao continued, stating that Jesus' apparent disregard for material life was due to his advocacy for freeing the human spirit from material constraints, not pursuing economic policy reforms as Wu suggested. Chao thus viewed Wu's interpretation of Christ's teachings as a forced alteration of the nature of Christianity to align with his personal thoughts of socio-economic reform (Chao 2004, pp. 710–13). Lew Timothy Ting-fang 劉廷芳 (1892–1947), first regular Chinese student of Union Theological Seminary in New

York City (Xu 2004–2006, p. 15), in the foreword to *Modi yu Yesu*, wrote: “Those who disagree with Wu’s portrayal of Jesus’s life are advised to study the teachings for social transformation presented meticulously. The book’s place in the history of Christianity in China will ultimately be judged on this basis. (若有對於吳君所描寫的耶穌生平不敢贊同，我奉勸他們對於所提出來改造社會的教訓，加一番精細的研究。本書在中國基督教史上的地位，將要在這一點上，得最後的判定)” (Lew 1940, p. 7) This indicates that Wu, Chao, and Lew all recognize that Wu’s discussions in *Modi yu Yesu* and *Jidujiao yu Zhongguo wenhua* ultimately aim to promote his vision for social transformation.

It is understandable that Chao viewed Wu’s interpretation of Christ’s teachings as a forced alteration of the nature of Christianity to align with his personal thoughts on socio-economic reform. From a theological or biblical studies perspective, this viewpoint has its merits. However, it is worth noting that, as mentioned earlier, Wu in *Modi yu Yesu* referred to the rampant corruption, distrust, and deception in Chinese society, warning that national rejuvenation would be unattainable without timely change. Furthermore, he quoted the maxim from “Han Feizi: Five Vermin” — “Policies should adapt to the times and measures be tailored for social needs” — as his expectation for writing *Modi yu Yesu*. It can be observed that, rather than approaching the comparison of Christianity and Mohism from a theological or philosophical perspective, Wu aimed to share his understanding of Christian and Mohist thoughts with readers to bring about social transformation in the context of the prevalent corruption, distrust, and deception in Chinese society at that time. In alignment with the publication dates of *Jidujiao yu Zhongguo wenhua* (1936) and *Modi yu Yesu* (1940), it is important to recognize that China was facing Japanese aggression during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945). While *Jidujiao yu Zhongguo wenhua* was written a year before the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, it had been five years since the Mukden incident (1931), and Japan’s aggression against China had not ceased (Gordon 2006). Additionally, in *Modi yu Yesu*, Wu explicitly addressed the issue of corruption in China at that time. From the late 1930s, prominent figures like Kung Hsiang-hsi 孔祥熙 (1880–1967), a close associate of Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887–1975), were embroiled in severe corruption scandals. Moreover, China was grappling with a financial crisis due to inflation. In 1940, the same year when *Modi yu Yesu* was published, famous scholars such as Ma Yinchu 馬寅初 (1882–1982) and Fu Ssu-nien 傅斯年 (1896–1950) led the protest against Kung. However, despite their efforts, they could not diminish Kung’s political and economic power (Cheng 2011, p. 61). Therefore, when *Jidujiao yu Zhongguo wenhua* (1936) and *Modi yu Yesu* (1940) were published, China was facing external aggression from Japan, severe domestic inflation, and corruption issues. As Wu stated, his motivation for writing *Modi yu Yesu* was to promote his vision for social transformation, address the practical challenges faced by China at that time, and strive for national rejuvenation. Chao’s criticism of Wu’s interpretation of Christ’s teachings is indeed valid, but Wu never intended to engage in a comparative study of Christianity and Mohism from a theological or philosophical perspective<sup>14</sup>.

## 5. Conclusions

The Mohism studies by the Qian-Jia School during the Qing Dynasty laid a crucial foundation for the comparative studies of Mohism and Christianity during the late Qing and Republican China periods. The contributions in Mohism studies by the Qian-Jia School, especially the methodologies developed by Bi Yuan and Zhang Huiyan for reading *Mozi*’s ‘Canons’ and ‘Explanations’, equipped the Chinese literati of that era with a nuanced understanding of Mohism’s scientific and technological concepts. Zou Boqi, leveraging the foundational work of the Qian-Jia School in Mohism, embarked on comparative studies between *Mozi*’s scientific and technological concepts and Western knowledge. Initially anchored in the belief that ‘Western knowledge originated from China’, he postulated that Western knowledge, including Christianity, had its roots in Mohism. This viewpoint garnered traction among Chinese literati, including those exposed to Western knowledge. In the aftermath of the demoralizing defeats in the Opium Wars, these literati were in pursuit

of restoring national dignity, and advocating the origin of Western knowledge, including Christianity, in Mohism served to this end.

This narrative persisted until Liang Qichao's serialization of "Zimozi xueshuo" in the *Xinmin Congbao*. Confronted with the setbacks of the First Sino-Japanese War and the collapse of the Hundred Days' Reform, Liang sought to rejuvenate traditional Chinese virtues infused with Western cultural elements, addressing the deficiencies in conventional Chinese ideologies. Influenced by Sun Yirang and his *Mozi jiangou*, Liang shifted away from the earlier focus of Chinese literati on Christianity, which originated from Mohism. He pursued comparative studies involving Christianity, Mohism, and other Eastern and Western philosophical and religious traditions. The comparative studies of Christianity and Mohism by Liang and other Chinese literati can be interpreted as a response to China's experience of being attacked by other countries. However, Liang's perspective was unique as he did not concentrate on Chinese or Western thought superiority. Instead, his approach emphasized amalgamating the best elements of both cultures, aiming to mitigate their weaknesses.

Concurrently, the Qian-Jia School's impact on Mohism studies extended beyond Chinese scholars to include non-Chinese missionaries and sinologists. Landmark works such as Edkins' comparative study in 1859 and Legge's translation of Mozi's 'Universal Love', signified pivotal developments using Bi Yuan's *Mozi zhu*. These studies varied in their emphases, with some underscoring the preeminence of Christianity and others drawing parallels with Western utilitarianism. The academic discourse on Mohism and utilitarianism, initiated during this period, continues today. Faber's 1877 publication, for instance, incited scholarly exploration into the applicability of Mozi's teachings for Western social development. Contrary to emphasizing the deficiencies of Mohism's 'universal love' compared to Christian 'love', Faber sought to acquaint German readers with Mohism's 'universal love', urging the German Christian church towards introspection and social responsibility through a Mohist perspective. These discussions reflected the influence of Bi Yuan's *Mozi zhu* before the early 20th century, not limited to English-language writings. The array of perspectives and interpretations by missionaries and sinologists showcased their individual comprehensions of Bi Yuan's *Mozi zhu*.

In the Republican era, Chinese intellectuals with Christian backgrounds, such as Huang Zhiji and Wang Zhixin, consistently highlighted Christianity's superiority in their writings. Concurrently, Zhang Chunyi diverged in his approach, turned to Buddhist doctrines as benchmarks in his comparative study. Mei Yi-Pao's English translation of *Mozi*, based on Sun Yirang's *Mozi jiangou*, facilitated extensive research among non-Chinese missionaries and sinologists. However, the socio-political conditions of Republican China crucially influenced these comparative studies between Christianity and Mohism. For instance, Wang Zhixin's comparison of the condemnation of warfare in both Christianity and Mohism aimed to mitigate Chinese antagonism towards Christianity, fueled by Western imperialism. Moreover, Wu Leichuan, despite facing controversy, introduced innovative comparative research methods to promote social transformation. His interpretations of Christianity and Mohism reflect how Chinese intellectuals with Christian backgrounds responded to issues of corruption and economic decline in China.

Throughout this era, the Qian-Jia School's studies in Mohism variably influenced these three categories of scholars, providing an indispensable foundation for their comparative analyses of Christianity and Mohism. This article not only categorizes these scholars into distinct cohorts but also underscores their dynamic interplay, giving rise to diverse objectives and consequences in their comparative works and contributing to a multifaceted and occasionally contentious academic milieu during the late Qing and Republican China periods.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> For the previous studies, see: (Chu and Xie 2018; Li 2010; J. Huang 2021; Yeung and Hung 2017; Fan 2012; Feng 2018; Wesołowski 2019; Chu 2017a, 2017b).
- <sup>2</sup> For example, Chu Lijuan pointed out that the study of the “dialogue” between Christianity and Mohism was begun by missionaries in the 1850s. Joseph Edkins was not only the first missionary but even the first person to research the “dialogue” between Christianity and Mohism. See: (Chu 2017a, p. 180; 2017b, pp. 25–26).
- <sup>3</sup> Wang Jixue pointed out that Zhang Zimu 張自牧, Chen Li 陳澧, Zou Boqi, and Guo Songtao 郭嵩燾 all made comparisons between Christianity and Mohism, noting that their perspectives led many late Qing Chinese literati to believe that Christianity originated from Mohism. However, Wang did not emphasize Zou Boqi’s unique status as the first Chinese literatus of the late Qing to compare Christianity with Mohist thought. Moreover, Wang only cited Zou Boqi’s views as referenced by Chen Li without directly quoting Zou’s works in his article. Furthermore, Wang’s interpretation that Chen Li agreed with Zou Boqi’s view, specifically regarding the similarities between Mozi’s concept of Heaven and the “Western concept of God (西人天主之說)”, indicates a possible misunderstanding of Chen’s stance. The distinctions between the viewpoints of Chen Li and Zou Boqi will be discussed in the section “Chinese Literati of the Late Qing Period”. See: (J. Wang 2011).
- <sup>4</sup> 伯奇則謂西人天學未必本之和仲，然盡其伎倆，猶不出墨子範圍[...]西人精於制器，其所恃以為巧者，數學之外有重學，視學[...]然其大旨，亦見《墨子》。《經說下》招負衡木一段，升重法也；兩輪高一，轉重法也。視學者顯微為著，視遠為近，詳湯若望遠鏡說。然其機要亦《墨子》。《經下》：「臨鑑而立，一小而易，一大而正」數語，及《經說下》：「景光至遠，近臨正鑑」二段，足以賅之。至若泰西之奉上帝，佛氏之明因果，則尊天明鬼之旨，同源異流者耳[...]故謂西學源出墨子可也。(Zou 1995, pp. 1–1011a).
- <sup>5</sup> 明萬曆間。西洋人始入中土。其中一二習算數者。如利瑪竇穆尼閣等.....及我朝定鼎以來。遠人慕化。至者漸多。有湯若望南懷仁安多閔明我。相繼治理曆法。間明算學。而度數之理。漸加詳備。然詢其所自。皆云本中土所流傳.....周末。疇人子弟。失官分散。嗣經秦火。中原之典章。既多缺佚。而海外之支流。反得真傳。此西學之所以有本也。(J. Mei 1935, p. 8).
- <sup>6</sup> 迨西漢之季，耶穌生，遂為洋教之宗，自稱上帝之子，名為天主。考天主之名，見於史記乃太公八神將之一。不知何年傳入西域而耶穌尸之[...]其教以煦煦為仁，頗得墨氏之道。耶穌二大誡：一曰全靈魂愛爾主神即明鬼之旨也，二曰愛爾鄰如己即兼愛之旨也。凡歐羅藝術文字皆著於經上之篇，以此知墨為西學之鼻祖也。(Z. Zhang 1877–1897, vol. 11, p. 505a).
- <sup>7</sup> 墨子以兼愛為仁[...]至今泰西風氣，猶以慈惠濟人相尚，不僅英國有普仁會也。然鴉片煙流毒，深入膏肓，無形之挺刃所殺者何止億萬人！火器窮極凶殘，往往一戰而伏尸數萬，肉飛如雲，血噴如雨。其慘毒奇譎不可思議之火器，方且日新月異，層出不窮。而傷未殊者，又從而療治之。以此為仁，則吾不知也。然以機器行兵，實亦源於墨翟。九攻九距，與公輸子爭衡[...]其為兼愛，亦可知矣。(Z. Zhang 1877–1897, vol. 11, pp. 506b, 507a).
- <sup>8</sup> 中國名之祝由科。耶穌治病之神，能使死者復蘇，當即用此法[...]大率耶穌術士，而其為教，主於愛人。其言曰：視人猶己，即墨氏兼愛之旨也[...]吾儒親親仁民，推而放之四海，其性同也。惟其理之一也，而必待推而行：家、國、天下，自然之分；由己以及人，由近以賅遠，其分不能不殊。是以仁至而義即行乎其間。佛氏知仁而不知義，以有捨身救世之說。耶穌救世之言即本於佛氏[...]佛氏固曰信受，其理無以易也。惟不達其分之殊，是以人人引而親之，而終不足與治天下[...]耶穌益原天以和同乎天下，其視人之生猶一本也，固不能逮佛氏之精微，而其言固切近而可深長思也。要其以治病濟人為事，始終一術士而已。(Guo 2012, vol. 4, pp. 42–43).
- <sup>9</sup> The two great commandments, as mentioned in Matthew 22:36–40, are to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart” and “love thy neighbour as thyself”. To explore the Old Testament’s role as a source of moral guidance, particularly through narratives that exemplify the Ten Commandments, including but not limited to the two great commandments, see: (Veldman 1995).
- <sup>10</sup> Following Joseph Edkins, the utilitarian aspect of Mozi’s philosophy has garnered attention from various scholars, including H. R. Williamson, Gerald Kennedy, Sverre Holth, Burton Walson, Frederick Mote, Derk Boode, Kristopher Duda, Daniel Johnson, Direk Vorenkamp, Hansen Chen, and A. G. Graham. Their discussions have gradually shifted the focus from utilitarianism to consequentialism. In 2016, Chris Fraser published a significant work titled “The Philosophy of the Mozi: the First Consequentialists”, which continues to explore the relationship between Mohism and consequentialism. See: (Chu 2019, pp. 69–70; Nie and Cao 2016; Liu and Xia 2023).
- <sup>11</sup> Jingjiao 景教 originally refers to Chinese Nestorianism, the first historically known version of Christianity in China. Zhang chose the term “Jingjiao” for Christianity because he believed the character ‘景’ embodies meanings such as ‘brightness’, ‘hope’, ‘faith’, and ‘aspiring to grand visions’, which is more elegant than referring to Christianity as ‘Yejiao 耶教’. Moreover, he thought the name “Jingjiao” better aligned with contemporary reverence for antiquity. In his 1916 article “Response to Rev. Ziheng Yin Part Three 答殷勤道(子衡)其三”, he mentioned: “Jingjiao is one of the Christian heresies... The choice of the character ‘景’ is ingenious. ‘景’ in ‘Shuowen jiezi 說文解字’ is composed of ‘日’ (sun) and the sound ‘Jing 京’. ‘日’ is explained as ‘heaven’, signifying abundant brightness. ‘京’ carries great significance. In ‘Zuo Zhuan 左傳’, nothing compares to it, signifying extreme height... ‘日’ and ‘京’ together form ‘景’, which also connotes faith and hope... In ‘Shiji 史記’, ‘Jingxing 景星’ is a virtuous star... In ‘Baihu tong: Fengshan 白虎通·封禪’, ‘Jingxing’ is a great star, always visible even without the moon, beneficial for night



- work and advantageous to people. In “Zhoushu: Cifa (逸)周書·諡法”, ‘景’ is used in posthumous titles for those with great thoughts and considerations, those who spread justice and act firmly, those who achieve through righteousness, and those who are decisive alone. ‘景’ as in ‘aspiring to grand visions’ aligns well with Christian doctrines. As people revere antiquity, it is appropriate to utilize it. Using the common term ‘Yejiao’ lacks elegance”. See: (C. Zhang 1918, p. 13; Wesolowski 2019, p. 27).
- 12 Zhang esteemed the Roman Catholic Church above Protestantism, perceiving it as more akin to Buddhism due to its commitment to celibacy, emphasis on higher education, and a deeper sense of spirituality. See: (Feng 2018, p. 100).
- 13 In Christianity, the Golden Rule is expressed as “Love your neighbor as yourself”, while in Confucianism, as mentioned before, it is articulated as “Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire.” The Confucian version, which essentially instructs individuals not to engage in actions they would find undesirable themselves, represents a more passive and prohibitive approach, referred to as the ‘negative Golden Rule’. In contrast, the Christian Golden Rule advocates for a proactive expression of love. Hence, it is called the ‘positive Golden Rule’. Over the past few decades, academia has extensively debated this topic. For a detailed understanding of the differences and complementary aspects of these two interpretations of the Golden Rule, see: (Allinson 1992).
- 14 For a more detailed understanding of Wu Leichuan’s social thought within the context of modern Chinese intellectual history and to further explore how he placed his Christian communist ideas of “abolishing private property” in the context of the “Revival of Mohism” and the “Wave of Socialism” of his time, as well as his liberation theology interpretation of Christianity, see: (Malek 2004).

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