

Christian Childhood and Westernized Education

PASTOR'S SON

In 1905, a new Church was built in a small mountain village called Banzi, some 60 miles inland of the port Xiamen (Amoy) in Fujian province, China. It was originally constructed with sun-baked mud bricks and covered with tiles cemented on the surface, but the mud bricks turned out to be too fragile to support the roof. The Reverend A.L. Warnshuis, an American missionary stationed in the area, then ordered steel beams from the USA, which were screwed to the wooden trusses supporting the roof. Along with the steel beams, the American mission also donated a bell to the new church, and a bell tower some 50 ft high was built at the entrance to the church. The Church and the associated American support excited the local Christian community. But the new church, a most visible landmark in the village, also aroused resentment among some villagers. One village scholar of Confucian education gathered sufficient donations in the village to build a Buddhist temple across the street from the church. At the entrance to the Buddhist temple stood a huge drum. Whenever the church bell rang, the Buddhist drum was beaten. This competition was particularly exciting to church boys, who took turns pulling the ropes for the bell and were determined to outdo the village scholar beating the drum. The competitive show of force went on for several months until called off by the pastor. Eventually the drum was gone and the Buddhist temple closed, while the church is still standing today.¹

Among the church boys actively involved in this “religious competition” was the 10-year-old Lin Yutang, nee Hele. The village pastor who was responsible for building the church was his father, Lin Zhicheng. Lin Yutang would later call himself a “mountain boy,” but perhaps more importantly he was brought up as a “mission boy.”

Lin Yutang was born in a mountain village called Banzi, Zhangzhou, Fujian province, on October 10, 1895. The year is significant in modern Chinese history. It is the year China lost the First Sino-Japanese War and had to sign the humiliating Treaty of Shimonoseki, ceding Taiwan to Japan among other humiliations. China’s loss in the war was more than the concessions in the Treaty itself, it entailed her defeat at the hands of Japan, once a tributary state of China but now, following the Meiji Reform through which Japan modeled herself after the West, a victor. To the minds of Chinese intellectuals of the era, the defeat of China in 1895 spelled the end of the reform efforts of an earlier generation of Chinese intelligentsia who had attempted to strengthen and empower China by adopting Western technological advances while remaining firmly grounded in the Confucian cultural-political system. After this defeat, the Chinese intelligentsia came to a consensus that modernity was inevitable and that it must be achieved at any cost, regardless of the nation’s cultural and political legacies. To ensure China’s survival in the modern world, nothing ought to stand in the way—if Chinese culture was an obstacle, then the answer was “total Westernization”; if the political regime was in the way, then “revolution” was essential to overthrow the regime. Indeed, after 1895, China embarked on a journey-of-no-return toward modernity, a journey that would be marked by conflicts and struggles, revolutions and bloodshed, agonies and excitement, sacrifices and betrayals in a process still ongoing today.

In that sense, Lin Yutang was born into Chinese modernity. In his adult life, he would actively participate in shaping the troubled and contentious process of Chinese modernity and eventually leave behind the remarkable legacy of a cross-cultural journey. His childhood, however, was shaped by the advance of modernity in the form of the spread and penetration of the Christian mission in China. By the time Lin Yutang was born, the Christian mission had been in China over half a century and had successfully penetrated to inland mountain villages like Lin’s hometown Banzi. Lin Yutang was of the third-generation born into his Christian family. His grandfather was a Taiping Christian and disappeared when the Taiping Rebellion was crushed.² His father narrowly

escaped by hiding under a bed and later became a diligent and enthusiastic village pastor. Dr. Warnshuis, the American missionary who later became Secretary of the International Missionary Council, London and New York, 1921–1943, found in Lin's father a most able aid in the local mission work and the two became good friends. In Lin's own words, his father "was a pioneer progressive those days. He was a dreamer, keen, imaginative, humorous, and eternally restless. He communicated to us children a passionate zest for all that was new and modern, the knowledge of the Western world."³

To grow up in a Christian family with a father who was a village pastor in early twentieth-century China offered unusual educational advantages. Lin's was a family of six sons and two daughters, and Lin Yutang was the youngest but one. His was a pious Christian home and the family lived in harmony and love. Brothers were never supposed to quarrel and they seldom did. Though a big family, it was run with an orderly routine where each knew his or her duty. By the time Lin Yutang was growing up, his two elder sisters had taken up much of the family chores like cooking and washing. Boys would take turns to fetch water from the family well. During the day, both boys and girls would spend much time reading and studying in the study room in their house, as their pastor father was also the instructor for the village Christian community. And there was a daily family prayer in the evening before going to bed. Growing up in a closely-knit Christian home imbued with love and peace surely played an important part in shaping Lin's character.

Lin's father was a Christian pastor, but he was also Chinese, so his home-spun instruction included teaching the Chinese language and excerpts from Confucian classics such as the *Book of Poetry*. At the age of eight, for instance, Lin Yutang composed a one-page textbook following the format of *Sanzijing* (Three-Word Classic), the traditional Chinese textbook for learning Chinese for beginners:

One who is too proud	人自高
Eventually will fall	终必败
Relying on armor	持战甲
And bows and arrows	靠弓矢
He does not know	而不知
That the others' power	他人强
And the others' strength	他人力
Are [a] hundred times greater	千百倍 ⁴

When his brothers and sisters found his creative text, they all began to read it aloud, causing little “Hele” much embarrassment, but his literary creativity was thus demonstrated early on.

As a pastor’s son, however, the strongest impacts on him were the traces of Western civilization that came with the mission. Along with the Bible, the missionaries brought with them a Western style of life and new knowledge. Lin’s first contact with Western civilization was a collar stud that Reverend Warnshuis left after staying at the Lin home, which aroused great wonder in the little Lin who did not know its purpose. Lin also remembered the odor of butter left behind by the Warnshuis’ after their visit, as his sisters had to open all the windows to let out the smell. During the building of the new church, Reverend Warnshuis sent a set of carpenter’s tools, including a rotating drill, which caused Lin a great deal of wonder and admiration. Most importantly, Dr. Warnshuis introduced to Lin’s father a Christian weekly called *Christian Intelligence*, published by the Christian Literature Society of Shanghai.⁵ It was through this weekly that Western learning came to Lin’s family. Not only did Lin’s father learn about the latest Western science and innovations, such as the invention of airplanes, he also heard about the universities of Berlin and of Oxford as the best in the world and dreamed that his sons might one day attend.

By the age of 10, Lin was sent to mission school at Gulangyu, Xiamen (Amoy), one of the first coastal treaty-ports opened up to foreigners following the Treaty of Nanjing after China’s defeat by Britain in the Opium War of 1842. Gulangyu was a colonial enclave some 60 miles away from Lin’s home village, and as a pastor’s son, Lin was eligible for free mission school education. From 1905 to 1911, Lin Yutang attended the Union Middle School set up by the American Reformed Church Mission and built on a hillside of Gulangyu.⁶ Lin and other boys were instructed in English, Chinese, algebra, geometry, astronomy, physics, physiology, and history, but according to its founder Reverend Pitcher, intellectual studies were “secondary to the great object of the Mission, the raising up of spiritual young men, Christian young men ... who may become fitted for the sacred office of the ministry.”⁷ Unlike Reverend Warnshuis, however, Reverend Pitcher, the school principal, did not leave a good impression upon Lin. In his memory, the principal was an “avaricious man” who occupied himself in the booming real estate business in Gulangyu, and Lin remembered hearing “the incessant tick of his abacus.” But Mrs. Pitcher, Lin remembered as “a sweet English lady, whose soft voice and intonation

was music to my ears. The choral soprano singing of *Sa-loh* of the missionary ladies had made a great impression on my Chinese ears.”⁸

The mission-school experience in a treaty-port further opened up the vista of the outside world to the mountain-village boy. It was at the port of Gulangyu that Lin, with a sense of awe and fascination, first saw the engine of a steamer. On the streets of Gulangyu one also often saw groups of French and American sailors, usually drunk and tottering around. When a British soccer team came to play on the enclosed playground at Gulangyu, mission school boys, including Lin, were recruited to serve them drinks. And Lin and other mission school boys would also stand peeping into the windows of a ball club where foreign men and women would socialize and hug each other in public—certainly an eye-opener to the boys. As a mission-school student, Lin was present at the reception when President Theodore Roosevelt sent the US fleet to Xiamen in 1907. It was a great show of force, which accelerated Lin’s desire to learn more of the West.

Lin Yutang graduated from the Union Middle School at Gulangyu in 1911, the year the Revolution erupted to overthrow the last dynasty in Chinese history setting China on its course to becoming a republic—in fact the first republic in Asia. To Lin’s family at the time, a critical decision was made by Lin’s father to send him to Shanghai for college education at St. John’s College, an Episcopalian missionary institution. It was not an easy decision for a village pastor, as he had to borrow a hundred dollars from a devoted former pupil to make the trip to Shanghai possible, in addition to getting support from Lin’s second brother during Lin’s college years as his second brother was then graduating from St. John’s.⁹ Eventually, the village pastor managed to send three of his sons—including Lin’s younger brother—to attend St. John’s College.

Lin would later tell the moving story of his second elder sister Meigong to whose sacrifice he owed his own college education.¹⁰ Meigong was 4 years older than Lin, and was the closest to Lin among his siblings. She had attended mission school in Xiamen and was a conscientious and brilliant student herself with a special liking for Western novels translated by Lin Shu (1852–1924). A native of Fujian province, Lin Shu was a legendary translator in modern China, who made eloquently accessible a series of Western novels, by authors such as Walter Scott, Dickens, Conan Doyle, Maupassant, and Dumas—but Lin Shu himself did not know a word of English. He depended solely on his aid to retell stories to him. Yet Lin Shu’s translations in beautiful classical

Chinese were extremely popular at the time, particularly his translation of Dumas' *La Dame aux Camélias*, to which siblings Meigong and Lin were attracted. After reading Sherlock Holmes, Meigong and Lin would invent their own detective stories together, and tell their stories to their mother to tease her, incorporating hair-splitting escapes and adventures episode after episode. After graduating from high school, Meigong longed to go to college and refused to be married off. She pleaded after family prayers and made promises but to no avail. It was simply beyond the means of the village pastor to send his daughter to college.

This was not a matter of college tuition, as she would have been able to get a scholarship, but a matter of traveling and living expenses beyond the means of the village pastor. So when it was decided that the family would send Lin to college in Shanghai, Meigong had no choice but to agree to get married. She had taken a special liking to her younger brother "Hele," for Lin was rather erratic and naughty as a youngster. In 1911, Lin's family embarked on a river journey by boat together—first to deliver Meigong to be married and then to take Lin to Xiamen and see him off to Shanghai for college. When the wedding ceremony was over, Meigong pulled Lin over and took 40 cents from her pocket and gave it to him. At parting, with tears in her eyes, she said to Lin, "Ho-lok [Hele], you have a chance to go to college. Your sister, being a girl, can't. Do not abuse your opportunity. Make up your mind to be a good man, a useful man, and a famous man."¹¹ Two years later, Lin learned that his beloved second sister, Meigong, died of bubonic plague, but her words remained with him for life.

THE MOST DISTINGUISHED "JOHANNEAN"

When Lin Yutang entered St. John's College in 1911, it was already known as the best higher education institution in China for producing English-speaking and Western-educated graduates. St. John's won national distinction for producing several Chinese ambassadors such as W.W. Yen (Yan Huiqing, ambassador to Germany and Denmark, 1913–1917), Alfred Sze (Shi Zhaoqi, ambassador to the UK, 1914–1921), and Wellington Koo (Gu Weijun, ambassador to the USA, appointed in 1915 and holder of many other key diplomatic posts).¹² Founded in 1879, St. John's was the largest missionary college in China, and though it was an Episcopalian college, its primary distinction lay in its English-language education. The majority of its students were trained to be successful

compradors aiding the business tycoons in Shanghai.¹³ The Reverend Dr. F.L. Hawks Pott served as St. John's President for more than 50 years beginning in 1886, and was instrumental in expanding St. John's from a small missionary college to the best English-language college of national distinction attracting not only students with a missionary background but also those with elite official, merchant, and professional family backgrounds. A graduate of New York's Columbia University and General Theological Seminary, Dr. Pott was an able administrator—"It was said he never returned from the United States without a new building in his pocket"¹⁴—and an exemplary educator who was personally involved in the everyday functioning of the college. The 1916 *Johannean*, the St. John's yearbook, was dedicated to "The Reverend Dr. F.L. Hawks Pott, Lit. B., D.D./Our President,/Teacher, Guide, and Helper,/Whose Personality/As an educative factor in our life/We shall always remember with gratitude."¹⁵

At St. John's, Lin Yutang was in every sense a top student who excelled both physically and intellectually. One of the distinctions of St. John's College apart from other Chinese colleges was its emphasis on physical education as an indispensable part of a college curriculum. Lin Yutang later recalled that, if anything, St. John's college education gave him a well-developed chest from his participation in various sports activities. He learned how to play tennis and how to play basketball. He was on the college soccer team and was the captain of the rowing team. He made the track teams of 1915 and 1916, and set a college record for the mile run, and even participated in the Far Eastern Olympics. However, when Lin's father visited him in Shanghai and saw him running races in a sports meet, he was not impressed and thought Lin should concentrate on his intellectual pursuits instead.¹⁶

In terms of intellectual pursuits, Lin made remarkable and unparalleled achievements, particularly in the mastery of the English language and in the demonstration of literary talent. Four years of St. John's college training had won Lin Yutang a series of honors and distinctions. He was President of the Class of 1916 (see Figs. 2.1 and 2.2), Leader of the Class English Debating Team, President of the English Literary and Debating Society, Medalist for Fiction and English Oration, English Editor for *The St. John's Echo*, St. John's student journal, Editor-in-chief of *Johannean*, the St. John's College yearbook. He was voted by fellow students as "the most distinguished student," "the Best English writer," "the Best English speaker," and "the Best English debater."¹⁷

Fig. 2.1 Lin Yutang,
President of the Class
of 1916, *The Johannean*
1916



As the best college for English training, St. John's offered Lin Yutang a solid foundation for his later success as the most accomplished cross-cultural critic among modern Chinese intelligentsia. Lin's college education epitomized the best that St. John's could offer. At St. John's, he "had taken to English like duck to water," and by the end of his year-and-half of preparatory school, he had pretty much perfected his English skills.¹⁸ The secret to his mastery of the English language was the pocket Oxford Dictionary, which did not merely offer definitions of particular words but also provided contextual meanings and examples of proper usage. Lin carried the dictionary at all times and worked on absorbing

Fig. 2.2 Mang Hyi-zung
[Meng Xiancheng], Vice
President of the Class of
1916, *The Johannean* 1916



the essence of the English language. So by his freshman year, Lin was elected to the editorial board of *The St. John's Echo*, the English-language student journal of St. John's College. His first piece of creative writing, a short story entitled "A Life in a Southern Village," was published in the October 1914 issue of *The St. John's Echo*. Unlike other modern Chinese writers, Lin's first creative work was in English, a most unusual and significant distinction.

Although the story of "A Life in a Southern Village" was set in 1887, the background was autobiographical. The story opens up with a beautiful description of Lin's home village:

In the southern part of Fukien there lies a large stretch of rich, fertile soil, well watered by a fine system of rivers, flowing in common toward the east to the beautiful harbour of Amoy. Everywhere we find an instance of the

bounty of magnificent nature. The climate is, for the most part of the year, mild and pleasant, except in a short period of hot summer. Wild flowers, berries, and delicious fruits flourish on the mountains during every season of the year.¹⁹

Now studying in metropolitan Shanghai, Lin was apparently reminiscing about his village life back home. On a number of later occasions, Lin Yutang would call himself a “mountain boy.” The natural beauty of his home village made an enduring impact on him. To Lin, the natural beauty and its omnipresence were always sources of inspiration to which he could return. Growing up in the high mountains gave him a sense of largess that transcended all that was artificial and man-made in the world, including, the skyscrapers in metropolitan cities.

His descriptions of the natural environment in this work introduce the reader to a world of innocence and purity in the village life, and serve the motif of the story well, as the story focuses on his youthful obsession and questioning of religious beliefs. On a summer day in 1887, Han-lock, the protagonist,²⁰ comes from his mission school in Amoy to his home village for vacation. Han-lock has a loving and caring family: his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Tsao, his sister, Ching, who is also studying in a girls’ school in a town 20 miles from home, as well as his fiancée, Chi-yau, who is already staying in his home taking care of his parents. Chi-yau was a gentle girl, “very kind, patient, obedient, and serviceable ... a more intelligent, sensible girl than her companions of her own age.”²¹ But later, something goes wrong. It is as if she is suffering from depression. She refuses to discuss it to the bewilderment of her family. As author Lin reveals, this is all because Han-lock is having doubts about his religious beliefs and is wandering away from God. It is not until Han-lock is studying in the USA and receives a letter from Chi-yau that he realizes that she has been troubled for his soul-wandering. At the same time Han-lock realizes his own faults and comes back to a firm belief in religion. Eventually he becomes a minister himself. The story ends with Han-lock returning from the USA to his home village, “and the young pair lived happily together, preaching the Gospel to the village people with their words and with their own example of a kind and loving life.”²²

Lin Yutang published two more short stories in *The St. John’s Echo*, “San-po” in October 1915 and “Chaou-li, the Daughter of Fate” in March 1916, both of a religious nature. Unlike the first story, these two stories probe the dark side of religious devotions and both have rather

grim endings. "San-po" is an innocent, kind and lovely girl in a group of inland Chinese religious pilgrims who believe in some kind of pestilence. The pilgrims came to the little village in the South where the first-person narrator (I-narrator) resides. These pilgrims from Henan province were from well-to-do families, but according to their custom they had to travel around the country begging their way along, eating simple foods and wearing bedraggled clothes for a year before their return, in order to avoid a visit of pestilence to their village. The I-narrator falls in love with San-po during their stay and begs the group to leave her behind temporarily indicating they can fetch her on their way back. During her stay, however, San-po violates the pilgrims' rules by wearing a black suit upon persuasion of the I-narrator, as no decent clothes are allowed. When the pilgrims return and discover this, they desert San-po, who eventually dies of depression and fear, to the great remorse of the I-narrator. In "Chaou-li, the Daughter of Fate," Chaou-li, the protagonist, is an illegitimate daughter of a wealthy village dignitary. When both her parents die, she is sold as a slave to a mean-spirited family. Her father has a will leaving his wealth to his daughter who is lost but specifying that the family fortune be given to her once she is found. However, to protect the reputation of her new master she cannot announce her identity. As such, Chaou-li is born to suffer and her suffering ends only when she is buried alive as a sacrificial offering to her dead master at the end of the story.²³

Although these two stories were set in a Chinese village involving Chinese religious customs, the youthful Lin Yutang was apparently grappling through his nascent literary talent with the Christian notion of original sin. Lin had enrolled in the Theological School at St. John's out of his own choice, but soon he realized that exegesis was not his cup of tea and his inquisitive mind was met with contradictory answers. "All the theological hocus-pocus was an insult to my intelligence. I could not be honest and go through with it,"²⁴ as he put it. During one summer vacation, Lin went back home and his father asked him to preach a sermon at the village church. Lin chose the topic "The Bible to Be Read as Literature" and said that "Jehovah was strictly a tribal god who helped Joshua to smite Amalekites and Gideonites, and that there was an evolution in the idea of God from a tribal idol to a monotheistic God of all peoples and all nations, no one in particular being 'chosen.'"²⁵ This caused considerable bewilderment to Lin's father, who was worried that the little "Hele" might turn into someone who is "good in English, but an atheist." In any case, Lin quit the Theological School

and concentrated on working on his “English.” His mind delved into the broad sea of knowledge St. John’s could offer. St. John’s had a library of 5000 volumes, and Lin Yutang was known on campus as the one who had made a complete list of the inventory of books in the library.

In his graduating year, he received the honor of being chosen as the Editor-in-Chief for *The Johannean 1916*, St. John’s yearbook for graduating seniors. In this volume Lin is described by his peers as “a smart young man who writes elegantly, speaks eloquently, and dresses fashionably.”²⁶ In the Literary section of *The Johannean 1916*, is an interesting story written by Lin entitled: “A Case of Johanitis.” In this story, the protagonist “I” visits a “madman” in a hospital, who is merely suffering from the symptoms of “Johanitis,” that is, the erratic behavior and eccentric character that may be common to all “Johanneans.” Indeed, the “madman” turns out to resemble certain treasured qualities of a “Johannean” such as being ambitious, independent, and gifted. In depicting the self-identity of a “Johannean,” the young Lin Yutang sounds rather Nietzschean.²⁷ What is most interesting is that “patriotism” is also shown in Lin’s story as an essential part of the “Johannean” identity, in spite of the fact that St. John’s was a missionary college. In the story, the I-narrator makes the “madman” burst out with a strong somewhat humorous but patriotic call: “Wake up! Wake up! You young men of China! Be strong morally, intellectually, and physically, for sleep is necessary to health. Therefore put out your lights after 11 o’clock, and make China one of the greatest nations in the world!”²⁸

“CULTURE SHOCK” IN BEIJING

Lin Yutang graduated from St. John’s College in 1916, a fully Westernized young man proficient in English and competent in Western knowledge thanks to his mission-school education in Xiamen and Shanghai. He went on to become an English Instructor at Tsinghua College, then a leading institution of Western learning in China. Founded with the partial refund of the US portion of the Boxer Indemnity, Tsinghua College at that time was basically a preparatory school for training Chinese students for further study in the USA. During his years at Tsinghua from 1916 to 1919, Lin Yutang experienced an important cross-cultural re-awakening, or a process of “un-learning,” during which he searched for his Chinese cultural roots and realized his sense of national cultural identity—at a time when Chinese

cultural tradition was precisely the target of severe critique among elite Chinese intelligentsia.

The latter half of the 1910s was a time of cultural upheaval in modern China. After the First Sino-Japanese War of 1895, Chinese intelligentsia lost confidence in the reform strategies of the late Qing literati who had attempted to adopt Western technological advances to strengthen the Qing regime, and revolution seemed all but inevitable. To avert and appease the revolutionary call, the Qing court itself instituted a number of significant reform measures, including the 1905 abolishment of the Civil Examination system, which forever changed the knowledge/power structure in modern China. After that, flocks of young Chinese had to go abroad, mostly to Japan and the West (USA and Europe), for an education. But revolution came nevertheless and the Qing dynasty was overthrown in 1911. In this process, the real power of the first republic in Asia fell into the hands of the warlord general Yuan Shikai who eventually attempted to restore the imperial system by making himself the new emperor in 1916. The restoration attempt was a fiasco and Yuan died shortly afterwards, leaving China in a chaotic Warlord Period.

By this time, a new generation of youth educated abroad had matured. Disgusted by the failures of the political revolution, the newly educated youth believed that the root of China's inability to usher herself quickly into modernity lay in her traditional cultural legacy and lethargy. The two groups of "returned students," those from Japan and from the USA and Europe, joined forces and launched the journal *La Jeunesse* (The New Youth) in Beijing, calling for a "Renaissance" of Chinese culture by means of a wholesale Westernization and reevaluation (condemnation) of traditional Chinese culture. Under the leadership of its able and open-minded chancellor, Cai Yuanpei, Peking University became the stronghold of a virtual cultural revolution. Chen Duxiu, Dean of Humanities at Peking University who later became the first secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, wrote a number of fierce polemical pieces in the journal *La Jeunesse* condemning the hypocrisy of traditional Chinese culture in terms of practices such as women's bound feet, concubinage, chaste widowhood, and arranged marriage. Hu Shi, then still a graduate student at Columbia University, joined forces with *La Jeunesse* and called for a literary revolution by replacing *wenyan*, or classical Chinese, with the vernacular modern Chinese. This New Cultural Movement, as it was called, was aimed at a reevaluation of all traditional Chinese cultural values to achieve the salvation of China.

Lin Yutang joined the Chinese national intellectual scene at this moment. But due to his Christian educational background, he felt awkward at the center of this Chinese intellectual scene. On the one hand, his Christian upbringing imbued him with instinctive sympathy toward the progressive spirit of the New Culture movement. “To be brought up as a Christian was synonymous with being progressive, Western-minded, and in sympathy with the New Learning. It meant, on the whole, acceptance of the West, with particular admiration for the Western microscope and Western surgery.”²⁹ When the New Culturalist progressive intellectuals condemned foot-binding and concubinage and called for the education of women, for instance, Chinese Christians like Lin who had long been upholding those values urged putting them into practice. In terms of recognizing the popular vernacular Chinese, missionaries in Lin’s hometown had gone one step further creating a Romanized script for the Fujianese dialect for the convenience of missionary work. Lin Yutang reveals that his own mother, a woman, barely educated in Chinese, could and did read the Bible in that Romanized script, and even wrote him letters in the same script. As Lin later put it, “It isn’t that Romanization is not feasible, but psychologically we don’t want it.”³⁰

On the other hand Lin’s own psychology was at a rather precarious stage. While the New Culture movement was a truly revolutionary intellectual upheaval advocating a complete break with the past, it was also fundamentally founded upon a tacit nationalist assumption that China would be “reborn” on a progressive path to renewed glory. The promotion of *baihua*, or vernacular Chinese, was successful precisely because it was rooted in tradition and had been in practice for several centuries, though not recognized as an elite and official form of expression. But a completely Romanized script in place of the Chinese characters would mean the demise of the Chinese characters themselves. Such a move cannot be comprehended as a “rebirth” of Chinese culture in any sense, and it would have certainly run against the national sentiment. What Lin Yutang realized as a “Johannean” teaching English at Tsinghua College during the height of the national intellectual fervor was that he could not fully identify with the national iconoclastic intellectual temper of the time precisely due to his Christian educational background. For Lin Yutang, the New Culture movement did mean its manifest claims to break with Chinese tradition completely, as the Christian education had successfully done for Lin Yutang. Yet Lin was now feeling awkward and embarrassed, even ashamed of the denial of the Chinese cultural knowledge to him

through Christian education. For Lin Yutang, the New Culture movement re-awakened in him a sense of national identification via a process of un-learning his Christian education.

As an English instructor at one of the elite colleges in Beijing, Lin Yutang found himself drawn to the center of an exciting cultural battle, yet he could not fully identify himself with the issues at stake. Even though he was regarded as part of the national intelligentsia, he lacked the suavity and cultural know-how of a New Culture and May Fourth intellectual. For Lin soon realized that as a Chinese Christian he had been brought up in a different world, separate from the larger Chinese community as a whole. It was in Beijing that Lin began to question his orthodox Christian beliefs and education. While Lin had certainly benefited a great deal from a Christian education that put him at the forefront of the English-proficient elites equipped with a solid command of Western learning, he now realized that that had come at a huge cost—the Christian education had cut him off from his own cultural heritage as if he were de-nationalized. As a Christian boy, for instance, he was forbidden to practice the age-old Chinese custom of ancestor worship which had served as a vital means of Chinese cultural inheritance. A Chinese Christian boy was even forbidden to listen to village folk opera, which entails much of the popular Chinese cultural tradition. As Lin himself put it:

Any Chinese laundryman was better acquainted with the heroes and heroines of the *Three Kingdoms* than I was. I had known even in my childhood that Joshua's trumpets had blown down the walls of Jericho. When I discovered that the tears of Chi Liang's widow, on finding her husband dead as conscript labor to build the Great Wall, had melted away a good section of the Great Wall, my rage was terrible. I had been cheated of my national heritage. That was what a good Puritan Christian education could do to a Chinese boy. I determined to plunge into the great stream of our national consciousness.³¹

If Christian divorce from Chinese folklore was unconscious indoctrination for Lin as a boy, during his Johannean years he more or less resolved by himself to abandon Chinese learning and to seek for the wonder in the English world. As an English instructor at Tsinghua College, Lin was indeed known as a “good Puritan Christian.” While his colleagues would go and have fun with sing-song girls in the red district in Beijing during

the weekend, Lin was conducting a Sunday school for Bible Study on Tsinghua campus. Lin was amicably called a “Puritan” and a “virgin”—which he was until his marriage.³² In the meantime, however, along with the rise of national consciousness in him, Lin was undergoing a critical examination of religious indoctrination and stopped being a church-going Christian and declared himself a pagan.³³ To make up for the gaps in his knowledge of his own cultural heritage, Lin plunged himself into the study of Chinese literature and philosophy with a sense of shame and vengeance. This process of “unlearning” Lin carried out all by himself, being ashamed of asking his Tsinghua colleagues questions. So instead of entertaining himself in Bada Hutong, the famous red district in Beijing, Lin became a frequent visitor to Liulichang, the well-known cultural district for antique shops and rare books, inquiring of shop-keepers about the differences among various editions of ancient books or collections.

The first outcome of Lin’s plunging into the study of Chinese literature and philosophy with a sense of shame and vengeance was an article in English on Confucian philosophy entitled: “Li: The Chinese Principle of Social Control and Organization,” published in *The Chinese Social and Political Science Review* in 1917. In light of the iconoclastic environment of the New Culture movement, Lin’s attitude toward Chinese cultural tradition as shown in this article revealed his unique cross-cultural perspective. It must be understood that Confucian “Li” was very much the target of an all-out assault by the New Culture movement, and Lu Xun’s condemnation of “Li” as the “man-eating (or cannibalistic) religion” had become the defining iconoclastic ethos of the New Culture movement. As a Christian-educated Westernized intellectual who resented the fact that he had been denied his own national cultural heritage, Lin Yutang came up with a much more objective and sympathetic understanding of “Li.” His approach was that of an interpreter from inside China’s own cultural tradition as opposed to a foreigner’s perspective which usually led to a narrower scope of observation. As Lin saw it, “*Li* is the disposition and regulation of the elements of the Chinese social system in a harmonious moral order.”³⁴ To achieve a good order of things, the Confucian principle of “Li” devises an elaborate social hierarchical order in which different relations are to be observed with proper behavior and deference. Lin points out that Chinese society always puts the harmony of social relations over individual achievement and “Li” takes care to spell out concrete moral lifestyle guidelines to maintain social control. Given the pervasiveness of “Li” in the elemental Chinese social fabric,

China is thus called “the country of Li.” Like Roman discipline that sustained the Roman Empire, “China, insisting on the reverence for order, stands and survives.”³⁵ For the modern challenge of Confucianism, Lin’s tone was rather conciliatory. Quite unlike the New Culturalist radicals who condemned the hypocrisy of “Li” and called for the dissolution of the Confucian system, Lin Yutang hoped for a reconciliation of the traditional and modern values. Since “Li” was very much founded upon the family system, it was inevitably contrary to the modern Western emphasis on individualism, “but perhaps a true solution of the problem will be found in a well-balanced growth and prospering of both principles.”³⁶ And Lin also acknowledged that it would be impractical to dissolve age-old practices that had been ingrained in the Chinese mind, such as “the sense of seriousness, the strong sense of duty, the love of order and propriety, and the respect for elders and authorities. Certain of these have shown signs of giving way under the stress of modern conditions, but it is hoped that such symptoms are temporary and that a longer period of time will bring Young China to her senses and make her once more respect the old virtues.”³⁷

While Lin’s English essay revealed his sympathetic understanding of Chinese cultural heritage, his two earliest essays in Chinese demonstrate concerns that resonated with the new national intellectual trends of the time. When Hu Shi returned to China in 1917 from America and was hailed as a hero of the New Culture movement, Lin Yutang was there to greet him at Tsinghua College and would later regard him as one of the most influential figures in his life. In addition, through Lin’s contributions to *La Jeunesse*, the signatory journal of the New Culture movement, Lin won the attention of Hu Shi and a life-long friendship was kindled between these two well-known liberal intellectuals of modern China.

“Hanzi suoyin zhi shuoming” (On Chinese Character Index System), published in the February 15, 1918, issue of *La Jeunesse*, signals Lin’s entrance into the inner circle of the New Culture elite intellectual world. Inspired by the English alphabetic indexing system, Lin attempts to design a similar Chinese indexing system by reducing all Chinese characters to the first three elemental strokes. It was a bold and creative attempt and this fascination with the ordering of Chinese characters would accompany Lin throughout his life. Lin’s creative system won lavish praise from Cai Yuanpei, Chancellor of Peking University and widely respected as the intellectual leader of the time. Cai wagers that Lin’s

design would prove to be “a path-breaking invention applicable to the compilation of Chinese dictionaries and all kinds of directories, saving time and energy in scholarship and practical business.”³⁸

Chinese language reform and Literary Revolution were interrelated issues during the New Culture movement, and the promotion and recognition of the vernacular language, or *baihua*, was key. While Lin’s invention of a Chinese index system opened up the philological reform efforts for the modern Chinese language, his follow-up essay in *La Jeunesse* demonstrates his unique insight in the development of modern Chinese literature as it focuses on the style of the vernacular literature. Lin argues that Literary Revolution should not merely focus on using the vernacular language in place of the classical language, but should attend to what kind of *baihua* one should use. Lin points out that as the vernacular speech, *baihua* could easily become “a housewife’s rattle”—talkative, long-winded, and pointless. Instead, the focus on *baihua* should pay particular attention to its stylistic cultivation and strive for “lucidity, perspicuity, cogency of thought, truth and appropriateness of expression” as commonly found in Western literature.³⁹ This idea of a proper style of *baihua* anticipates Lin’s later promotion of *yuluti* as a viable alternative to the corrupt usage of *baihua* in the 1930s.

Three years of post-college experience in Beijing (1916–1919) during the exciting New Culture movement constituted an important “un-learning” process for Lin Yutang. In the meantime, 3 years of service as English instructor at Tsinghua College earned him a half government scholarship for further graduate study at Harvard University in the USA. So during the height of the New Culture and May Fourth movement in 1919, Lin Yutang embarked on a voyage to America.

FROM HARVARD TO LEIPZIG

Before going to America, Lin Yutang got married to Liao Cuifeng (known as “Hong” in English) who also came from a Chinese Christian family, a relatively well-to-do merchant family in Xiamen. Liao had graduated from St. Mary’s College in Shanghai, a women’s college equivalent to St. John’s, so she was also fluent in English. Their personalities were rather complimentary, and it proved to be a very successful marriage that lasted for a life time.⁴⁰

On August 17, 1919, the newlyweds boarded a ship to the USA in a first-class cabin. There were 146 Chinese students bound for the USA

on the ship. Apart from the monthly stipend of US\$40 from Tsinghua College, Lin would rely for his study abroad expenses on a partial subsidy from Peking University based on an agreement that Lin would join the faculty of Peking University after his study in the USA. This agreement was only verbal in nature between Lin and Hu Shi and had not been officially verified by Peking University by the time Lin boarded the ship. The second day on the sea voyage, Lin wrote a letter to Hu Shi informing him of his hectic departure. He told Hu that Mrs. Lin was joining him and that she planned to take some courses in home economics at Radcliffe, the women's college complement to Harvard. Lin claimed that this reflected his idea of women's role in the world. He perceived social ethics as prejudiced against family life and women themselves as often being ashamed of bearing and bringing up children. But to Lin, a woman's primary job was to "make a good home," and "until society gives credit to bringing up children, to family life and to the duties that make human happiness possible, the present state of affairs would remain unsettling."⁴¹ Lin goes on to urge Hu to make his expectant employment at Peking University final, and looked forward to joining Hu at Peking University and collaborating with him on the cultural reform enterprise for modern China after his study abroad. On September 11, 1919, Lin arrived at San Francisco and stayed at Hotel Washington. He was elated at coming to see America for the first time, ate a lot of ice-cream, and enjoyed the service of American servants. He also enjoyed his new married life, as he was now pampered and taken good care of by Hong.

Lin spent a couple of days in San Francisco and then took the trans-continental train for Boston, and arrived at Harvard University about a week later just in time for the new semester. The couple first settled at 85 Trowbridge Street, Cambridge. On September 20, 1919, Lin Yutang sent in an "Application for Admission to Candidacy for a Degree in Arts or Philosophy," in which he listed his credentials as follows: St. John's Preparatory School, 1911–1912, St. John's College, 1912–1916, graduated with honors and obtained A.B. degree in 1916; courses taken at St. John's include English Composition, English Literature, German, French, History, Economics, Sociology, Philosophy, Education, Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Geology and four or five courses in Theology; proficient in French but not in German; he had been a teacher of English at Tsinghua College from 1916 to 1919, had served as Assistant Editor for the journal *Chinese Social and Political*

Science Review, and had published articles both in English and Chinese, as well as a book *An Index System for Chinese Characters and Vocabulary*. The major Lin intended to study was “modern literature (European), chiefly comparative,” and he intended to obtain a Master’s degree as soon as possible and a Ph.D. degree in summer 1922.⁴² Normally, it would take 2 years for an M.A. degree at Harvard, but given the strength of Lin’s application, it was agreed that Lin would be granted a master’s degree on the basis of 1 year’s work, plus an approved summer course at Harvard, if he maintained an A record for all his courses except for the course on German, and he would also have to satisfy the Latin requirement. And in the Dean’s remarks, it was specifically noted that such an arrangement was not to be taken as a precedent for St. John’s graduates. The courses Lin took at Harvard include Comparative Literature 11 (Romantic Movement), Comparative Literature 12 (Fiction), French 17 (Literary Criticism), as well as German 12, Slavic 5, and English 59.

Lin plunged into the world of learning now available to him at Harvard. As he noted in his letters to Hu Shi, he went to classes every morning and stayed in the library in the afternoon. He found the courses at Harvard demanding and joked that once at Harvard, one had to become a “John Harvard.” Lin noticed that Harvard put special emphasis on theory and philosophical ideas.

The two courses Lin took in comparative literature were all taught by Irving Babbitt.⁴³ An enigmatic professor at Harvard at the time, Babbitt left an important legacy in modern Chinese culture as he influenced a group of Chinese students of his who later formed the *Xueheng* School, a conservative cultural group critical of and opposed to the New Culture movement. In his article entitled “Humanistic Education in China and the West” published in *The Chinese Students’ Monthly*, a journal put forward by Chinese students in the USA, Babbitt laid out his argument against the rash break with tradition either in the West or the East. Babbitt was critical of the development of modernity in the West. In its break with the tradition since the Renaissance, as Babbitt argues, the West has been suffering from a certain moral malaise and spiritual crisis, along with the expansion of physical sciences and scientific discovery that engendered a utilitarian-sentimental pseudo-morality based on the belief in the idea of progress. If China were to engage in a literary revolution to renounce tradition *in toto*, she would find herself in the same kind of moral vacuum as the West. Thus Babbitt urged China “not to lose touch

with your own background in the name of a superficial progress, and at the same time to get into closer touch with our background beginning with the Greeks. You will find that the two backgrounds confirm one another especially on the humanistic side, and constitute together what one may term the wisdom of the ages.”⁴⁴

Later in his life, Lin Yutang would become the best-known Chinese intellectual in America introducing and interpreting the “wisdom of the East” to the West, contributing toward what Babbitt had envisioned as a “humanistic international” ideal⁴⁵ and Lin’s take on the wisdom of China was very much a humanistic interpretation comparable to Babbitt’s humanistic concerns.⁴⁶ Given the fact that Lin took two courses taught by Irving Babbitt at Harvard, it would be reasonable to assume that Lin would become a staunch follower. But the fact is that Lin was perhaps the only one among the Chinese students sitting in Babbitt’s classes who did not become Babbitt’s disciple. Instead, he was at that time a staunch supporter of Hu Shi, the leader of the Chinese New Culture movement. In his letter to Hu Shi, Lin stated that he had talked to Irving Babbitt about Hu’s promotion of *baihua*, the vernacular Chinese, and felt that Babbitt held misunderstandings about the Literary Revolution going on in China.⁴⁷ As Lin found out there was considerable resistance among Chinese students in America to the Literary Revolution back home, Lin took up the cudgel for Hu Shi and the New Culture movement and wrote two essays in *The Chinese Students’ Monthly* elaborating on and defending the *raison d’être* of the Literary Revolution.

What Lin deemed Babbitt’s misunderstanding of China’s Literary Revolution was not so much Babbitt’s critical insight on the idea of progress, as a question of the compatibility of Babbitt’s ideas with intellectual positions in contemporary China. There are two major objections against the Literary Revolution by Chinese students influenced by Babbitt, one on patriotic grounds and the other on aesthetic grounds. Opponents of the Literary Revolution held that the literary language was the special crown and flower of China’s national heritage and its replacement with the vernacular would mean a loss of national treasures. But Lin counters that there are two kinds of patriotism, the narrow and the liberal. Narrow patriotism knows only to preserve and uphold one’s own ideals and standards against any foreign element. “But should it be possible to conceive of a patriotism which is engaged with what one’s country might become, might possess, and might have done? ... the

man who explores the latent possibilities of the nation is not necessarily less of a patriot than the man who only dreams of the Era of Yao and Hsun.”⁴⁸ And Lin further affirms that the “idea that a nation should keep and maintain a literary standard distinctly different from all others in this great republic of letters and thought, is one of the belated prejudices we ought staunchly to fight against.”⁴⁹ With regard to aesthetics and echoing the literary cosmopolitanism of the New Culture reformers, Lin further elucidates that the key to understanding and appreciating the significance of China’s Literary Revolution lies in a higher conception of what is literature as found in Western literary history. Literary excellence in Chinese cultural history has put too much emphasis on its rhetorical and stylistic craftsmanship, but

we have seen a new conception of literature as criticism of life that towers far above the paltriness of the mere stylist’s ideal. We are met with the new conception that the aim of all great literature is to see life steadily and see life whole, that literature is to play for us the part of the interpreter of life, that insight into human nature, a penetrating sense of the tragedy of human life, and a clear, close vision of the enigmatic face of the great being called the universe, are the first qualifications of a great writer.⁵⁰

Thus, Lin put forward new criteria in terms of patriotism and aesthetics. In regard to opponents’ accusations that *baihua* literature would necessarily be barren and slovenly, Lin cautioned that the vernacular should not be taken to mean merely the way we speak. As the history of European literature demonstrates, vernacular literature is as capable as classical languages of Greek and Latin of exercising a sense of form, choice of words, and beauty of expression. Indeed, the promotion of *baihua* literature would help develop a higher aesthetic objective—“to create in literature a greater beauty of logical thought, imagination and culture.”⁵¹ Lin’s two essays composed during his Harvard year constituted an important contribution to the literary and culture reform movement in modern China, and were perhaps the earliest documents of modern Chinese literary criticism in English. The fact that he was not won over by, but nevertheless aware of, Irving Babbitt’s teachings was particularly significant in terms of Lin’s unique path in his life-long cross-cultural journey.

About a month after the Lins arrived at Cambridge, they moved to a new apartment at 51 Mt. Auburn Street. They enjoyed their family life in

a new exciting environment, but they also found out that living expenses were quite high. "Daily commodities are twice or three times more than normal, plus five to ten percent tax on every purchase. The workers earn about eight or nine dollars per day, and strikes are common."⁵² While Lin spent all his energy exploring the world of learning at Harvard, Hong felt a bit lonely, so she planned to take courses at Radcliffe College in spring. In January 1920, however, Hong got seriously ill with appendicitis and had to be hospitalized. This put a huge financial strain on the Lins who were already financially stressed. Lin had been waiting to hear from Hu Shi about his contract with Peking University after his return to China, which would give him an advance subsidy for his study at Harvard. So he wrote to Hu Shi about his urgent need on January 6, 1920, and Hu immediately sent him US\$300 out of his own pocket as the official contract was still pending. On March 14, 1920, Lin signed a receipt for another US\$480 from Peking University as the subsidy for his study at Harvard.⁵³ Lin was grateful for this aid that sustained him through his first year at Harvard. But in June 1920, he was unexpectedly cut off from the stipend by Tsinghua College, and it proved to be a turning point in his study abroad.⁵⁴

So Lin Yutang needed a summer job fast. While writing to Hu Shi to ensure further subsidy from Peking University, he found a job opportunity he could not afford to miss: working as a secretary for the YMCA in France.⁵⁵ So he decided to go to France for half a year so as to earn his tuition fees and see Europe in the meantime, and then come back to Harvard to resume his studies in Spring 1921. He told Hu Shi that he would see if there would be opportunities in France for him to do research on the history of Chinese literature, as he had planned to focus his research on Chinese literary history through modern/Western methodologies so that after he returned to China and after 10 years he could teach Chinese literature instead of Rousseau and Tolstoy.⁵⁶

During his 1-year study at Harvard, Lin had satisfied all the requirements for an MA degree except for the summer course according to the agreement made at the entrance. Except for the German course in which he got a C plus grade, the rest of the courses were either A or A minus. On the grounds of his excellent record at Harvard, Dean Haskins granted him special permission "to substitute properly certified work done at the University of Paris" for the course Lin was originally required to take at Harvard Summer School.⁵⁷ The Lins then left Cambridge in late June 1920, and went to New York for about

3 weeks. On July 9, 1920, the Lins celebrated their wedding anniversary at a “chop soy” restaurant by themselves.⁵⁸ Then they left for France and were stationed at Le Creusot, a small town in southern France. During his half-year stay at Le Creusot, Lin was preoccupied with his work at the YMCA and could not take any courses at the University of Paris. On February 11, 1921, the Lins moved to Jena, Germany, and decided Lin should pursue his graduate study in Germany because things were much cheaper in postwar Germany, about half price compared to Harvard. Lin again wrote to Dean Haskins about his situation and was told that Harvard would accept “a half-year of properly certified work in either a French or German university as taking place of the work which was prescribed for you in the Harvard Summer School last summer.”⁵⁹ Lin enrolled at Jena University in Spring 1921, and completed three courses: *Die englische Sprache in ihren geschichtlichen und kulturellen Beziehungen* (The English language in its historical and cultural context), *Einführung ins Mittelenglische* (Introduction to Middle English), *Englisches Seminar (Engl. Roman)* (English Seminar: the Novel).⁶⁰ Lin sent proper certification of the completion of these courses to Harvard in July 1921, and was awarded the MA degree *in absentia* from Harvard University in February 1922.

Now knowing that he would obtain an MA degree from Harvard, Lin hesitated wondering if he should just go back to Peking University and devote himself to the grand enterprise of literary and thought reform in modern China. He understood that a doctoral degree would certainly better qualify him for the professorship at Peking University, yet he was still shaky in terms of his financial resources for continuing graduate study. From his correspondences with Hu Shi, we know Lin at least received two more sums of US\$480, as well as another 100 lb from Peking University successively.⁶¹ In the meantime, he learned that Leipzig University was a good research university, and to his surprise, it was particularly strong in sinology and philology, the collection of Chinese books at Leipzig even surpassed that at Harvard. So, in Fall 1921, Lin decided to leave Jena and continue his graduate study under the sinologist Dr. August Conrady at Leipzig so that he could pursue his interest in the Chinese language and literature. Lin was quite impressed by Dr. Conrady’s sinological knowledge as he admitted that some of the subjects covered in Conrady’s courses had never occurred to Lin. At first, Lin planned to write his dissertation on the grammar of *baihua*, the Chinese vernacular.⁶² But soon he plunged himself into the world of

sinology and indulged in the study of classical Chinese philology. Lin was attracted to the modern Western philological and linguistic method for which Leipzig was noted, and tried to apply it to a renewed understanding of Chinese philological tradition.

The Lins had a good time during the 2 years spent in Germany. The couple would go to lectures hand in hand together and go on outings on the weekends. They traveled and explored Europe extensively and fell in love with the old charm. Unlike in the USA where one finds more modern and more standardized cities with the same concrete streets and the same post office, “Europe gave a variety from old castles to narrow streets at the Loire valley, from the old cathedrals of Brussels, the busy streets of Liege, to the glorious views of St. Moritz and Interlaken.”⁶³ Jena was the home town of Goethe and Lin visited the Goethe house and was quite impressed, particularly by the books Goethe collected on the theme of the evolution of species. In the apartment Lin stayed in at Jena, there was no tap water, so he had to use pitchers and basins for bathing, but it occurred to him that that was how Goethe washed himself and produced such great poetry. Lin appreciated very much and was quite affected by Goethe’s *Sorrows of Werther* and *Dichtung and Wahrheit*.⁶⁴ But Lin’s favorite German writer was Heine, not only for his poetry but also for his political writings. At Jena and Leipzig, Lin translated a book of poems by Heine and sent it to his friend Meng Xiancheng to forward it to Hu Shi.⁶⁵ Heine would remain a spiritual companion for Lin for the rest of his life.

While experiencing the traditional charms of the sounds and landscapes of old Europe, intellectually Lin was exploring the traditional sounds of the Chinese language. Influenced by German sinological studies and equipped with the first-class library at Leipzig, Lin devoted himself to the study of ancient Chinese phonology and eventually completed his doctoral dissertation entitled “Altchinesische Lautlehre” (Ancient Chinese Phonetics) written in German. This period of sinological training signaled another unique perspective in the formation of Lin’s cross-cultural knowledge structure. The realm of knowledge Lin was delving into in his sinological study at Leipzig was in fact the crown of Qing Dynasty scholarship—the latest in the exegetical tradition of Confucianism, as Lin’s readings focused on *Huangqing jingjie* (The Exegesis of the Confucian Classics of the Qing Dynasty) and *Hanxue shichengji* (Academic Biographies of the Masters of Confucian Learning in Qing Dynasty).⁶⁶ Lin’s training in the classical scholarship of

Confucian learning constituted another important aspect of his knowledge structure that would have a lasting impact upon his cross-cultural journey. In a sense, Chinese modernity opened up with an academic revolt against the canonical veracity of Confucian Classics. By the time of the New Culture movement, *yigu*, or “doubting antiquity,” or “the suspicion of the forgery of classical texts,” became the dominant ethos that underlay the New Culturalist agenda to reevaluate traditional values and to usher in a new civilization for modern China. But the excesses in this mode of “suspicion” are also symbolic of the successive radicalization of modern Chinese intellectuals. Lin’s training in the exegetical tradition of Confucian classics would eventually provide him with a balanced perspective, which was also symptomatic of his overall attitude toward Chinese cultural traditions in the long run.

In mid-February, 1923, Lin completed his dissertation and left Leipzig. The Lins boarded the ship in Italy—this time in a third-class cabin so that he could save money to pay off the debt he owed to Hu Shi⁶⁷—and took the voyage home. At that time, Hong was already in late pregnancy. After three and half years of study in America and Europe, Lin Yutang had first-hand experience of the West and had become intellectually mature as a budding scholar and intellectual of both East and West educational and cultural training. Dr. Lin was ready to join the faculty of Peking University and participate in the exciting cultural reform movement for a young China.

NOTES

1. Lin Yutang, *From Pagan to Christian*, pp. 22–23, 38–39.
2. Later in France working for the YMCA, Lin even tried to look for his grandfather, but with no luck. See Lin Yutang, *Memoirs of an Octogenarian*, pp. 48–49.
3. Lin Yutang, *From Pagan to Christian*, p. 21.
4. Lin Yutang, *Memoirs of an Octogenarian*, pp. 16–17.
5. This is recorded in Lin’s two autobiographical works: *From Pagan to Christian*, pp. 23–24 and *Memoirs of an Octogenarian*, pp. 21–22. According to Yang Liu’s research, the journal should be in Chinese and its correct title is *The Chinese Christian Intelligencer* 通问报. Yang Liu, p. 28, note 132.
6. The school’s Chinese name is 寻源堂, its English name is “Boy’s Academy,” or commonly referred to as “Union Middle School,” and in 1914 changed to “Talmage College.” See Yang Liu, p. 29, note 142.

7. P.W. Pitcher, p. 104.
8. Lin Yutang, *Memoirs of an Octogenarian*, p. 25.
9. Lin Yutang, *From Pagan to Christian*, p. 27.
10. Lin Yutang, "A Sister's Dream Came True." Also, *From Pagan to Christian*, pp. 25–29; *Memoirs of an Octogenarian*, pp. 18–19.
11. Lin Yutang, *From Pagan to Christian*, p. 28.
12. Other notable Johanneans include Y.T. Tsur (Zhou Yichun), President of Tsinghua College, Z.T.K. Woo (Wu Jian), general superintendent of the Hanyang Iron and Steel Works (1912–1923), David Z.T. Yui (Yu Rizhang), general secretary of the YMCA, Yen Fu-ch'ing (Yan Fuqing), Dean of the medical faculty, Yale College, Changsha (1914–1926), and W. Y. Hu (Hu Yigu), eminent jurist and law professor, president of the Shanghai Court of Appeals (1925–1930). See Diran John Sohigian, p. 137. St. John's campus today is *Huadong Zhengfa daxue* (East China University of Political Science and Law), and on the campus was erected a statue of Zou Taofen (1895–1944), one of the most well-known journalists of modern China, another St. John's graduate.
13. For a discussion of English-language instruction at St. John's College, see Wen-hsin Yeh, pp. 7–22.
14. Diran John Sohigian, p. 137.
15. *The Johannean 1916*, Vol. II, 1915–1916, published annually by the students of St. John's College, Shanghai. I am indebted to Mr. Qin Xianci for sharing the *The Johannean 1916* yearbook with me.
16. Lin Yutang, *Memoirs of an Octogenarian*, p. 30.
17. *The Johannean*, Vol. II, 1915–1916.
18. Lin Yutang, *Memoirs of an Octogenarian*, pp. 27–28.
19. Lin Yutang, "A Life in a Southern Village," p. 20.
20. Lin Yutang's childhood name is "Hele," or "Ho-lock" according to the old spelling.
21. Lin Yutang, "A Life in a Southern Village," p. 22.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
23. See Lin Yutang, "San-po," and "Chaou-li, the Daughter of Fate."
24. Lin Yutang, *From Pagan to Christian*, p. 32.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
26. *The Johannean 1916*, p. 33. On several occasions, Lin Yutang would claim that he "always graduated second, because there was always some fool who took his classwork seriously, [while Lin chose to fish in the Suzhou Creek during examination week] and who came out first," (*From Pagan to Christian*, p. 31). But *The Johannean* has no such category of who graduated first or second. Lin might be fishing before examination, but I suspect his claim of "graduating second" must be understood as an euphemism following the traditional Chinese, or rather Taoist, wisdom of

- “never finishing first.” According to *The Johannean 1916*, Lin was voted as “the most distinguished” of his cohort, and at least in terms of his English-language excellence and literary talent, he was indeed No. 1.
27. An interesting comparison can be made between early Lu Xun and early Lin Yutang in terms of their Nietzschean influence. The deployment of the “madman” motif in Lin’s short story here also anticipates Lu Xun’s groundbreaking short story in modern Chinese literature—“The Madman’s Diary.”
 28. Lin Yutang, “A Case of Johanitis,” p. 116.
 29. Lin Yutang, *From Pagan to Christian*, p. 34.
 30. Ibid.
 31. Ibid., p. 35.
 32. For that, Lin would joke, “That is why I love so much the nude shows of Parisian nightclubs. No one can properly appreciate nude shows so well as a good Puritan.” See Lin Yutang, *From Pagan to Christian*, p. 42.
 33. By contrast, his Johannean buddy Mang Hyi-zung (Meng Xiancheng), who was now a colleague of Lin’s and lived in a room opposite to Lin’s in the same staff quarters, was being converted into Christianity under the influence of an American Christian lady who upheld Christian virtue of love personally and cared deeply for her Chinese students. Meng was Lin’s classmate at St. John’s and was vice-president of the class while Lin was the president, and he was known at St. John’s for his solid family training in Chinese language and culture, and “made an unbroken and unbreakable record of capturing the Translation Medals throughout his four college years.” See *The Johannean 1916*, p. 34. See also Lin Yutang, *From Pagan to Christian*, pp. 232–233. Meng later served as the first Chancellor of East China Normal University from 1952 to 1966. Lin was careful not to disclose his full name in this book published in 1959, as his “Christian identity” might very well bring trouble to Meng at the time.
 34. Lin Yutang, “Li: The Chinese Principle of Social Control and Organization,” p. 109. Lin Yutang was Assistant Editor for the journal at the time.
 35. Ibid., p. 116.
 36. Ibid., p. 117.
 37. Ibid., p. 118.
 38. Lin Yutang, “Hanzi suoyin zhi shuoming,” p. 132.
 39. Lin Yutang, “Lun Hanzi suoyin zhi ji xiyang wenxue,” p. 367. The quote was in English in the original text. In this article, Lin claimed that he had finished a book on a Chinese Index system soon to be published. In his application for an M.A. degree at Harvard University, Lin also listed his book *An Index System for Chinese Characters and Vocabulary* as one of his credentials. I can only trace Lin’s very first publication in Chinese

- as “Chuangshe hanzi suoyin zhi yi” (An Index System for Chinese Characters) in the journal *Kexue* (Science), Vol. 3, No. 10 (October 1917).
40. According to Lin Taiyi, Lin Yutang’s second daughter and biographer, Lin was actually in love with Chen Jinduan, daughter of a rich merchant family in Xiamen (Amoy), although Lin Yutang hardly mentioned this himself. In regard to his personal life, Lin was very much a Christian, and unlike many modern Chinese writers, he reported nothing juicy in his private life, as he enjoyed a good and harmonious family life. See Lin Taiyi, Chapter II.
 41. Lin Yutang’s letter to Hu Shi, August 19, 1919, p. 293. I thank Chih-ping Chou for informing me of Lin Yutang’s letters to Hu Shi in this collection. Much of the detailed information about Lin’s graduate study experience in the USA and Europe is based on the cluster of Lin’s letters to Hu Shi collected here.
 42. Lin Yutang file, The Registrar’s Office, Harvard University. I thank Ito Noriya for first pointing out this reference to me. Judging from the date of Lin’s application (September 20, 1919), it seems that Lin Yutang was accepted to graduate study at Harvard University on the spot.
 43. Lin Yutang’s letter to Hu Shi, October 17, 1919, p. 301.
 44. Irving Babbitt, p. 91.
 45. Babbitt envisioned “a humanistic international” to promote “a real understanding between the intellectual leaders of Orient and Occident” by having scholars, preferably Chinese, to come to the USA to teach Chinese history and philosophy. See Irving Babbitt, p. 91.
 46. A. Owen Aldridge had much insight in seeing the affinities between Irving Babbitt and Lin Yutang and named Lin as Babbitt’s second most famous student (after T.S. Eliot). See A. Owen Aldridge.
 47. Lin Yutang’s letter to Hu Shi, April 13, 1920, p. 314.
 48. Lin Yutang, “Literary Revolution, Patriotism, and the Democratic Bias,” p. 37.
 49. Lin Yutang, “The Literary Revolution and What Is Literature,” p. 25. This essay was awarded first prize in the November Essay Contest of *The Chinese Students’ Monthly*.
 50. Ibid., p. 28.
 51. Lin Yutang, “Literary Revolution, Patriotism, and the Democratic Bias,” p. 41.
 52. Lin Yutang’s letter to Hu Shi, October 17, 1919, p. 302.
 53. See Lin Yutang’s letters to Hu Shi, January 6, 1920, January 22, 1920, March 14, 1920, and June 22, 1920, pp. 303–304; 305–306; 310–311; 320–325. For a specific study on the issue, see Wu Yuankang. Lin was aware that some of the money he received from Hu Shi was from his own

- pocket. This is somewhat different from Lin's later recollection during his last years in Taiwan that Peking University advanced him US\$2000 and that he didn't know it was actually all from Hu Shi's own pocket until he returned to China from Europe. See Lin Yutang, "Wo zui nanwang de renwu—Hu Shi boshi"; Also: *Memoirs of an Octogenarian*, p. 41; and Lin Taiyi, p. 55. It is possible that Lin overstated the incident to highlight Hu Shi's moral integrity and their friendship in light of the CCP's vicious campaign against Hu Shi during the Mao Era, or he had forgotten about the details when he recalled this incident almost five decades later.
54. It was not quite clear what exactly was Lin's agreement with Tsinghua College. According to his letter to Hu Shi, Lin expected renewal of his stipend following normal rules, but the Chinese official in Washington, DC cited a special article in the agreement to deny his renewal. See Lin Yutang's letter to Hu Shi, undated (around June 1920), p. 316.
 55. Lin's job title at YMCA was "secretary," which involves giving sermons and/or lectures in the evening, teaching Chinese or English or French, and any other secretarial duties assigned by the YMCA branch in France. This is somewhat different from being an instructor of Chinese to Chinese laborers in France, as described in Lin Taiyi's biography, Lin Taiyi, p. 50. See Lin Yutang's letters to Hu Shi, June 22, 1920 and July 10, 1920, pp. 320–325, 326–327.
 56. See Lin Yutang's letters to Hu Shi, March 14, 1920, and June 22, 1920, pp. 310–311, 320–325.
 57. Dean Haskins' letter to Lin Yutang, July 1, 1920.
 58. Lin Yutang's letter to Hu Shi, July 10, 1920, p. 326.
 59. Dean Haskins' letter to Lin Yutang, January 19, 1921.
 60. Lin Yutang file, The Registrar's Office, Harvard University.
 61. See Lin Yutang's receipt signed on February 18, 1921 and on May 31, 1922. 100 lb was supposed to cover Lin's return expenses back to China from Germany. Geng Yunzhi, pp. 341, 348.
 62. See Lin Yutang's letter to Hu Shi, August 11, 1921, p. 346.
 63. Lin Yutang, *Memoirs of an Octogenarian*, p. 51.
 64. *Ibid.*, pp. 50–51.
 65. See Lin Yutang's letter to Hu Shi, August 11, 1921, p. 347.
 66. Edited by Ruan Yuan (1764–1849), *Huangqing jingjie* 皇清经解 was a crystallization of Qing scholarship on Confucian classics while *Hanxue shichengji* 汉学师承记 by Jiang Fan records and explains the academic lineage of Confucian learning in Qing Dynasty.
 67. See Lin Yutang's letter to Hu Shi, March 30, 1923, p. 351.

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