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Local Magistrates and Foreign Mendicants: Chinese Views of Shanxi's Franciscan Mission During the Late Qing, 1700-1900

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**STRANGERS IN DISTANT LANDS: THE WEST IN
LATE-IMPERIAL CHINA**
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PAPER TITLE:

“Local Magistrates and Foreign Mendicants: Chinese Views of Shanxi’s Franciscan Mission During the Late Qing, 1700-1900”

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LECTURE OUTLINE:

[SLIDE 1: Title]

- I. Sino-Western exchange has had a capricious history; both have vacillated between aversion and admiration since their earliest encounters.
 - a. During Kangxi’s 1682 Southern Tour he noticed several Catholic missionaries near the bank of the river; the emperor called the small Jesuit boat to his and towed the Jesuit boat for two leagues while the Kanxi enjoyed a long visit with his European guests.
 - i. He so enjoyed their company that he piled gifts into the Jesuit craft before seeing them off.
 - b. By 1720 Kangxi had largely changed his views of the foreign missionaries – after he had become aware of the Church’s injunctions against ancestor veneration, and after having met with Bishop Charles Maigrot, MEP.
 - i. Maigrot was sent to China to condemn Confucian ancestral rites as superstitious.
 - ii. Kangxi wrote on 17 December 1720: “Maigrot must confess his

transgression against China, and the Western religion [Christianity] can no longer be spread throughout China.”

iii. Sino-Western exchange began to rest on mutual mistrust.

II. After the Boxer Uprising in 1900, a rash of missionary memoirs and hagiographies of Christian martyrs were published in Europe and America.

a. As expected, these accounts portrayed China as “heathen,” “backwards,” and “ruthless.”

b. Among the most read and cited books from the post-Boxer era was Dr. Ebenezer Henry Edwards’ memoir on the Protestant martyrs of Shanxi, *Fire and Sword in Shansi*.

i. In his opening sentence, Edwards wrote that:

1. “During the summer of 1900, while the eyes of the civilized world were turned towards Peking anxiously awaiting news of the beleaguered Legations, far away in the province of Shansi helpless men, women, and children – European and American – were being done to death.”

ii. This is typical of Western books on China in the early twentieth century:

1. “The civilized world” watched China from afar while “uncivilized” China massacred Europeans and Americans.

a. We might note here that foreign victims were only a small portion of those who were killed in 1900; most victims were native Chinese.

- III. Since 1900, and perhaps even before, missionary representations of the “insidious” Chinese influenced Western depictions of China.
- a. By the 1950s and 60s there was a confluence between both missionary and secular portrayals.
 - b. In 1907, the English Protestant missionary, W. E. Hipwell, recounted his impressions of a Chinese temple:
 - i. “I entered the temple for a few moments, but was compelled to withdraw quickly, on account of the horror by which I was overwhelmed as I watched those before the idol who with intense fervour besought the blessings which they desired.... The place was reeking with sickening smoke, and horrible because of the almost manifest presence of the devil, glorying over these multitudes thus enslaved by him.”
 - ii. Hipwell’s description of China’s indigenous religious culture is unflattering:
 1. Followers of popular religions make offerings of “sickening smoke” to the devil, who has “enslaved” the people of China.
 - c. Only six years after Hipwell published this description in *The Church Missionary Gleaner*, Sax Rohmer, wrote a similar description of the lair of “the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu”:
 - i. “From a plain brass bowl upon the corner of the huge table smoke writhed aloft... smoke faintly penciled through the air—from the

burning perfume on the table—grew in volume, thickened, and wafted towards me in a cloud of grey horror.”

ii. In other passages from Rohmer’s novels, the reader is invited to, “Imagine a person, tall, lean and feline, high-shouldered, with a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan, a close-shaven skull, and long, magnetic eyes of the true cat-green.”

1. Rohmer’s representation of the “Satanic doctor” appears to have been inspired by Protestant descriptions of such Chinese temple worshippers, as one source describes them, “with their hideous, grotesque expressions, staring fixedly in front of them.”

[SLIDE 2: Yuxian (**fade**) Yuxian (**fade**) Fu Manchu] – 3 **CLICKS**

IV. To return to Shanxi: In Father Cipriani Silvestri’s, OFM, 1943 history of the Catholic martyrs of Shanxi, *La Testimonianza del Sangue*, Silvestri includes a line-drawn image of the Taiyuan governor who orchestrated and conducted the massacre of thousands of Christians, Yuxian.

a. - which appears almost identical to conventional book cover and film representations of Rohmer’s Dr. Fu Manchu.

b. In addition, later depictions of the mendicant friars and nuns of Shanxi who died under Yuxian’s command are characteristically hagiographical, theatrically presenting a tableau wherein the cultural lines between good (West) and evil (East) are clearly distinguished.

[SLIDE 3: Taiyuan Massacre Depictions (**fade**) Large Image] – 2 **CLICKS**

- i. The victims of Yuxian's massacre are almost always seen below the impending figure of a Chinese executioner in the act of slaughtering a mendicant at prayer.
- c. During the first half-century following the Boxer Uprising, Western views of China were decidedly pejorative.

[SLIDE 4: Chinoiserie & Yellow Peril"]

- i. Western representations of China before the Boxer era, however, vacillated between naïve adulation, such as the idyllic depictions of the Chinese "philosopher king" and caricatured Chinese beauties in European chinoiserie popularized in mid-to-late seventeenth century Europe, and the occasional imaginings of the "Yellow Peril," a phrase regrettably coined by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1895.

V. China was an active participant in pejorative imagination.

[SLIDE 5: Bixiejishi]

- a. Perhaps the most extreme example of anti-Christian propaganda in China was the vitriolic text and illustrations of the *Bixiejishi* (A Record of Facts to Ward Off Heterodoxy), published in 1861.
 - i. One of the more acerbic illustrations in this text, which encouraged severe forms of anti-foreignism, depicted an, "Image of Feeding [Foreigners] Shit."
 - 1. Excrement was believed to be an apotropaic substance in imperial China; forcing Christians to eat feces was thought to hinder their practice of malicious magic.

2. The illustrations and anti-Christian descriptions of this booklet certainly reached Shanxi.

[SLIDE 6: Nicolas Trigault & Matteo Ricci]

- VI. The first Catholic missionaries to enter Shanxi were not mendicant friars, but were Jesuits.
 - a. The first Catholic in Shanxi was Nicolas Trigault, SJ, who opened a chapel in Jiangzhou in 1624, and his nephew, Michel Trigault, SJ, was the first to bring Christianity to Taiyuan.
 - i. Another Jesuit, Alphonse Vagnone, later entered Shanxi, and successfully earned the respect of the provincial authorities due to his ability to amalgamate Christianity with the hallowed virtues of Confucianism.
 - ii. The earliest official Chinese document that discusses the Catholic mission in Shanxi mentions Vagnone in complimentary terms.

[SLIDE 7: Jiangzhou Edict - Vagnone]

1. In an edict by the prefect of Jiangzhou published in 1635, the magistrate praises Vagnone's virtue.
 - a. "We are fortunate to have Mr. Gao, a Western Confucian, who cultivates virtue, serves Heaven, and loves others as himself. Because he imparts loyalty and filial piety as his principal teaching, he is given honor from our sagely Son of Heaven (emperor) and worthy ministers. Even the learned,

officials, and all gentlemen revere him as their teacher and love him as a brother. The common people who follow his teachings are all transformed into virtuous persons.”

iii. There are no complaints in this early document regarding Western foreigners or their religious teachings.

1. It is Vagnone’s Confucian behavior that is noted – the Jesuit is referred to as a “Western Confucian” 西儒.

VII. Franciscan friars were assigned to Shanxi in 1716, and very little is written about them until Sino-Missionary tensions materialize following the calamitous events of the Opium War (1839-1842).

a. After the Sino-Western treaties of 1842, the Franciscan mission in Shanxi became increasingly powerful and visible.

b. After 1860 Shanxi’s cities and countryside were progressively marked by large Franciscan churches with towering steeples.

[SLIDE 8: Moccagata & Taiyuan Cathedral]

i. The Church of the Immaculate Conception, for example, was built by the Italian bishop, Aloysius (Luigi) Moccagatta, OFM, in the provincial capital, Taiyuan, near the city’s north gate.

1. The church’s tall steeple appeared to challenge the two fifty-two-meter-tall pagodas at Taiyuan’s prominent Twin Pagoda Temple.

a. Suddenly a foreign building competed with the

city's venerated religious monuments.

c. Local Chinese reactions to the friars began to appear in earnest after the emergence of Boxer violence in northern China, especially after Yuxian's arrival at Taiyuan on 19 April 1900.

i. He had been transferred to Shanxi from Shandong, where he had already demonstrated his support for Boxer anti-Christianism.

VIII. Several themes emerge from within Chinese documents produced in Shanxi during the Boxer era, some of which appeared in the writings of local literati, often included in gazetteers (*difangzhi* 地方志), and other texts that were posted publically by local officials.

a. These themes include:

- i. 1) Contrived rumors of clandestine plots to overthrow the empire.
- ii. 2) A superstitious fear of Christian black magic.
- iii. 3) A belief that the emperor and the imperial Court were cooperatively anti-Christian and anti-foreign.
- iv. 4) An assertion that Christian missionaries were invaders who precipitated anarchy in Shanxi.
- v. 5) A critical view of Christianity as a heterodox doctrine, and official decrees calling for apostasy under threat of punishment; and.
- vi. 6) A post-Boxer violence *volte face* by the Court and local officials, wherein efforts were made to redefine Christianity as orthodox and victimized, as well as an attempted rapprochement

with Shanxi's Franciscan mission.

[SLIDE 9: Yuxian, Liu Dapeng, & Cen Chunxuan]

b. Other than a smattering of official documents exchanged between the governor's yamen in Taiyuan and the Zongli yamen in Beijing, which deal little with their views of the Christian missionaries in Shanxi, the most important local Chinese materials are the reflections by:

- i. The Confucian literatus, Liu Dapeng.
- ii. The agitated decrees of Governor Yuxian.
- iii. And the post-Boxer decrees of Governor Cen Chunxuan, who replaced Yuxian in 1901.

1. All three of these men received characteristically classical educations, immersed in the Confucian textual tradition requisite for advancement in the late-imperial exam system, though surprisingly the writings of Liu and Yuxian participate in the typical superstitious sensibilities and rumor mongering that were more common to less educated Chinese in Shanxi.

IX. Liu Dapeng and Yuxian's impressions of the Franciscan mission in Shanxi were based largely on the invented mythology that the friars and their native followers were surreptitiously plotting a widespread rebellion against the Qing empire.

- a. In Liu Dapeng's *Qianyuan suoji* (Trivial Records While Ensconced in the Garden), Liu wrote at length about the Boxers and the role of local

Christians in the Sino-missionary tensions of 1900.

b. After describing the abrupt emergence of Boxers in Shanxi, Liu recounts that, “The Court ordered a military expedition, anxious that foreigners would gather their Christian forces in collaboration,” and that the Court decreed that, “all of the foreigner barbarians from the hinterlands must be securely constrained.”

i. The imperial pronouncement, Liu continues, declares that “anyone [Christians] who seizes the opportunity to rebel or collaborate in forming plots should be executed on the spot.”

1. Shanxi’s Boxer-friendly governor, Yuxian, was so pleased when he heard the Court’s edict to suppress foreigners and Christians that reportedly, “he was moved to tears of gratitude.”

c. Liu Dapeng elaborates in detail how the foreign missionaries of Shanxi by that time, “had already entered into deliberations with the Christians regarding how to initiate a rebellion in the province and take its cities and towns by force, and have summoned the militaries of their respective countries to march into Shanxi.”

i. There is no evidence whatever in Franciscan correspondences, diocesan records, or in any available Western archival materials, that the friars and nuns in Shanxi had conceived any intentions of rebellion.

1. It appears that these rumors of a collaborative missionary-

native Christian insurgence were manufactured to support Yuxian's aspiration to eradicate foreigners and Christianity in Shanxi.

- X. In addition to allegations of sedition, the Franciscan mendicants were accused of sorcery, and Shanxi's Boxers disseminated leaflets throughout the province, especially around Taiyuan, that the foreign missionaries along with their native Christian followers were casting fatal curses on non-Christians.
 - a. Inventive tales of Christian magic had become so prevalent by 1900 that one Boxer notice advertised a protective formulae to use as protection against their curses.
 - i. This formula, reported to have descended from Confucius and the Daoist patriarch, Zhang Daoling, recommended gathering several ingredients, such as red orpiment, lime, and black beans, and placing them into a red pouch, which was to be "worn with your undergarments, suspended behind their doors, and placed on five branches of a willow tree."
 - b. Liu Dapeng, who one might expect would have maintained an educated distance from popular superstition, was in fact an enthusiastic sponsor of such mythologies.
 - i. In a lengthy reflection on the "Christian practice of black magic," Liu outlines a litany of imaginative practices.
 - 1. They were said to perform rites involving:
 - a. The sprinkling of blood.

- b. Steaming food in poisonous vapors.
 - c. And enchanting streets and alleys with a mysterious “kill, kill sound” 殺殺之聲.
- 2. Perhaps the most outrageous claim Liu Dapeng makes in his local record involved the animation of paper cutouts.
 - a. He notes that the foreign missionaries and their Christian followers in Shanxi:
 - b. “Cut out paper men with yellow paper and past them in alleys and lanes in the night, desiring that these paper figures will kill a million Chinese people. The Boxers, however, broadcasted instructions to every household, informing them to set out water basins in their door thresholds and windowsills in order to destroy the paper men [as they fall into the water].”
- ii. The heroic champions against Christian conjuring, Liu reported, were the Boxers who preemptively warned the common people and provided instructions regarding how to safeguard against these enchantments.
 - 1. As Liu recounted, these common rumors about Franciscan missionary magic precipitated an outbreak of terror through Shanxi: “In the daytime the common people were bewildered and at night they had nightmares of ghosts,”

and “the myriad people prayed to the gods asking for protection.”

- XI. On 12 July 1900, Governor Yuxian announced in an official proclamation that:
- a. “The religious teachings of the foreigners employs black magic to confound the people, and poisons and harms the land of China.”
 - b. Boxers, literati, and mandarins alike promoted such rumors.
 - c. One of the recurring themes in local Shanxi texts during the Boxer disturbances was that the imperial Court, which was viewed as anti-Christian and anti-foreign, was powerless to punish missionary “offences.”
 - i. After announcing the intention of foreigners to “delude the minds of China’s people and turn China into a foreign country,” Liu lamented that foreign power was such that, “the Court cannot rectify their crimes, and local officials are incapable of investigating their guilt.”
 1. Governor Yuxian presumed the Court’s unanimous anti-missionary position when he posted his decree, announcing that:
 - a. “War has been declared in the coastal regions, and the great military of China has won a victory. The officials and people must be of one mind, remain bound by a common thread of hatred for the enemy, eliminate the seed of Christianity, and eradicate foreigners at their root.”

d. The operating assumption of Shanxi's literati and mandarins was that the Court was decidedly on the side of the Boxers, though this was far from unambiguously true.

i. Perhaps one of the best sources we have regarding the Court's actual position regarding Christians and foreigners during the Boxer Uprising is Li Xisheng's account of debates conducted during the summer months of 1900 in the Palace between the conservative faction of Empress Dowager Cixi and the reformist party of the emperor, Guangxu.

1. During these deliberations Xu Jingcheng remarked that, "China has had relations with the foreigners for several decades, and there has not been a single year during this period free of animosity between the people and Christians."

2. Xu's statement was followed by a response from Yuan Chang, who "passionately" recommended that, "We cannot allow conflict to occur with foreigners. Toleration of the rebels [Boxers] will bring disasters of a magnitude which will make them impossible to handle," and he continued to predict that if the Boxers are allowed to attack foreigners and Christians, "civil wars and foreign invasions will follow."

ii. After representatives of the Empress Dowager's faction countered that the Boxers must be supported due to threats of foreign

invasion, the emperor himself argued that conflict with foreigners would be reckless:

1. “How could there be any hope of success when we use riotous mobs [Boxers] to do our fighting?”

a. Contrary to what literati and official impressions were in Shanxi – that the emperor and his Court were unanimously in support of collaboration with Boxers to rid China of foreigners and Christians – the emperor was in fact adamantly opposed to any support of the “riotous” and superstitious Boxers who threatened China’s long-term security. In the end, however, the Empress Dowager and her conservative Court allies won the debates, and war was affirmed.

XII. After a series of unequal treaties were pressed upon the Qing Court in the wake of Britain’s attack of China’s shores during the Opium War, agreements permitted unconditional missionary freedom throughout the empire, and in keeping with European ecclesial custom, churches and mission structures were constructed in a fashion that illustrated the ascendancy of God over humanity and human institutions.

[SLIDE 10: Shanxi Churches]

a. Suddenly, the plains, cities, and villages of Shanxi were punctuated with grand Franciscan edifices, many of which soared above the other

structures – Buddhist, Daoist, popular religionist, and civic.

- b. Thus, Liu Dapeng reflected on what he saw as he passed through of the Franciscan village of Dongergou, which was where Taiyuan’s bishops housed and trained Shanxi’s seminarians. He writes:

[SLIDE 11: Dongergou]

- i. “The villagers all follow the foreign religion. The village lies at the foot of the hills, with the church standing on the slope of the hill, surrounded by a wall. There are many buildings within the wall. The site is impressive and the buildings are all in the foreign style.”
 - 1. From his point of view, Shanxi was not only being overrun by foreign Christians, but Franciscan buildings built in non-Chinese styles appeared to claim the province.
- c. In addition to the construction of new and looming churches, which Shanxi’s literati viewed as itself a distortion of social hierarchies, the Italian Franciscans were accused of confusing proper human relations.
 - i. As Yuxian asserted in his decree of 5 July 1900:
 - 1. “Foreign missionaries wreak havoc, and slowly bring disaster on the people.”
 - ii. And just three days after he had executed all of the Franciscans and Protestant missionaries in his yamen courtyard on 9 July 1900, Yuxian posted another decree justifying his actions:
 - 1. “They completely destroy proper relationships between humans and have dared to plot rebellion, so I myself have

seized them.”

d. Liu Dapeng’s estimation of Shanxi’s Christian missionaries was similar to Yuxian’s:

i. “Foreign Christians are said to encourage people to behave well, but in truth they annoy our government, rebel against our institutions, destroy our customs, and delude our people,” and he lamented that Shanxi’s missionaries could not be eliminated because they “rely on the support of foreign power, which is vast and imposing.”

e. The Franciscan mission was, according to Yuxian and Liu Dapeng, intrusive and divisive, and despite local protests it was sheltered under the defensive arms of its foreign protectors, which were in any case far away in Beijing and Tianjin, and were actually too far away from Shanxi to pose a serious threat.

XIII. Among the most common grievances expressed in local documents against foreign presence in Shanxi was that Christianity was a heterodox doctrine that must be rejected for the province to remain authentically Chinese.

a. This notion was mainly promoted in Shanxi by Governor Yuxian.

i. In fact, the Franciscans were already well aware of Yuxian’s opinion that Christianity was a precarious and heterodox religion long before he was assigned to Taiyuan.

[SLIDE 12: Friars, Taiyuan Yamen, & Andrew Bauer]

ii. In an apprehensive letter written in May 1900, the mendicant friar,

Andrew Bauer, OFM, wrote:

1. “He has come to Taiyuanfu, the notorious persecutor of Christians in Shandong. What can we expect of him at any time now except persecutions?”

a. Bauer’s concerns proved prophetic, for soon after Yuxian arrived in Shanxi he invited the native Chinese population to his yamen to present their accusations against the Franciscan mission and other foreigners.

i. Yuxian wasted no time amassing “confirmation” that Shanxi’s Christians were dissenting mischief-makers.

XIV. Yuxian’s decrees after his arrival in Shanxi included a call for Chinese Christians to apostatize.

a. In his 5 July 1900 decree, Yuxian posted a severe and foreboding ultimatum for Shanxi’s Christians to consider:

“The righteous people will burn and kill, and calamities will come down.

I exhort you who are Christians to reform before it is too late.

Correct your evil and return to what is proper and all shall be benevolent.

If you maintain this distinction [between Christian and non-Christian], you will become a respectable person.

Officials accept this command to protect yourselves.

For those who do know to change, they will have regrets for no reason.

To this end explicit directions are given, and all should revere [this decree] with trepidation.”

b. Yuxian’s view of Christian heterodoxy as a cause of social disorder was so extreme that, he warned Christians that, “righteous people,” that is non-Christians, will soon “burn” the property and “kill” persons who refuse to, “correct your evil and return to what is proper.”

i. In other words, apostatize or die.

c. In his 12 July 1900 decree, Yuxian repeated his exhortation, though by then he had already demonstrated that his threats were far from idle.

i. He stated that:

1. “I have executed these criminals according to their names [list] in order to extinguish calamities and all Christians at their root. It is urgent to make a new beginning; Christians apostatize and it shall pacify the people.”

d. In yet another decree Yuxian reasserted his call for Christians to depart from their “heterodox” teaching, albeit in a somewhat softened tone:

i. “The Court has recommended magnanimity, granting [Christians] a chance to reform.”

ii. In this pronouncement the Court is also mentioned, which as Shanxi’s new governor reported, agreed with Yuxian’s urgent summons for Christians to abandon “deviant” beliefs.

e. Another official announcement was posted on 14 July 1900, demanding that:

i. “All male Catholics who refused to apostatize must report to Beimen Street, Dongtoudao Alley [Taiyuan].”

1. His decree was clear; those who neglected to arrive would be pursued and executed, and those who obeyed the summons would be presented another opportunity for apostasy.

2. Taiyuan’s Christians, however, were determined to become martyrs, and the more than 100 Catholics who arrived at the designated courtyard all knelt in remonstrance against Yuxian’s decree.

a. The magistrate’s order was received with intense resistance.

i. The Catholics arrived three hours early, and as they knelt they wrapped their long queues around their foreheads, exposed their necks, and defiantly awaited the executioner’s sword.

ii. Once the mandarin’s runners had arrived to the gathering of audacious Christian protesters he, “shouted the order to ‘kill,’ and the executioner began arbitrarily beheading men; in a split second streams of blood flooded the ground.”

iii. Thirty-nine Chinese Catholics were killed before the executioner grew too exhausted to continue; conflicts between the governor and the Chinese attached to the Franciscan mission grew even more severe in subsequent weeks.

XV. Local views of the Franciscan mission and native Chinese Christians in Shanxi vacillated from serene and strained.

a. The Jiangzhou edict of 1635, which praised the Catholic mission for its apparent compatibility with Confucian tenets, was entirely reversed after the international tensions between China and the West in the wake of the Opium War.

b. Yuxian and Liu Dapeng provide sharp examples of the late-Qing transition from a predominantly tolerant attitude toward the Catholic mission to one of suspicion and superstition.

c. By 1898 the Franciscan mission in Shanxi, directed by Italian Friars Minor, was rumored to be rebellious, involved with black magic, collectively abhorred by the emperor and his Court, and determined to overcome the empire and disturb China's cultural cohesion with its heterodox teaching.

i. The only recourse local officials had, they argued, was to execute the Franciscan mendicants and call all native Christians to apostatize.

ii. In early 1901 the Court issued an edict ordering the capture of

Shanxi's governor, Yuxian, who had fled to Lanzhou, and on 22 February 1901 he was publically beheaded.

XVI. When Yuxian had left Shanxi on 12 October 1900 he was seen off with great fanfare.

- a. The people and gentry of Taiyuan reverently bid him farewell, and the local merchant guilds erected a memorial tablet in the governor's honor at the city's south gate.

[SLIDE 13: Cen Chunxuan & Edict]

- b. Once Cen Chunxuan, Yuxian's replacement, had settled in Taiyuan, he invited missionaries to return to the province, and then exacted swift punishment on the Boxers.

- i. In the official *volte face*, buoyed by the central Court in Beijing, the violence of the Boxer Uprising was turned upon the Boxers themselves.

1. As Zhang De and Jia Lili recount: "After Cen Chunxuan had replaced Yuxian as the new governor of Shanxi, every day there were Boxers who were executed, and above the gates of Taiyuan and every city in the province were hung their heads, dripping with blood."

- c. Having executed the Boxers, Cen labored to repair relationships with the Franciscan mission in Shanxi, which returned to discover that its churches, hospitals, and orphanages had all been razed.

- i. What remained was a diminished and beleaguered Catholic

community.

- d. Suppressing Boxers was one thing; recasting social stereotypes of foreign missionaries and their religion was another matter.
 - i. Cen Chunxuan's about face followed a deliberate pattern, which carefully reversed the assertions made about missionaries and Christians since the mid-nineteenth century.
 - ii. In 1901, Governor Cen posted a long decree at the south gate of Shanxi's capital city, Taiyuan, (replacing the earlier monument in the same location praising Yuxian) celebrating the erection of a commemorative stele commemorating the Franciscan and Baptist foreign missionaries and the large number of native Christians who were killed under the order of Cen's predecessor.
- e. The extent to which foreign pressure influenced post-1900 edicts of reconciliation cannot be underestimated, though the rash of official proclamations exonerating martyred foreigners and Christians had an undeniably salutary effect on general impressions of foreigners and Christianity.
 - i. Cen Chunxuan issued a series of decrees to exonerate the Franciscan mission and extol the virtue – rather than the heterodoxy – of their religion.
 - ii. In his commemorative decree, Cen begins by asserting the emperor's consternation regarding what had besought the missionaries in Shanxi.

1. “The Son of Heaven commemorates the missionaries of Shanxi who were cruelly and unexpectedly slaughtered, and it has been ordered that the official in charge of the area where they were killed record the names of the missionaries for posterity. Now I have been appointed the magistrate of Shanxi and solemnly honor the will of the Court.”
 - a. In no uncertain terms Shanxi’s new governor avowed the emperor’s support of and remorse for the missionaries.
2. Cen continues: “Looking into the rebellion of 1900, the Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries encountered difficulties and were willing to die for their benevolent way, and in all 150 people died.”
 - iii. Finally, Cen notes his intention to “exonerate [these Catholics] in order that they never be forgotten.”
- f. Official proclamations beginning in 1901 systematically reversed those published during the height of the Boxer conflicts.
- g. Another decree acclaims the missionaries’ merits in very explicit terms:
 - i. “I commend the sincere virtues of those missionaries and grieve over the cruelties they encountered.”
 - ii. Shanxi’s new governor also provided funds and land for a Franciscan cemetery, where the martyrs’ bodies could be interred

and memorialized.

1. He also assisted in the reconstruction of the Catholic orphanages, schools, hospitals, and churches that had been destroyed.

[SLIDE 14: Friars - Chinese]

XVII. Perhaps the most interesting turn of events in Shanxi after the Boxer era had concluded was that local Chinese depictions of the Franciscan mission began to be produced almost entirely by Chinese Catholics attached to that mission.

- a. As the number of converts increased after 1900, so too did Chinese attempts to re-present the mendicants who served the population of Shanxi.

- i. Mandarins shared literary space with Chinese Christians who added their own voices to the Franciscan history of late-imperial Shanxi.

1. As one Chinese Catholic wrote, those who suffered during the Boxer violence of 1900, “Were prepared to give their lives when in danger, and spend their lives selflessly,” which is precisely the message taught by the Franciscan mendicants who first entered Shanxi in the early eighteenth century.

- b. Chinese views of Shanxi’s Franciscan Mission during the Late Qing were transformed after the Boxer incidents of 1900.

- i. They shifted from mythological to objective, from a rhetoric of enemy to friend, and from a mode of representing the Franciscan

“other,” to a predominant representation, as the number of Chinese friars grew to outnumber the foreign missionaries, of the Chinese and mendicant “self.”

[SLIDE 15: END – Shanxi Catholics]