Gentle as Jade: Perspectives Upon the Multiple Lives of Lou Tseng-Tsiang

by

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Preface

“Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage…”
Joachim Du Bellay

Happy he who like Odysseus completes a wonderful journey wrote the 16th century French poet Joachim Du Bellay. This thesis has been an odyssey of sorts. It has taken me to distant shores both geographical and intellectual. While Odysseus ended his voyage with a homecoming to Ithaca, my journey opened up new horizons that I will continue to explore long after this work.

The thesis journey proper began as a research project during a study abroad semester in Paris in Fall 2012. While interning with the Centre d’études sur la Chine moderne et contemporaine (CECMC), I discovered a copy of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s autobiography in the library and decided to write my required study abroad research paper on him.
For me, Lou was a fellow traveller and man of the world who learned to navigate different linguistic, ethnic and cultural worlds. His life bridged Europe and China in multiple ways. I myself have grown up in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural environment in Malaysia and studied abroad in Germany, France and the USA. From childhood, I learned to listen to what could and could not be said in one tongue or another. I also learned to appreciate the silent spaces between languages that were themselves laden with meaning. Lou’s story resonated with me and inspired me to go on a journey to discover his disparate identities – termed here as “lives.”

Summer research was a crucial stage in this journey. I explored libraries and archives in London, Paris, Bruges and Leuven. On the outskirts of Bruges, I passed through the brick arch illustrated above. I had followed the trail of a man who was more than a diplomat, minister and monk. I followed his footsteps into a quiet abbey surrounded by trees. I was seeking insights into the interior life and mind of Lou Tseng-Tsiang and the Benedictines. I came away greatly enriched.

I spent three weeks at Sint-Andriesabdij where Lou Tseng-Tsiang had lived as a monk. Apart from consulting the Lou archives held at the abbey, I also immersed myself into the monastic life, attending prayers and meals with the monks. It was a powerful experience to live the monastic rhythm as Lou had. I returned to Wesleyan for my senior year spiritually and intellectually fortified.

I invite my reader to also pass with me under the trees and through the brick archway. It is my hope that you will be able to hear the disparate voices of Lou Tseng-Tsiang as they echo across time and space. Though much has changed at the abbey since Lou’s time, much still remains the same. The daily rhythm is still
structured by the Divine Office, as it was in Lou’s time, and as it has been for more than a thousand years in all the houses of the sons and daughters of St. Benedict.

The French poet Charles Baudelaire had also once invited his readers to go on a journey with him:

*L’invitation au voyage*, Charles Baudelaire
Le monde s’endort
Dans une chaude lumière.
Là, toute n’est qu’ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté.

Baudelaire led his audience into an idyllic world of order and beauty, luxury, peace and pleasure, bathed in the warm glow of the poet’s opium haze. I invite my reader to come with me and explore the lives of Lou Tseng-Tsiang and the worlds he inhabited, to travel from a Shanghai transformed by opium and foreign trade, to the capitals of Europe and the glittering palace of Versailles. This travel will mirror Lou’s travels from the chaos of Beijing to the idyll of a Swiss villa, and finally to the brick arch of the Benedictines. The abbey was a world where Lou tasted a sublimity that could only be experienced through faith and not through Baudelaire’s drugs.
Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the contributions and support of many. First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my parents, for instilling in me the value of education, hard work and discipline. Without your years of toil and sacrifices, I would never be able to pursue any of my dreams and I hope I have made you proud.

I then thank Mr. and Mrs. Freeman, for their generosity and vision in giving me an opportunity to receive a Wesleyan education and the chance to pursue my diverse intellectual interests. I will always be proud that I am a Freeman Scholar. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Surdna Foundation and the Wesleyan Public Affairs Center for supporting my thesis research with a Davenport Study Grant and the David A. Titus Memorial Prize respectively.

Next, I would like to thank my thesis advisor Professor Vera Schwarcz, Mansfield Freeman Professor of East Asian Studies. Her guidance, questions, critiques and encouragement have been invaluable in helping to complete my thesis. Thank you for giving me the courage to reopen windows both poetic and spiritual that I had once kept shuttered.

Various other Wesleyan professors have been a resource to me at various stages of this project. I would especially like to thank Professors Victoria Smolkin-Rothrock, Cecilia Miller, Richard Elphick, Donald Moon, Magda Teter and Tony Day for the guidance in refining my thesis project and formulating my Davenport grant proposal. I am particularly grateful to Professor Alice Hadler for her help proofreading my thesis.

I wish to express my special thanks to the researchers of the Centre d’études sur la Chine moderne et contemporaine (CECMC) in Paris, whose help was priceless for the genesis and completion of this thesis project. I especially recognize the help and guidance of M. Frédéric Obringer, Mme. Jacqueline Nivard, Mme. Isabelle Landry-Deron, M. Xavier Paulès, Mme. Monique Abud and M. Pierre-Étienne Will.

I also extend my gratitude to the librarians and archivists of the British Library, the Library of the School and Oriental and African Studies, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the BULAC and CECMC, the Archives Diplomatiques de France, the library of the Collège de France, and the library of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. I am especially grateful to Père Victor Broekaert, O.S.B., the librarian of Sint-Andriesabdij, for sharing the treasures of the Lou archives with me. I also thank Philip Vanhaelemeersch, director of the Confuciusinstituut Brugge, for assistance with navigating the maze of material conserved at Sint-Andriesabdij.

I am grateful to all who showed me kindness and hospitality at all stages of my thesis journey. I am especially thankful to my Uncle Francis Theseira for housing me in London, to Abbot René Fobe, O.S.B. and the other monks of Sint-Andriesabdij for teaching me the value of Benedictine hospitality and spirituality, to the religious of the Fraternité Monastique de Jérusalem for their Christian charity, to l’se de Smet, Mieke Mortier, Emma Therens and Kim Steen for their kindness and friendship to a visitor to Belgium, and to Mme. Brigitte Godelizer-Etlicher, the best Parisian landlady I could hope for.

I would also like to thank my friends without whose support, encouragement, and prayers I would never have made it through this journey. I am especially grateful to Fr. Hal Weidner, C.O., for the prayers and spiritual guidance through my time at Wesleyan. I am thankful to my Wesleyan Freeman Scholars family especially my thesis proofreaders Ng Chun Kit, Jill Jie’en Tan and Marianna Ilagan. I also thank my fellow Freeman Scholars, notably Han Hsien Liew, Gavin Swee, Angela Lo, Paul Hanakata, and Yusaku Takeda, my fellow Wesleyan Catholics especially Erin Chase and Mary DePascale, and my CSS classmates notably Ben Jacobs and Brendan O’Donnell for the years of warm friendship.

I am also grateful to the College of Social Studies for giving me an intellectual home at Wesleyan. I thank the Wesleyan Center for the Humanities for providing me with a pleasant workspace in which I could complete my thesis.

Finally, I thank the Almighty for the wonderful blessings I have received through this project. Though I have received much help and support to bring this thesis to fruition, if any mistakes should remain they are entirely my own.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, and to all who in every generation have stood up for the cause of truth.
Note on Romanization and Translations:

In line with current academic convention, the Hanyu Pinyin system was used for the Romanization of Chinese words and names that appear in this thesis. Exceptions were made for figures such as Sun Yat-Sen and Chiang Kai Shek who are well known with names Romanized according to older Romanization systems. Since this thesis has been an attempt to reanimate Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s voice for a contemporary audience, a decision was made to Romanize Lou’s name as “Lou Tseng-Tsiang,” the Romanization he himself used, rather than adopt the Pinyin Romanization “Lu Zhengxiang”. Similar exceptions were made for Lou’s contemporaries John Wu Ching Hsiung and Archbishop Stanislaus Lokuang. When I have quoted directly from a source, Romanizations were maintained according to the source material. Unless otherwise indicated, I translated all passages from Chinese myself.
### Lou Tseng-Tsiang Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang born in Shanghai.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang enrolled in l'École des Langues Étrangères de Shanghai where he learned French.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang admitted to Tong Wen Guan, a school for foreign languages attached to the Zongli Yamen (Chinese Foreign Affairs Office).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893 - 1905</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang with Chinese legation in St. Petersburg. Met his master Xu Jingcheng who groomed him and helped him ascend the ranks from interpreter to counselor of the legation. Met and married Berthe Bovy, a Belgian Catholic woman in 1899.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Xu Jingcheng who had returned to Beijing executed for opposing imperial court’s support of the Boxers. Lou Tseng-Tsiang loses faith in the Qing Dynasty and begins to follow Sun Yat-sen’s revolutionary movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Lou appointed Head of the Chinese Legation in the Hague, the Netherlands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Lou appointed Head of the Chinese Legation in St. Petersburg, Russia. Lou converted to Catholicism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Lou appointed first foreign minister of the Republic of China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912 – 1920</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang served multiple terms as Foreign Minister of Republic of China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang negotiated and signed Twenty-One Demands Treaty with Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang led Chinese delegation to Paris Peace Conference in his capacity as Foreign Minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang and his wife leave for Switzerland. Lou took up a position as Chinese Minister Plenipotentiary to Switzerland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s wife passed away on 16 April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang joined the abbey of Saint-André de Bruges on 4 October.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang is ordained a priest on 29 June.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Publication of <em>Souvenirs et Pensées</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Lou Tseng-Tsiang is appointed titular abbot of the abbey of Saint-Pierre de Gand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Brief Modern China Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1839 - 1842</td>
<td>First Opium War.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850 - 1864</td>
<td>Taiping War.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894 - 1895</td>
<td>First Sino-Japanese War.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Hundred Days Reform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899 - 1901</td>
<td>Boxer Uprising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>On October 10, Outbreak of the Xinhai Revolution. 29 December, Sun Yat-sen elected president by the Nanjing assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>The Qing court abolished the traditional Chinese examination system as part of the broad-ranging Xinzheng (New Administration) reforms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>January 1 declared the first day of the Chinese Republic. February 12, the last emperor of China abdicated. In exchange for supporting the revolution, Sun Yat-sen resigned presidency in favor of Yuan Shi Kai who was sworn in as president on March 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914 - 1918</td>
<td>First World War. About 100 000 Chinese workers sent to Europe to help meet Allied need for labor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Chinese appeals for German concessions in Shandong to be returned to China are rejected. This provokes student demonstrations across China that will grow into what becomes known as the “May Fourth Movement.” The Chinese Delegation is the only peace conference participant that did not sign the Treaty of Versailles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926 - 1928</td>
<td>Chiang Kai Shek leads the Nationalist armies on the Northern Expedition to reunite China by military force and ended the disunion of the warlord period during the early 1920s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Japan invaded and occupied Manchuria. Manchuria occupied until end of WWII.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945 -1949</td>
<td>Chinese Civil War between Nationalists and Communists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Mao Zedong proclaimed the establishment of the People’s Republic of China on 1 October. The defeated Nationalists fled to Taiwan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Colors of a Winter Coat:

An Intellectual History of the Life and Times of Lou Tseng-Tsiang

Loneliness imprints twilight years, almost forgotten.
With them vanish forty years of officialdom.\(^1\)


The poetic verse above was written for a man who wore many different suits, coats, and robes during his lifetime, as befitting the many roles he played in Chinese and international history. He had once held some of the highest Chinese diplomatic and political positions. By his twilight years he was an old man in a Belgian abbey. His years of officialdom were now a memory that continued to weigh in his mind. A century later he was largely forgotten. This man was Dom Pierre-Célestin René Jean-Jacques Lou Tseng-Tsiang (1871 – 1949), a diplomat, minister, monk and more.

Recent exhibitions about his life and times along with newly published works of scholarship have, however, helped revive public knowledge and interest in Lou’s disparate lives. In both Mainland China and Taiwan there have been recent attempts to reevaluate his role in each Chinese government’s respective national narrative. The crescendo of interest in Lou is not limited to both sides of the Straits of Taiwan.

There has also been a resurgence of interest in Lou Tseng-Tsiang in Europe, especially in Belgium where he spent the last twenty odd years of his life. The photo above was taken from the poster of an exhibition entitled “陸徵祥 Lou Tseng-Tsiang: diplomat, minister, monk” held in Ixelles, a suburban municipality of Brussels from October 28 – 30, 2011. The poster presents a triptych of Lou’s portraits, depicting his identities as a diplomat, minister and monk.

This thesis is an attempt to explore the central triptych of Lou’s roles while filling out the spaces between the images. Through rigorous research, a portrait of the complex living texture of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s worlds is explored in the pages that follow. The picture that emerges is that of a man who was like a finely crafted piece
of Chinese jade, with a seemingly fragile exterior but blessed with a durability to weather the vicissitudes of history.

**Neither Politician nor Scholar**

A detailed study of the different stages of Lou’s life, marked by many of the key events of the period such as the Xinhai Revolution, and the 1919 Peace Conference at Versailles, will illustrate some of the complexities of China’s modernization and explore the political, social and religious changes that occurred in China during the late Qing and Republican periods.

An inquiry into Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s careers also demonstrates the harmonization of Chinese tradition together with new Western ideas. Indeed, as this thesis argues, his complex commitments offer an example of a syncretic model of modernization. The analytical biography developed here demonstrates how and why a new class of urbanized and often Western influenced and professionally trained officials (such as Lou) replaced China’s traditional Confucian scholar-official (Shidafu) class as the new social and political elites in China, especially in cities of the coastal region such as Shanghai.³

A historical mechanism for social change is explored here in light of the changes in Chinese education and the introduction of Westernized schools that displaced the traditional Confucian academies. Members of the urbanized elite such as Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek were Protestant Christians. Unlike many of his elite Chinese Christian contemporaries, however, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was raised as a Protestant and converted from Protestantism to Catholicism in adulthood.

³ “士大夫” (Shidafu)
The question of why Christianity was so appealing to Chinese intellectuals of the period is analyzed in this work by concentrating upon how Christianity came to be seen as a moral force that could enhance societal stability and therefore allow for the fulfillment of the cherished Confucian dream of a harmonious, stable society. Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s conversion to Catholicism will be shown to compare how and why Catholicism and Protestantism appealed to the Chinese. Lou’s story also illuminates a larger history of Christianity in China.

Although he did not receive a traditional formal Confucian education, Lou Tseng-Tsiang defended the humanistic value of Confucianism against radicals who pushed for a more complete rejection of Chinese tradition. Lou believed that Christianity was truly compatible with Confucianism.

One intriguing aspect of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s life explored in this thesis is his marriage to a Belgian Catholic woman before his monastic vocation. Lou’s marriage transgressed the national, racial, and religious boundaries of the time. By his own account, Lou’s marriage was opposed by his Chinese colleagues and superiors. It also raised questions among his wife’s European family.

An analysis of Lou’s marriage thus serves as a lens to explore the complexities and contradictions of racial, and social relations between Europeans and Chinese in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The recounting of Lou’s vocation as a married man also fills out some of the textured interstices of the triptych of his life.

**Beyond Chancery and Cloister**

Western scholarship on Lou Tseng-Tsiang is currently sparse. One published secondary source in English that examines Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s life in entirety is

Keegan’s article argued that a study of the lives of Chinese diplomats reveals how they viewed the significant events in the history of Sino-Western relations.⁴ Hence Keegan wrote a brief biography of Lou in the form of an article that attempted to illustrate how a Chinese diplomat of the Qing Dynasty and Republican China experienced the significant events of the period such as the Boxer Uprising and the establishment of the Republic of China. Keegan also argued that Lou Tseng-Tsiang lived a life comprised of myriad contradictions, such as the contradiction between his fervent patriotic love for China and his increasing adoption of Western and Christian mores.⁵

The life of Lou Tseng-Tsiang was also the subject of study of an unpublished doctoral dissertation by Claire Shu-chin Chang entitled “When Confucius Meets Benedictus: The Destiny of A Chinese Politician Lou Tseng-Tsiang (1871 – 1949).” Chang argued that Lou Tseng-Tsiang was one of the most remarkable personalities of his era, as he was an important government official during both the Qing dynasty and early Republican China, and some of his decision affected China for a long period.⁶

Chang drew on a wide range of European and Asian archival sources, including the Lou archives at Sint-Andriesabdij for her dissertation. Chang came to

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⁵ Ibid., 172–173.
the final conclusion that Lou was universalistic in his concern for humanity. He had a world consciousness that was not limited by Chinese nationalism and this colored his religious sentiments as well.7

Subsequently, the most recent scholarly work in English that studied Lou Tseng-Tsiang is an essay in a book by David Strand published in 2011 and entitled *An Unfinished Republic: Leading by Word and Deed in Modern China*. Strand argued that the Chinese Revolution and establishment of the Republic of China in 1911 engendered new political practices in China that required leaders to engage in public discourse in order to gain public support. Men like Lou opened the sphere of politics up to confronting dissenting public audiences.

Strand analyzed how three prominent political actors of early Republican China, the suffragist Tang Qunying, the diplomat Lou Tseng-Tsiang and the revolutionary leader Sun Yat-Sen adapted or attempted to adopt the new republican political practices and atmosphere that had developed in China. Strand argued that the most successful political actors were those who could successfully adopt the new ways of politics as a form of public performance while those that could not adopt the new practices successfully were faced with swift public criticism.

There is to date more Chinese scholarship on Lou Tseng-Tsiang, including three full-length published biographies of Lou Tseng-Tsiang written in Chinese. Stanislaus Lokuang’s (Luo Guang) *Lu Zhengxiang Zhuan (Biography of Lu Zhengxiang)* is the oldest published biography of Lou. It was first published by the Truth Society of Hong Kong in 1949, the very same year of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s

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7 Ibid., 385.
death. It was subsequently republished by the Taiwan Commercial Press in 1967 with an added preface written by Lokuang.

Lokuang argued that Lou Tseng-Tsiang was a Confucian “gentleman” (*Junzi*).\(^8\) Lokuang wrote in the preface: “Lou Tseng-Tsiang was neither a politician nor a scholar; but he was a gentleman, in fact he was a gentleman according to Confucian standards.”\(^9\) This statement is indicative of Lokuang’s portrayal of Lou in the biography, namely as a virtuous Confucian gentleman who possessed the four qualities of Confucian gentlemanliness, modesty, respectfulness, concern for the people, and moral righteousness.

Lokuang was interested in the persistence of traditional Confucian values amongst Republican Chinese officials as well as how these values were reconcilable with Christianity and other Western mores. Lokuang may have developed this interest in Lou as a Confucian gentleman in response to developments in Mainland China. In 1949, when the book was first published, the Communists were making significant gains and in 1967, when the second edition was published, the Cultural Revolution had just been launched a year before.

The Communists attacked Confucian values as feudal and also persecuted Christians. Moreover, they likely considered Republican Chinese elites like Lou Tseng-Tsiang to be accomplices of Western imperialism. When assessed against this historical context of the spread of Communist ideology in China, it is clearer why

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\(^9\) Translation of “陸徵祥不是一位雄才大略的政治家，也不是一位富於學術的學者；他乃是一位君子，而且是一位標準的儒家君子” from Ibid.
Lokuang aimed to defend Confucian and Christian values through a biography of Lou, especially since Lokuang shared these values himself.

Lokuang himself was also a Confucian and Catholic, and considered Lou a friend. As a result he may not have analyzed Lou’s life as critically as another historian might have done. The sources Lokuang consulted for his biography of Lou Tseng-Tsiang were also limited. The two main sources Lokuang used for his book were Lou’s autobiography, as well as oral interviews when he visited Lou at Sint-Andriesabdij in August 1939 and in September 1948. As both sources were sources based on the memory of the historical actor, they were likely subject to the same limitations such as the fallibility of human memory. In fairness to Lokuang, he may also not have had access to more recent archival sources when he was writing his book.

It would take a few decades before another biography of Lou was written in Chinese. The second published biography of Lou Tseng-Tsiang written in Chinese is by Shi Jianguo. It is also entitled *Lu Zhengxiang Zhuan (Biography of Lu Zhengxiang)* and was published in 1999 by the Hebei People’s Press. It is part of a series of historical biographies of diplomats of the Republican period in the People’s Republic of China. The other biographies in the series are on Wellington Koo (Gu Weijun), Wu Tingfang, Yan Huiqing, C.T. Wang (Wang Zhengting), Song Ziwen, and Chen Youren. Koo and Wang were plenipotentiary delegates representing China under Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s leadership at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference.

Shi Jianguo’s biography of Lou Tseng-Tsiang is predominantly focused on Lou’s diplomatic career. Shi wrote that the contemporary Chinese interest in
Republican Chinese diplomats was sparked by China’s reform era and entrance into the global market, which aroused a desire to compare contemporary Chinese experiences with an earlier Chinese experience with rapid internationalization during the early years of the 20th century.\(^\text{10}\) Shi argued that the Republican Chinese diplomats were a remarkable new social class that emerged in early 20th century China. They had utilized their professional education and skills to further China’s interest as best as possible despite the myriad challenges before 1949.\(^\text{11}\)

Shi claimed that Lou Tseng-Tsiang was a figure who was very much part of this class of diplomats. What made Lou unique in Shi’s view was the fact that not only was he an accomplished statesman, in his later years he became a monk that was distinguished and recognized, being elevated by the Catholic Church to become the first Chinese Benedictine abbot in history. Moreover Shi Jianguo asserted that Lou remained a Chinese patriot to the end of his life and never forgot China.\(^\text{12}\)

Shi Jianguo’s biography of Lou Tseng-Tsiang drew on a wider range of sources than did Lokuang’s. Apart from Lou’s autobiography and Lokuang’s earlier biography, Shi Jianguo also consulted a number of Chinese archival sources in order to illuminate the intricacies of Chinese politics and diplomacy of the time. For instance, Shi Jianguo noted domestic Chinese opposition to Lou being nominated to lead the Chinese delegation at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, “Lou’s diplomacy as Foreign Minister, whether on the issues of Mongolia, Manchuria, Tibet, etc. have all resulted in national humiliation. Moreover, he lost a confidence vote in the National

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\(^{10}\) Shi Jianguo, *Lu Zhengxiang Zhuan*, (Shijiazhuang: Hebei People’s Press, 1999), 1.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 283.
Assembly. This shows that the people do not recognize Lou’s diplomacy.”\textsuperscript{13} The information about Chinese dissatisfaction with Lou was documented in a newspaper of the period, the \textit{Minguoribao} (Republican Daily).\textsuperscript{14}

Neither Lou Tseng-Tsiang nor Lokuang mentioned the domestic Chinese opposition to Lou’s nomination as leader of the Chinese delegation to Paris. They both only recounted that by the end of the Peace Conference, Lou and the rest of the Chinese delegation were hailed as heroes for rejecting the Treaty of Versailles that dealt with China unjustly. In summary, the historical distance between Shi Jianguo and Lou Tseng-Tsiang, along with Shi’s access to Chinese archival sources may have allowed Shi to undertake a more objective study of Lou than Lokuang was able to accomplish in the previous biography.

The third and most recent Chinese biography of Lou Tseng-Tsiang by Hu Xinding, Lü Cai and Hu Ying, was published in 2011 by the World Knowledge Press. This biography may be the most politically slanted in its interpretation and portrayal of Lou and his time. It is entitled \textit{Ruoguo Waizhang Lu Zhengxiang; Xiangai Xinhai Geming Yibai Zhounian} (\textit{Lu Zhengxiang Foreign Minister of a Weak Country: Dedicated to the Centenary of the Xinhai Revolution}). The title itself sends a message by claiming that Lou was a Foreign Minister of a weak country during the Republican period in contrast to the “strong” People’s Republic of China that replaced it.

The book opens with a preface by Guan Chengyuan, Member of the People’s Consultative Committee of the 11\textsuperscript{th} National Committee of the People’s Republic, and former ambassador of China to the European Union and Plenipotentiary to the

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{13} Translation of “陆氏自长外交以来，若蒙满藏各处之外交，举无不丧权辱国，且曾经国会投以不同意票，足见国民对于陆氏不能胜认外交已为多数人所承认” from Ibid., 203-204.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{14} “民國日報” (Minguoribao).}
Kingdom of Belgium. The inclusion of a preface by someone with close ties to the ruling Chinese government indicates that this biography received Communist party sanction.

In the preface itself, Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s role as a diplomat of a weak China who signed accords such as the Twenty-One Demands of Japan is depicted as leading to further national humiliation.\textsuperscript{15} This was a rather harsh indictment of Lou since he and his team of negotiators did successfully reduce the harshness of the terms of the Twenty-One Demands Treaty with Japan.

The authors of the biography argue that Lou Tseng-Tsiang was, for the most part, an accomplished diplomat of his time, though in his twilight years he made the astounding decision to enter a monastery in Belgium. Lou had a lifelong love for China but eventually was not able to return to his homeland to die. They claim that even though opinions may be divided on Lou Tseng-Tsiang and his legacy, his remarkable life means that he will not be forgotten by history.\textsuperscript{16}

Despite their claims, the authors use a quote attributed to Lou Tseng-Tsiang to temper their evaluation of his accomplishments, and of the Republican Chinese government that he served. Lou is said to have declared in a 1945 interview with Chinese reporters that there was “neither justice nor diplomacy for a weak country” (\textit{Ruoguo wu gongyi, ruoguo wu waijiao}), thereby implying that the achievements of diplomats like himself were ultimately superficial.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15} Hu Xinding, Lü Cai and Hu Ying, \textit{Ruoguo Waizhang Lu Zhengxiang: Xianggei Xinhai Geming Yibai Zhoumian} (Beijing: World Knowledge Press, 2011), II.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., I - 4, 224.
\textsuperscript{17} Translation of “弱国无公义, 弱国无外交” (\textit{Ruoguo wu gongyi, ruoguo wu waijiao}) from Ibid., II.
The source for the quote is, however, not cited. This same phrase is also mentioned during contemporary colloquial discussions of Lou Tseng-Tsiang but the source is never clear, and its accuracy is uncertain. It is possible that Lou Tseng-Tsiang really did utter that sentence, but likely within the context of a larger discussion that may have been forgotten. Quotes taken out of context, however, can have very different meanings than originally intended.

The authors’ interest in Lou Tseng-Tsiang was likely motivated by the commemoration of the centenary of the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 that overthrew the Qing Dynasty. This event put an end to the Chinese imperial system and established the nationalistic Republic of China. The Chinese Communists eventually overthrew the Republic of China forcing the Nationalists to flee to Taiwan.

During this commemoration of the Xinhai Revolution there were competing interpretations of the revolution’s significance and meaning amongst Chinese and Taiwanese historians. The historical debates that continue to be shaped by the political divisions between the two sides likely extended to historical figures such as Lou Tseng-Tsiang as well. The book published in 2011 was heavily influenced by the Chinese Communist Party’s perspective of the Republican Chinese state and government as being weak and even reactionary.

The existing scholarship on Lou Tseng-Tsiang was based on analyses of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s own writings, as well as archival and secondary research. A similar research methodology was adopted when writing this thesis, though the interpretations of Lou’s lives presented here supplements and also challenges existing interpretations of Lou, including the narrative he himself presented.
Among the main sources on which this project is based are Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s few published writings, including his autobiography *Souvenirs et Pensées* in which he recounted his diplomatic and political career as well as his religious vocation. Lou’s autobiography retells his service as a diplomat for the Qing dynasty, and Foreign Minister for the Republic of China, as well as his role in the Chinese delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, before spending his twilight years in the monastery on the outskirts of Bruges. The autobiography provides an insight into how an educated and westernized Chinese man of the period perceived, thought about and remembered all these events and developments.

Important as it is, *Souvenirs et Pensées* suffers from similar weaknesses that other memory-based sources do, as Lou Tseng-Tsiang omits or glosses over more unpleasant experiences, such as his unhappy and very brief tenure as Prime Minister of China. These episodes can be reconstructed on the basis of other primary and secondary sources, particularly archival sources such as newspapers from the Republican period, which reported on the opposition Lou aroused in the National Assembly.

My choice to quote *Souvenirs et Pensées* throughout the thesis was made in order to evoke Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s voice, and give the reader an opportunity to hear Lou tell the story of his own life in his own terms. Meanwhile archival and secondary research provided an opportunity for this thesis to engage in conversation with Lou and enhance the narrative of *Souvenirs et Pensées*. To borrow an idea from the
historian Natalie Davis, this thesis is in part my own invention but “held tightly in check by the voices of the past,” especially the voice of Lou.\(^{18}\)

Apart from *Souvenirs et Pensées*, Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote another book, *La rencontre des humanités et la découverte de l’Évangile*, published posthumously, in which he reflected on the humanistic encounter between Orient and Occident, especially with regards to the relationship between Confucianism and Christianity, as well as the role of intellectuals in mediating this humanistic encounter. Lou’s call for a dialogue of civilizations between China and the West remains in my view relevant today.

The contemporary significance and uniqueness of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s message is highlighted in this thesis by linking it to the work of William Theodore de Bary’s latest book *The Great Civilized Conversation* that also discusses the importance of humanistic dialogue between various civilizations through the medium of education.

**Lou and Languages**

Significantly, Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s sole published account of his life and his call for inter-civilizational dialogue were published in French. French was a language that Lou mastered from youth but it nevertheless never took the place of Chinese, which he always considered to be his mother tongue. His publication of works in French and other occasions in his life raise profound questions about the nature and use of language.

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The unfolding lives of Lou Tseng-Tsiang deepen our understanding of the role of language in the development of thought. Wittgenstein’s aphorism “Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt” (The limits of my language means the limits of my world) helps to focus the emotional and intellectual meaning that different languages had for Lou Tseng-Tsiang.\textsuperscript{19}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang had \textit{mehrere Sprachen} (multiple languages: Chinese, French, Latin) allowing him to inhabit and traverse \textit{mehrere Welten} (myriad worlds) with \textit{mehrere Bedeutungen} (many meanings) und \textit{Grenzen} (limits). These multiple languages affected and shaped his \textit{Weltanschauungen}.

Moreover Wittgenstein’s aphorism also has the connotation of referring to the limits of orality, as \textit{Sprache} implies a language that was originally \textit{gesprochen} (spoken) before it was \textit{geschrieben} (written). However Chinese with its distinctions between oral (语, yu) and written (文, wen) forms of the language, a distinction represented by different characters, and the separate yet complementary historical evolutionary trajectories of the oral and written forms of Chinese, raises the possibility that a language can have multiple limits depending on the form in which it is expressed and represented.

Language had important implications for Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s experience of religion. He experienced Christianity in Chinese from an early age through Protestant translations of the Bible into Chinese. He lived however as a Catholic in a time when the Catholic Church insisted on Latin as the liturgical language of the predominant Roman liturgical rite. When Lou eventually joined the Benedictines, he had to learn

Latin as a middle-aged man, which was a considerable challenge. He advocated the use of Chinese as a liturgical language, and celebrated his younger compatriot John Wu’s translation of the New Testament into Classical Chinese.

Concurrently, language was also central to the relationship of Lou Tseng-Tsiang and his wife. French was the language of love between Lou and Madame Lou, and there is little indication that Madame Lou ever mastered Chinese in the manner akin to her husband’s mastery of French. Lou however always considered Chinese to be his mother tongue, the language in which he could best express the nuances of his heart and spirit.

Therefore as intimate as Lou’s relationship with his wife was, there were perhaps places in his heart and spirit that she could never fully enter, because those were Chinese spaces, spaces where the boundaries were *bedeutet* by the limits of Chinese, in line with Wittgenstein’s aphorism. Despite the linguistic boundaries between Madame Lou and Lou, there were still some things shared between them that even language could not express, but that did not mean that they were unintelligible or meaningless to the both of them.

Finally, language was also essential to Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s career. He began his diplomatic vocation as an interpreter, and his command of French, the main diplomatic language of the time, was one reason for his ascent up the ranks of the Chinese diplomatic corps. He learned the language of Western internationalism and diplomacy, but his later religious vocation gave him a language and vocabulary to espouse his universalistic vision. It also gave him a language to express and reflect on China’s and his own suffering and hardship. For Lou, French had multiple
dimensions with varying significances at different stages of his life. The questions on language raised by Lou’s life contribute to the filling of the spaces between the dominant images of Lou.

**Beyond Diplomat, Minister, Monk**

The images and memory of Lou Tseng-Tsiang as diplomat, minister, and monk have been most faithfully preserved in Sint-Andriesabdij. After Lou’s death, the monks of the abbey where he had lived as a monk conserved his personal documents and papers in the monastery archives. His personal effects were also kept and a room was set-aside to house a permanent exhibition on Lou. The arrangement of items resembled as closely as possible the arrangement during Lou’s own lifetime. The collection of items has since grown over time as some descendants of friends of Lou have also donated items from or related to Lou back to the abbey so that they can be conserved together with other Lou memorabilia.20

Over time, the memories of the former Chinese diplomat and minister who joined a Benedictine abbey on the outskirts of Bruges faded amongst the townsfolk of Bruges. From time to time, Belgian, Chinese or Taiwanese scholars or graduate students might drop by the abbey but its collection remains under the radar.

The first public exhibition of the abbey’s collection on Lou Tseng-Tsiang was held in conjunction with the 22nd Europalia from October 2009 to January 2010.21

The exhibition was entitled “Dom Lou: Imperial Diplomat and Monk” and held at

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20 I thank the monks of Sint-Andriesabdij and Philip Vanhaelemersch, Director of the Confuciusinstituut Brugge, for the information on the historical background of the Lou Tseng-Tsiang collection at Sint-Andriesabdij.
21 The Europalia is a major international biennial arts festival held in Europe that celebrates an invited country’s cultural heritage. In 2009, the invited country was China. For more information, please refer to: http://www.europalia.eu/.
Sint-Andriesabdij. A write-up of Lou and the exhibition quoted a Taiwanese representative to Brussels who described Lou’s life: “He led a remarkable life, at the heart of which is a touching love story between two people who came from very different backgrounds.”\(^{22}\) The quote suggests that Lou was more than just a diplomat and monk. He was also a loving husband.

Nevertheless, the second public exhibition on Lou Tseng-Tsiang in Belgium continued the emphasis on Lou’s diplomatic, political and religion vocations and careers. It was entitled “陸徵祥 Lou Tseng-Tsiang: diplomat, minister, monk”. The exhibition was organized with the assistance of the Taiwanese Representative Office to Belgium in conjunction with the centenary of the Xinhai Revolution to commemorate Lou’s role in reforming and modernizing the Chinese foreign ministry at the establishment of the Republic of China.\(^{23}\)

Meanwhile in Taiwan itself, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Taiwan National Palace Museum organized an exhibition from August 2011 – February 2012 to commemorate the centennial of the Republic of China. The exhibition was entitled “Bainian Chuancheng Zouchu Huolu: Zhonghua Minguo Waijiao Shiliao Tezhan A Century of Resilient Tradition: Exhibition of the Republic of China’s Diplomatic Archives.” Treaties, maps, documents and photographs highlighting key moments in modern Chinese diplomatic history were exhibited.


Amongst the exhibited items were telegrams regarding the refusal of the Chinese delegation led by Lou Tseng-Tsiang to sign the treaty of Versailles in 1919.\textsuperscript{24}

While acknowledging the significance of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s diplomatic, political and religious vocations and careers, this thesis has also attempted to explore other facets of Lou such as his relationship with his mentor Xu Jingcheng and his wife Berthe Bovy. Extensive research based on archival material, primary and secondary sources was conducted to achieve this.

For instance, the collection of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s medals in Sint-Andriesabdij highlights his accomplishments as a professional diplomat, and raises questions of how the Chinese had to learn to adapt to a new diplomatic system that was imposed on them from after the First Opium War and which replaced the traditional Chinese tributary system. Some of the photographs of Lou and his residences pose questions about changing Chinese material culture with regards to clothing style and interior decoration, as well as deeper questions about the changing meanings of Chinese identity in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.

The library of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven conserved some other archival materials on Lou Tseng-Tsiang such as photos and documents. There was a copy of the address Lou gave during the mass in August 1946 when he was consecrated as the first Chinese Benedictine abbot. The contents of this speech are significant because they demonstrated that Lou continued to think of China and his former Chinese diplomatic colleagues even years after he departed his homeland and

he invoked his memories at this important new moment in his life. He ended his speech by emphasizing the continued importance of the spiritual and made an appeal to peace between peoples. These were themes he would develop further in *La Rencontre des Humanités*.

The Bibliothèque Nationale de France meanwhile conserved a copy of a eulogy of Lou Tseng-Tsiang given in February 1949 at the Collegio San Anselmo in Rome by Lou’s friend and then Chinese ambassador to the Holy See, John Wu. The contents of this eulogy provide an invaluable insight into how a prominent Chinese Catholic contemporary of Lou perceived Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s life and spirituality.

Newspapers in libraries and archives in both Europe and America were also an important primary source for this thesis. A French weekly published in Beijing in the early 20th century provides a sense of how the expatriate community in China at the time viewed Lou Tseng-Tsiang. Subsequently, a news report from the Washington Post on the Chinese delegation at Versailles in 1919 reveals the lack of comprehension amongst Westerners of Chinese aims at Versailles and demonstrates an almost patronizing view of the Chinese diplomats present at Versailles in 1919.

This thesis is anchored in the methodologies of intellectual history. By analyzing how Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s ideas about politics, religion, justice etc. as well as how his worldviews changed and developed over the course of his lifetime, this thesis explored how ideas and intellectual patterns changed over time in modern China. Through an analysis of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s writings, this thesis also evaluated Lou as an intellectual, and assessed his contributions to Chinese intellectual developments of his time.
This thesis also represents an attempt at transnational history in order to assess how ideas and intellectual patterns flowed and circulated and transcended boundaries between Europe and China, as well as within China itself.\textsuperscript{25} The spread of Christianity to China and within China and the role of Chinese elites and intellectuals such as Lou Tseng-Tsiang in this transfer will be analyzed. The transfer of ideas with regards to Christianity was not just one way from Europe to China, and it is also necessary to evaluate how Christianity adapted over time to Chinese culture and tradition for instance with regards to the question of the Chinese reverence for their ancestors. This transnational history also illuminates the transfer of Western political and educational models and ideals to China, and the impact this transfer had on Chinese political, social, cultural and intellectual developments of the period.

In conclusion, this work attempts an original contribution to the relatively nascent field of scholarship on Lou Tseng-Tsiang by complementing existing works and challenging some of their frameworks and interpretations. My goal is to show how he successfully navigated a spectrum of identities that were not contradictory at all. What made Lou distinctive though was that he transgressed some boundaries that others would not cross, especially in his marriage to a Belgian Catholic woman. This thesis complements current scholarship by arguing that an analysis of the intellectual developments that shaped Lou Tseng-Tsiang pose novel questions about the political and diplomatic history of Republican China.

Ultimately, this thesis is a journey alongside Lou Tseng-Tsiang into the worlds that he inhabited and which comprised his multiple lives. The starting point is

fittingly Shanghai, Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s birthplace and arguably the gateway into modern China in Lou’s time, and today.
Chapter One

Wretched China

Donc, après un certain enseignement privé des classiques chinois, à treize ans et demi, j’étais entré à l’École des Langues étrangères de Shanghai. J’y appris surtout le français. Ce cours était donné par un maître zélé, M. Alphonse Bottu.26

In the mid-19th century, Shanghai was China’s gateway to the world and to modernity, just as it is once again today. While Shanghai was initially opened to foreign settlement by force of arms, it was also the site of Chinese experiments in modernization such as the establishment of schools that taught foreign languages, and Western science and mathematics.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang recounted in *Souvenirs et Pensées* how, at thirteen and a half years, he was enrolled in the new school of foreign languages in Shanghai where he specialized in learning French under the tutelage of a certain Mr. Alphonse Bottu. This education would open the door for Lou to pursue a medal-studded diplomatic career.

The photo above is of one Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s school notebooks from a class with Mr. Bottu. The notebook is preserved in the archives of Sint-Andriesabdij. A yellowing page provides insights into who Lou Tseng-Tsiang was, which help to fill out the spaces between the dominant images of his life. For instance, the page reminds the reader that before he was a diplomat, minister or monk, Lou was a boy from Shanghai who learned French and bore the name Jean-Jacques.

The preservation of the notebook also suggests that Lou Tseng-Tsiang cherished his education and the memory of his teachers such as Mr. Bottu so much that he kept his school notebooks all his life. Perhaps the notebooks accompanied him every time he moved, reminding him of the linguistic foundations of his diplomatic career. The weathered pages of the notebooks bear silent testimony to the life of one of China’s foremost diplomats of the late-Qing and Republican periods.

How was it that a young Chinese boy enrolled in a school of foreign languages and not in a traditional Confucian academy became one of the most prominent Chinese diplomats and public officials of his time? The answer lies in the rapid changes China experienced from the mid-19th century onwards, which altered China’s social, political, educational, and cultural landscape.
China had entered into a new world order dominated by European and American power.\(^{27}\) China also struggled to accommodate and adapt to the changed international system as well as greatly emboldened foreigners.\(^{28}\) Many of these changes were focused on the rapidly transforming urban landscape of Shanghai, where Lou Tseng-Tsiang was born and grew up.

**Knowing Sorrow From Youth**

Shanghai was not only transformed architecturally and physically, but also changed demographically. It was a magnet for migrants from elsewhere in China. Lou Yong-Fong, the father of Lou Tseng-Tsiang was one such migrant to Shanghai. Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself provided few details of his parents’ backgrounds:

> Je suis né à Shanghai. Mon père, M. Lou Yong-Fong appartenait à une famille aisée. ... Dieu permit que mes parents connussent l’épreuve et la pauvreté, et cette grande mortification de rester sans enfants pendant dix-sept ans.\(^{29}\)

Lou Yong-Fong was reportedly born in 1835 and was originally from Taicang city in the Jiangnan region, in what is today southern Jiangsu province not far to the north of Shanghai.\(^{30}\) Lou Tseng-Tsiang recounted that his father was originally from a wealthy family, so Lou Yong-Fong may have moved to Shanghai because of the new commercial opportunities available there.

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\(^{28}\) For a discussion of how the treaty system fit within the traditional Chinese world order, please refer to John K. Fairbank, “The Early Treaty System In The Chinese World Order,” in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China’s Foreign Relations*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968). Fairbank argued that the treaty system in its initial decades from the 1840s to the 1880s could be understood as not just a Western device to bring China into the Western world, but could equally be seen as a Qing device for accommodating the West and giving the West a place in the Chinese world.


Lou Yong-Fong married a woman, Ou Kin-Ling in 1854 and they had a daughter who survived only a few weeks. Lou Tseng Tsiang wrote that God allowed his parents to know trials and poverty, as well as the pain of remaining childless for another 17 years until Lou Tseng Tsiang himself was born in Shanghai on June 12, 1871.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s birth should have brought joy to the family, but it was only a precursor of more sorrow to come. Lou stated that upon giving birth to him, his mother developed an edema (dropsy) that would claim her life eight years later. The early death of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s mother due to complications arising from his birth marked Lou deeply for the rest of his life:

Jusqu’aujourd’hui, sa mort prématurée me cause un serrement de cœur. J’ai accepté et j’accepte cette peine; pour l’adoucir, je m’unis à la joie de ceux qui ont encore leur mère ou qui l’ont gardée plus longtemps que moi.\(^{31}\)

Years later as a monk recounting his past, the memory of the early death of his mother still caused Lou pain. To temper the pain, he shared in the joy of those who knew their mothers longer.

Lou Yong-Fong never remarried, therefore serving as a role model for his son who would also not remarry when in the years to come he, too, mourned the passing of his own wife.\(^{32}\) The fact that the Lou household was marked by hardship and grief led one of Lou’s Chinese biographers, Shi Jianguo, to claim that Lou Tseng-Tsiang was one who knew sorrow from youth, “Shaoshi jishi chou ziwei”, and these early sorrows can perhaps be understood as foreshadowing later sorrows to come.\(^{33}\)

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 38.
\(^{32}\) Shi, Biography of Lu Zhengxiang, 4.
\(^{33}\) Translation of “少时即识愁滋味,” from Ibid., 1.
The trials and tribulations of the Lou family in some way reflect the trials endured by China and the Chinese at the time, such as the wars with foreign powers that forced China to open up diplomatically and commercially. Nevertheless, the forced opening also led to the rapid development of new urban centers such as Shanghai that in time would become sites where a new distinctive Chinese modernity thrived.34

Shanghai Open City

Among the distinctive features of Shanghainese modernity in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries was Shanghai’s status as a haven for political dissidents of all stripes, as evoked by the following poem:

New Year 1933
The general sits safe on his cloud-wrapped peak
While thunderbolts slaughter the humble in their hovels.
Better by far to live in the Settlement,
Where the clacking of mahjong heralds the Spring.35

One of these dissidents was the well-known author Lu Xun. Writing in 1933, Lu Xun critiqued the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek’s anti-communist campaign. With the use of aircraft and other modern weaponry, Chiang could rain death down on his lowly enemies. Anti-government dissidents, such as Lu Xun himself, were thus better off in the International Settlement of Shanghai, where they were safe from the reach of the Chinese law, and where the sound of mahjong heralded the sound of a new

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year. Due to provisions concerning extraterritoriality and its status as a Treaty Port, Shanghai became a refuge for Chinese dissidents such as Lu Xun.

One of the important outcomes of the Treaty of Nanjing of 1842 that concluded the First Opium War between Britain and China was the establishment of the Treaty Port system.\textsuperscript{36} Article 2 of the Treaty determined that five Chinese cities – Canton, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo, and Shanghai – would be opened to residence by British subjects and their families “for the purpose of carrying on their mercantile pursuits, without molestation or restraint.” It also permitted the establishment of consulates in each of the cities that were to be opened up.\textsuperscript{37}

Over the course of the subsequent decades, one after another the other powers would sign their own favorable treaties with China, oftentimes compelling China with force of arms. The establishment of the treaty port system opened a new chapter in history for the treaty port cities, especially Shanghai, whose new status would propel its rise to become of the great Asian metropolises.

At the outset, Shanghai had seemed like the least attractive of the five new treaty ports. It was not a provincial capital unlike Canton, but merely the chief city of a district (Xian). Geographically, it seemed inferior to Xiamen (Amoy) and Ningbo, that were both situated in bays protected by coastal islands. Instead, the port of Shanghai was located on the left bank of the Huangpu river, at about eighteen kilometers from the confluence of the Huangpu with the Yangzi river. Shanghai was

\textsuperscript{36} For an overview of the Opium War and the establishment of the Treaty Port system, please refer to Jonathan D. Spence, \textit{The Search For Modern China} Third Ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013), 150 – 151.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 158.
not just a fishing village, however, as it counted a population of two hundred to three hundred thousand inhabitants and was an important commercial center in the region.\textsuperscript{38}

Nevertheless, until the mid-nineteenth century, Shanghai attracted little foreign attention, either from the missionaries or from the merchants of the East India Company. The British recognized Shanghai’s potential due to its strategic location in the Yangzi delta region. Hence, they chose Shanghai to be one of the new treaty ports.\textsuperscript{39} Within a few decades, Shanghai would become the preferred place of residence of foreign entrepreneurs who established their enterprises there in collaboration with Chinese merchants.\textsuperscript{40}

Meanwhile, the political and social turbulence of the surrounding Chinese countryside drove a slew of Chinese migrants and refugees to Shanghai. Many fled the destruction of the Taiping Rebellion that was devastating the Southern Chinese provinces surrounding Shanghai. By 1854, there were already 20,000 Chinese refugees in Shanghai and their numbers would continue to grow in the subsequent years.\textsuperscript{41} Some of the Chinese migrants to Shanghai were attracted by the new opportunities presented by its commercial development. Lou Yong-Fong, the father of Lou Tseng-Tsiang could have been one of them.

Marie-Claire Bergère argues that the interactions between foreigners and Chinese in Shanghai turned the city into a place where Chinese civilization encountered western modernity, and that this encounter was experienced in a pragmatic manner on both sides. Chinese had to learn to adapt to a growing European

\textsuperscript{38} Marie-Claire Bergère, \textit{Histoire de Shanghai} (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2002), 28 – 32.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 30 – 32.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 53.
presence in their society while the Europeans had to adapt to a new place of residence and work. The encounter between China and Europe in Shanghai occurred on multiple dimensions, commercial, social, political, literary, educational, and religious etc. This allowed for the blossoming of Chinese modernity in Shanghai during the early 20th century.

There was also a darker side to the history of Shanghai’s transformation from a commercial center into a cultural matrix of Chinese modernity, Shanghai had been opened up to foreign commerce and settlement in the wake of the Opium Wars. Opium was a means by which foreign powers forced China open to foreign penetration of the Chinese economy and territory. Shanghai itself would come to be known as a center of opium consumption, renowned for the luxurious opium houses that were established in the city from the 1870s onwards.

The Struggle Against Opium

Opium addiction was a scourge that continued to blight Chinese society through the rest of Qing rule and into the Republican period. Having grown up in Shanghai, Lou Tseng-Tsiang would have likely witnessed opium consumption and its consequences first hand. This may explain why he later supported the Chinese struggle against opium. In 22 November 1930, Lou Tseng-Tsiang, wrote to Pope Pius XI seeking His Holiness’ support and encouragement for the activities of the National Anti-Opium Association of China:

... “National Anti-Opium Association of China” association très importante, qui compte plus de 400 organismes dispersés à travers la

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42 Ibid., 10.
According to Lou, the Association comprised over 400 organizations across China dedicated to the same cause of cleansing China of opium, a cleansing that was perceived as a moral struggle.

On April 28, 1930, a certain Garfield Huang had written from Shanghai to Lou Tseng-Tsiang on behalf of the Association, to seek Lou’s intercession with the Holy See:

We would therefore risk the impudence of seeking you to consul (sic) with the Reverendissimme Abbé de Saint André, and with his approval, to bring this matter at your earliest convenience to the attention of His Holiness the Pope in Rome and seek his sympathy in this regard. We must earnestly hope that the sanction from His Holiness will be obtained so that the Catholic forces in China will be in a position to freely assist this humanitarian movement, and which sanction, we are sure, will be received with enthusiasm throughout the Catholic circles in this country.

Chinese anti-opium activists such as Huang recognized the value of being able to draw on the resources and network of Catholic religious establishments in China to fight against opium. Support from the Holy See would also be a moral victory for the activists. They believed in Lou’s ability to intercede for them to the Holy See.

For his part, Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote the Holy See arguing that papal sanction of the Association’s activities would also be a public relations gain for the Catholic Church in China:

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Un encouragement de Votre Sainteté à la “National Anti-Opium Association of China” établirait un contact entre l’Église Catholique et de nombreux groupes de mes compatriotes auprès desquels celle-ci a toujours été présentée sous un aspect qui ne correspond pas à la réalité et qui, bien souvent, défigure douloureusement l’Épouse du Christ.\textsuperscript{46}

The Catholic Church, like other Christian groups, was associated with the imperialist foreign presence and incursion into China. The Catholic Church’s support of the Chinese movement against opium, the drug that had been used to force open China would thus help the Chinese see the Church in a different light.

On January 10, 1931, Lou Tseng-Tsiang received a positive response from Cardinal Pacelli, then Secretary of the State of the Holy See:

Le Souverain Pontife connaît et apprécie les très louables efforts que l’on fait en Chine pour combattre le fléau de l’opium et autres substances semblables aussi nuisibles à la santé de l’âme qu’a celle du corps, et il prie le Seigneur de couronner de succès une campagne si digne d’éloges, mais qui ne va pas sans difficultés.\textsuperscript{47}

The Catholic Church recognized the scourge of opium, which was harmful to both body and soul of the Chinese and China. The Church was willing to give its blessing to the campaign against opium. In any case, it was not the Catholic Church but the British that decided to export opium in large quantities to China to secure a more favorable trade balance with the Chinese.

The exchange between Lou Tseng-Tsiang and the Holy See indicated Lou’s contribution to the long hard Chinese struggle against opium. It also suggests how Lou Tseng-Tsiang was to become much more than an ordinary monk, to have such


influence with the Holy See. Intriguingly, it also ties together two means by which Europeans had used to enter China, Christianity and opium, and highlights the contrast between the two.

From the 16th to 18th centuries, the Jesuits had presented themselves not simply as missionaries but bearers of new knowledge and technology from Europe. Their scientific skills, and willingness to embrace Chinese culture and learning won the Jesuits the respect and admiration of the Chinese literati. Chinese converts were allowed to continue practicing Chinese rites such as honoring of ancestors. The subsequent Chinese Rites Controversy, however, culminated in Christianity being outlawed and the Jesuits and other Christian missionaries being expelled from China.

In the 19th century, Christian missionaries including for the first time large numbers of Protestants were allowed back into China in accordance with the new treaties China signed with the foreign powers. While the missionaries arrived on the coattails of the merchants and soldiers that had opened China up, they were not solely interested in exploiting China, some were genuinely keen on saving souls through conversion, while others may have been driven by a sense of adventure.

Regardless of their motivation, some of the missionaries would come to be known for their charity and kindness. The various charitable organizations, hospitals and schools the missionaries established helped provide new opportunities and changed the lives of many ordinary Chinese men and women, especially in the burgeoning coastal cities of China. The missionaries thus played their part in the shaping of modern China.
Christian Charity and Kindness

Among those who would come to recognize and appreciate the missionaries for their charity and kindness was Lou Tseng-Tsiang:

Le protestantisme a été pour moi une étape sans laquelle je crois que je n’aurais pu arriver au catholicisme. Je garde une profonde reconnaissance pour toute la charité et la bonté dont j’ai été l’objet de la part de ces missionnaires.⁴⁸

Through the Protestant missionaries of the London Missionary Society, Lou gained his first exposure to Christianity. Lou’s early exposure to Protestantism left its mark on him, since it was his first experience of Christian ideals in practice. Lou believed that without this experience with Protestantism, he may not have arrived at Catholicism.

The London Missionary Society was one of the many Protestant missionary groups active in Shanghai. It was born of the evangelical revival in England begun by George Whitefield, and John and Charles Wesley.⁴⁹ The religious revival movement they started had come to be known as Methodism. It grew quickly in England, appealing especially to the nascent English working class. The moving sermons of Methodist preachers, along with Methodism’s emphasis on charity and service towards those who were suffering, drew in the crowds.⁵⁰

The Methodist revival rejuvenated the various branches of Protestantism in England. One of the fruits of the rejuvenation was the establishment of the inter-denominational London Missionary Society, established in 1795 to send missionaries

⁴⁸ Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 38.
“to the heathen and unenlightened countries.” The founding members of the Society included Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians and Independents, all united by missionary zeal. The Society would soon send missionaries to various far-flung corners of Britain’s world empire, and even to lands outside of British dominion such as China. In China, the Protestant missionaries’ devotion to charity would eventually impress Chinese converts such as Lou Tseng-Tsiang.

The Society established several mission posts in China, including one at Shanghai. According to 19th century accounts, the missionaries apparently considered the people of Shanghai “much inferior to those in the southern parts of the empire as to intelligence, energy, and independence of character,” and Shanghai itself was seen as a city of the “third order”. Nevertheless, the missionaries established themselves in Shanghai because like the British traders, they recognized the value of its central location along the Chinese coast.

The mission in Shanghai was predominantly a preaching mission, and among the methods employed to spread the gospel were “House-to-house visitation, the distribution of tracts and books, Bible women’s work, a girls’ school, etc.” The missionaries had the help of local converts, among them was Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s father Lou Yong-Fong, who distributed Christian tracts and Bibles for the society.

One can surmise that since not many Chinese of the time knew English, the missionary tracts and Bible Lou Yong-Fong helped distribute were likely in Chinese.

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52 Ibid., 35.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., 522.
Indeed one of the important projects the London Missionary Society undertook was a Protestant translation of the Bible into English. Lovett recounted this undertaking:

Two matters of great moment were connected with the early days of the Shanghai Mission. The first was the preparation of a new Chinese translation of the Bible which became widely known as the Delegates’ Version.\(^57\)

The New Testament in the Delegates Version of the Bible was written in a more classical style than translations that preceded and succeeded it. The Delegates Version was widely admired for its greater elegance, but its classical flavor also made it more difficult for Chinese commoners to read and comprehend easily.

Nevertheless, the Delegate’s Version was extensively used for the rest of the 19\(^{th}\) century, and it was only supplanted as the Chinese Bible of choice when the newer Union Translation was completed in 1919.\(^58\) According to Daniel Bays, one reason for the success of the Delegates Version was because the missionary translators had the help of capable Chinese assistants, though the Chinese contribution was barely acknowledged in the documentary record concerning the project.\(^59\)

If even the names of Bible translators were neglected in the missionary records, what more the names of those, like Lou Yong-Fong, who were merely hired hands to distribute tracts. This may explain why there seems to be little to no traces of Lou Yong-Fong and other Chinese catechists in the London Missionary Society archives, despite their contributions to the missionary cause in transmitting the Christian message in China in a language or dialect the Chinese could understand.


\(^{59}\) Ibid.
Languages and Religion

Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote that Chinese was his “langue maternelle” or mother tongue, the language in which he was best able to express the nuances of his heart and spirit, including perhaps his religious experiences:

…chinois, ma langue maternelle, qui, seule, peut exprimer dans toutes leurs nuances les pensées de mon esprit et les sentiments de mon coeur.60

Lou likely first experienced Christianity in his mother tongue Chinese through the Bibles and other texts that his father helped to distribute, but also probably through contact with the missionaries and their Chinese assistants. One reason for Lou’s receptivity to Christianity was his experience of Christianity in Chinese in his youth.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s early exposure to the classical style of the Delegate’s Version of the Bible may have shaped his fondness for classical Chinese, and strengthened his later desire to experience Catholicism in classical Chinese as evidenced by his calls for classical Chinese to be used as a liturgical language.61 His later joy at reading John Wu’s translation of the New Testament into classical Chinese may be because after long years of waiting he finally found a Catholic translation of the Bible that was able to make use of classical Chinese to represent the divine Truth.62 John Wu’s translation of the Bible may also have reminded him of the Bible he first read as a child in Shanghai.

In Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s lifetime however, Chinese was not used as a Catholic liturgical language. Lou later had to overcome the practical challenge of learning

60 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 31.
61 Ibid., 105 – 107.
Latin as a middle-aged monk. Apart from this difficulty, his later religious vocation was also a linguistic exile of sorts. In his quest for what he believed to be the truth in Christianity, which he hoped to share with his compatriots, he took this burden on to himself. His faith helped him to endure this challenge.

While Lou Tseng-Tsiang considered Chinese to be his mother tongue, questions remain about exactly which form of Chinese was Lou’s proper mother tongue. Given that Lou grew up in a time before standardized Mandarin Chinese (Putonghua) was imposed as the standard spoken form across China, it is not implausible that Shanghainese (Shanghaihua) or a similar dialect could have been Lou’s first spoken language, rather than Mandarin Chinese. The growing numbers of migrants in Shanghai from various provinces who would have brought with them their home dialects of Chinese meant that Lou possibly grew up in a multi-dialect environment.

Reports from missionaries of the London Missionary Society provide a tantalizing glimpse into the diversity of spoken tongues in the Shanghai of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s childhood as well as the Protestant missionaries willingness to engage the people in their own tongues where and when possible. The missionary William Muirhead wrote one such account:

> During the year there has been a good deal of outdoor preaching in the streets and thoroughfares of the city and suburbs. The writer has been in the habit, alone and in company with a native brother, of engaging in labours of this kind. … The numbers and variety of people render it all the more attractive, and the use of different dialects on the occasion makes these services available for all.\(^{63}\)

The preaching of the Christian message in Chinese dialects likely attracted the crowds. One wonders if Lou ever attended any of these open-air preaching sessions as a curious young boy, listening to the cacophony of dialects being spoken around him. He may have come to admire the Protestant missionaries to emulate the apostolic method of preaching in languages that were understandable to the target audience. As a Benedictine monk, Lou believed that the Catholic Church should also adopt the apostolic spirit in missionary work, and use local languages for liturgy and develop local clergy in mission territories.\(^{64}\)

Regardless of which spoken variety of Chinese Lou Tseng-Tsiang first learned, the written Chinese he learned would have been the standardized form that had been current for centuries. The unanswered questions surrounding Lou and the Chinese language are illustrative of how the nuances and distinctions between the spoken and written forms of the language has historically been of greater significance in Chinese than it has been in many European languages where the written form evolved alongside the spoken form.

In Chinese, the characters “文” (wen) and “语” (yǔ) can be used to distinguish between the written and spoken forms of a language. There is arguably a subtle difference between the meanings of “中文” (Zhongwen) and “汉语” (Hanyu). This difference is lost in translation as both terms are translated simply as Chinese, chinois etc.

When Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote of Chinese as his “langue maternelle” or mother tongue, in which he could best express himself there is the implication that he

\(^{64}\) Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 104 – 105.
is referring to the oral form of Chinese that is spoken with the tongue or “langue.”

But given Lou’s fondness for classical Chinese, which was only written but not spoken, surely he must have meant that only in both spoken and written Chinese could he fully express himself, moreover he likely was able to express different meanings in spoken and written Chinese, due to the differences in the oral and textual forms of Chinese.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s upbringing in Shanghai gave him the opportunity to experience not just the diversity of Chinese dialects, but also exposed him to foreign languages. Lou Yong-Fong enrolled Lou Tseng-Tsiang in the Shanghai School of Foreign Languages located in the Jiangnan Arsenal. There, Lou Tseng-Tsiang specialized in the study of French. His command of French was a valuable skill that enabled him to eventually become one of the leading Chinese diplomats of his time.

**A Seed of Traitors**

The decision of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s father to enroll him into the Shanghai School of Foreign Languages was one of great foresight, and it opened the path for Lou to achieve a successful diplomatic career. Lou Tseng-Tsiang always appreciated his father’s foresight, as well as his religiosity and honesty:

*Mon père était un homme religieux, honnête et clairvoyant. ... passant au-dessus des amères représentations que lui valut de toutes parts mon inscription, à l’âge de treize ans, à l’École des Langues Étrangères de Shanghai.*

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65 Ibid., 31.
66 Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 38. Meanwhile, for a discussion of the historical background of the Shanghai School of Foreign Languages, the subjects it taught, and its appeal to the Shanghainese, please refer to Benjamin A. Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550–1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 369 – 370. Elman argued that because the school taught both the Confucian Classics and new subjects such as Western algebra, geometry, international law, etc., it came to be seen as an alternative means for accessing the Chinese civil service.
68 Ibid., 38.
After graduating from the Shanghai School of Foreign Languages, Lou continued his education at the Tong Wen Guan, the school for interpreters established in 1862 and attached to the Zongli Yamen (Chinese Office of Foreign Affairs) in Beijing. Upon leaving the Tong Wen Guan, Lou took up a position as an interpreter with the Chinese legation in St. Petersburg. Despite his initial personal wishes to only spend a short time abroad, his posting to Russia would be the first step in what would become a long and successful diplomatic career.

Lou Yong-Fong’s decision to enroll his son in a school of foreign languages was also a courageous decision, since students of the school were considered to be traitors who helped deliver their country over to the imperialistic foreigners. As Lou Tseng-Tsiang recounted in the quoted passage above, others harshly criticized his father’s choice of school for him. Lou Yong-Fong’s own contact with Westerners through his work with the London Missionary Society, however, likely helped him appreciate the value that could be gained from Western learning.

Moreover, Lou Yong-Fong disapproved of the corruption of the Qing officials of the time, and did not want his son to enroll in a traditional Confucian academy that would have focused mainly on preparing Lou Tseng-Tsiang for the imperial civil service exams and a possible career as a state official. Furthermore, at the School of Foreign Languages in the Jiangnan Arsenal, students also had exposure to traditional Confucian learning, in addition to the new knowledge that they were receiving. This

69 Ibid., 39. Meanwhile, for a discussion of the historical background of the establishment of the Tong Wen Guan within the context of mid-19th century Chinese reforms, please refer to Mary C. Wright, The Last Stand Of Chinese Conservatism: The T’ung-Chih Restoration, 1862 – 1874 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962), 6-8, 242 – 243. Wright argued that the Tong Wen Guan was an attempt to integrate new learning into the old Chinese educational system, thereby hopefully strengthening the system against Western expansion and “Cantonese compradors.”

70 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 39.
would eventually give these students an upper hand over those in the traditional Confucian academies.

In any case, the traditional Confucian academies were rendered obsolete when the imperial civil service exams were finally abolished in 1905. Lou Yong Fong’s educational choice for his son was thus vindicated, while those who had spent long years preparing for the imperial civil service exams were left stranded and trying to find their place in a rapidly changing world. Lou Tseng-Tsiang meanwhile benefited from having studied both the Confucian classics as well as the new Western knowledge. As China’s economic center moved from the inland provinces to the coastal cities such as Shanghai, men like Lou Tseng-Tsiang benefited from the new opportunities that were created in China’s modernizing and expanding cities.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang was educated to be a specialist in the use of language, an important skill in the field of diplomacy, with its strict sets of protocols and codes of conduct. Lou learned French from a young age, and became by and large bilingual in it. Thanks to his linguistic skills, he was eventually groomed and developed into a leading Chinese diplomat who represented China at embassies abroad and at major international conferences. His diplomatic experiences and knowledge and understanding of Europe also allowed him to serve as one the elites who would aid in the rebuilding of China after the collapse of the Qing Dynasty.

71 The case of Liu Dapeng as discussed by Henrietta Harrison in The Man Awakened From Dreams represents a particularly poignant illustration of these men who were stranded by the changes of the time, and whose life trajectories were in marked contrast to those like Lou Tseng-Tsiang. Over the course of his lifetime, Liu experienced the decline in value and prestige of traditional Confucian education in favor of new forms of learning. For more on Liu Dapeng, please refer to Henrietta Harrison, The Man Awakened from Dreams: One Man’s Life in a North China Village, 1857 – 1942 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 163.
Formation of the Spirit

The education and formation of elites was an issue that personally resonated with Lou Tseng-Tsiang all his life, even during his time in the abbey:

Les élites ... Ce sont les individus qui, dans chaque class sociale, dans chaque profession, représentent le type humain le plus équilibré, le plus parfait, le plus apte à exercer autour de lui une influence salutaire et à remplir, … le rôle de chef et de meneur.”

Lou Tseng-Tsiang read quite widely in French, including newspapers. The Lou archives at Sint-Andriesabdij contain several books and folders of newspaper cuttings by Lou. One article that Lou saved was entitled “L’éducation des élites: Leur rôle et leur importance.” Lou highlighted the quoted passage, which stuck out for Lou probably because it spoke to his own personal sense of what the role of elites was in society, namely to lead, guide and exert a positive influence on those around them.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang saved the article because he was interested in the issue of the formation of elites. His notion of the responsibility of elites was informed by the traditional Confucian ideal of the statesman, whose responsibility was to assure the welfare of the people and preserve a stable and harmonious society. Lou himself had been an elite Chinese diplomat and minister who had tried his best to contribute to the modernization of his country. Lou would become an elite within the Catholic Church as well, after his elevation to the title of abbot. Lou’s reflections were spurred by his status as a member of the Chinese elite, and later of the Church elite.

The news article argued, in order to create a group of people who were balanced and could exercise leadership, education was of the utmost importance, and

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73 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 39.
education of the elites had to consist of more than just technical training. They would also need a formation of the spirit, a *Geistesbildung*. This would most certainly be where the humanistic elements of education are key.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang was educated in the Confucian tradition of China in school. But even before he was enrolled in school, he received some private tutoring in the Chinese classics, almost certainly from the Confucian canon.\(^{74}\) Lou always appreciated the value of the humanistic essence of traditional Chinese education though he recognized that its application had become pharisaic over time:

> Vous savez à quel point l’on a médité des études littéraires chinoises … le vieux système d’écolage chinois avait au moins le mérite de ne pas apprendre l’exercice de la lecture sans apprendre en même temps celui du jugement.\(^{75}\)

Lou argued that contrary to what the critics and radical modernizers thought, traditional Chinese education was valuable because it taught one not only to read, but also to judge, and think, and evaluate for oneself if something was right or wrong. This would certainly be a crucial skill for anyone aspiring to a leadership position in society.

Traditionally, a Confucian education began within the family itself. The central virtues of Confucianism were filial piety, and the cultivation of the self, which were values that could be developed from within the home itself:

> ... « développer les vertus naturelles dans les cœurs de tous les hommes. » (Ta Hio, Livre de la Grande Étude, 1) Ce développement social des vertus naturelles est, pour l’homme d’État, une tâche primordiale. Elle ne peut s’apprendre que dans le sein de la famille ...\(^{76}\)

\(^{74}\) Ibid.
\(^{75}\) Ibid., 78.
\(^{76}\) Ibid., 39 – 40.
Lou’s parents likely instilled in him the value of filial piety and self-cultivation. Lou claimed that without intending to do so, his father had actually laid the foundations for his public service career by imparting Confucian virtues to him.

Throughout his public service career, Lou Tseng-Tsiang measured himself according to Confucian standards, and aspired be a virtuous official. Lou also maintained a lifelong devotion to the virtue of filial piety, as evidenced by his respectful recollections of his father in *Souvenir et Pensées*. Nevertheless, his choice of a public service career meant that he was not at his father’s deathbed. There were thus instances when the ideals of virtuous devotion to public service conflicted with the ideal of a filial child.

As Confucianism was seen as the source of Chinese humanism, so would Christianity come to be seen by Lou Tseng-Tsiang as the source of Western humanism. He had the virtue of early exposure to Christianity, through his family’s membership in the community of the London Missionary Society in Shanghai and through his father’s work as a Christian catechist.

While Lou Tseng-Tsiang may have learned of the humanistic traditions of both China and the West from an early age, that itself did not set him up to be an “élite” and a leader. He had merely received theoretical knowledge, but had little sense of what virtuous public service meant in practiced. Nor had Lou experienced what striving for such an ideal might cost. The echoes and connections between Confucianism and Christianity may also not have been so visible to a young Lou.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang may have known he was not ready to be an elite, hence he initially envisaged a career with the Post Office, not as one of the most illustrious
diplomats of modern Chinese history.\textsuperscript{77} After a planned short time gaining experience abroad, he had wanted to return to China to care for his father.\textsuperscript{78} Moreover, Lou’s father initially objected to him becoming an official due to widespread corruption among Qing officials of the time.\textsuperscript{79}

Upon graduation from the Tong Wen Guan, what Lou still needed was a master or maître to refine and polish him into a fine piece of jade; he needed what the Chinese would call a “Shifu,” someone who was both a teacher and a father figure.\textsuperscript{80} A “Shifu” could polish a rough stone into a fine jade ornament. Such a person could show Lou the way and prepare him for the responsibilities he would have to shoulder as an “élite” and leader in a changing China. Lou Tseng-Tsiang had the good fortune of finding such a person upon his first posting abroad in St. Petersburg.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 39.
\textsuperscript{80} “Shifu” (师父)
Chapter Two

Treasures and Lessons of St. Petersburg

In December 1892 Lou Tseng-Tsiang received a posting abroad, as an interpreter of the fourth class, attached to the Chinese Legation in St. Petersburg. He first arrived in St. Petersburg in January 1893 as a young man of twenty-two and a half years. Lou Tseng-Tsiang ended up spending 14 years in St. Petersburg, and the people he encountered then, especially his mentor or master Xu Jingcheng (Shu King-
Shen as per Lou’s own Romanization), and his future wife Berthe Bovy, would end up changing his life professionally and personally.\textsuperscript{82}

Xu Jingcheng persuaded Lou Tseng-Tsiang to put aside his personal plans and take up a vocation of public service. Lou was transformed from an interpreter into a diplomat who would eventually be entrusted to lead Chinese legations abroad. Lou Tseng-Tsiang also learned to Europeanize himself for the sake of China.

The photo above that was taken when Lou Tseng-Tsiang was 26 years old raises questions about the nature of Lou’s Europeanization. Lou’s clothing was still rather Chinese, and he was posing with Chinese style furniture. Despite his Chinese appearances, Lou was already fluent in French. Meanwhile his job as an interpreter required him required to navigate and bridge different linguistic and cultural worlds to bring Europe and China into contact.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang continued to reflect on the meaning of inter-civilizational encounters all his life. Over time, Lou would become more Europeanized in dress, hair, and lifestyle, yet he always retained a Chinese core. One might wonder what motivated Lou to Europeanize himself for the sake of China.

\textbf{A Man of Foresight}

The instruction for Lou Tseng-Tsiang to Europeanize himself for China’s sake came from Xu Jingcheng. It was one of many lessons Lou heard from a man he called master (\textit{maître}), or most likely in Chinese, “\textit{Shifu},” or “Teacher-father”:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Cet homme d’État, juste et clairvoyant, m’honora de sa confiance et de son dévouement, consacrant de longues heures, presque quotidiennes, à me préparer à la tache qu’il envisageait pour moi.}\textsuperscript{83}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 39–42.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 43.
Lou described Xu as a just statesman and a visionary, who devoted much time to prepare Lou for the responsibilities of public service he would take up.

Xu Jingcheng led the Chinese Legation in St. Petersburg when Lou Tseng-Tsiang first arrived there as an interpreter. He was a reformist minded Qing official whose progressive position eventually cost him his life. Xu’s most remarkable contribution may have been his recognition that China needed a new generation of talented young leaders to reform and rebuild the country. Hence, Xu Jingcheng’s decision to train Lou as a protégé to carry out tasks he himself would not live to do such as reforming China. Lou Tseng-Tsiang credited Xu Jingcheng for not only transforming him into a diplomat, but also for pointing him in the direction of Catholicism and an eventual religious vocation. Lou later wrote of Xu Jingcheng, “Sans lui, je ne serais jamais devenu diplomate, et, ultérieurement, je ne serais devenu ni moine, ni prêtre.”

As a young interpreter in St. Petersburg, Lou Tseng-Tsiang inhabited and bridged different linguistic and cultural worlds. Later as an old monk reflecting on his past experiences, Lou meditated and wrote on the continuum of his identities and his many lives. While public historiography might present a triptych of separate images of Lou as diplomat, minister, and monk, in reality there were flows and continuities between the various lives of Lou Tseng-Tsiang. Lou believed that the training given him by Xu Jingcheng was a common wellspring for the varied spectra of his life.

One of the great Tang dynasty literati cum Confucian scholar-officials, Han Yu (768 – 824 CE), once wrote, “Shiyou Bole, ranhou you qianlima,

84 Ibid.
Bo Le was a man from China’s ancient Spring and Autumn period (770 – 476 BCE), who was renowned for his knowledge of horses. The saying from Han Yu can be rendered as meaning, that “only when there is one like Bo le can a horse that is capable of running a thousand miles be found. Nevertheless, there many horses capable of running a thousand miles but only few men like Bo le.” Han Yu was trying to emphasize that those capable of recognizing talent, are even rarer and more precious than talented individuals themselves.

As someone schooled in the Confucian tradition, Xu Jingcheng would doubtless have known of Han Yu’s writings, and may have had this saying in mind when scouting for talent in the Chinese diplomatic corps. Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself learned and practiced this ethos when he reformed the Foreign Ministry of China and focused on recruiting men of talent and education.

Xu Jingcheng himself was not a man without ability. He was amongst the early generation of Confucian officials who were sent abroad as Chinese ambassadors and diplomats as China and the Confucian scholar-official (Shidaifu) class sought to adapt to a rapidly changing world order. Max Weber provided a discussion of the nature and role of the traditional Confucian scholar-officials:

Für die richtige innere Ordnung der Verwaltung und für die charismatisch richtige Lebensführung des Fürsten -, rituell und politisch, - war eben der schriftkundige kenner der alten Tradition der allein Kompetente. ... waren also die chinesischen rituell geschulten Literaten-Politiker primär an den Problemen der inneren Verwaltung orientiert...

85 世有伯乐，然后有千里马，千里马常有，而伯乐不常有
As discussed by Weber, the Confucian scholar-officials were historically preoccupied with maintaining order and stability in China, and guiding the conduct of the ruler in a virtuous manner. Their education in the Confucian Classics and their grasp of Chinese tradition were believed to be the core competencies that qualified them to play this role.

The scholar-officials traced the genesis of their kind all the way back to the time of Confucius, Mencius and their disciples during the Warring-States and Spring and Autumn periods, when China was divided amongst numerous warring kingdoms. Hence the Confucian ideal to have a united and stable polity ruled by a virtuous ruler guided by the Confucian scholar-official developed out of this context.

Nevertheless, by Xu Jingcheng’s lifetime, the scholar-officials were forced to learn not only how to ensure domestic stability, but also to seek stability for China within an international system of sovereign states all jostling for supremacy. As the scholar-officials of the 19th century would learn, developments in the international arena could seriously upset the domestic Chinese order.

As Chinese ambassador to the Russian Empire, Xu Jingcheng had an important role to play especially since the Russian Empire was a major rival of the Qing Empire. Russian expansion eastward and Qing expansion had brought the two empires into contact and conflict in preceding centuries. The border between the two empires had been stabilized and trade established on the basis of the Treaty of

“Only the adept of scriptures and of tradition has been considered competent for correctly ordering the internal administration and the charismatically correct life conduct of the prince, ritually and politically. … the Chinese literati-politicians, trained in ritual, were primarily oriented toward problems of internal administration…” From Max Weber, *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*, trans. and ed. Hans H. Gerth (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1951), 110.
The overland trade with Russia, based at the town of Kiakhta enriched inland Chinese provinces such as Shanxi and Shanxi merchant houses eventually dominated commercial relations with Russia. By the time Xu Jingcheng was ambassador in Russia in the 1890s the status quo was changing as Russia, like other imperial powers of the time also sought to expand its territory and influence, at China’s expense. Xu thus had to do his best to maintain peaceful relations between China and Russia. Xu was keenly aware of the changing nature of China’s international relations and the need for Chinese reforms. Hence while carrying out his diplomatic duties, he was also on the search for young Chinese to be molded into the new leaders of China.

**Identifying A Thousand Mile Horse for China**

One who caught Xu Jingcheng’s attention was Lou Tseng-Tsiang. Lou Tseng-Tsiang later recounted Xu Jingcheng’s decision to train him into a diplomat:

*M. Shu King-Shen m’avait fait venir de Pékin. il m’adressa ... « Écrivez donc à votre père. S’il peut se passer de vous et vous confier à la formation que j’ai l’intention de vous donner, je vais essayer de faire de vous un diplomate».*

While Xu would have been educated according to the traditional Confucian system and mastered the traditional Chinese Classics, he lacked the training in foreign languages and cultures that someone like Lou Tseng-Tsiang received, hence Xu’s need for an interpreter. The ambassador took an interest in the young interpreter

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89 Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 43.
dispatched from Beijing to work with him in Russia, and resolved to turn Lou Tseng-Tsiang into a diplomat so that he could more fully use his skills and talents in service of China.

The young Lou Tseng-Tsiang faced a choice between observing his filial duties to his father, which would have been a noble decision in accordance with Confucian teachings, or to take up the burden of becoming a statesman in the Confucian mold and learn to work to “assurer le bonheur public.” Xu Jingcheng reminded Lou that he had been educated in an academy founded for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It would thus not be proper if Lou used his education only to achieve personal goals and not in service of his country and people.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote his father concerning Xu Jincheng’s offer to train him as a diplomat. After Lou received his father’s blessing of his decision to accept Xu Jingcheng as “un maître”, Lou took on the responsibility of a career of public service. Lou ended up spending eleven consecutive years abroad and never saw his father alive again. In some ways, Lou’s choice of a path of public service over his own personal filial obligations arguably foreshadowed his own later Christian vocation.

The Gospels recount a number of instances where Jesus’ radical challenge to those who wished to follow him was to leave their lives behind, including their family, in service of a mission they believed was greater than themselves, the call of the first apostles being but one example:

Now as he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and

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90 Ibid., 39.
91 Ibid., 43.
92 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 43.
followed him. And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.\footnote{Mark 1: 16 – 20 (Authorized King James Version)}

In his later years as a monk, Lou Tseng-Tsiang may have meditated on the above Bible passage. Jesus’ call to the first apostles to leave behind their personal pursuits and follow him for a greater vocation could have reminded Lou of Xu’s own call to him to put aside his personal plans and take up a diplomatic vocation in service of China.

Being a public servant as well as a follower of both Confucius and of Jesus Christ required sacrifices, sacrifices that Lou Tseng-Tsiang was ultimately prepared to make. Fulfilling his various vocations also required a lifetime of training and practice for Lou Tseng-Tsiang. Studying to be a monk as a middle-aged man was not easy, but even during his training as a diplomat while still a young man Lou faced challenges.

“\textit{Un Petit Garçon}”

As part of his training process, the young interpreter Lou Tseng-Tsiang was entrusted with many responsibilities. By his own account he accompanied ambassador Xu Jingcheng during practically all of Xu’s meetings with the Russian foreign minister and other Russian diplomats:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Présenté au Prince Lobanow en qualité d’interprète, je paraissais tellement jeune qu’il ne put s’empêcher d’observer: « Vous m’amenez donc un petit garçon! ... »}
\end{quote}

Lou recalled that when he was first introduced to the then Russian foreign minister Prince Lobanow, the prince was surprised by Lou’s youth and exclaimed to Xu
Jingcheng that Lou was “un petit garçon”. The Russian minister was surprised that Lou, a slim, clean-shaven youthful-looking Chinese man (probably looking like how he appeared in the photograph in the beginning of the chapter), whom one could mistake for a mere office-boy should be allowed to attend important meetings.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang was much more than “un petit garçon” though, because of his important role as interpreter. During ambassador Xu’s absences, Lou was also entrusted with the responsibility of serving as chargé d’affaires of the legation. Lou Tseng-Tsiang learned not only from his master Xu, but also from the Russian foreign ministers he encountered through his work. He later recalled that it was through them that he first learned of the duties and responsibilities of a foreign minister, a position he would find himself entrusted with later.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang was trained as a diplomat during a particularly challenging period in Chinese history. China’s humiliating defeat to Japan in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894 - 1895, exposed the degree of China’s weakness. In the aftermath, various foreign powers all scrambled to increase the Chinese concessions they possessed, and to increase their influence in China through the construction of railroads etc. Lou wrote of this period:

*Notre défaite dans la guerre avec le Japon en 1894, avait révélé au monde entier quel était le degré de notre faiblesses, et le comte Mouraview ... nous contraindre de céder à bail, ... à la Russie Port-Arthur et Dalny. Ce fut la goutte d’eau qui fit déborder le vase...*

The Russians compelled China to cede Port Arthur (Lushunkou) and Dalny (Dalian) to them for 25 years, Germany claimed the concession of Kiaochow (Jiaozhou),

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94 Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 47.
95 Ibid., 43, 47.
96 Ibid., 48.
England took Wei-Hai-Wei (Weihaiwei), and France claimed Kwang-Chow-Wan (Guangzhouwan), etc.\(^7\)

Coming of age in a time when China seemed like a prize to be divided up amongst the Great Powers must have had a profound impact on the young Lou Tseng-Tsiang. It may explain the fervent patriotism he expressed subsequently and his desire for the preservation of China’s national sovereignty. Lou’s conceptions of patriotism also became more complex over time due to his life-experiences and his view that China’s ills were not solely political or economic, but that there were moral and spiritual dimensions to the challenges China faced. The training provided by Xu Jingcheng was crucial to helping Lou develop this sense of awareness.

**Revitalization of China**

Xu Jingcheng was aware of the gravity of China’s malaise, in which China’s most noble traditions had become deformed and sterile, producing results contrary to the spirit according to which these traditions had first been developed:

\[
M. \textit{Shu} \textit{\ (Xu Jingcheng) désirait pour la Chine un rajeunissement complet ... les meilleures traditions ancestrales, déformées et sterilisées, amenaient un résultat diamétralement opposé à l’esprit qui les avait fait naître...} \tag{98}
\]

Xu’s vision for his young protégé was not only to make Lou Tseng-Tsiang a polished diplomat, but also to prepare Lou for the part he would have to play in the revitalization of China when the time came. In this way, Xu Jingcheng still retained the traditional Confucian preoccupation with seeking a way to ensure domestic order and stability. Xu may also have been aware that he himself may not live to see the

\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Ibid., 45.
revitalization take place, hence the responsibility of preparing the way for those who would come after.

Despite being a high official of the Qing, Xu Jingcheng was critical of the existing regime. A later report from the weekly *La Politique de Pékin*, discussed an early exchange between Xu Jingcheng and Lou Tseng-Tsiang. *La Politique de Pékin* was a French language weekly published in Beijing. Its audience was most likely the Francophone expatriate community as well as Francophone Chinese such as Lou himself. This source allows today’s reader to listen in to how the Francophone community in early 20th century China perceived and understood Chinese politics and diplomacy.

According to the report, both men had attended a reception with the tsar in St. Petersburg and Xu had asked Lou which court he preferred, that of St. Petersburg or Beijing. Lou preferred the Russian court because it seemed more open than the Chinese court, and tsar appeared more visible to his people. Xu concurred with Lou:

… conclut le Ministre. “C’est la facilité du contact entre l’Empereur et son peuple qui établit entre eux ces liens de confiance qui manquent chez nous où l’Empereur s’entoure de mystère.”

Xu Jingcheng was critical of the state of the Chinese administration of the time especially its opaque administration with a lack of transparency in governance. By then, the government of China was effectively dominated by the empress Dowager Cixi who was the real power behind the throne, ensconced from public view deep within the confines of the imperial palace, where she maintained a strong hold over the young Guangxu emperor.

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Xu Jingcheng may have begun by criticizing the imperial regime in conversations with Lou Tseng-Tsiang, but his critical stance would become increasingly known to the imperial court, especially after he was recalled to Beijing in 1898. Back in Beijing, Xu Jingcheng was appointed as a xingzou (minister without portfolio) at the Zongli Yamen and concurrently deputy minister of the Board of Rites, and was subsequently transferred to the position of deputy minister of the Board of Civil Appointments, where he eventually assumed the post of senior deputy minister. He was then appointed general instructor of the Imperial University and minister of the Imperial University. These positions meant that Xu Jingcheng was essentially within the heart of the Qing administrative system when the Boxer Uprising broke out into open war in 1900.

The Boxers, or the Boxers United in Righteousness was a violent anti-Christian and anti-foreign movement with spiritual underpinnings centered in northern China. The Boxers attacked missionaries and Chinese Christians, and besieged the foreign legations in Beijing in the summer of 1900. The Qing court’s decision to support the Boxer Movement and attempt to use it to expel the foreign presence in China facilitated the expansion of the movement and set the stage for a confrontation with the foreign powers. In response the foreign powers launched an Eight-Nation Expeditionary Force that crushed Chinese forces, and then proceeded to launch brutal punitive expeditions in occupied Chinese territory.

After a decisive defeat, the Qing were forced to sign the humiliating Boxer Protocol on September 7, 1901. The Chinese had to erect a monument in Beijing on the site of the murder of the German minister Baron Clemens von Ketteler, whose death had escalated the initial conflict. A harsh indemnity was also imposed, with China having to pay to the victorious powers 450 million taels in 39 annual installments along with 4 percent interest on unpaid principal. In some ways, the defeat could be seen as a nadir in Chinese international history, with China defeated by an alliance of the world’s great powers of the time and forced to submit to a humiliating and costly settlement.

The decision by the Qing court to support the Boxer movement and declare war on the foreign powers was not made without debate amongst Qing officials. In the end the pro-Boxer faction won out and in late July and early August, five officials who were known for their anti-Boxer views and past friendliness toward foreigners were executed by imperial order.

Amongst these officials was Xu Jingcheng, who according to Lou Tseng-Tsiang was beheaded on the Beijing marketplace in the morning of 29 July 1900. According to the Zhongfang Shi, no one prepared the corpse of burial and it was removed until the afternoon of the second day. The corpse festered in the summer.

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102 Ibid., 55 – 56.
103 For a discussion of how and why the Qing court chose to make war on the Great Powers of the time, please refer to Lanxin Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003). Meanwhile, Paul Cohen argues that the Boxer Movement became imprinted on European and American psyches as the symbol of everything that was then most detested and feared about China: “its hostility to Christianity, its resistance to modern technology, its fiendish cruelty, its xenophobia, its superstition.” Please refer to Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, 15.
104 Ibid., 54.
heat, and there were flies and maggots everywhere, as well as a suffocating foul odor.\textsuperscript{106} Six months later, a decree was issued to rehabilitate Xu Jingcheng.\textsuperscript{107}

The unjust execution of Xu Jingcheng, the beloved and respected “\textit{maître}” of Lou Tseng-Tsiang, triggered a profound personal crisis in the aspiring diplomat. For an entire year, Lou wrestled with whether or not he should remain in a public service career. He questioned why he should continue serving a government that could be so unjust and so blind in its shrewdness:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Mon maître, à qui je devais toute ma formation, était la victime innocente de l’incompétence des grands, de leur orgueil et de leur jalousie. À quoi bon, me disais-je, servir des gouvernants aussi injustes, aussi aveugles et aussi astucieux?}\textsuperscript{108}
\end{quote}

His superior in St. Petersburg of the time, Yan You, reassured Lou that the best way for Lou to honor his master’s memory would be to stay the course for which Xu Jingcheng had prepared him and for which Xu had sacrificed his life. Lou Tseng-Tsiang eventually realized Yan You was right, and he stuck with a life of public service. Nevertheless, the execution of Xu Jingcheng had left him completely disillusioned with the Qing administration and he would turn to Sun Yat-Sen’s revolutionary movement as an alternative.

Apart from the profound personal loss of Xu Jingcheng, the harsh terms of the Boxer Protocol also left a deep mark on Lou Tseng Tsiang. He described the Protocol in bitter words, condemning it as one of the most cruel, iniquitous and blind acts in world diplomatic history, “\textit{Le Protocole de Pékin en 1900, demeurerà un des actes}

\textsuperscript{106} Zhongfang Shi, \textit{Gengzi jishi} (A record of the events of 1900), Compiled by Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jindaishi ziliao bianjishi (Section for editing of materials on modern history of the Modern History Institute, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1978), 17 – 18, 30, quoted in Cohen, \textit{History in Three Keys}, 351.
\textsuperscript{107} Lou, \textit{Souvenir et Pensées}, 52.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
les plus cruels, iniques et aveugles de toute l’histoire diplomatique mondiale. The Boxer Protocol would not be the last unjust settlement that would be presented to China. Lou’s outrage at the injustice of the Protocol foreshadowed later Chinese outrage at the injustice of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles.

While in 1900, in the wake of military defeat and diplomatically isolated, China had little choice but to sign the harsh terms presented by foreign powers, the situation in 1919 was different. In 1919, China had joined what proved to be the winning side in a world war, hopeful in the promises of the Great Powers to begin the construction of a new more just world order. When China was once again confronted with unjust treaty terms, this time the Chinese delegates including Lou Tseng-Tsiang refused to sign the treaty. This gesture made the rest of the world take notice.

In 1919, the world powers may have expected the Chinese to accept yet another unfair treaty as had been the case with the Boxer Protocol in 1900 and the other unequal treaties of the 19th century between China and the Western powers. By 1919, however, the Chinese diplomats had learned the ways of international diplomacy and refused to sign another treaty that they felt did not adequately consider China’s rights. The Chinese felt justified in their refusal because China had been an Allied Power that had contributed to the war effort against the Central Powers.

The Boxer Uprising and its aftermath brought home to Lou Tseng-Tsiang the burden of a life of public service. It also cemented his desire to seek justice for China, and made him realize that the public service career for which Xu Jingcheng had trained him was a duty he had to fulfill. Lou recounted his decision to follow Yan You’s advice, and remain in public service:

109 Ibid., 48.
With the help of God, Lou Tseng-Tsiang understood public service to be a duty, or perhaps a calling from which he could not retreat.

A life of public service for justice and for the state, China, became the domain in which Lou would dedicate his strength and energy for a significant portion of his life. He believed it was his duty to do so. In time, though, Lou Tseng-Tsiang would find that there was perhaps an alternative way of serving the cause of justice, and China apart from a diplomatic career, and this was through a religious vocation. Lou’s training as a diplomat arguably prepared him in some ways for the religious life.

Learning The Way Of Solitude

The lessons Xu Jingcheng taught Lou Tseng-Tsiang in order to prepare the young man for the challenge of restoring China were tough, and the path laid out for Lou would be a lonely one. Lou’s experience of solitude as a diplomat foreshadowed and prepared him for the religious life, of which solitude is an important component.

One of Xu’s instructions to Lou was to observe and learn so that when the time came, he would be able to reform China:

*Et M. Shu poursuivait : « Lorsque ces hommes seront tombés, soyez prêt, vous ... pour commencer, en Chine, une construction actuelle, selon un plan ancien et nouveau... ».*

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110 Ibid., 52.
111 Ibid., 44.
The moribund Qing Dynasty was headed for imminent collapse, but when the dynasty fell, Lou was not to punish the fallen for their mistakes but rather to devote his energy to rebuilding China. China was to be rebuilt anew but yet maintain its ancient core and traditions.

Xu Jingcheng instructed Lou not to become attached to the moribund Qing regime. Rather, Lou was to observe and learn from the best practices of the Europeans and emulate these practices in his own life and career:

*M. Shu me donna comme première directive ... de me borner à faire mon devoir et, en observant les fonctionnaires les plus distingués des pays européens, de me faire à moi-même un programme de vie et d’action ...*\textsuperscript{112}

Doing so, however, would require Lou Tseng-Tsiang to learn to remain silent in the face of whatever insults and humiliations were thrown at him, “d’apprendre à me taire, quelles que soient les humiliations et les avanies que m’infligerait nécessairement.”\textsuperscript{113}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang had to find his own way to endure the disdain of both Chinese and Europeans, and to remain focused on the goal of learning for the sake of China. Chinese dignitaries scorned those who did not flatter them, “les dignitaires chinois méprisant tous ceux qui ne les flattaient pas”; European officials meanwhile considered China to be the sick man of Asia “l’homme malade”, and the Chinese as lesser beings even, “considérant tout Chinois comme un être dévalué”.\textsuperscript{114} Lou thus had a lot of practice turning the other cheek in line with the Gospel injunction, which could have been good preparation for his later religious vocation. Despite the

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
challenges, Lou took Xu’s lesson about learning from the best practices of Europe to heart, and he would implement this himself when he was appointed foreign minister of the Republic of China and given the responsibility of reforming that ministry.

Xu Jingcheng also taught Lou Tseng Tsiang that he needed to Europeanize himself for the sake of China. This meant once again walking a lonely road, as the conservative faction that dominated the Chinese administration rejected what was deemed foreign, and the Westerners meanwhile continued to regard Chinese with disdain no matter how Europeanized they might be:

*Mon maître me prescrivait de m’européaniser par amour pour la Chine. ... il faut accepter d’être jugé défavorablement par les uns et par les autres. Là, on doit apprendre à rester seul. La vie chrétienne, ... n’échappe pas à cette règle...*  

For Lou, learning to Europeanize himself for the sake of China meant enduring more disdain and scorn from both Europeans and Chinese. He had to embrace solitude in order to do so.

Later, as a monk, Lou Tseng-Tsiang would realize that a Christian vocation similarly required learning to endure loneliness for a greater cause. After all, Jesus Christ had died mostly alone, scorned by all. As Lou would later learn, being a Christian meant taking up one’s personal cross daily and often walking one’s own lonely way to Calvary as Jesus did. Lou’s later religious vocation gave him a language to understand and express the trials and tribulations of his youth as perhaps akin to a way of the cross.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang certainly followed his master’s advice in adopting European dress, and speaking excellent French, but in some other ways he would

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115 Ibid., 45.
exceed his master’s expectations, especially when he married a Belgian woman. Lou’s Christian faith was the source of inner strength for him to continue walking the lonely road that had been pointed out to him, carrying as it were his own cross for the sake of China. Lou also learned that Christianity could be a resource not just for himself, but for his country too. On this matter he was also influenced by Xu Jincheng.

Pick The Most Ancient Branch

The final and arguably most important lesson of Xu Jingcheng for Lou Tseng-Tsiang was concerning Christianity as a potential moral force for China:

La force de l’Europe ne se trouve pas dans ses armements; elle ne se trouve pas dans sa science; elle se trouve dans sa religion.  

As a true Confucian, Xu had been preoccupied with the question of how to ensure stability for China, and he saw in Christianity a possible answer. Xu believed that Christianity, and not science nor modern weaponry, was the true source of European strength.

On this point Xu differed from his fellow Qing officials, some of whom tried to import Western learning, science and technology into China via the establishment of institutions such as the Tong Wen Guan, the Jiangnan Arsenal, etc., but did not think anything from the West could address China’s spiritual or moral troubles. Xu Jingcheng meanwhile had recognized that China’s malaise in the 19th century was not just due to a lack of modern science and technology but actually ran deeper.

Xu Jingcheng had been particularly impressed by the Catholic Church, which he saw as a global church united and led by one spiritual government, and which

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116 Ibid., 46.
claimed a history that dated back to the very roots of Christianity. Lou Tseng-Tsiang recounted that Xu Jingcheng even spent one Christmas at Rome to observe the celebrations.\footnote{Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, 45.} One can only imagine the elaborate Christmas liturgies leaving their mark on the Confucian Xu, who would have had an appreciation for the importance and significance of ritual and “Holy Rite.”\footnote{For a discussion of Confucian \textit{li} (禮) or Holy Rite, please refer to Herbert Fingarette, \textit{Confucius: The Secular as Sacred} (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press Inc., 1972), 1 – 17. Fingarette claimed that Holy Rite brought out not just the harmony and beauty of social forms, but also the moral perfection that was implicit when achieving one’s ends through dealing with others as beings of equal dignity, and as free co-participants in \textit{li}.}17

Xu Jincheng instructed Lou Tseng-Tsiang to observe and learn from Christianity, just as he had instructed Lou to learn from European officials. Lou was to find the most ancient branch of Christianity and learn from it. Xu told Lou that someday, after the end of his diplomatic career, he might even have the chance to go beyond observing, but actually join the oldest religious order within this most ancient branch of Christianity. Lou was to become a disciple of this society, and once he had learned and grasped the secret of the religious life, which Xu believed to be the heart and source of strength for Christianity, Lou was to return to share it with China:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Lorsque vous aurez compris et capté le secret de cette vie lorsque vous aurez saisi le cœur et la force de la religion du Christ, emportez-les et donnez-les à la Chine.}\footnote{Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, 46.}
\end{quote}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang took his master’s instructions to heart, and in time he would indeed carry them out, in the hope that Catholicism might provide a remedy for modern China’s malaise that ran so deep. Nevertheless, Lou’s later understanding of Catholicism exceeded that of his “maître.” For Lou, Catholicism was arguably not
just a potential moral and stabilizing force for China, it also gave him a way to understand and express China’s as well as his own trials and sufferings.

Xu Jingcheng left a lasting impact on Lou Tseng-Tsiang, so much so that years later Lou continued to credit Xu not only for turning him into a diplomat, but for also pointing him in the direction of an eventual religious vocation within the Catholic Church. Lou also admired Xu because he made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of duty to his country, dying as it were a martyr’s death for China, “qui était mort victime de son devoir.”

After Lou Tseng-Tsiang was appointed Chinese ambassador to the Netherlands, the first ambassadorial position he held, he was struck by a profoundly grateful memory of the one who had prepared him for such a responsibility, “le souvenir de mon maître Shu, auquel je devais ma formation et qui était mort victime de son devoir, me revint à l’esprit et au cœur.” Therefore Lou used his remuneration to have a medal struck in Xu Jingcheng’s honor, which he then offered to the queen of the Netherlands, as well as the emperors of Austria-Hungary and Russia, rulers of countries where Xu had served as ambassador, along with numerous Chinese dignitaries.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang continued giving these medals out until he professed his monastic vows in 1932. The act of giving to those who appreciated the medal’s significance remained a source of profound joy and comfort for Lou:

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120 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 55.
121 Ibid., 54 – 55.
122 Ibid., 55.
Some of these medals may have survived the upheavals of the 20th century in both Europe and China. Dom Edouard Neut, a monk who had served as Lou’s secretary in the abbey later included a photo of the medal in the booklet he published in 1962 that provided a brief biographical sketch of Lou and the world he lived in. It is quite possible that there may still be a Xu Jingcheng medal kept in the Lou Tseng-Tsiang collection at Sint-Andries, but if there is one it is not openly displayed.

As illustrated by above image sourced from Neut’s booklet, the medal reproduced the likeness of Xu Jingcheng, the loyal and devoted official who was unjustly executed. Perhaps for Lou Tseng-Tsiang the eyes of Xu continued to implore

123 Ibid.
him to pursue a life of self-sacrifice for the sake of China, even though Xu himself did not live to see how Lou may have exceeded his expectations. The medal of Xu Jincheng represented Lou’s devotion to the master who had changed his life.

Regardless of the debt Lou Tseng-Tsiang later felt towards Xu Jingcheng, the instructions of his “maître” were tough to carry out, and they meant Lou Tseng-Tsiang had to walk a lonely road during the formative years of his diplomatic career in St. Petersburg. However, it was then that he would meet a companion, a wife he dearly loved and who also left a lasting impact on Lou.

**A Corner Of Paris That We Both Love**

It was while in St. Petersburg, that Lou Tseng-Tsiang met Berthe Bovy, the woman who would become his wife. They fell deeply in love, and Lou never forgot her. Years later, while a monk, Lou would still recall her in loving terms, and considered her a gift from the Almighty:

_Le Seigneur s’était réservé de me faire sortir de l’isolement en me donnant au milieu de tant de luttes et de misères, un appui providentiel efficace, dont le soutien chaleureux me fut précieux au-delà de tout ce que je pourrais en dire._

She was a companion, and a source of support through the loneliness, struggles and as Lou described it misery of his formative professional years in St. Petersburg. Lou shared a bond with his wife that transcended the limits of language. She was his *Zhiyin*, who could understand him in a way no one else could.

The phrase *Zhiyin* can be rendered as “knows my sounds.” It comes from the ancient Chinese story of Bo Ya and Zhong Ziqi. Bo Ya was a gifted musician who delighted in the company of Zhong Ziqi. Zhong Ziqi could truly hear and understand

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126 “知音.”
Bo Ya’s thoughts and emotions as they were expressed through his music. When Ziqi died, Bo Ya broke the strings of his zither because there was no one left who “knew his sounds.”

Dom Edouard Neut provided an account of Lou Tseng-Tsiang getting to know his wife in his book on Lou Tseng-Tsiang. She was related to the Belgian ambassador to Russia of the time, a M. Leghait and was a French teacher. The Chinese ambassador to Russia who had succeeded Xu Jingcheng, Yan You, requested that Lou find a French teacher for his son. Thus Lou came to know Berthe Bovy. They exchanged letters and photographs.¹²⁷

Upon receiving the photo and message of Lou, Berthe felt herself transported to a corner of Paris they both loved, where things were delicate and gracious. The pair seem to have fallen in love with each other soon enough. Lou Tseng-Tsiang later wrote that what he loved about Madame Lou were the distinctiveness of her thinking, her upstanding moral life, her sound judgment, her disinterestedness, her courage and her loyalty, “J’aimai la distinction de sa pensée et de sa vie morale, son jugement sain, son désintéressement, son courage et sa loyauté.”¹²⁹

Lou Tseng-Tsiang and Berthe Bovy were married on 12 February, 1899, in the Saint Catherine Catholic parish church in St. Petersburg. The marriage was

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¹²⁷ Neut, Jean-Jacques Lou Dom Lou, 12.
¹²⁸ Ibid.
¹²⁹ Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 50.
presided by the Dominican parish priest, Father Lagrange.\textsuperscript{130} It was a marriage that broke boundaries in many ways. There was confessional boundary between the couple. Lou Tseng-Tsiang was Protestant and Berthe Bovy was Catholic. Lou Tseng-Tsiang promised to raise any children he might have with his wife as Catholic, and the confessional difference was not insurmountable.\textsuperscript{131} Lou made the promise even though his wife was 16 years older than him; by the time of their marriage she was already about 44 years old, and hardly of prime childbearing age any longer.

More serious than the confessional differences were the national and racial differences. Lou’s superiors and colleagues opposed his marriage to a foreign woman, and may have regarded such a mixed marriage as tainting the purity of Chinese blood. Berthe’s age upon marriage was likely another reason for their opposition. Even Lou’s beloved Master Xu Jingcheng initially opposed the union, and the marriage was said to be the only time Lou Tseng-Tsiang defied Xu Jingcheng.\textsuperscript{132} Because of the Chinese opposition to the marriage, Madame Lou did not accompany her husband to any official functions to which Lou Tseng-Tsiang was invited for eight years. Conditions changed only after Lou was appointed Chinese ambassador to the Netherlands and dispatched to The Hague.\textsuperscript{133}

The relationship also raised questions on the part of Berthe’s family. The Bovys were a family of military officers, and members of the Belgian bourgeoisie. A young Chinese man, no matter how Europeanized, was probably not their first choice of an ideal match for Berthe. The Belgian ambassador to Russia, M. Leghait, and the

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 51.
\textsuperscript{131} For a discussion of Catholic teachings on mixed marriages, please refer to the \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church} (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1994), 407 – 408.
\textsuperscript{132} Shi Jianguo, \textit{Lu Zhengxiang Zhuan} (Shijiazhuang: Hebei Renmin Chubanshe, 1999), 56.
\textsuperscript{133} Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, p.51.
Russian minister of Foreign Affairs Count Mouraview tried to reassure the Bovys by speaking of Lou’s potential:


In time, Lou would develop a closer relationship to the Bovys. Even after Madame Lou had passed away, Lou would receive letters from his nieces while in the abbey. For instance, he would receive letters on the feast-day of St. Peter-Celestine (St. Pierre-Célestin), his patron saint after becoming a monk. Some of these letters remain conserved in the Lou collection of the archives of Sint-Andriesabdij.

In retrospect, it is not so surprising that Lou Tseng-Tsiang viewed his marriage with Madame Lou as a gift from God. Her companionship eased the loneliness he was feeling during the years of formation under the guidance of Xu Jingcheng. Madame Lou would also have been a valuable source of support during a challenging period for Lou Tseng-Tsiang both personally and professionally.

By the time the Lous were married, the Boxers were already carrying out violent acts in China. In a little over a year after the wedding, Xu Jingcheng was executed, plunging Lou into his profound personal crisis. Lou also faced a professional challenge at the same time. During the Boxer Uprising, the Russians occupied Manchuria. The Chinese ambassador to Russia at the time, Yan You had to undertake negotiations with Russia to resolve the issue. As interpreter, Lou Tseng-Tsiang must have had an important role to play in the tense negotiations.

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To make matters worse for Lou, that same year in 1900, his dear father passed away. Lou Tseng-Tsiang never saw his father alive again after he had left China as a young interpreter set for St. Petersburg. Upon his father’s death, he could not return to mourn either due to the conflict of the time. Madame Lou later wrote that she too regretted that she never had the chance to meet her father-in-law.

Underneath the portrait of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s father now displayed on one of Lou’s shelves in the abbey, Madame Lou had written in April 1921, “Portrait de mon beau père que je regrette infiniment de ne pas avoir eu le grand bonheur de connaître et dont j’ai si souvent entendre parler par mon mari. Berthe.” Lou Tseng-Tsiang spoke often of his father to his wife, and he must have appreciated Madame Lou’s tender expression of profound regret at having never had the great joy of meeting the

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elder Lou. Through this message, Madame Lou expressed a sense of filial piety towards Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s deceased father, which must have resonated with Lou.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang kept this photo of his father and Madame Lou’s message all his life. Their combination represented his continued devotion to the memory of his deceased loved ones while living as a monk. Moreover, as a monk, he would have been able to pray for his father and his wife every day. After Lou’s death, the monks of Sint-Andriesabdij preserved and exhibited the photo of the elder Lou and Madame Lou’s note in the room dedicated to the memory of Lou Tseng-Tsiang. They too saw no conflict between Lou’s religious vocation and his devotion to his father and wife who had predeceased him.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang greatly cherished the memory of Madame Lou because she was a steadfast pillar of support amidst the series of personal and professional crises Lou Tseng-Tsiang encountered in the latter part of his first term of service in St. Petersburg. Lou Tseng-Tsiang and China too eventually emerged from this year of crises, but new challenges would lie ahead for both Lou and China, and Lou’s destiny would remain intertwined with that of China. Lou continued his rise through the ranks of the Chinese Foreign Service, though political earthquakes in China eventually brought him back to his homeland, where his skills were needed to build China anew.
Nous projetions, ma femme et moi, toute une série de réceptions dans l’hôtel de notre Légation, remeublé avec goût, lorsque le brusque développement des événements politiques en Chine nous força de contremander les fêtes déjà préparées.\textsuperscript{137}

As Lou Tseng-Tsiang was promoted through the ranks of the Chinese diplomatic corps, he was appointed to serve as Chinese ambassador to a number of European states including eventually Russia. The above photo from the Lou Tseng-Tsiang archives at Sint-Andriesabdij was taken during his time as Chinese ambassador to Russia.

The photo shows a formally-dressed Lou Tseng-Tsiang in a suit with a mustache sitting in an interior space decorated according to Chinese aesthetic sensibilities, with a light in the form of a Chinese lantern, calligraphy scroll and other Chinese-style wall hangings, as well as cabinets with Chinese decorative motifs. The

location is the Chinese ambassador’s residence in St. Petersburg circa early 1912, since Lou was then Chinese ambassador to Russia. Lou was dressed and styled like a European as part of his Europeanization, as Xu Jingcheng had instructed him. Nevertheless, Lou was surrounded by objects that reflected Chinese aesthetic tastes, demonstrating that he maintained core Chinese sensibilities, despite external European appearances.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote in the passage from Souvenir et Pensées quoted above of how he and his wife refurnished the Chinese embassy building tastefully, and prepared a series of receptions to celebrate Lou’s appointment as Chinese ambassador to Russia and the Lous’ return to St. Petersburg. One can assume that the Lous also redecorated the ambassador’s residence at the same time, before the above photo was taken. However, their plans were disrupted by political developments in China, which cut short their second stay in St. Petersburg.

The first decades of the 20th century were an era of upheaval for China, politically, socially, culturally, etc. As Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s destiny was closely intertwined with that of China, the period was also a time of many changes for him. It is unknown whether any of the artifacts in the photo have survived. Perhaps some may still lie in some corner of St. Petersburg, having somehow survived the turmoil of 20th century Russian history, a silent testimony to a world later destroyed by war and revolution. The photo at least survived and is a visual reminder of Lou’s diplomatic career, that he had taken up as a service to China.
Irrepressible Current

As Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself described it, practically his entire public service career took place in an atmosphere of silence, revolution and action, from the loneliness in St. Petersburg, through the Xinhai Revolution and the efforts at reforming the Chinese administration after the establishment of the Republic of China:

*C'est dans cette atmosphère de silence, de révolution et d’action que s’est éculée toute ma vie publique: Qui aurait pu arrêter un courant bourbeux aussi violent ? Dieu lui-même se refuse à sauver l’homme lorsque celui-ci refuse le salut.*

Both Xu Jingcheng and Lou Tseng-Tsiang were aware of the weaknesses of the Qing dynasty, with widespread corruption, abuse of power and lack of administrative transparency. Through their work they witnessed firsthand how the foreign powers including Russia, increased their influence in China by extracting ever more territorial, diplomatic and financial concessions from the Qing. They both accepted that the Qing Dynasty would collapse, with Lou later noting that even God could not save man if man rejected salvation.

Xu Jingcheng taught Lou Tseng-Tsiang to observe and learn in order to be able to reform and rebuild China after the dynasty’s inevitable collapse. The two men would likely have been disappointed by the failure of the Hundred Days Reform of 1898. The conservative faction at court led by the empress Dowager Cixi crushed the attempts of the Guangxu emperor, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and other reformists to implement sweeping institutional changes that sought to transform Chinese social, political and cultural life and turn the Chinese empire into a polity resembling a

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138 Ibid., 39.
modern constitutional monarchy. The conservative faction would later kill Xu Jingcheng for his dissenting views on the conduct of the Boxer War.

The execution of Xu Jingcheng caused Lou Tseng-Tsiang to lose faith in the moribund Qing dynasty. Lou had begun searching for an alternative for China. From 1896 onwards, he started taking notice of Sun Yat-Sen’s nationalist and revolutionary movement that sought to redress China’s ills. After the death of Xu, Lou claimed he gave his heart over to the revolutionary movement. He later wrote of his transition toward supporting the revolutionary movement:

À partir de la mort de mon maître Shu, en 1900, je lui donnai tout ma cœur. Puisque la dynastie refusait de se sauver elle-même il fallait empêcher que le pays ne fût entraîné par elle dans sa propre chute ; ....

Lou defended his support of the revolutionaries by arguing that he could not allow China to be dragged down along with the collapsing Qing dynasty that refused to save itself.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s sympathies for the revolutionary movement manifested themselves in actions of dissent, even as he continued his rise through the ranks of the Chinese Foreign Service. In 1905, Lou Tseng-Tsiang had been appointed to the rank of Counselor in the Chinese legation at St. Petersburg. The following year he was appointed a plenipotentiary minister and charged with the responsibility of establishing a Chinese legation in The Hague, the Netherlands. Before his departure

139 For a discussion of the 1898 Reform Period, its aftermath and legacy for modern China, please consult Rebecca E. Karl and Peter Zarrow, eds., Rethinking the 1898 Reform Period: Political and Cultural Change in Late Qing China (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
140 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 59 – 60.
141 Ibid., 60.
for The Hague, Lou was accorded a private audience with the tsar and bestowed with an award of the Order of Saint-Stanislaus, an honor that Lou appreciated.\textsuperscript{142}

While Lou Tseng-Tsiang held sympathetic views of the Russian monarchy, at the same time his sentiments against the Chinese imperial rulers were becoming ever more revolutionary. This disposition manifested itself as well in Lou’s changing appearance, notably when he removed a sign of Manchu domination that he had been forced to wear.

**Removing The Mark Of Chinese Humiliation**

During Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s youth, all Han Chinese males like himself bore a physical mark of subjection. The Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty had compelled all male Han subjects to wear the queue under pain of death as a sign of their subjugation. Manchu domination extended all the way to conditioning the appearances of their Han subjects:

\textit{La dynastie impériale régnante, d’origine mandchou, avait… contraint tous les Chinois au port d’une tresse… Au début du XXe siècle … les leaders de la révolution refusèrent de porter davantage le signe humiliante d’une époque terminée.}\textsuperscript{143}

As the Chinese revolutionary movement gathered strength by the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, queue-cutting became for Han Chinese an act of defiance against what was increasingly perceived as a foreign Manchu imperial regime.\textsuperscript{144} Through a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{142} Lou Tseng-Tsiang recalled this moment fondly in \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}. Please refer to Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, 53. It is the only award Lou mentioned explicitly in \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, suggesting it meant something to him. The medal is now displayed at Sint-Andriesabdij alongside Lou’s other medals.
\item \textsuperscript{143} Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, 53
\item \textsuperscript{144} Edward J. M. Rhoads, \textit{Manchus & Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861 – 1928} (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2000), 15, 113 – 114, 164 – 166. For a discussion of the historical development of Manchu institutions and identity during the Qing Dynasty that draws on Manchu language primary sources in addition to Chinese
\end{itemize}
physical act, Chinese revolutionaries and nationalists could remove a humiliating symbol of foreign rule.

It was while serving as a counselor in the Chinese legation at St. Petersburg in 1905 that Lou Tseng-Tsiang and several other members of the Chinese staff there decided to cut their queues. They did so without consulting the then Chinese ambassador to Russia Hoo Wei-Tai. Hoo did not sanction his staff for cutting their queues.145

Queue-cutting was not without its risks. Before Lou Tseng-Tsiang departed for The Hague, Hoo Wei-Tai reminded him of the gravity of this act, and suggested that Lou wear a fake queue to avoid trouble with the imperial administration. This was especially because soon after taking office in The Hague, Lou would have to receive a high commission of imperial officials on a study tour of European constitutional institutions, whose members included among others the Viceroy of Nanjing and the Qing Minister of Public Instruction. Hoo warned Lou that the commission would likely file a report against Lou in Beijing.146

Having decided to defy a regime with which he was deeply disappointed, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was reluctant to resort to duplicitous means to ensure his personal safety and status. An invitation to a banquet hosted by Chinese students in Paris in the commissioners’ honor was the occasion Lou needed to make his defiance public. Lou attended the banquet queueless in plain view of the imperial commissioners.147

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146 Ibid. 54.
147 Ibid.
The sight of a Chinese ambassador openly defiant of the regime shocked the imperial officials. Being surrounded by a revolutionary milieu, however, there was little the officials could do:

*Le milieu dans lequel je les rencontrai pour la première fois ne leur permit pas de marquer d’une manière excessive leur étonnement; le vice-roi de Nankin se borna à sourire, le ministre de l’Instruction publique à froncer les sourcils. L’affaire elle-même en demeura là.*

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In the spirit of revolution and nationalism, many of the Chinese students assembled in Paris would likely have cut off their queues as well. They would certainly have appreciated that a Chinese ambassador would openly show solidarity with them by appearing queueless at a reception hosted by students.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself seems to have delighted in showing the limits of the imperial officials’ power, noting that the Viceroy of Nanjing had to limit himself to a smile, “*le vice-roi de Nankin se borna à sourire,*” and the Minister of Public Instruction could only raise his eyebrows in a frown, “*le ministre de l’Instruction publique à froncer les sourcils.*”

149 The Qing regime had weakened considerably since the days when Lou’s own master Xu Jingcheng had been executed for criticizing court policy.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang remained queueless from then on. Two years later upon a return to China, the Minister of Foreign Affairs himself authorized Lou to go queueless, except when presenting himself before the prince and prime minister. Then Lou was to wear a false queue. Since the wearing of queues was now little more than a formality given the Qing’s lack of capacity to enforce it on the population, Lou Tseng Tsiang acceded to the request of the minister.

148 Ibid.
149 Ibid.
Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s mission to the Netherlands was not without importance either. He was charged with the responsibility of negotiating the establishment of Chinese consulates in the Dutch East Indies, where there was an important Chinese diaspora community. The Dutch were resistant to the Chinese proposal and it was only after several years of negotiations that a treaty allowing the establishment of Chinese consulates in the Dutch East Indies was ratified in 1911.

Shortly thereafter, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was dispatched to St. Petersburg, initially as a special commissioner charged with revising a commercial treaty with Russia, then subsequently as Chinese ambassador to Russia.\(^{150}\) Lou Tseng-Tsiang ended up spending only a short time in Russia during his second spell there due to the then rapidly shifting political ground in China.

**The Fall Of The Son Of Heaven**

Throughout Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s time in the Netherlands and during his return to Russia, the Chinese revolutionary movement had been gathering steam:

> Accomplissant sa dernière étape, qui allait être victorieuse, la révolution nationale chinoise gagnait chaque jour du terrain et mettait en péril la dynastie impériale; ... Le changement de régime était proche ...

\(^{151}\)

Even though he was abroad, Lou was up to date on developments in China and sensed that the final collapse of imperial rule was increasingly inevitable. A regime change was imminent, though what lay beyond was uncertain.

The outbreak of the Xinhai Revolution in China following an uprising in Wuchang on October 10, 1911 eventually forced an end to Lou’s term as ambassador to Russia. The revolution disrupted the plans Lou and his wife had made for the

\(^{150}\) Ibid., 55 – 56.
\(^{151}\) Ibid., 57.
receptions they were to host, as described at the beginning of this chapter. Lou was likely not sorry to see the end of the dynasty that had executed his “maître” Xu Jingcheng.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang claimed he played a part in the final revolution that overthrew the Qing Dynasty and abolished imperial rule. On 31 December 1911, he decided to telegraph the Qing court stating that the foreign powers would not be intervening against the revolutionary forces. Therefore to avoid further bloodshed, and especially to prevent the blood of the Manchu princes being spilled, Lou suggested that the emperor should abdicate the throne.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang later claimed he had acted alone, against the wishes of the staff of the Chinese legation to Russia and contrary to the counsel of other Chinese ambassadors to Europe.152

Le 31 décembre 1911, … je pris sur moi de télégraphier à l’empereur que l’aide étrangère ferait défaut à la dynastie et que, pour éviter une effusion de sang – le sang de nos princes eux-mêmes - l’heure était venue pour le souverain de renoncer au trône.153

By the time Lou sent his telegram to the court, several provinces had already overthrown Qing rule and the revolution was making progress. The risks attached to Lou’s act of rebellion were not overly grave. Lou’s telegram probably had little real impact on the final decision of the court that the emperor would abdicate.

Yet Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself probably felt gratified that he could play a role, even if a small one, in the revolution that would result in the collapse of the dynasty that had taken the life of his revered “maître” Xu Jingcheng. After receiving a guarantee of safety for the emperor and his family, the court finally announced the

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152 Ibid., 60.
153 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 60.
abdication of the last emperor Puyi on February 12, 1912. Lou was therefore right about the court being concerned that royal blood might be spilled during the revolution.

With the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, one of the world’s longest running political systems, the Chinese imperial state, came to an end. No new dynasty stepped forth to claim the Mandate of Heaven. Instead, Sun Yat-Sen had already been elected provisional president of the Chinese Republic by sixteen provincial assemblies, and assumed office in Nanjing on January 1, 1912, even before the abdication of the last emperor. Sun recognized the weakness of his own position and eventually agreed to cede power to Yuan Shikai. Yuan Shikai commanded the powerful Beiyang Army, and actually had the capacity to enforce claims to power. It was Yuan Shikai who negotiated the emperor’s abdication, and he assumed the presidency of China once the Qing gave up their claim to the imperial throne.

With the fall of the last Son of Heaven, as the emperors of China had styled themselves, China became Asia’s first republic and stepped into a new uncertain chapter of its history. Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s destiny continued to be intertwined with that of China, and the establishment of the Chinese republic would mark the beginning of a new stage in his life.

**Embracing A New Spirit**

With the collapse of the Qing dynasty, the moment for which Xu Jingcheng had prepared Lou Tseng-Tsiang seemed to have arrived at long last. Lou was to use his skills and training to help build China anew, embracing modernity while at the same time remaining firmly grounded in China’s rich heritage and tradition:
By a vote of the provisional national assembly, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was appointed the first Foreign Minister of the Republic of China. Years later, Lou still vividly recalled the initial elation of his return to China after twenty years of service abroad.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang was charged with the responsibility of renewing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and giving China’s foreign relations a new tone and spirit. Lou’s appointment was recognition of the value of the skills and experiences he had gained through years of diplomatic service abroad. Lou got to work even before he actually set foot in China. On his journey home, Lou passed by Brussels and Paris to observe the Belgian and French foreign ministries that he intended to use as models for his restructuring of the Chinese foreign ministry.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang reformed the recruitment of foreign ministry officials and diplomats according to the following principles: 1) The institution of diplomatic exams and the rigorous exclusion of the process of recommendation and favoritism that was then in use; 2) Inter-provincial recruitment to permit candidates from across the country to meet together in a collaborative community of service to the state; 3) Selecting candidates who had studied foreign languages abroad that were necessary for the operations of the ministry:155

... je fixai trois principes nouveaux qui présidèrent au recrutement: primo, l’institution d’examens diplomatiques ...; secundo, le recrutement inter-provincial, ... ; tertio, le choix candidats ayant

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154 Ibid., 60.
155 Ibid., 62 – 63.
Lou described the principles by which recruitment of staff for the Chinese foreign ministry was to operate as new. In reality, Lou’s reform of the Chinese foreign ministry seems to be very much in line with Xu Jingcheng’s injunction to embrace modernity while remaining firmly grounded in Chinese heritage and tradition.

The principle of using exams to recruit diplomats was an example of how Lou blended Chinese tradition with newer European techniques. The classical Chinese examination system was meant to recruit the best and brightest young men from across China into the civil service. After years of arduous study of the classics in academies across the various provinces, the men would then gather in the imperial capital to take the national examinations that would determine their future.

The examination system was also influenced by Neo-Confucian ideals that developed during the Song Dynasty as formulated by Zhu Xi (1130 – 1200 CE), who believed that learning and study especially of the Confucian Classics was a way of moral cultivation towards perfection. Those who passed the examinations were thus ideally not only supposedly the most diligent and brightest students of the land, but also virtuous Confucian gentlemen (Junzi) ready to serve as scholar-officials (Shidafu) to ensure the preservation of a harmonious and stable society.

Over time, the system became ossified as students became fixated on memorizing the classics purely for the sake of passing the examinations and obtaining

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156 Ibid.
a government position, rather than the more noble goal of moral cultivation. Moreover not everyone could afford to spend years studying in the academies. Those from peasant backgrounds who could not afford to invest in the rigorous preparations necessary to pass the exams were thus left out of the system. Sun Yat-Sen was a notable example of a man of peasant origin excluded from recruitment into the traditional Chinese civil service.\textsuperscript{159}

Others from the inland Chinese countryside who passed county and provincial exams, but not the national exams, were denied the chance to hold government office even after years of preparation and investment in the system. They thus had to seek other forms of employment such as tutoring, their dreams of holding high office dashed. Eventually their skills and knowledge were rendered obsolete by the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905.\textsuperscript{160}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang and those like him were fortunate in being able to benefit from the new educational and career opportunities created in the treaty ports. Lou Tseng-Tsiang was able to hold high office even without passing the traditional imperial exams. He recognized the weaknesses of the imperial exam system that had been abolished. Lou drew on Western models when devising recruitment exams for the Chinese foreign ministry. But these Western models were in turn ultimately

\textsuperscript{159} Bergère, \textit{Sun Yat-sen}, 11, 24.

\textsuperscript{160} Liu Dapeng was an example of a man from the countryside who failed to pass the highest civil service exams and thus did not fulfill his dreams of holding government office. The abolition of the civil service exams also rendered his years of study obsolete. For more on Liu Dapeng, please refer to Henrietta Harrison, \textit{The Man Awakened from Dreams} (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 38 – 39, 86 – 87.
inspired by the traditional Chinese system.\textsuperscript{161} Lou’s reform thus in a way synthesized the old and the new just as Xu Jingcheng had instructed him.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s command of French, the primary diplomatic language of his time, was one of the keys to his rise through the Chinese diplomatic corps. The French language Chinese weekly \textit{La Politique de Pékin} later wrote of Lou’s affinity for French:

\begin{quote}
Ce n’est pas assez de dire qu’il parle couramment le français, car il connaît notre langue dans la perfection: il n’en ignore aucune nuance, et il trouve toujours avec facilité le mot propre qui traduit sa pensée avec finesse et expression.\textsuperscript{162}
\end{quote}

Lou was described as having a perfect command of French, even though it was supposedly a foreign language for him. He was praised as being able to grasp the nuances of the language, and always being able to find the right words that could translate his thoughts with finesse and expression.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s command of French was not just crucial to his diplomatic career, but was central to his personal life as well, since French was the language of intimacy with his wife. The praise of Lou’s French, however, contrasts with Lou’s own thinking on languages. Lou personally thought that no matter how good his French was, it still was second place to his mother tongue, Chinese. Lou claimed that it was only in Chinese that he could most fully express himself.\textsuperscript{163} The reality is that Lou likely found different uses for Chinese and French. Given their different

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\textsuperscript{163} Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, 31.
\end{flushright}
vocabularies and linguistic structures, Lou could express different things in Chinese and French. Most significantly, he learned to navigate the spaces between languages.

The teaching of foreign languages was part of the reforms introduced during the Qing Dynasty as China tried to adapt to a rapidly changing world. Lou Tseng-Tsiang recognized the need for Chinese diplomats to have a command of foreign languages, hence he decided to recruit those who unlike himself had actually had the chance to study abroad and master foreign languages while overseas. Lou himself had first learned French while still in China. Even while acknowledging the importance of mastering foreign languages, Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself remained attached to Chinese, which he always considered to be his langue maternelle.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang laid the foundations for the modernization and renewal of the Chinese Foreign Ministry. Over the course of the Republican period, it would attract some of China’s best-educated and most sophisticated young men to serve as diplomats who earned respect at home and abroad. Many of these men were like Lou Tseng-Tsiang in their ability to traverse linguistic boundaries with confidence.

Among the young men who would join the foreign ministry in the early years of the Republic was a Shanghainese PhD graduate from Columbia University, V.K. Wellington Koo (Gu Weijun), who helped Lou with his reforms and who would later serve alongside Lou as one of China’s plenipotentiary delegates to the 1919 Conference of Versailles. Koo later matured into one of Republican China’s most

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renowned diplomats, and his fame endures to a greater degree in Chinese popular memory than does Lou’s.

The Foreign Ministry of China maintained its prestige into the 1940s. Despite the very challenging international climate, turbulent Chinese domestic politics, and China’s relative lack of military strength during the first half of the 20th century, the Chinese Foreign Ministry arguably still performed exceptionally well during the Republican era. Even with limited means, Chinese diplomats were able to negotiate revisions to unequal treaties, secure favorable bilateral arrangements, and present China in a sympathetic light abroad.

While China was ultimately unable to contain Japan, the Chinese still succeeded in diplomatically and morally isolating Japan and Japanese expansionism through the use of bilateral ties and the League of Nations.166 This ultimately ensured that China received Allied support and aid during the Second World War and was counted among the victorious powers whose responsibility it was to rebuild a world broken by war. In recognition of China’s status and role in the new post-World War order, China was given a permanent seat with veto power on the newly-established United Nations Security Council.

As contemporary China reasserts itself on the world stage, there are Chinese historians who are hoping to learn more about the contributions of Lou Tseng-Tsiang, who laid the groundwork for Chinese diplomacy in the modern era. This could be one of the motivating factors for recent Chinese scholarship on Lou. Lou’s own contributions were recognized during his lifetime:

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166 Strauss, *Strong Institutions in Weak Polities*, 153, 155
En fait, il a été le premier à introduire au Waichiaopou les méthodes modernes ... Il a su s'entourer d'hommes qui, par leur formation, leur connaissance des langues, des idées et des usages étrangers, ont fait du Waichiaopou le Ministère le plus moderne ...

Lou was praised for introducing modern operational techniques into the “Waichiaopou” or Waijiaobu (Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs) that laid the foundations for the ministry becoming the most modern branch of the Chinese government during the Republican period. He was lauded for filling the ministry with Chinese men who in their time were the brightest, most highly educated, and most proficient in foreign languages, ideas and customs. The concentration of talent in the ministry contributed to its modernization and its prestige.

Significantly, even as Lou Tseng-Tsiang reformed and modernized the Chinese Foreign Ministry, he remained mindful of Chinese tradition. Thus in 1918, he had erected within the compound of the Foreign Ministry a shrine to the memory of his deceased master and mentor Xu Jingcheng, as well as the other three Qing high officials executed alongside Xu Jingcheng during the Boxer Uprising for opposing the court’s handling of the crisis. Each year there was to be a ceremonial offering of silk and wine to honor the dead men, “quatre fonctionnaires victimes de la cause de la Civilisation.”

By this point in time, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was already a Catholic, but he saw no contradiction between his Christian faith and his honoring of Xu Jingcheng and the other dead Qing officials. The Catholic Church itself had changed since the time of the Chinese Rites Controversy that it did not condemn Lou’s actions. Lou was certainly not worshipping the dead men, and his act of devotion was arguably in line

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168 Ibid., 5 – 6.
with Catholic traditions of honoring the dead. Lou’s honoring of Xu Jingcheng and his companions as martyrs for the cause of “civilization” arguably foreshadows Lou’s own later reflections on humanism and civilizational dialogue. Lou himself would later join the Benedictines, a religious order that had played a key role in preserving the learning of Greco-Roman civilization during the medieval period.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang was not appointed as a foreign minister merely to reform and modernize the Foreign Ministry. He continued to serve China as a diplomat, and it was in this capacity that he would encounter some of the greatest challenges of his professional career. Against his wishes, he would also end up entangled in the complicated domestic politics of Republican China. The various difficulties Lou faced drained him physically and emotionally.

“Pénible Travail”

Lou Tseng-Tsiang had initially rejoiced at his return to China after well nigh two decades of diplomatic service abroad. However, serving as a foreign minister in the newly established Republic of China amid domestic turmoil and a challenging international climate proved to be an incredibly arduous task. The simultaneous tasks of reforming the Foreign Ministry and dealing with foreign policy challenges wore Lou Tseng-Tsiang down:

S. Exc. Lou, fatigue par dix-huit mois de ministère – qui avaient été pour lui dix-huit mois de pénible travail – sollicita bientôt un congé qu’il alla passer en Europe.169

So worn down was Lou that as the quoted passage from La Politique de Pékin recounted, 18 months after his initial return to China Lou Tseng-Tsiang was so drained he requested a vacation in Europe. Significantly, even then Europe was

already a refuge for Lou Tseng-Tsiang from the storms and stresses of China. In later years, Lou would once again find refuge in Europe for both himself and his wife.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang had spent his formative professional years in the Chinese diplomatic corps serving in Russia. He would need to draw on his past experiences in dealing with the Russians in negotiations with Russia concerning the status of Mongolia after the collapse of the Qing Dynasty. Mongolia had been part of the empire of the Qing for more than 200 years. In the decades preceding the dynasty’s final fall, Qing rulers had been apprehensive about growing Russian territorial ambitions that exerted ever-greater pressure on the northern frontier of the Qing Empire. The Qing therefore reformed their administration of Mongolia. Mongolia was opened to Han Chinese colonization, which had been forbidden before. Intermarriages between Manchus, Han Chinese and Mongols were permitted, and the prohibition against the use of Chinese language, clothes and customs in Mongolia was lifted.  

Moreover after the implementation of the Xinzheng (New Administration) Reforms, the Qing began constructing barracks in Mongolia. Young Mongols would soon have to be mobilized into the Qing army. The Qing rulers saw the Xinzheng Reforms as indispensable for the survival of China; the Mongols meanwhile saw it as a colossal threat to their own survival. A petition to the Qing government reveals the desperate sentiments the Mongols felt, “Among the many directives repeatedly issued there is not one which benefits the Mongols. Consequently, we all desire that

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171 Ibid.
we be allowed to live in accordance with our ancient ways.” According to Lou Tseng-Tsiang, the Russian foreign minister of the time, Sazonow, wanted to leverage his good personal relationship with Lou with the aim of obtaining an outcome favorable towards Russia. In June 1912, Russia proposed three conditions for the autonomy of Mongolia: 1) Prohibition of a Chinese military presence in Mongolia; 2) Prohibition of the colonization of Mongolia by Han Chinese; 3) Prohibition of Chinese intervention in the internal affairs of Mongolia.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang advised the Chinese government against accepting these conditions as doing so would essentially mean renunciation of Chinese territorial

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174 Ibid., 402 – 403.
175 Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 63.
claims over Mongolia. Frustrated by the Chinese refusal to negotiate, the Russians found a unilateral solution, signing a secret convention with the Japanese to divide Outer and Inner Mongolia into the respective zones of influence of the two powers. Russia also signed an agreement with Mongolia promising to support Mongolian autonomy in exchange for increased Russian commercial privileges in Mongolia.

China finally had little choice but to negotiate with Russia, and Lou Tseng-Tsiang led those negotiations. The Chinese government continued to refuse the Russian conditions, as Mongolia was seen as an integral part of China. With negotiations deadlocked and a resolution favorable to China nowhere in sight, Lou Tseng-Tsiang resigned his position as foreign minister of China. He was likely disillusioned with the conduct of the Russian government with whom he was personally familiar, and that was in that moment trying to exploit China’s weakness. Lou was also probably frustrated with the Chinese government’s management of the situation.

China ultimately had to accept a treaty with even less favorable terms than the initial conditions Russia proposed. Among others, China had to accept Russian intervention in Sino-Mongolian affairs. China maintained nominal sovereignty over Mongolia, and Mongolian political and territorial issues were still to remain under the oversight of the Chinese government, albeit with the acceptance of Russian and Mongolian advice on the handling of these issues.

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177 Ibid.
179 Ewing, Between the Hammer and the Anvil?, 56 – 57.
180 Ibid.
La Politique de Pékin wrote of this particular episode in Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s life, “S. Exc. Lou laissa à un autre le soin de signer une convention néfaste pour son pays; il donna sa démission de ministre des Affaires Etrangères.” On this occasion, Lou was able to avoid signing an unequal or even “nefarious” treaty as the French weekly described it, but he would have to take on such burden later on during the Republican period. It was after his resignation that Lou requested time off for a vacation in Europe to recuperate. The Mongolian question was not the only issue that wore Lou down; he was also entangled in the messy domestic politics of Republican China.

Scorned In His Own Country

Despite his wishes, Lou Tseng-Tsiang eventually held the second highest domestic political position in China, that of premier. Lou later recounted his very brief tenure as premier of China in Souvenirs et Pensées:

Malgré ma répugnance à aborder la politique intérieure, j’acceptai provisoirement la charge de Premier ministre, ... La tâche était suffisante pour absorber les forces d’un homme plus vaillant que moi.\(^{182}\)

Barely any details of the episode are provided. Lou Tseng-Tsiang mentioned his reluctance to be entwined in domestic politics; he was after all a professional diplomat.\(^{183}\) China had changed considerably, that a Confucian like Lou should be

\(^{182}\) Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 63.
\(^{183}\) Ibid.
more focused on foreign relations than on domestic affairs, the traditional occupation of Confucian scholar-officials, as Max Weber had noted.\textsuperscript{184}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote that he accepted the position of premier only after the dissolution of the short-lived cabinet of Tang Shaoyi, while resolving to remain focused on China’s foreign relations and renewing China’s diplomatic corps. This suggests that he accepted the premiership out of a sense of duty to his country more than out of any personal political ambition. He concluded with the statement that the task of serving as premier would have drained even those stronger than he was.\textsuperscript{185}

The strain of the job, combined with the challenges he was facing in the Foreign Ministry, left Lou Tseng-Tsiang worn out a mere 18 months after a joyful return to his beloved patrie. Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s time as prime minister of China ended up being one of the low points of his professional careers. This may be why he preferred not to recall in detail his tenure holding the second highest domestic political position in China after the presidency.

While Lou Tseng-Tsiang preferred to concentrate on his Foreign Ministry portfolio, it was precisely because of his foreign affairs and diplomatic experiences that he was nominated for the premiership. China was confronting serious foreign policy challenges at the time and Lou’s contemporaries felt the need to have someone with Lou’s skills and competences at the helm.

Moreover, Lou was relatively neutral in the sphere of Chinese domestic politics. He was not a polarizing figure for the different factions. Besides that, his


\textsuperscript{185} Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, 63.
docility and good relationship with Yuan Shikai contributed to Yuan nominating him for the job. The Senate approved his nomination with 74 votes for and only 10 votes against.\textsuperscript{186} Lou Tseng Tsiang ended up serving as the second Prime Minister of the Republic of China from 29 June 1912 to 22 September 1912.\textsuperscript{187}

After the initial wave of support, Lou Tseng-Tsiang soon confronted the ugly realities of Chinese domestic politics. Later as chief of the Chinese delegation at Versailles in 1919, he would again have to navigate Chinese political infighting. Lou had little real say in the formation of his cabinet, with five of the six new incoming ministers being nominated by Yuan Shikai, and only the sixth, Hu Weide, a former colleague of Lou’s, actually chosen by Lou for the position of Minister of Communications. By the time Lou Tseng-Tsiang presented himself and his cabinet to the Senate for approval, some senators already considered them to be little more than pawns of Yuan Shikai.\textsuperscript{188}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang made his first appearance before the Senate on 18 July 1912. The day would prove to be one of the most humiliating of his life. By the time Lou arrived on the Senate floor at 11:00 a.m. the atmosphere was already tense from earlier debates on parliamentary procedure. Nevertheless, the senators still greeted Lou respectfully. He began by reflecting on how during his long years of service abroad, he always thought warmly of China.\textsuperscript{189} Even after Lou later left China definitively to become a monk in Belgium, his thoughts were ever turned to China.

\textsuperscript{188} Strand, \textit{An Unfinished Republic}, 212 - 213.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., 217 – 218.
This trait was honored in a poem Lou’s compatriot and future biographer Lokuang wrote for Lou.\(^{190}\)

Lou Tseng-Tsiang then recounted that he treated all Chinese he encountered abroad cordially, whether they were personal guests, merchants, students, or laborers.\(^{191}\) This was true later during Lou’s time in the abbey as well. When Lokuang visited the abbey, Lou received his younger compatriot warmly.\(^{192}\) Lou subsequently expressed his hope that the senators would now treat him cordially upon his return to China, as Lou had dealt with their countrymen while abroad.\(^{193}\)

The next segment of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s speech surprised and appalled the senators in session that day. Lou recalled that during his previous visits back to China while still a diplomat, he was ostracized by various circles because he did not want to consort with prostitutes, flatter officials, or abuse his position to take advantage of others. He declared that now that he was back in China, he still did not wish to engage in such activities. Even as his audience grew more restive, Lou’s speech became more introspective and he likened his homecoming to a second birth. By the time Lou Tseng-Tsiang got to the conclusion of his speech, his audience was in uproar. It was only in the final section of his speech that Lou discussed the cabinet nominees, emphasizing their foreign education, governmental experience and technical training.\(^{194}\)

The senators reacted with disbelief and consternation to Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s speech. Due to his upbringing and the training provided by Xu Jingcheng, Lou


\(^{191}\) Strand, *An Unfinished Republic*, 218.


\(^{194}\) Ibid., 217 – 222.
himself personally believed that public officials should behave according to a high moral standard. Nevertheless, his perceived moralizing did not come across well to his audience, some of whom very well may have joined politics for personal gain rather than the noble goal of serving country and people. The senators criticized Lou’s speech for being devoid of policy, which they believed proved his incompetence and inability to serve as prime minister.\textsuperscript{195}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang had however not sought out the position for himself, as he wanted to obey his father’s injunction not to become enmeshed in the corruption of Chinese officialdom.\textsuperscript{196} Moreover, Lou was qualified to lead the Chinese government in confronting the serious foreign policy changes that faced China. On this occasion, Lou delivered a speech his audience did not expect and they attacked him for it. In time, Lou would find more receptive audiences, notably audiences abroad.

Ten days after the speech, a senator, Gu Zhongxiu led a parliamentary effort to have Lou Tseng-Tsiang impeached for incompetence. Those whom Lou had nominated as ministers wrote to Yuan Shikai asking for their nominations to be retracted. In this moment, when it seemed everyone had turned against him, Lou himself asked Yuan Shikai for a leave of absence but this was rejected. He then began submitting a series of letters of resignation but they were all rejected as Yuan Shikai probably still needed Lou’s competence in negotiations with Russia on the Mongolian question.\textsuperscript{197}

A month later, after the failure of the impeachment attempt, Lou Tseng-Tsiang had himself checked into the French hospital in Beijing. The strain took its toll

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 221 – 222.
\textsuperscript{196} Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, 39.
\textsuperscript{197} Strand, \textit{An Unfinished Republic}, 222 – 223.
on his health, and a stay in hospital would provide some respite from those baying for his blood.  

Moreover Lou’s health had been frail since childhood. When he was 18 years old and still a student at the Shanghai School of Foreign Languages, his schooling was interrupted for a year due to illness.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s tenure as premier eventually came to an end as Yuan Shikai found a replacement for him. Lou had been scorned by his countrymen due to a poor speech in the Senate, yet worse was to come as he confronted the most serious foreign policy challenge of his career.

**Demanding The Surrender Of Soul, Body, and Possessions**

The grave challenge that Lou Tseng-Tsiang and China faced came from Japan:

> .... le Japon nous adresse un ultimatum de vingt et une demandes ... À lui seul, le chiffre de « vingt et un » dénote le caractère vraiment massif des concessions que le Japon entendait s’arroger.

War had broken out in Europe in 1914 and it did not take long for war to reach East Asia. Japan, which had an alliance with Great Britain, declared war on Germany. A joint Japanese and British force besieged the German port of Tsingtao on the coast of Shandong province and took the colony by November 1914. The Chinese played no part in the siege. In order to entrench its position in China, on January 18, 1915, Japan issued an ultimatum to China, the so-called Twenty-One Demands. As Lou noted, the fact that there were twenty-one demands alone revealed the large number of concessions the Japanese sought to extract from China.

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198 Ibid., 222 – 223.
199 Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 39
200 Ibid., 64.
201 Ibid.
Japan sought to retain control of the German concession it had taken, and demanded a range of rights and privileges in Shandong, Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia for the movement and residence of Japanese subjects in these provinces, the operation of railways and mines, etc. Japan also demanded that China agree not to cede or lease to a third power, any harbor, bay or island along the coast of China.\textsuperscript{202}

Finally, Japan demanded that the Chinese government employ Japanese advisers in political, financial and military affairs; that the police departments in important parts of China be jointly administered by the Japanese and Chinese; the establishment of a Sino-Japanese jointly worked arsenal; and the right of missionary propaganda (preaching Buddhism) for Japanese subjects in China.\textsuperscript{203} Lou Tseng-Tsiang described the demands as if Japan had demanded of the Chinese to cede all they had and were to give over their souls, bodies and possessions, “céder tout ce que nous étions et possédions: âmes, corps et biens.”\textsuperscript{204} Lou would lead the Chinese negotiations with the Japanese concerning the ultimatum. Over the course of the negotiations, he too would be drained body and soul.

The Twenty-One Demands provoked a strong public outcry in China as Chinese public opinion was staunchly against agreeing to the Japanese demands. Lou Tseng-Tsiang, however, personally recognized that China lacked the capacity to refuse the Japanese ultimatum outright and doing so would invite possibly worse consequences for China. Lou Tseng-Tsiang was not the foreign minister at the time,\textsuperscript{202}

\textsuperscript{203} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{204} Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, 64.
but Yuan Shikai called on him to lead the negotiations with Japan over the demands.\textsuperscript{205}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang took on the burden out of a sense of duty to his country.\textsuperscript{206}

It would be another one of the low points of his public service career:

\begin{quote}
... je crus de mon devoir de me sacrifier et d’accepter la direction, de négociations infailliblement vouées à un échec, lequel pouvait m’attirer à moi-même l’incompréhension et le mécontentement d’un grand nombre de mes compatriotes.\textsuperscript{207}
\end{quote}

As an experienced diplomat, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was aware that realistically, the negotiations would not produce a treaty favorable to China. Signing the treaty would then provoke incomprehension and discontentment from many of his compatriots. He might even be condemned as a traitor. Nevertheless, it was still his duty and his fellow negotiators’ duty to try to obtain the best terms possible for China. Hence Lou saw his acceptance of the task as a form of self-sacrifice.

After three months of arduous negotiations, the two sides came to an agreement. The Japanese eventually dropped the most onerous demands. Lou Tseng-Tsiang remembered this small victory:

\begin{quote}
Parmi les exigences que nous pûmes écarter, je retiens particulièrement la prétention d’imposer des conseillers politiques et militaires japonais à notre gouvernement central, celle de la mainmise japonaise sur la police chinoise et celle d’obtenir le droit de prédication en Chine ....\textsuperscript{208}
\end{quote}

He noted that the Japanese withdrew the demand to impose political and military advisors on the Chinese central government, the demand to jointly administer the Chinese police force, and the demand for Japanese missionary preaching in China,

\textsuperscript{205} Ibid., 65.  
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid.
which was probably an excuse to freely spread Japanese political and military propaganda across China and at all levels of Chinese society.

With the Japanese military threat looming, China signed the revised agreement with Japan. China could only hope for a possible redress of the injustice on some future occasion, such as the peace conference that would surely be called once the world war that was then raging finally came to an end. Signing the treaty with Japan provoked outrage and protest among the Chinese public, who accused those who negotiated with the Japanese and signed the treaty of being traitors.

One can imagine the hurt this must have caused to Lou Tseng-Tsiang, who so fervently loved China:

*Toute la Chine s’indigna, protesta, accusa ... L’heure n’était pas encore venu où une résistance militaire nous serait possible et cette infériorité douloureuse nous faisait endurer une profonde humiliation.*

According to Lou, all of China was indignant at the signature of the treaty with Japan, and people protested and hurled accusations. However, the hour had not yet come when Chinese military resistance would be possible, and it was China’s painful military inferiority that caused it to endure this profound humiliation. The signing of the Twenty-One Demands Treaty would continue to haunt Lou.

A time would come when China would fight back against Japan militarily, but it would cost the Chinese people dearly. As Lou Tseng-Tsiang was writing *Souvenirs et Pensées* during World War II, much of coastal China had been devastated by war with Japan since 1937. War was still raging on in China even as *Souvenirs et Pensées* was first published in early 1945, after the end of the war in Belgium. Unfortunately

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209 Ibid., 66.
for China and Lou, Japan was not the only threat to the young Chinese republic, and
the next crisis confronting China would stem from within China itself.

**Disappointment**

When the Chinese Republic was established on January 1, 1912 with Sun Yat-
Sen as provisional president, it was the first Asian republic. Just over three years later
in late 1915, China confronted the possibility that Yuan Shikai, the second president
of China, might have himself enthroned as a new emperor of China:

> Je connus alors une des périodes les plus douloureuses de ma vie publique. ... j'avais vu en M. Yuan Che-Kai le seul homme qui, à ce moment, fût capable de diriger l'État ; et cet homme-là s'avançait vers sa perte ...²¹⁰

Lou Tseng-Tsiang recalled the episode of Yuan Shikai’s ill-fated attempt at imperial
restoration with Yuan himself as the founder of a new dynasty, as one of the most
painful periods of his public service career. Lou himself was entangled in this episode
despite his personal wishes. He claimed that he had thought Yuan Shikai to be the
sole person capable of leading the Chinese state. Lou was however powerless to deter
Yuan from his monarchical scheme that ultimately resulted in Yuan’s downfall,
politically and physically. Lou’s continued involvement with Yuan Shikai through
this period would become another point of criticism against him.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s persistence in supporting Yuan Shikai may have been
because Lou was trapped by the ideal of a Confucian minister as had been outlined by
Mencius millennia earlier. The Confucian minister was supposed to occupy a
privileged position, serving as an independent counsel and providing a counterpoint

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to the dictates of the ruler.\textsuperscript{211} Lou Tseng-Tsiang was likely trying to live up to this ideal during Yuan Shikai’s presidency. His own master Xu Jingcheng had done so, and paid with his life, dying as a martyr for the country.

At the outset of the Republic of China’s establishment, Lou’s view of Yuan Shikai had been more positive:

\textit{Par Bonheur, le haut personnel gouvernemental trouvait en la personne du président de la République, M. Yuan Che-Kai, un homme d’État de grande envergure, ... le corps diplomatique tout entier voyait en lui le restaurateur désigné de l’État chinois.}\textsuperscript{212}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang and a fair number of his contemporaries thought Yuan Shikai to be a statesman of great stature, and the diplomatic corps believed Yuan would be one who could restore the Chinese state, and Yuan did initially impose some order on the chaotic political situation of China. Lou and others likely saw Yuan Shikai as a unifying figure, one, who had the strength and capacity to unify and pacify a China that had been wracked by conflict for much of the last decades of Qing imperial rule. If this was the case, then Lou and his contemporaries were being influenced by a political conception born out of the experience of Chinese history, the ideal of \textit{Datong}, often rendered as “Great Unity.”\textsuperscript{213}

The notion of “Great Unity” was possibly the most distinctive and essential feature of Chinese political ideology. It was an ideal that predated the establishment of the Chinese imperial systems; its roots lay in the Warring States period far back in the ancient Chinese past, a time when China was divided amongst various warring

\textsuperscript{212} Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, 61.
states and thinkers, notably Mencius, began formulating the ideal of political unification as a way to ensure stability and end the internecine bloodshed in China.\textsuperscript{214} While Mencius had thought that the unifier of China would be one “who has no proclivity to kill,” it was ultimately the king of Qin who unified through conquest and proclaimed himself the First Emperor.\textsuperscript{215}

The First Emperor’s rule was harsh, but the suffering and bloodshed during the years of disunion that had preceded his reign were worse. Over the subsequent course of Chinese history, there would be other periods of disunion accompanied by war between rival Chinese states. The human and economic destruction caused by these wars exceeded the damage inflicted by foreign invaders, and was greater than the suffering imposed by even the harshest and most tyrannical of imperial regimes.\textsuperscript{216}

Even during the Qing dynasty, the greatest destruction and bloodshed China suffered came not during wars with the foreign powers, but during the Taiping War, a Chinese civil war that devastated the southern provinces of China. Chinese leaders at the establishment of the republic would have been mindful of the lessons of Chinese history. In this light, it is perhaps understandable that some of them, like Lou Tseng-Tsiang, would choose to work with a strongman like Yuan Shikai despite his autocratic tendencies, who could potentially unify the country, rather than risk China collapsing into civil war.

Yuan Shikai had not initially been elected president, but rather had secured the presidency through an agreement with the Qing court in which Yuan Shikai

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., 16 – 18.
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid., 18 – 19.
\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., 42 – 43.
agreed to guarantee the imperial family’s safety in exchange for being invested with the presidency of China. The first elections were held in late 1912, and won by the newly formed Nationalist Party (Guomindang) that was the successor of Sun Yat-sen’s Revolutionary Alliance.\footnote{217}{Peter Zarrow, \textit{China in War and Revolution, 1895 – 1949} (London: Routledge, 2005), 78.}

Song Jiaoren, a young associate of Sun Yat-sen, organized the Nationalist Party for the elections, and had campaigned on the promise that they would keep Yuan Shikai in check. Song Jiaoren was widely expected to be elected premier, but he was assassinated in March 1913, on what many suspected were Yuan Shikai’s orders. In October 1913, parliament elected Yuan Shikai president, after three ballots, the arrests of several MPs, bribes, and threats.\footnote{218}{Ibid.}

Throughout his presidency, Yuan Shikai faced the challenge of legitimating his rule in both Chinese and foreign eyes. He revived some rituals of state Confucianism. He eventually decided to establish a new dynasty, with himself as the new emperor. A new national assembly appointed by Yuan unanimously elected him emperor in late 1915, with not a single vote in opposition. This was not entirely a return to the old Chinese imperial system as indicated by Yuan Shikai’s reign name, Hongxian, or Grand Constitutional era. The name of the country was to be Empire of China (\textit{Zhonghua diguo}).\footnote{219}{``中华帝国 ” (\textit{Zhonghua diguo}).} This was to be a modern national monarchy, like those in Japan and Europe.\footnote{220}{Zarrow, \textit{China in War and Revolution, 1895 – 1949}, 80 – 82.}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang found himself entangled in Yuan Shikai’s monarchical scheme. He initially despaired of Yuan’s scheme and how it would jeopardize the
progress China had made during Yuan’s presidency. Lou later wrote of his decision to persist with Yuan Shikai whom he had once seen as a leader for China:

*Qu’allait devenir la Chine? ... Après de longues et douloureuses réflexions, je résolus de suivre le Président aussi loin que je le pourrais ... j’étais résolu irréductiblement à refuser tous les avantages personnels que l’on aurait essayé d’y attacher.*

Lou attempted to justify his continued work with Yuan Shikai on the basis of national duty. He resolved to focus only on the responsibilities of the positions Yuan had assigned him, namely as foreign minister and as secretary of state. Lou was determined not to abuse his positions for personal gain. In persisting with Yuan Shikai, Lou Tseng-Tsiang may very well have imagined himself as a Confucian minister, who was bound not to abandon his position for the sake of duty to the country and people, and had to hope that the sovereign would listen to counsel.

The project of imperial restoration ended in failure, as Yuan Shikai faced widespread domestic opposition. In March 1916, Yuan announced the end of the Hongxian era, and by June that same year he was dead of uremia. In the wake of Yuan’s death, central authority broke down, and China descended into a period of civil strife, as competing regional warlords fought for dominance. It would be more than a decade before China was once again unified with some sort of central power.

The early years of the Republican period were thus filled with troubles and disappointments for the Chinese and for Lou Tseng-Tsiang. Some of these were domestic in origin, others external. Lou Tseng-Tsiang later summarized the experience of these years, during which he served multiple times as foreign minister, and China was marked by two great trials and a profound disillusion:

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222 Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution, 1895 – 1949*, 82 – 84.
Au cours de ces années difficiles, pendant lesquelles j’exerçai, sans discontinuité importante, les fonctions de ministe des Affaires étrangères la Chine rencontra deux redoutables épreuves et une profonde désillusion.223

According to Lou, the first great trial was caused by Japan, namely the Twenty-One Demands, “La première de ces épreuves, d’ordre extérieur, nous vint du Japon.”224

The second great trial came from within China itself, namely Yuan Shikai’s attempt to proclaim himself emperor. The failure of Yuan’s plan and the subsequent collapse of Chinese central power began a 15 year period of internal division and civil war, when various warlords battled for control, “la seconde fut causée par le chef même de l’État chinois : elle ouvrit une période de quinze années de troubles intérieurs et de guerres civiles.”225

Meanwhile, the great disillusion that Lou Tseng-Tsiang referred to was the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and the Treaty of Versailles, “la désillusion devait nous être imposées par les grandes puissances réunies à Versailles.” In 1919, many Chinese had been caught up with the rhetoric of Wilsonian internationalism and were taken by the promise that a new more just world order would emerge from the ashes of the Great War. Lou Tseng-Tsiang led the Chinese delegation to Versailles in 1919, and he and his fellow compatriots would be left deeply disappointed by the experience.

223 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 64.
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid.
Chapter Four

Disillusionment With Wilsonian Internationalism

When we spoke at Versailles, the other countries’ representatives opened their eyes wide, and responded to us that our requests were beyond their jurisdiction.  

In late July 1939, Stanislaus Lokuang paid a visit to his older compatriot Lou Tseng-Tsiang at the abbey where Lou lived as a monk. Lokuang would later serve with the Chinese legation to the Holy See after the establishment of Sino-Vatican diplomatic relations in 1943. Over a fortnight in 1939, Lokuang interviewed Lou as part of his research for the biography he would write on Lou Tseng-Tsiang. Lokuang

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was interested in writing about Lou because he thought Lou’s story would help to illuminate the diplomatic history of Republican China, especially because of Lou’s involvement in such crucial moments as the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.

The quote above is taken from Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s discussion with Lokuang about the development of the Chinese diplomatic corps during Lou’s lifetime and with which he was closely involved. Lou had recalled that during the Qing dynasty, Chinese diplomats did not know how to assert that China’s rights and privileges as a sovereign state were to be respected. By 1919, the situation had changed.227

Lou Tseng-Tsiang recalled the extent of Chinese hopes for the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. There were hopes that the peace conference would put right the injustices dealt to China since the time of the Opium Wars. The Chinese aimed to show at Versailles how much they had learned and grasped of the ways of international diplomacy since the time of the Qing Dynasty. As Lou recounted, the other delegates were surprised by the Chinese performance at Versailles, and could only respond that the questions the Chinese delegates hoped to resolve were beyond the jurisdiction of those assembled at Versailles.

The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 was a landmark in both international and Chinese history. Chinese disillusionment with Wilsonian internationalism and the Treaty of Versailles sparked the May 4th student movement, and also arguably spurred the Chinese diplomatic turn toward the Soviet Union. For Lou Tseng-Tsiang, leading the Chinese delegation to the Peace Conference was his last major act as a diplomat. Due to a combination of personal wishes and other circumstances, after his

227 Ibid.
return to China from the Peace Conference, Lou began the process of shifting from his diplomatic vocation to focus on other matters.

Even though the Paris Peace Conference ended in disillusionment for himself and for China, Lou Tseng-Tsiang retained many memories of the events at Versailles in 1919, and would speak and write of these recollections again at later points in his life. The painting that appears in the photograph above was a treasured souvenir from this time in his life. On the journey back to China from the peace conference, Lou had passed through Italy. He had his portrait painted in Napoli by the painter A. Arcioni.\(^{228}\) It now hangs above his desk in the Lou memorial room of Sint-Andriesabdij, surrounded by Lou’s other personal effects.

At first glance, the European style portrait that depicts a mustachioed Chinese man in a tie and suit seems like another stage in Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s Europeanization. Yet even this portrait actually aims to demonstrate and embody Lou’s synthesis of European and Chinese tradition. According to Lokuang’s biography of Lou, the painter had labeled this portrait “慎独” (Shendu). “Shendu” can approximately be rendered as “watching over oneself even when one is alone.”\(^{229}\) It is unclear how the painter would have known Chinese, and perhaps he named the painting based on a suggestion from Lou himself.

According to the Zhongyong (often rendered as the Doctrine of the Mean), one of the four central texts of the official Confucian canon in imperial China, “Shendu” is one of the key virtues of a Confucian gentleman.\(^{230}\) It was also a virtue

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\(^{228}\) Luo Guang, *Lu Zhengxiang Zhen* 2\(^{nd}\) ed. (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1967), 16.

\(^{229}\) Ibid.

\(^{230}\) Quotation from the first verse of the Zhongyong and English translation by James Legge sourced from the Chinese Text Project Website: “故君子慎其独也。” (Therefore the superior man is watchful
that Lou had personally admired since his youth, and aspired to practice in his life. Lukang wrote that Lou later called his room (likely referring to Lou’s monastic cell) “Shenduzhai” or “The Pavillion/Studio of Shendu.”

The pavilion of Shendu and the abbey as a whole had become a refuge for Lou after his disillusionment with the world of diplomacy. That disappointment had arguably reached a crescendo in Paris 1919 when the hopes of many around the world for a new, more just world order were dashed. Despite the disappointment, the Paris Peace Conference was an experience that remained with Lou and he would recall his memories of the conference at later moments of his life, such as during his consecration as an abbot.

**Danger and Opportunity**

China had obtained a place at the Paris Peace Conference through participation in the First World War. Lou Tseng-Tsiang later wrote simply of the outbreak and spread of the First World War, which had begun as a European war but quickly spread around the world, including to China, due to the global network of European alliances and coalitions:

*Entre-temps, la guerre européenne faisait rage et elle étendait à l’univers entier le réseau de ses alliances et de ses coalitions.*

Europe’s masses, who had not known a continent-wide war for a hundred years, initially greeted the war with enthusiasm. At the same time in China, a country that had experienced a series of wars over the course of the 19th century, the outbreak of

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231 “懸独齋” (Shenduzhai) From Luo, *Lu Zhengxiang Zhuan*, 16.
war in 1914 was greeted with a sense of what historian Xu Guoqi has termed *Weiji*, or a sense of concurrent danger and opportunity.²³³

There was a sense of danger because Chinese elites and government officials recognized that there was a risk of China being involved in the war involuntarily, because the various belligerents all had spheres of influence in China. Furthermore, with the breakdown of the international system and the European powers otherwise preoccupied, there was a danger that Japan would have a free hand to assert dominance in East Asia, including over China.²³⁴ This fear would prove real when Japan issued the Twenty-One Demands to China in January 1915.

There was, however, also a sense of opportunity among some Chinese who thought that out of the war there could emerge changes to the international system that would allow for more Chinese participation in the world system.²³⁵ Such a complex reading of the international situation in August 1914 amongst Chinese in the know demonstrates as well how far Chinese elites had come in grasping the nature of the new world order that China found itself in, from the end of the First Opium War onwards.

One of the prominent Chinese of the time who argued for China’s participation in the First World War was Liang Qichao, who claimed that the First World War presented the Chinese “a once-in-a-thousand-years opportunity to renew

²³⁴ Xu, *China and the Great War*, 82.
²³⁵ Ibid.

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their country and get it on track to recover its national sovereignty.”

Liang Qichao wrote:

We cannot justly condemn war as a sin pure and simple when it can be used as a purifying and caring agent. It is certain that every great war opens for the world a new era or a peaceful regime of hundreds or several scores of years. Seen from this point of view, it is quite probable that the seeds of great blessing have been sown during this year of disaster and misfortune.

This passage was written in December 1914; by then, all the European powers had been shocked by the scale of losses suffered during the opening battles and campaigns of the First World War, yet each side still believed they could win out over their respective enemies.

War had already come to China as well, with the joint Japanese and British siege of the German port of Tsingtao in the autumn of 1914. China did not participate in the siege and Tsingtao had fallen into Japanese hands. With the European powers otherwise preoccupied, Japan had a free hand in the Far East:

La guerre européenne remontait à six mois et notre voisin, guettant toutes les occasions, profitait de cette conflagration pour nous faire violence en tête à tête, sans qu’aucune puissance n’ait la possibilité d’intervenir ou de s’interposer.

As Lou Tseng-Tsian later recalled, the war in Europe had been raging for six months, and Japan, which had been looking for opportunities to expand its influence in China, took advantage of the conflagration to impose itself violently on China, without any other power being able to intervene or interrupt.

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236 Ibid, 83.
238 For a then contemporary discussion of the siege and capture of Tsingtao by the Japanese and its implications for the geopolitics of East Asia, please refer to Jefferson Jones, The Fall Of Tsingtau With A Study Of Japan’s Ambitions In China (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915).
239 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 64.
China had initially declared neutrality in August 1914 in an attempt to prevent the war from spreading to its shores. Some Chinese officials were, however, enthusiastic about China’s prospects for joining the war and argued that China should join the Allied side in the war. Lou Tseng-Tsiang claimed that he was among those who argued from the beginning of the conflict that China should join the Allied side:

*Dès le début de la conflagration, j’avais été du petit nombre de ceux estimant qu’il revenait à la Chine d’y participer et engageant notre pays à prendre rang parmi les Alliés.*

This seemed to be corroborated by a later report. Perhaps Lou Tseng-Tsiang read the situation accurately, aware that Germany was not likely to win a war that dragged on, and was motivated by a realist desire to see China advance its national interests by joining the winning side.

It was also possible that the German invasion and occupation of Belgium, the homeland of his wife, affronted him. The invasion violated international norms, and the subsequent atrocities against civilians and destruction of property such as the burning of the university library of Leuven likely outraged Lou. Joining the Allied side would thus seem like fighting for the cause of justice and civilization.

The Japanese capture of Tsingtao and the subsequent Twenty-One Demands Ultimatum delivered to China made the situation more urgent. Many Chinese began to realize that the post-war peace conference could be an opportunity to abrogate the treaty with Japan signed in response to the Twenty-One Demands. Even before the Twenty-One Demands episode there were Chinese who realized the importance for China of attending the peace conference. Obtaining a seat at the peace conference

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240 Ibid., 67.
thus became a primary goal of both the Chinese government and educated Chinese concerned about foreign affairs.\textsuperscript{242}

Accordingly, the Chinese government began taking steps to prepare for participation in the eventual peace conference. On January 18, 1915, the very same day Japan delivered the Twenty-one Demands to China, the Chinese Foreign Ministry sent a telegram to all Chinese ministers abroad explaining the importance of the Chinese drive to attend the peace conference, pointing out that “the many crimes committed by Japan could not be solved justly until our country attends the peace conference after the war.”\textsuperscript{243}

A high-level research group was convened on January 22, 1915 to prepare China’s case for the war. Among its members were then Vice minister Cao Rulin as well as Lou Tseng-Tsiang and Wellington Koo, who would both eventually represent China as plenipotentiary delegates at Versailles in 1919. Several strategies were proposed as to how China could secure a seat at the peace conference, though the most secure way was to join the war. In May 1915, after he had signed the Twenty-One Demands treaty, Lou Tseng-Tsiang told Yuan Shikai that joining the war was the only way China could hope to attend the postwar peace conference.\textsuperscript{244}

China therefore began searching for a way to join the war. China lacked a modern and well-armed military, but what China had in abundance was manpower, something the Allies would increasingly need as the war dragged on and the casualty count mounted. Liang Shiyi, an influential politician of the time and a confidant of Yuan Shikai, came up with the idea of the \textit{Yigong daibing}, or “laborers in the place of

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{242} Xu, \textit{China and the Great War}, 89, 90 – 91,98 – 99.  \\
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid., 100.  \\
\textsuperscript{244} Ibid., 101.
\end{footnotesize}
soldiers strategy.” The rationale for the plan was that since the Chinese government wanted to connect China to the international system and the Allies, sending laborers would demonstrate Chinese sincerity and ability to help the Allies.

As the war continued, France and then Britain turned to China to meet their need for manpower. The first group of Chinese laborers arrived in France on August 24, 1916. By the time the war ended, China had sent about 140,000 laborers to Europe. Many of them were from Shandong province, the birthplace of Confucius and Mencius and therefore a region of great significance to the Chinese.

During the course of the war, Shandong had come under Japanese sway. The recovery of Shandong was one of the goals China hoped to achieve by supporting the Allied cause. But the contribution and role of the Chinese workers in the First World War would remain largely unrecognized. Indeed Chinese hopes for the recovery of Shandong in all its integrity would be disappointed as well, at the postwar peace conference.

**Hope For A New World**

The Chinese had high hopes for the Paris Peace Conference because of the promise of Wilsonian internationalism. The quotation below reveals the degree of enthusiasm among the Chinese people in 1918 for President Wilson and the ideals he espoused, especially as encapsulated in his “Fourteen Points”:

[President Wilson] is a wonderful man, having a firm grasp of the world situation and knowing exactly how to deal with it. … his picture as thrown on the screen or shown in the magazines – serene, resolute,

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246 Ibid., 16.
247 Ibid., 19.
248 Ibid., 1, 6.
fearless, and yet gentle, reasonable and friendly – shows that … he is spiritual, fair-minded and firm in his determination.249

Nor were the Chinese alone in admiring Wilson, as many other peoples and nations around the world also pinned their hopes for a new world order on the ideals of President Wilson.

The admiration and devotion for President Wilson in the year leading up to the Paris Peace Conference seemed almost religious. The rhetoric about the hope in Wilsonian ideals echoed the language of prophesying and longing for a figure who will bring peace and justice that can be found in the book of Isaiah:

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Behold my servant, whom I uphold; … I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. … he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.250
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It is possible that Lou Tseng-Tsiang also shared those hopes only to be left disillusioned. Perhaps later in the abbey, when he reflected on the passage from Isaiah quoted above as part of the lectio divina, Lou may have pondered how he had once put his trust in the ideals and institutions of man, but his deepened faith as a monk may have led him to believe that man alone could not bring peace and justice.

The enthusiasm for President Wilson had built up in a world wearied by war and looking forward to the possibility of renewal at the post-war peace conference. As China prepared for the upcoming peace conference, the Chinese people, like many other oppressed and subject peoples elsewhere, looked increasingly to the United States and its president Woodrow Wilson to usher in a new era of international

250 Isaiah 42: 1, 3 – 4 (Authorized King James Version)
equality. The veteran journalist Hollington K. Tong wrote that Wilson was “the best qualified statesman to assume the role of champion of human rights generally and of the rights of China in particular.”\textsuperscript{251} In the present day, some Chinese democratic dissidents continue to place their hopes in the USA and its leadership as champions for human rights, and continue to be disappointed.

There was great excitement in China that Wilson’s Fourteen Points would be used as the basis for the postwar peace.\textsuperscript{252} When the war ended, Chinese students in Beijing gathered before the American legation and chanted “Long Live President Wilson!” The Chinese translation of Wilson’s Fourteen Points speech was an immediate bestseller and some students even memorized the speech.\textsuperscript{253}

Among those fascinated by Wilson and his ideas was the veteran reformist from the 1898 Hundred Days Reform Period, Kang Youwei. Kang had initially advocated Chinese neutrality in the war, believing that Germany would win and thinking that China was too weak to gain anything by participating in the war.\textsuperscript{254}

However by the time of the armistice of November 1918, Kang was intrigued by President Wilson’s proposals for peace, particularly the plan to create a League of Nations. Kang thought that the League of Nations would unite all of humanity under its covenant, and thereby promote the realization of the traditional Confucian ideal of Datong, a utopian vision of peace and stability for not just China, but that also included a universalistic hope for world peace.\textsuperscript{255}

\textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 103.
\textsuperscript{253} Xu, \textit{China and the Great War}, 245.
\textsuperscript{255} Ibid. The first articulation of the concept of Datong is likely that found in the ancient text, the \textit{Liji}
Datong was a subject Kang Youwei had written about some years earlier in a manuscript that was eventually published as the Datongshu, or Book of Datong.\(^{256}\) While the proposed League of Nations would not go as far as Kang had advocated and abolish all social distinctions between peoples, nevertheless for many sophisticated Chinese of the time including Lou Tseng-Tsiang, it still seemed like a real step toward the realization of the ideal of Datong. With the creation of the League of Nations, China would become an equal member of a new world order comprised of a just and peaceful community of nations.\(^{257}\)

However, not everyone was quite so taken by President Wilson. Li Dazhao who would co-found the Chinese Communist Party together with Chen Duxiu in 1921 was among those skeptical about Wilson. Li had initially praised Wilson for “his deep

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\(^{256}\) In the Datongshu, Kang Youwei had advocated the abolishment of the state in politics, private property in economics, and families in the social structure because according to Kang, all evils in society came from the differences among countries, classes, races/ethnicities, genders, families, and wealth levels. From Shiping Hua, *Chinese Utopianism: A Comparative Study of Reformist Thought with Japan and Russia, 1898 – 1997* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009), 36.

love of world peace,” but by the end of 1918 Li was more impressed by the rise of Bolshevism in Russia and seemingly elsewhere in Europe as well.²⁵⁸

Li Dazhao then considered Lenin and not Wilson to be the true visionary of the future. Li criticized his fellow Chinese for their celebration of the Allied military victory arguing instead that it was the power of the German people and German socialism that won the war. The real victors were thus revolutionary leaders such as Lenin and Trotsky, Karl Liebknecht and Philipp Scheidemann, not Wilson.²⁵⁹

Li Dazhao’s position was a marginal one at the time, but the Chinese would soon be deeply disappointed by Wilson and his idealistic proposals. China and many Chinese then turned away from the Western Allied powers to the one power that promised to treat China on equal terms, Soviet Russia.

**Instead of Healing**

Before the disappointments of 1919, the Chinese had thought that their best chance for obtaining the restoration of China’s rights and territories was through the peace conference that would be held after the end of the world war. The Chinese government eventually believed that the Allied powers had a greater chance of winning the war. Hence China joined the war on the side of the Allied Powers to secure a place at the peace conference as a member of the winning coalition of states. The Chinese delegates at the Paris Peace Conference tried in vain to ensure that the peace treaty the conference produced did not deal with China unjustly, despite China’s status as an allied state:

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 110.
²⁵⁹ Ibid.
Their efforts failed as they learned in Paris that the Great Powers considered China to be only a minor power with negligible contributions to the war effort. China’s demands were therefore accorded less importance.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang later wrote that the Chinese delegates wanted the Great Powers to heal rather than extend the troubled state of relations between China and the West that had festered for close to 80 years, or the strained relations between China and Japan that had been in conflict for a quarter-century by then:

... pour éviter que les Puissances ne prolongent et n’étendent, au lieu de le guérir, l’état de trouble si profond, qui, alors, depuis près de quatre-vingts ans, compromettait les relations de la Chine avec l’Occident, et, depuis un quart de siècle, ses relations avec le Japon.\(^{261}\)

Contrary to Chinese expectations and to Wilsonian ideals, the Great Powers were less interested in seeking healing than in furthering their national agendas at the peace conference. It was during the course of the peace conference that the Chinese learned that they had been naïve to place their trust in the Great Powers’ promises.

The Chinese delegates had initially travelled to Paris in 1919 with a set of far-reaching goals they wanted to achieve for China at the peace conference. They sought the abrogation of all the unequal treaties that had been concluded with the foreign powers and which infringed on Chinese sovereignty. They also wanted to phase out the system of extraterritorial jurisdiction for foreigners in China, and that leased

\(^{260}\) Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 68.
\(^{261}\) Ibid., 68.
territories and foreign concessions in Chinese railroads, mines, and communications be returned to Chinese hands.262

Shandong province, where the Japanese had extensive concessions in the wake of the Twenty-One Demands Treaty, was a focal point of Chinese demands. Shandong’s status as the birthplace of Confucius and Mencius made it even more significant. Moreover, it was the place of origin for many of the Chinese workers who had served the Allied cause during the war, which should have strengthened China’s case for the recovery of Shandong in its entirety. The Chinese had confided in Wilson and his ideals, as well as in their status as one of the states that had contributed to the Allied victory.

China sent a large delegation of more than sixty members with five plenipotentiary delegates to Paris in 1919.263 They were some of the best and most well-qualified and experienced Chinese diplomats of the time. As foreign minister of China at the time, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was appointed to lead the Chinese delegation to the post-war peace conference. Lou had spent long years of service abroad as a Chinese diplomat before returning to China to renew the Foreign Ministry. He also had past experience with major international conferences. Lou represented China as a “Second Delegate (Second Délégué)” at the First International Peace Conference held

263 Xu, China and the Great War, 246.
at the Hague in 1899.\textsuperscript{264} He then led the delegation as “Ambassador Extraordinary” and “delegate plenipotentiary” at the Second Hague Peace Conference in 1907.\textsuperscript{265}

These conferences were part of the pre-First World War internationalist movement that ended in failure during the heady days of summer 1914. An American adviser working with the Chinese delegation at The Hague in 1907, John W. Foster wrote of the Second Hague conference in terms that suggest how it may have prefigured the conference at Versailles in 1919 in scale and ambition, and ultimately, failure to fully realize its lofty goals:

The Second Peace Conference at The Hague was, in some respects, the most important event in the history of the human race. It was the first time that the political representatives of all the nations of the earth had met together. … especially to concert measures to promote peace and to prevent war or to ameliorate its horrors and inconveniences.\textsuperscript{266}

By the summer of 1914, a mere seven years after the Second Hague Peace Conference, those nations of the earth that had gathered to “concert measures to promote peace” were mobilizing their armies for what would turn out to be a long and bloody war. Likewise, the outcome of the later Paris Peace Conference failed to bring lasting peace to Europe and East Asia and two decades after the signature of the Treaty of Versailles, the world was once again at war.

During the Hague conferences Lou Tseng-Tsiang represented China with distinction and already actively defended China’s cause. In 1899 at the First Hague


\textsuperscript{266} John W. Foster, Diplomatic Memoirs Vol. II With Illustrations (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909), 212.
Conference, Lou speaking on behalf of the head Chinese delegate, gave the only recorded speech by a member of the Chinese delegation at that conference. In this speech Lou declared China’s readiness to cooperate with the international community but subject to conditions, namely the preservation of Chinese national interests. Lou Tseng-Tsiang made the following declaration in the name of the first delegate of China:

In the purely humanitarian questions on the subject of war with which the commissions have been charged, he (the first delegate of China) has given without hesitation his adhesion to the proposals of the delegates of the powers invited to this high assembly. Sometimes, he has believed that the acceptance of one or another proposal would not be to the advantage of China; he has, conformably to his general instructions, given his vote against the form in which it was advanced, but, when the desired form was obtained, he rallied to his colleagues in order to assure unanimity.267

Lou’s speech was greeted with applause as noted in the record of the conference proceedings. This was in marked contrast to the ridicule Lou received when he spoke before the Chinese Senate in 1912.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang continued his defense of China’s national interest at the Second Hague Conference in 1907, especially with regard to international arbitration of controversies regarding extraterritorial rights, a subject of great importance to China.268 John W. Foster later wrote in his memoirs of his impressions of Lou at the conference and also recounted how the other delegations failed to take China’s plight seriously:

The military delegate of China established a great reputation as a wit, notwithstanding he was one of the most serious-minded of the members and never consciously attempted a joke. … he stated that he regarded it as important that the Conference should define accurately what constituted a state of war, for, said he, “my country has had its navy destroyed, its ports bombarded, and its capital occupied by foreign troops, when the aggressing nations declared that their acts were not war, but only expeditions,” referring to the French hostilities of 1885 and the allied occupation of Peking in 1900. The only answer he received to his inquiries from the Commission was a hearty laugh from the delegates, who regarded them as sallies of wit or sarcasm on the part of the Oriental member.²⁶⁹

The sheer lack of comprehension and patronizing stance of the other delegations towards the Chinese delegates was telling, despite all the Chinese were doing to learn the ways of modern diplomacy. The assembled delegates did not seem to regard China as a sovereign state, with equal rights and privileges, such as the right to national security and sovereignty. While the Chinese delegates made their appeals based on their having witnessed the incursions into Chinese national sovereignty by foreign powers in their lifetime, the other delegates took the Chinese pleas as nothing more than attempts at oriental wit or sarcasm.

John W. Foster meanwhile remembered his Chinese colleagues not just for their professional competencies, but also for their courtesies, hospitality and urbanity:

My relations with my colleagues of the Chinese delegation were cordial and pleasant throughout the Conference. The first delegate, Lu Ching-tsiang (sic), had been a member of the First Peace Conference, had passed more than ten years in the diplomatic service in Europe, and was an accomplished French scholar. … The first delegate, Mr. Lu, and his European wife, as well as the other members of the delegation, were untiring in their social courtesies, and I parted with them with an increased estimate of Chinese hospitality and urbanity.²⁷⁰

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 241.
Significantly, Foster recalled that Madame Lou was allowed to play an important social role, in contrast to the earlier years of her marriage when she avoided all official functions to which Lou was invited, because of the scorn she received from other Chinese diplomats. For the Western diplomats, Lou’s European wife may have made Lou seem less foreign and raised his standing in their eyes. While others may have viewed Madame Lou as a bridge across cultures, for Lou himself she was a soul mate, and not just a generous hostess.

Foster at least still remarked on Lou’s qualifications. In their coverage of the opening of the conference, the foreign press noted not the qualifications of the Chinese diplomats in attendance but rather their “tinted silk robes.” The “scarlet fezzes which the Turks kept upon their heads” also caught the eye of the orientalist journalists.

The lessons from these conferences remained with Lou Tseng-Tsiang, and they might have foreshadowed some of his later experiences in Paris and Versailles in 1919:

> Cette fonction me mit pour la première fois en face de l’attitude simultanée de toutes les puissances, unanimes à traiter la Chine comme un pays de dernier rang. Ce fut pour moi une expérience très riche d’enseignements et de renseignements."

Lou wrote of his experiences representing China at the Hague Conference of 1907, that he remembered the assembled powers treating China as a country of the lowest order. It was an experience that taught Lou many lessons, which deepened his understanding of international diplomacy, and its attendant hypocrisies. Such

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272 Ibid.
experiences may have later pushed Lou towards embracing a humanism grounded in Catholic faith and Confucian tradition as a possibility for achieving peace and justice between China and the West.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang was the most experienced of the five Chinese plenipotentiary delegates to the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919. The other plenipotentiaries were C.T. Thomas Wang (Wang Zhengting), V.K. Wellington Koo (Gu Weijun), Alfred Sze (Shi Jaoji), and Wei Chenzu. C.T. Wang was close to the Guomindang government based in South China and was named a plenipotentiary in order for China to present a united front and hopefully advance efforts to achieve unity in China itself.\(^{274}\)

Apart from Lou and Wang, the other three plenipotentiaries were all Chinese ambassadors then serving abroad. Wellington Koo was the minister to the USA, Alfred Sze the minister to Great Britain and Wei Chenzhu the minister to Belgium.\(^{275}\) The omission of the Chinese minister to Japan amongst the ranks of the plenipotentiaries suggests that China chose to focus on the Western powers at the conference and not deal with Japan.\(^{276}\)

Among the five plenipotentiaries, three were American educated: Wellington Koo at Columbia University, Alfred Sze at Cornell University, and C.T. Wang at Yale University.\(^{277}\) This represented a gradual changing of the guard of the Chinese diplomatic corps as noted by a French diplomatic telegram dated January 9, 1918,

\(^{275}\) Ibid.
\(^{276}\) Xu, *China and the Great War*, 247.
from M. D. De Martel, French chargé d’affaires in China, to M. Pichon, French Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Le départ du Ministre actuel des Affaires Étrangères serait incontestablement une perte pour l’influence de cette Légation. Ancien élève de nos missions, demeuré très attaché à la culture française, marié à une belge et ne connaissant d’autre langue étrangère que le français, M. Lou-Tcheng-Hsiang perpétue en Chine un type, malheureusement de plus en plus suranné, du diplomate vieille école auquel se substituera de plus en plus uniformément le type anglo-saxon de formation américaine. De toutes les Légations Alliées la Légation des Etats-Unis est celle qui a accueilli sa nomination avec le moins de satisfaction.278

The French diplomatic telegram of January 1918 discussed how Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s potential departure from the Chinese foreign ministry could have represented a loss of French influence in the Chinese Foreign Ministry. It noted that Lou had been a student of French missions, remained attached to French culture, and knew no other foreign language apart from French. He represented the type of old-school Francophile Chinese diplomat who was increasingly being replaced in China by Anglicized and American-educated Chinese diplomats. The French remarked that the Americans were the most dissatisfied at Lou’s nomination to the Chinese foreign ministry.

The telegram revealed France’s real fear of its loss of political and cultural influence in the world after three and a half years of a bloody and devastating war. French victory was not yet certain at that point in time. The then recent collapse of France’s ally, Russia, combined with the German Spring Offensive of 1918 if it had succeeded, could have broken a weary France. While France did eventually emerge

278 M. D. De Martel, M. D. De Martel Chargé d’Affaires de France en Chine à M. Pichon, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, January 9, 1918, Telegram, Folder 37, Dossier Asie 1918 – 1929: Chine, Archives Diplomatiques, La Courneuve, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, France, (accessed July 15, 2013).
victorious, it was at a terrible cost. France had suffered heavy casualties, with more than 1.3 million war dead, while most of its industrial heartland in the north lay devastated.

That Lou Tseng-Tsiang was a Francophile is unsurprising. Lou had studied French from a young age, and came of age as a diplomat at a time when French was *la langue de diplomatie*. He spent his first tour of duty abroad in St. Petersburg, socializing with the tsarist Russian elite that was historically Francophile. Lou’s language of love with his Belgian wife was French. When Lou modernized and reformed the foreign ministry after returning to China in 1912, he did so according to French and Belgian models.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s affinity for French language and culture could have been one of the multiple motivating factors that made him push for China to join the Allied side in the First World War. Lou and his fellow Francophile Chinese diplomats were a relatively young class that only arose in the latter years of the Qing dynasty. Yet the pace of change in China was so great that already they were being supplanted by a new class of Americanized Chinese diplomats, whose rise mirrored the rise of American wealth, world power and influence. Nevertheless, in 1919 Lou Tseng-Tsiang was still the Chinese Foreign Minister and thus officially China’s most important diplomat at the time of the Paris Peace Conference.

**Jostling At The Table**

Lou Tseng-Tsiang was appointed to lead the Chinese delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in his capacity as foreign minister of China:
Despite Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s credentials and experience, his appointment as chief of the Chinese delegation to Versailles was not without opposition. A recent Chinese biographer of Lou, Shi Jianguo noted that the selection of Lou was met with domestic opposition from various quarters. The Anhui clique and other factions close to Japan opposed Lou’s appointment. These factions lobbied for Liang Qichao to be selected to lead the Chinese delegation as Liang was close to Japan. They also recruited businessmen to support their lobbying for Liang’s selection as the chief delegate.280

Meanwhile there was also opposition to Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s status as chief delegate from the Southern government of the time. This opposition was due to Lou’s past involvement with Yuan Shikai’s government and Yuan’s failed attempt at imperial restoration. Lou's competence as a diplomat was also questioned. He was accused of having failed to adequately defend Chinese sovereignty over Mongolia, Manchuria and Tibet from foreign incursions during his stewardship of the Foreign Ministry. The National Assembly's vote against Lou meanwhile was seen as a sign that the Chinese people lacked confidence in Lou's abilities.281

The internal disputes amongst the Chinese continued at Versailles as evidenced for example by an episode recounted by Wellington Koo in his memoirs:

In the beginning of February, the Chinese delegation convened a meeting. … Normally, the seat was left at the head of the table for the chair of the meeting, Minister Lou. However on this occasion, there were two chairs at the head of the table. Delegation Secretary Shi said he had been told by C.T. Wang’s private secretary, Zhao, that since Wang represented the Southern government, his status was equal to

279 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 67.
280 Shi Jianguo, Lu Zhengxiang Zhuan (Shijiazhuang: Hebei Renmin Chubanshe, 1999), 203.
281 Ibid., 204.
that of Lou’s. Hence the seats should be arranged to reflect their joint chairing of the meeting and delegation.\textsuperscript{282}

The early leadership disputes within the Chinese delegation mirrored the ongoing power struggles in China and hampered the initial work of the Chinese delegation that had such lofty goals for the conference. According to Koo’s account, the aforementioned meeting became farcical when the delegates entered the room. C.T. Wang apparently jostled with Lou for the leading seat and usurped Lou’s authority by acting as meeting chair. Lou remained silent in the face of the indignity. In doing so Lou displayed traces of the future monk with inner fortitude. Koo meanwhile pointed out to his colleagues that Lou was still the foreign minister and head delegate and should be treated accordingly.\textsuperscript{283}

The Chinese plenipotentiaries seemed split down the middle, into two camps. Wellington Koo, who had worked with Lou to reform the Chinese Foreign Ministry, and like Lou Tseng-Tsiang was originally from the Shanghai region, supported Lou’s leadership. Meanwhile C.T. Wang and Alfred Sze formed an opposing camp.\textsuperscript{284} The Chinese delegates eventually put aside their differences in the face of common challenges. Ultimately, they were united in not signing the Treaty of Versailles due to the treaty’s unfavorable terms against China.


\textsuperscript{283} Gu, \textit{Gu Weijun Huiyi Lu}, vol. 1, 190 – 191.

\textsuperscript{284} Stephen G. Craft, \textit{V.K. Wellington Koo and the Emergence of Modern China} (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 49.
An Oriental Courtesy

One of the reasons the Paris Peace Conference did not resolve the Shandong question to Chinese satisfaction was arguably because the Great Powers did not place much importance on Chinese demands. Lou Tseng-Tsien reported the indifference of the leaders of the Great Powers towards developments in the Far East, and their lack of any desire to understand China’s plight, or China’s attempt to seek justice:

... M. Lloyd George lui (Wellington Koo) poser la question : “The Twenty-One Demands, what’s that?” Cette ignorance ouvertement affichée ne s’accompagnait d’aucun désir d’information : la cause de la Chine était jugée avant d’être entendue.285

When Wellington Koo discussed the Twenty-One Demands, he was stunned by Lloyd George’s ignorance of the matter. Given the circumstances, Lou concluded therefore that China’s cause had been decided even before China had pleaded its case. The Great Powers were not interested in seeking justice for China.

Great Britain had fought the war to curtail Germany’s rise and maintain a world order in which Britain was the predominant imperial power. The British goal at Versailles in 1919 was to see the perpetuation of that world order, not to achieve international justice. Likewise the French had no interest in seeking international justice except to demand compensation and retribution for the severe losses France had endured during the war. As John Maynard Keynes, a representative of the British Treasury at the 1919 peace conference noted, the French leader Georges Clémenceau, who presided over the peace conference, had one illusion, France, and one disillusion, mankind.286

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285 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 68.
Clémenceau was a political realist who had little time for Wilsonian ideals, and is quoted to have said of Wilson, “When I talk to President Wilson I feel just as if I was talking to Jesus Christ.”

In any case, the European powers’ reluctance to find a just resolution to the geopolitical rivalries of East Asia and check Japanese expansionism would prove short-sighted, as the very same Japanese aggression that was eating into China would soon consume the British and French imperial possessions in the Far East as well and deal a death blow to the European world empires.

Confronting the lack of comprehension from the Great Powers, and the complexities and contradictions of Sino-Japanese relations of the period, the Chinese delegation tried various methods to plead their case, including before the international media. A March 6, 1919 news report from the *Washington Post* with the headline “China Defies Japan: Peace Delegates Denounce Nipponese Aims as Imperialistic” recounted one press briefing where the Chinese tried to do just that. The article noted Chinese hopes placed in Wilsonian ideals, such as the right of nations to self-determination in the run-up to the peace conference. The Chinese wanted the peace conference to free China from foreign interference and guarantee China’s national sovereignty:

Basing their attitude on the Wilsonian idea of the League of Nations the Chinese delegates make no secret of their hope that out of the peace conference will come a new China, free of all alien interference. Nor do they hesitate to affirm that unless the Far Eastern question is

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solved … the hope of preventing and or minimizing the chances of future wars by the League of Nations is illusory.288

The Chinese were right in pointing out the importance of seeking a just resolution to the tensions in the Far East in order to prevent future conflicts. When Japan eventually unilaterally invaded and occupied Manchuria in 1931, the League of Nations was powerless to check Japanese aggression, and Japan responded by simply withdrawing from the League of Nations in 1933.

The foreign journalists also initially misunderstood the gravity of the situation to the Chinese, as shown by their initial thoughts about the Chinese invitation:

Ever since the publication of reports denials, counter-reports, new denials and counter-assertions regarding the alleged secret treaty between Japan and China there has been a feeling here that an explosion was bound to come. It came last night. It was heralded by the apparently guileless invitation, “Mr. Lou Tseng Tsiang requests the pleasure of your company at tea Tuesday.” Being Mardi Gras we regarded the party as merely an oriental courtesy to foreign newspaper men. It was more than that. Gathered at the hotel Lutenia we found the entire Chinese delegation to the peace conference.289

For the assembled Chinese, the occasion was a serious one, as they were attempting to argue for the preservation of Chinese national sovereignty and territorial integrity. They demonstrated their mastery of the ways of international diplomacy, with a large delegation comprised of professional diplomats and technocrats, as well as skillfully using the modern mass circulation newspapers to advance their cause.

The Western journalists meanwhile revealed their ignorance of how much the Chinese had learned in such a short span of time. The journalists may have thought the Chinese diplomats of 1919 were like those of the Qing Dynasty who were still

289 Ibid.
ignorant of the ways of Westernized international diplomacy, and did not know how
to argue for their country’s rights and privileges. The journalists were merely
expecting an “oriental courtesy” for Mardi Gras, which was hardly a traditional
Chinese festival.

Significantly despite the internal tensions and rivalries within the Chinese
delegation, before the foreign press the Chinese strove to present a united front:

Besides Mr. Lou welcoming us there were Wellington Koo, Ambassador to Washington, who has a seat on the league of nations
commission; Tchedu Wei, secretary of the Chinese delegation to the
conference; Chanting Thomas Wang, China’s representative on the
ports and waterways commission; a dozen minor members of the
debellation, and several technical experts, including Quo Tai Chi, who
told me proudly he was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania
and was hoping to learn newspaper work in America when the war
called him back to China. He is the expert adviser of the delegation on
international politics.²⁹⁰

The composition of the assembled Chinese illustrated the changing face of the
Chinese diplomatic corps. Several of the prominent diplomats such as Koo and Wang,
and the technical experts, such as Quo Tai Chi spoke fluent English and were
American, rather than French educated. Quo even felt the need to emphasize his
status as a graduate of a prestigious American university to the assembled journalists.
Perhaps he hoped that the reputation of his alma mater might persuade them of his
quality as a technical adviser and an aspiring journalist.

The report noted that Lou Tseng-Tsiang allowed C.T. Thomas Wang, who had
previously challenged Lou’s authority, to be the leading spokesperson at this press
conference. This was perhaps part of the effort to present a united Chinese front. Lou

²⁹⁰ Ibid.
also likely recognized that as a Yale graduate, Wang was much more comfortable conducting public diplomacy in English than Lou himself was:

Wang several times emphasized the fact that he was speaking to Americans. Wellington Koo, Tchedu Wei and Lou Tsenw (sic) Tsiang nodded appreciatively. Ambassador Koo remarked to me, “Our main hope is the American love of justice.”

The report also recorded the Chinese hopes for the “American love of justice.” Given the number of American-trained diplomats and technical experts in the Chinese delegation, unsurprisingly the Chinese placed their hopes in the United States of America, which portrayed itself as the champion of liberty and justice. The Allies on the whole had portrayed the war as a fight for civilization and for justice. The USA and its president Woodrow Wilson were seen as the best embodiments of the love of justice and the hope for a new world order.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang noted that the American delegation was sympathetic to Chinese hopes:

... la délégation des États-Unis au Congrès de la Paix multiplia envers nous les marques de compréhension et les actes de serviabilité. Les États-Unis allaient dans la suite poursuivre à notre égard une politique d’amitié qui nous fut très précieuse.

Some of the Americans were reportedly understanding and helpful toward their Chinese counterparts. Lou remarked that American policy toward China after the Peace Conference was also friendly. This was however because the USA did not want Japan to dominate China and East Asia, which would have threatened American influence in the region, rather than any altruism on the part of the USA.

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291 Ibid.
292 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 68.
The Chinese delegates reminded the powers assembled in Paris that given China’s military weakness at the time, it was dependent on foreign guarantees to secure its independence and sovereignty. All the Great Powers had competing interests in China and no single power wanted another power to dominate China completely:

… said Mr. Wang in his speech, “the Chinese question may be said to center on the maintenance of the independence and integrity of China, which is guaranteed in a series of conventions and agreements concluded severally by Great Britain, France, Russia and the United States with Japan. The necessity for these international guarantees springs from the inability of China to prevent assault on her sovereignty, owing largely to the weakness marking the transition of a state in the throes of readjusting its life to the demands of the new environment. 293

By playing the competing interests of the different powers against each other to advance China’s own agenda, the Chinese diplomats arguably demonstrated a shrewd grasp of foreign policy and diplomacy. They understood how a militarily weak state could still use diplomacy to further its goals.

The Chinese were keenly aware that American concern over developments in East Asia was also ultimately motivated by a desire to preserve American interests in China:

Mr. Wang then reviewed the presentation to China of Japan’s 21 demands in January, 1915, … He told how Japan had been dissuaded from proceeding further by the action of the American State Department informing Japan that America would not recognize any agreement impairing the policy of the open door. 294

America itself was an imperial power, with colonies and ambitions of its own. There may very well have been American statesmen who were sympathetic to China’s cause,

294 Ibid.
but when America intervened to check Japanese expansion in China, it was because uncontrolled Japanese ascendancy would present a threat to America’s own pretensions as the dominant “Pacific power.”

China had perceived the Paris Peace Conference as a first opportunity to renegotiate the system of unequal treaties and foreign concessions that had been imposed on China over the course of the 19th century. They wanted to begin by reclaiming the German concessions in China, which Japan had since occupied:

> Within the category of burdens against which we protest is included the system of imperialistic rights, interests, and privileges which Germany established in the province of Shantung in 1898. This German system was typically expressed in the leased territory of Kiaochou. Japan, since her reduction of Kiaochou, developed and delimited this territory for exclusive Japanese occupation.\(^{295}\)

The Chinese did not achieve their main objectives at the Peace Conference, but in the interwar period, they would successfully negotiate more equal treaties with the Western powers and restore some degree of national sovereignty.

Wang concluded his speech by reminding the audience of China’s fervent support of the Allied cause during the war and Chinese praise for the idea of the League of Nations:

> After recounting what China had actually done to help the cause of the allies in Europe, Mesopotamia and the Far East, Mr. Wang said China hailed the idea of a League of Nations as the “supreme expression of the intellectual and moral qualities of the modern mind.”\(^{296}\)

China’s claim to its presence at the peace conference was that China had supported the Allied cause during the war, sending more than a hundred thousand laborers to Europe. Kang Youwei had written a letter to Lou in 1919, asking Lou to fight for


\(^{296}\) Ibid.
equal treatment of Chinese laborers in Europe and elsewhere, because it was they who had truly contributed to the war on behalf of China.\textsuperscript{297} Many of the laborers originated from Shandong province, and had signed on to support the Allied cause in the hope that their contribution would strengthen China’s case for the recovery of the German concessions in Shandong.

Notably at the press conference, Wang, a Yale-educated Chinese diplomat, hailed the proposed League of Nations as the “supreme expression of the intellectual and moral qualities of the modern mind.”\textsuperscript{298} The League of Nations, whose members would be equal sovereign nations coming together to further the cause of international justice and peace, was a modern utopian internationalist idea. It had, however strong echoes of the traditional Chinese notion of Datong or “Great or Grand Harmony.” These echoes were probably not lost on the members of the Chinese delegation at Versailles, who while being mostly Western educated, were at the same time firmly grounded in the Chinese tradition.

The Chinese would ultimately be left deeply disappointed by the outcome of the 1919 peace conference. They participated in the newly-established League of Nations, but the League would prove woefully inadequate in realizing the lofty goal of maintaining international peace. There was little the League could do to check the Japanese, Italian and subsequently German expansionism and aggression that resulted in the eruption of another world war.

As for Wilson himself, the foundation of the League of Nations may have been his only significant achievement in Paris in 1919. The US Senate, however,

\textsuperscript{297} Xu, \textit{Strangers On The Western Front: Chinese Workers in the Great War}, 213.
\textsuperscript{298} O’Brien, “China Defies Japan,” 1.
refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and rejected United States membership in the League of Nations. In advocating for the league to his compatriots, Wilson suffered a debilitating stroke from which he never recovered, and he died a physically broken man with broken dreams.

In contrast to Wilson’s brokenness, Lou Tseng-Tsiang eventually found solace and healing in the religious life. In the years following the Paris Peace Conference, Lou began his gradual withdrawal from the world of international diplomacy. He eventually came to believe that diplomacy and international organizations were not enough to ensure justice and peace. By the end of his life, he pushed for the need for mutual respect and understanding between peoples, and the necessity of inter-civilizational dialogue via engagement with the humanistic foundations of different civilizations. Before he arrived at that later stage, he arguably began his disengagement from diplomacy when he joined his fellow Chinese delegates in rejecting the Treaty of Versailles.

**Duty Not To Obey**

After much deliberation, Lou Tseng-Tsiang and the rest of the Chinese delegation ultimately chose not to sign the Treaty of Versailles. They had not yet received official approval for their decision from the Chinese government when they rejected the treaty:

*Pour la première fois dans ma carrière, je crus de mon devoir de ne pas obéir. ... Je ne voulais pas, une nouvelle fois, apposer mon nom sous des clauses injustes, et je pris sur moi seul de refuser la signature.*

The Chinese perceived some of the treaty’s clauses that transferred the German concessions in Shandong to Japan as being deeply unjust. When Lou recounted his decision not to sign the treaty, he claimed it was the first time in his career that he believed he had a duty to disobey orders. He believed that it was time for China to stand up for its rights and not submit to being the plaything of the Great Powers any longer.\(^{300}\)

Lou Tseng-Tsiang asserted that he no longer wanted to attach his name to another unjust treaty. He did not want to repeat the experience of 1915 when he had signed the Twenty-One Demands. Lou later claimed he made the decision of his own accord. The official Chinese order not to sign the treaty only came later.\(^{301}\) In his recollections, Lou omitted the inner turmoil he had experienced at the time.

The Shandong question and the deliberations concerning the Treaty of Versailles had aroused a big interest among not just Chinese in China, but also among overseas Chinese.\(^{302}\) China was the only country present at the peace conference that refused to sign the peace treaty. The Chinese delegates had done their best to make a case for the return of Shandong in all its integrity directly back to China. The Shandong issue was complicated by secret treaties between the European powers and Japan, as well as a secret agreement between the Chinese government in Beijing and Japan that even the Chinese delegates were unaware of until they arrived in Paris.

Though the first group of Chinese laborers had arrived in France on August 24, 1916, it was not until March 14, 1917 that China severed diplomatic relations with

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\(^{300}\) Ibid., 69.

\(^{301}\) Ibid., 70.

\(^{302}\) To view messages from overseas Chinese communities received by the Chinese delegation in Paris, please refer to *Telegrams Received By The Chinese Delegation In Support Of Their Stand On The Shantung Question* (Paris: Imprimerie De Vaugirard, 1919).
Germany and Austria-Hungary, and only on August 14, 1917, that China officially declared war on the Central Powers.\textsuperscript{303} Anticipating that China’s claims for the restitution of former German concessions in Shandong would be stronger once it was officially at war on the Allied side, the Japanese concluded secret agreements with the Allied powers in early 1917 to guarantee Allied support for Japanese claims to Shandong.

On February 21, 1917, Japan concluded a secret agreement with Great Britain in which the British promised to support Japanese claims to the Shandong concession at the upcoming peace conference in exchange for Japanese support of British claims to Germany’s South Pacific Islands. On March 5, 1917, Japan reached an agreement with Russia in which the Russians agreed to recognize the Twenty-One Demands in return for Japanese recognition of Russia’s preeminent position in Outer Mongolia. On March 6, 1917, Japan and France reached an agreement in which the French agreed to support Japanese claims to Shandong in return for the Japanese working to persuade China to break off diplomatic relations with Germany and impound German ships in Chinese ports. Finally, on March 28, 1917, Japan and Italy reached a similar agreement.\textsuperscript{304} While the Italians had little real strategic interest in the Far East, they did have far-reaching territorial ambitions in Europe that the Japanese probably promised not to oppose or hinder in return for Italy not hindering Japanese expansionism in East Asia.


Lou Tseng-Tsiang later recounted how the Chinese had to confront these secret agreements despite joining the war on the Allied side:

La Chine se rangea parmi les Alliés. Mais lorsqu’elle fit valoir ses justes droits, elle se heurta à une entente secrète, en vertu de laquelle la France, l’Angleterre et l’Italie, en contrepartie de la collaboration du Japon dans cette Première Guerre mondiale, s’étaient engagées vis-à-vis de celui-ci à ne pas soutenir les revendications chinoises.³⁰⁵

China had even taken the risk of providing laborers to the Allies while still technically a neutral country. When the Chinese delegates attempted to press China’s claims before the Great Powers, they confronted the reality of the secret agreements between the various Allied powers. In exchange for Japan joining war on the Allied side, France, England and Italy had committed not to support Chinese attempts to seek redress for China’s grievances, particularly against Japan.

The Chinese struggle was further jeopardized by secret agreements the Beijing government had concluded with Japan in September 1918, agreements that even the Chinese plenipotentiary delegates at Versailles were apparently unaware of until January 1919, when they were already in Paris.³⁰⁶ The Chinese government agreed to Japanese proposals concerning Shandong, such as the stationing of Japanese troops along the Shandong railway line, in return for the advance of a 20 million yen loan for extensions of the Shandong railway.³⁰⁷ It was not just the European powers who had betrayed Chinese hopes, but China’s own government in Beijing through secret dealings with the Japanese.

While the Americans were initially sympathetic to the Chinese cause, with the revelations of the September 1918 secret agreements between China and Japan

³⁰⁵ Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 67.
³⁰⁶ Elleman, Wilson and China, 41 – 43.
³⁰⁷ Scott, Shantung, 91 - 94.
concerning Shandong, the American delegation had to reevaluate its support of the Chinese, especially since China had entered into the 1918 agreements willingly. Wilson himself faced a dilemma. Italy had walked out of the conference as Fiume had been awarded to the Croats, thus disappointing the ambitions of Italian irredentism.\textsuperscript{308} Italian frustrations with the peace settlement ultimately help push Italy along the road to fascism and war.

The Japanese meanwhile had already seen their proposal for a racial equality clause in the covenant of the League of Nations defeated, thereby revealing the hypocrisy of the Western powers, including the USA. With Italy gone, Wilson could not risk having the Japanese withdraw their support of the League of Nations as well. In the end, a bargain of sorts was struck as Japanese claims in Shandong were recognized, and Japan would not vote against the League of Nations, despite their proposal for racial equality being rejected.\textsuperscript{309}

The creation of the League of Nations was therefore supposed to be President Wilson’s great achievement at Versailles in 1919, having been outmaneuvered by the European powers on most other issues. Ironically, the Shandong question would be one of the issues seized upon by American opponents of the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations who criticized the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference. The U.S Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, and Wilson broke himself trying to defend his idea to his compatriots.\textsuperscript{310}

\textsuperscript{309} Ibid., 336 – 338.
\textsuperscript{310} Ibid., 343 – 344.
Disillusionment with such diplomatic bargaining may have contributed to Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s moving away from professional diplomacy. During the peace conference itself, the myriad and complex double-dealings and secret treaties, and the pressure from Chinese communities worldwide not to sign the peace treaty were a source of great stress for Lou. While he did not reveal his inner turmoil during the lead-up to the signature ceremony of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919 to his colleagues or in his autobiography, he confided in his wife.

The strain seems to take taken a physical toll on Lou Tseng-Tsiang, as was the case during past trying incidents in his life. There would however be no rest to be found in Versailles in 1919:

> Ce qui s’est passé le 27 dans le nuit et le 28 dans la matinée, dans le salon et le jardin de l’Établissement et enfin dans ma chambre de malade, même à mon chevet, a été comique et tragique au plus haut point de la vie humaine. Jamais je n’ai eu tant de gardes d’honneur; comme s’il s’agissait d’un enterrement d’un haut personnage...

Lou likened the atmosphere at his sick bed to that of a funeral. He compared those gathered by his bedside awaiting his decision concerning the treaty, to a guard of honor attending the burial of a dignitary. In such a difficult and lonely time, the only one Lou could really trust was his wife, to whom he wrote a letter.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang ultimately decided not to sign the treaty. In the immediate aftermath of the Chinese refusal to sign the treaty, Lou was bitter about all that had transpired and shared his bitterness with his wife:

> Cette date et cette heure seront-elles heureuses ou malheureuses pour la Chine? L’avenir le dira (...), ... Voilà tant de mois d’espoir et tant

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Lou seemed disgruntled that long months of hope and labor had finally culminated in China’s absence from the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. In the moment, Lou was not certain what China’s absence from this crescendo of the concert of civilized nations could portend for China. Only the future would tell if this was a good or evil moment for China.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s frustration was compounded by the fact that in the end the decision to refuse the signature of the Treaty of Versailles was made by himself and his fellow Chinese diplomats. They were all schooled in international affairs, spoke foreign languages, and had been educated in either Europe or America:

Enfin, le mal est fait: ce qui est désolant et décourageant, il est fait par des hommes connaissant l’Europe et les affaires internationales, car les membres de la délégation malgré tout parlent toutes une langue étrangère, sont tous élevés en Europe ou en Amérique et sont certainement supérieurs à ces vieux chinois de Pékin conservateurs et ignorant complètement l’étranger et les affaires étrangères.\(^{313}\)

Lou felt that given their qualifications, they were superior to the Chinese crowds in Beijing, who supposedly lacked understanding of foreigners and foreign affairs yet had clamored for the Chinese delegation not to sign the Treaty of Versailles. Lou seemed bitter about the delegation having succumbed to popular pressure. Lou would eventually revise his opinion, especially once it became clear that not signing the treaty did not leave China worse off, and it raised Lou’s standing in the eyes of his compatriots.

\(^{312}\) Ibid., 233.

\(^{313}\) Ibid.
The trials of the Paris Peace Conference brought to the fore frustrations that had been building up in Lou for some time. He confessed to his wife his weariness of diplomacy and his desire to retire from diplomatic service:

\[
\textit{Je suis plus que jamais décidé à quitter ma carrière qui m’a fait jusqu’à présent ma réputation et coûtera plus tard trop cher pour que j’y reste.}^{314} \ldots \text{D’ailleurs, ma santé le réclame et me l’impose. Même avec une santé robuste, pourquoi servir et se sacrifier pour un gouvernement impuissant à vous défendre au cas de danger.}^{315}
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Lou noted that even though he had made his reputation through a diplomatic career, the time had come for him to go. Staying would likely cost him dearly in future. As it was, his health was feeling the strain of the work. But Lou claimed that even if he had been in good health, he no longer wanted to serve and sacrifice himself for a government that was incapable of defending him in times of danger and trouble. Such language reveals the depth of Lou’s disillusionment with diplomacy at the time.

Shortly after returning to China, Lou Tseng-Tsiang resigned as foreign minister, leaving the ministry that he had helped to build up. He never held that portfolio again. Lou cited several reasons for his resignation from the portfolio, namely the persistent enmity of foreigners that he consistently had to confront, “L’inimité persistante de l’étranger, à qui je n’avais eu cesse de tenir tête,” the lack of government support for him, “le défaut de soutien du gouvernement,” and the absence on the part of the government of a vision and the lack of a persistent and coordinated action plan for national renewal and reconstitution, “et l’absence chez lui

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314 Ibid.
d’une vue supérieure et d’une action persistante et coordonnée dans le but de réno

et de reconstituer les forces de la nation.”

Lou Tseng-Tsiang later wrote that he believed it was pointless for him to
remain at the helm of the ministry of foreign affairs, and continue to be held
responsible, by his country and by history, for the whole series of mistakes that had
been committed:

… qu’il était inutile pour moi de rester davantage à la barre du

département des Affaires étrangères et de continuer à être rendu

responsable, en face de mon pays et en face de l’histoire, de cette

accumulation de mécomptes…

His resignation was effective from December 1920. Lou also later claimed that it was
the first stage in his secret desire to renounce the political life to pursue other callings
“elle était la première étape de mon secret désir de renoncer à la vie politique.”

Lou Tseng-Tsiang would have some final acts as foreign minister before his
final resignation. After he resigned as foreign minister, he did not immediately end
his career of public service. He accepted a position as vice-director of the Famine
Relief Bureau, which gave him the chance to come to know the hardships of the
common folk of China, whose lives were so different from his own:

J’acceptai la fonction de vice-directeur du Bureau de secours aux

affamés. Les documents que j’eus dans les mains me montrèrent, ... ce

que devient le people d’un grand pays lorsque, pendant une longue

période, les gouvernants manquent à leur devoir.

Lou’s work with the bureau made it painfully clear to him, how the people of a once
great land suffered due to their leaders long neglect of their duty. The duty to which

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316 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 70.
317 Ibid.
318 Ibid.
319 Ibid.
Lou referred was most likely the duty of an ideal Confucian scholar-official to ensure the peace and harmony of the country and society, and maintain the welfare of the people.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang would eventually leave China for Switzerland in 1922, as his wife’s declining health necessitated a stay in Europe. He may not have known it then, but his move to Switzerland, where he owned a villa in Locarno, would be his definitive departure from China. Lou would not see his beloved Zuguo or “land of his ancestors” again. He ended up taking one last diplomatic position as Chinese ambassador to Switzerland, but he was already on the path to leaving his diplomatic vocation and following a different calling. Lou finally made the choice to leave China and eventually the diplomatic world, even though when he first returned from the Paris Peace Conference, he was acclaimed as a heroic diplomat by the Chinese people for having rejected the Treaty of Versailles, and seemed to be at the pinnacle of his public service career.

320 “祖国”
Chapter Five

A Departure Without Return

After Lou Tseng-Tsiang returned to China from the Paris Peace Conference, he began the last stage of his public service and diplomatic career. After some final public acts as foreign minister, he resigned definitively from the ministry he had renewed. Over the subsequent decades of the Republican Period, the Chinese ministry of foreign affairs continued to retain its prestige and attract some of the best talent in China to join its ranks. These diplomats would also begin the process of repealing the unequal treaties with the foreign powers.

After serving for a time with the Bureau for Famine Relief, as discussed previously, circumstances compelled Lou Tseng-Tsiang to leave China in 1922. He did not know then to what future exactly this departure would lead him, nor did he

realize that he would never return to China again. Lou left China for Europe, where he would find solace.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s first refuge was the villa he owned in Switzerland. The photograph above shows Lou dressed in a suit, standing in the manicured backyard of his European villa. Lou appeared to look just like a European gentleman in the garden of his bourgeois holiday home. While there is little about the villa’s external appearance that is Chinese, its interior reveals a syncretic side of Lou that appreciated both Western and Eastern culture.

Moreover, while owning a holiday home in Switzerland might seem like the pinnacle of Lou’s Europeanization, it was not. In time, he would seek another refuge, and continue his Europeanization in a more profound, spiritual manner, in line with the instruction of his “maître” Xu Jingcheng. Crucially, Lou Tseng-Tsiang left China to seek refuge in Europe, during the period when his popularity amongst the Chinese masses was probably at its peak.

The Whole Country Declared Itself With Me

When Lou Tseng-Tsiang returned to Shanghai, his home city, after the long wearying months at the Paris Peace Conference, he was greeted by cheering crowds. Lou later recounted his initial triumphal return:

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\textit{Lors de ma rentrée de Chine, vers la fin de 1919, à Shanghai, à la descente du bateau, et dans toutes les gares où mon train devait s’arrêter, de vastes manifestations populaires, ovationnant celui qui avait refuser de signer ...}^{322}
\]

He felt pride in the moment, and perhaps there may have been echoes of the elation he felt when he first returned to China to serve as foreign minister at the

\[^{322}\text{Ibid., 39.}\]
establishment of the Republic. The cheering crowds gathered along the Shanghai waterfront and in the train stations must have been quite a sight.

However, in his account Lou Tseng-Tsiang omitted the fact that not everyone gathered that day was hailing him as a hero. There were about a thousand who waved banners and called him “traitor” whilst distributing leaflets denouncing him for failing to deliver on the “hopes of citizens” for the recovery of Qingdao and the redress of other violations to Chinese sovereignty.\(^{323}\)

By that point in his career, Lou Tseng-Tsiang had experienced the vicissitudes of the masses and of public opinion. He was condemned as a traitor for signing one treaty and acclaimed as a hero for rejecting another treaty. Later as a monk, Lou would have had to reflect on the Holy Week and Passion narratives in the Gospels, on the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and his shameful death a week later, abandoned and alone. Such meditations may have helped Lou come to terms with his past experiences, including the occasions when he felt alone as a diplomat.

Upon his return to China, Lou Tseng-Tsiang also paid a visit to the “Holy Land” of the Chinese people and civilization in Shandong province. He visited the tomb of Confucius in Qufu, and there laid a palm at the tomb of the Sage of China in the name of the Chinese delegation to the Paris Peace Conference that had strived so hard for the return of Shandong in all its integrity to China. Such a public act demonstrated Lou’s profound attachment to the Confucian tradition and its virtues:

\[
\text{Au retour dans sa patrie, après avoir protesté contre le traité de Versailles qui prétendait arracher le Chantong (Shandong) à la Chine,}\]

At the peace conference, the Chinese delegates had likened Shandong to the “Holy Land” of the Chinese people, as it was the birthplace of the two great Sages, Confucius and Mencius.

The historic significance of Shandong was one reason why the Chinese delegates fought so hard for the return of the German concessions in that province. The quoted report also highlighted how the tomb of Confucius, and the nearby Mount Tai had attracted generations of devoted pilgrims:

... Là-bas, en un coin de la montagne du Taichan vouée au culte des pèlerins fidèles, cette palme symbolisera la foi toujours vivace dans l’avenir du pays, l’attachement indéstructible au sol sacré.\(^{325}\)

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s gesture made him part of this tradition of Confucian devotion. The report also claimed that the deposition of the palm symbolized the Chinese people’s faith in the future of their country, and their continued profound attachment to their homeland, which was a religious-like devotion to holy ground. Hence, Lou’s act of devotion could be interpreted as both a sign of devotion to tradition, and a gesture of faith and hope for the future of China. Lou’s reverence for Confucianism and Confucian values meanwhile manifested themselves as well in personal acts of devotion.

**Action That Revealed His Deepest Sensibilities**

In 1920, the same year of his resignation from the foreign ministry, Lou Tseng-Tsiang had a chance to express his deepest sensibilities concerning

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\(^{325}\) Ibid.
Confucianism as well as Christianity through a personal gesture of reverence for the deceased members of his family:

\[ J\text{’acquis, aux portes de Pékin, ... un terrain d’environ un demi-hectare, en face du cimetière catholique de Chala, ... au centre duquel je fis construire une chapelle dont la crypte fut disposée pour recueillir les dépouilles mortelles de ma grand’mère paternelle et de mes vénérés père et mère.} \]

Lou had been marked deeply by the early loss of his mother, and he had been absent from his father’s deathbed due to his duty to his country. Years after the deaths of his parents, Lou was finally able to honor them, as well as his paternal grandmother, through a grand act of filial piety. He purchased a plot of land facing the Jesuit cemetery of Zhalan (Chala) in Beijing, where he constructed a chapel with a crypt to hold the remains of his family. He and his wife also intended their final resting place to be within the compound.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang chose to orientate his family mausoleum complex to face the tombs of the great Jesuit missionaries, Matteo Ricci, Adam Shall and Ferdinand Verbiest, who were laid to rest within the cemetery at Zhalan. The Jesuit missionaries had a profound admiration for Chinese civilization and culture, as well as a sophisticated appreciation for Confucianism, which they believed did not contradict with Catholicism. Lou claimed that his gesture demonstrated his own personal convictions about Confucianism and Christianity:

\[ L’entrée principale du jardin fut orientée de manière à faire face aux tombes glorieuses des révérends pères Matteo Ricci, Adam Shall et Ferdinand Verbiest, inhumés à Chala. Le choix de ce lieu de sépulture et sa disposition expriment par eux-mêmes toute ma pensée.\]

\[326\] Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 89.
\[327\] Ibid.
Lou thought that his Confucian and Catholic beliefs were compatible and perhaps even harmonized with each other. Lou attempted to illustrate this point physically through the orientation of the Lou family mausoleum. Lou would continue to reflect on the idea of the compatibility of Confucianism and Catholicism later in life.

On November 14, 1920, the remains of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s parents and his maternal grandmother were solemnly transferred to the completed family crypt. A copy of the photo of the ceremony can be found in the archives of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. The photo itself reveals a synthesis of Western and Chinese elements.

The ceremony proper was rooted in the Confucian tradition of filial piety. The grand vessels used to transport the remains were made and decorated in Chinese style. The ceremony was however accompanied by a Western style brass band. The musicians were dressed in trim buttoned down shirts and trousers. They were not clanging Chinese gongs but were playing Western brass music instruments. The

\[328 \cite{Ibid.}\]
combination of aesthetic styles reflected Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s own appreciation of both Europe and China.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself appeared close to the center of the photograph dressed in a Western style coat and leather shoes. Lou was surrounded by other men who were dressed similarly, with some who also wore ties and who even appeared to be holding top hats in their hands. These men could have been Lou’s Westernized colleagues from the foreign ministry. They were at the forefront of Chinese modernization, yet they continued to value filial piety, an integral virtue in the Confucian tradition. Beside these Westernized Chinese men were however some other men dressed in more traditional Chinese style robes. The presence of both modernizers and traditionalists in the crowd demonstrated the state of flux of Chinese society at the time.

The compound toward which these men were headed also reflected a combination of Chinese and Western sensibilities. The construction of the family mausoleum complex was a noble act of filial piety on the part of Lou Tseng-Tsiang. The compound and the chapel that housed the crypt were however constructed in Western style. In an interview with Lokuang, Lou revealed that this was because his father apparently was fond of Western style buildings.\(^\text{329}\) Having lived in Shanghai, the Lous were exposed to many magnificent examples of Western architecture. Perhaps in his youth, Lou and his father may have spent time walking along the banks of the Huangpu River, admiring the splendor of the Shanghai Bund.

Fortunately, some vestiges of this compound that represented a synthesis of the West and China survived the tumults of 20th century Chinese history, but not without damage and scars. The most recent Chinese biography of Lou Tseng-Tsiang provides a rough account of the fate of the Lou family cemetery and the adjacent Jesuit cemetery. After the Communist takeover of China, the land for the cemeteries was appropriated by the state. A Communist party school was constructed on the property of the Jesuit cemetery. The Lou cemetery compound meanwhile fell into disrepair because of neglect. The ornaments within were most likely stolen.\(^\text{330}\)

The most serious depredations occurred during the Cultural Revolution. In the madness and fury of the revolutionary spirit, the Lou family cemetery was seen as a prime symbol of “counter-revolutionary” and “feudal” ideology. The cross, the epitaphs, the photos, the coffins, etc. were all ransacked and destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. The structure of the stone chapel itself that housed the crypt however survived. In the years after the Cultural Revolution, the building was used as a warehouse.\(^\text{331}\)

It was only in 2001 that the city of Beijing recognized the building as a historical site worthy of protection. The Chinese historians expressed the hope that the remains of the cemetery can be preserved, recognizing that it was a rare architectural representation of synthesis of China and the West; of Catholic and Confucian devotion.\(^\text{332}\)


\(^{331}\) Ibid.

\(^{332}\) Ibid.
Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself may however believe that the preservation of the compound itself is meaningless if the Chinese people are not allowed the freedom to live and practice their beliefs, including Catholicism if they so choose. Without a living tradition and faith milieu to nourish it, the preserved compound will be like dry bones of stone from a time long past, a mere curiosity for passers-by. Their message and their lessons would not be allowed to resonate. While the lessons of the preserved Lou family chapel and crypt may not yet fully resonate with Chinese visitors, the Chinese delegates to the Paris Peace Conference and those accompanying them learned some profound lessons while in Europe in 1919 and they carried these lessons home with them to China.

**The Lessons of Europe**

The various Chinese delegates and sojourners in Paris in 1919 each brought back to China their own interpretation of all that they had seen and experienced in Europe. One of the prominent Chinese visitors to Paris at the time of the peace conference was Liang Qichao. Liang had been a student of Kang Youwei, whose ideas on *Datong* were previously mentioned. Liang had also been suggested as a possible leader of the Chinese delegation by those opposed to Lou Tseng-Tsiang.

While in France, Liang Qichao took the opportunity to visit Verdun. The visit was a powerful experience for him:

> We exited the city, and walked in the vicinity in a line. However we saw that the whole area was scorched and barren, with not a blade of grass in sight. Here and there were craters and holes. The landscape resembled the pockmarked head of a monk with scabies. … If one asks when this land can be restored to its original condition, I’m afraid even twenty or thirty years will not be enough.\(^\text{333}\)

\(^\text{333}\) Translation of “我们出了市街，便循一带冈峦而行，但见满地焦枯，连一根草也没有，这里
Upon visiting the cratered and devastated landscape of Verdun after the war, which he vividly described in the passage quoted above, Liang Qichao exclaimed in despair that the development of science had allowed men to behave like wild beasts committing this destruction of life and earth. He wondered if twenty or thirty years on, the land would regain its original form.

Liang Qichao lamented that all about him at Verdun was death; the sounds, the sky and heaven, the earth, they were all dead. He pondered the sobering implications of what he had seen, noting that if this was what brilliant culture and civilization brought, then the more he thought about it the more chilled he felt.

Those were amongst the lessons Liang brought home with him after his journey to Europe in 1919 on the occasion of the Paris Peace Conference. As to Liang Qichao’s question, well nigh a century on, the trees and grass have grown back at Verdun, but the landscape remains scarred with craters; a picturesque region of rolling hills remains a giant lieu de mémoire of humanity’s brutality and destructiveness.

Another of the prominent Chinese who had travelled to Paris in 1918 was Ye Gongchuo, who had travelled to Europe to study its industry, especially railroads. During the war, Ye had worked with Liang Shiyi to devise the previously discussed plan for China to send workers to help the Allied cause.

From Liang Qichao, Liang Qichao Youji: Ouyou Xinying Lu, Xin Dalu Youji (Beijing: Dongfang Chubanshe, 2006), 161 – 162.

334 “我但觉得四周围色是死的，声是死的，天是死的，地是死的.” From Ibid.

335 “现在所谓光华烂漫的文明，究竟将来作何结果，越想越令人不寒而栗.” From Ibid.

Ye apparently returned from Europe infatuated with the idea of Sino-foreign co-
operation, both to obtain capital and technical workers. His great find was to discover
the French mathematician and statesman, Paul Painlevé and bring him to China to
work as a Senior Advisor of Chinese railways. According to the quoted report,
Ye’s idea of Sino-western cooperation seemed more focused on technical and
material aspects and did not seem to consider the humanistic dimension of Sino-
western cooperation that Lou Tseng-Tsiang would later come to emphasize.

Liang Qichao meanwhile came back from Europe with the notion that the
Chinese should not simply imitate European models of development:

S.E.M. Liang Ki-tchao, … est rentré avec l’idée que la Civilisation
Chinoise et la Civilisation Occidentale étaient à deux pôles
diamentralement opposes, et que l’imitation servile des méthodes
occidentales, dans l’œuvre d’établissement de la République en ce
pays, était une erreur et la cause principale de tous les troubles internes
dont la Chine avait souffert depuis la Révolution de 1911.

Given what Liang had seen of the horrific results of European progress that had
culminated in total war, it comes as no surprise that he would be skeptical of the
assumed universal efficacy of Western models of development that were thought to
lead to assured progress wherever they were implemented. Liang is reported to have
thought that the servile imitation of Western methods in the establishment of the
Republic of China had been an error and was the principle cause of all of China’s

Président de la République de Chine,” La Politique de Pékin, 1921, 7.
338 Ibid.
339 Ibid.
problems since the Xinhai Revolution of 1911. This may have been a critique of those like Lou Tseng-Tsiang who reformed Chinese government institutions according to Western models.

The cited article even suggested that Liang Qichao developed the view that Western and Chinese civilization were diametrically opposed. Such a conception from Liang was contrary to the syncretistic ideas that Lou Tseng-Tsiang would increasingly propound later in life. While Lou thought that Western and Chinese civilization were different, he also believed they were both similar in having humanistic cores. Both Westerners and Chinese had much to learn from each other and could benefit from engaging the varying humanistic foundations of the other’s civilization. When Lou first returned from the Paris Peace Conference however his focus was not yet on facilitating humanistic encounters between China and the West.

“Aide-toi, le Ciel t’aidera”

Lou Tseng-Tsiang came home from Europe with the view that it was imperative to cultivate amongst the Chinese people, a sense of patriotism, or attachment to their patrie. It was only by doing so that China could be saved, or so Lou Tseng-Tsiang thought at the time:

Quant à S.E.M. Lou Tseng-tsiang, il est surtout revenue de là-bas, avec l’impression nette qu’il fallait à tout prix développer chez le peuple le sentiment patriotique. C’est là, dans le culte pieux de cet idéal, qu’il a vu le salut de la Chine.\textsuperscript{340}

Lou was arguably a Chinese patriot to the end of his life and continued to reflect on patriotism. Even as a monk he would describe the 17\textsuperscript{th} century Chinese convert to Catholicism, Paul Xu Guangqi as a patriot.

\textsuperscript{340} Ibid.
After his return from the Paris Peace Conference, Lou Tseng-Tsiang took active steps to promote patriotism, believing that it was imperative to implant modern symbols of the *patrie*, such as the national flag and national anthem within the hearts of the masses. Lou even came up with the idea of mass distribution of recordings of patriotic songs such as the national anthem and the Chinese workers song to cultivate patriotism:

Il (Lou Tseng-Tsiang) a senti, au surplus, qu’il fallait ne rien négliger pour implanter au coeur des masses tout ce qui rappelle le symbole de la patrie – … Et il a eu cette bonne idée, … de faire enregistrer en un disque, … l’Hymne chinois d’un côté, et le Chant des Travailleurs Chinois de l’autre, et de faire l’acquisition d’un nombre considérable d’exemplaires, afin que leur diffusion pût servir à l’éducation des masses.341

Lou Tseng-Tsiang undertook such actions even though the notion of attachment to a national *patrie* was a relatively new one for many Chinese of the time. The novelty of patriotism made the education of the masses especially important.

The Chinese have a traditional conception of loving one’s country, the land of one’s ancestors. This idea is known by the term “*Aiguo*.”342 The Chinese Confucian scholar-officials or military generals who remained dutiful and loyal to their country, even in the face of treachery or exile, did so because of “*Aiguo*.”343 The concept of a national homeland or a *patrie* that one should love was however a new one inspired by European nationalism.

At the time of publication of the cited article from *La Politique de Pékin*, the writers and editors of the weekly, who were likely French expatriates themselves,

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341 Ibid., 8 – 9.
342 “爱国” (*Aiguo*)
343 The historical stories of Quyuan and Yuefei epitomize and idealize respectively, the figures of the scholar-official and the general who died for their country because of *Aiguo*.  

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were influenced in their understanding of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s actions by the French statist and nationalist tradition and the cult of *la Patrie*. Lou himself may have been influenced by this tradition during his school years at the Shanghai School of Foreign Languages, where he was taught by French teachers.

Having served many years as a diplomat in Europe, Lou Tseng-Tsiang would have witnessed first hand how various European countries emulated the French model, and also inculcated nationalism and patriotism amongst their citizens with the use of national symbols and mass national education. By the time the cited report was published, both Britain and France had constructed tombs for unknown soldiers, monuments to the anonymous thousands who had sacrificed their lives for their respective *patries*.

It may well be true that at that point in time, Lou felt that it was necessary to cultivate Chinese patriotism for the sake of Chinese national salvation. However, by his later years Lou realized that patriotism alone would not be enough to save China, as China’s malaise was more profound than just a simple lack of patriotism amongst the people. His subsequent reflections on humanism would also have universalistic dimensions.

There also seems to have been an exchange between Liang Qichao and Lou Tseng-Tsiang through published articles after both men had returned from the Paris Peace Conference:

\[
\text{M. Liang Ki-tchao a dans une série d’articles d’un grand intérêt, développé surtout ce proverbe français: “Aide-toi, le Ciel t’aidera”, pour montrer que la Chine ne doit pas se contenter d’implorer la justice des autres Puissances et qu’elle doit aussi travailler à son propre relèvement.}^{344}
\]

\[^{344}\text{Ibid., 8.}\]
Liang’s articles were probably a critique of the Chinese delegation that had implored the Great Powers for justice at Versailles. In line with the notion that Heaven helps those who help themselves, Liang thought that China must also work for its own recovery and restoration. China could not rely on the Great Powers alone to do it justice.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote in reply to Liang Qichao, emphasizing the importance of patriotism and that every citizen had to play their part:

M. Lou Tseng-tsiang lui a donné une vibrante réplique dans l’admirable Rapport qu’il a adressé. … « … Serions-nous vraiment moins patriotes que les peuples des Etats Occidentaux ? Le devoir incombe à chacun de montrer son dévouement envers la patrie. Tous nous devons aspirer à ce sentiment si noble qui pousse à sacrifier la famille à L’Etat.  

Lou believed that the Chinese were not any less patriotic than Westerners. Hence it was incumbent on all Chinese to show their devotion towards the patrie. The rich should contribute funds, and the poor the labor of their hands, “Les riches fournissent les fonds, les pauvres le travail de leurs bras”.  

Significantly, Lou is reported to have argued that all Chinese should aspire to be so patriotic as to sacrifice the family for the sake of the state. He was perhaps suggesting that they should emulate his example, as one who put aside his filial duty to his father in order to serve his country and people. Lou seemed to claim that the service of the public was a noble act superior even to service towards one’s family, which challenged traditional Confucian understandings of the hierarchy of duties.

345 Ibid.
346 Ibid.
Lou Tseng-Tsiang, having experienced first hand foreign disregard for China and disdain for the Chinese, called for a restoration of China’s position in the eyes of the world. He emphasized that all citizens had to play their part in this reawakening of China, and it was not just the government’s responsibility:

"Chaque citoyen a sa part de responsabilité ; le Gouvernement ne saurait être seul responsable. Etonnons le monde par notre réveil. Suscitons son admiration et, du coup, la position internationale de notre pays sera relevée aux yeux de tous » …"\(^{347}\)

Lou Tseng-Tsiang wanted the world to be astonished by the Chinese awakening. He felt that by gaining the world’s admiration, China’s international position would be raised in the eyes of all.

Then contemporary accounts thus reveal that after returning from the Paris Peace Conference, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was still a man in the public spotlight. He resigned as foreign minister in 1920, and turned down a plum diplomatic posting as principal Chinese delegate to the League of Nations. He was eventually appointed as a Chief Advisor to the President in 1921.\(^{348}\) He himself recounted that his last public role was as vice-director of the Famine Relief Bureau.\(^{349}\) By then, he had grown weary of close to a decade of his career that had enmeshed him in politics, contrary to the wishes of his father all those years ago. In 1922, Lou left China for what turned out to be the last time, to devote his time and energy to other vocations.

**Never Seeing The Homeland Again**

Lou Tseng-Tsiang left China for Europe in 1922 due to the declining health of his wife. The Lous owned a villa in Locarno on the shores of Lake Maggiore:

\(^{347}\) Ibid.

\(^{348}\) Ibid., 1.

\(^{349}\) Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 70.
En 1922, je quittai la Chine. L'état de santé de ma femme demandait un séjour en Europe. Nous décidâmes de nous installer en Suisse, où nous possédions une petite propriété sur les bords du Lac Majeur.\footnote{Ibid., 70 – 71.}

The alpine climate in Switzerland was supposed to be more conducive to the health and recovery of Madame Lou. Lou Tseng-Tsiang did not know at the time that this was a definitive departure from China. He also did not know where the future would lead him.

Moreover, the Lous were not originally intending to leave China. They did plan to seek a refuge somewhere, but Lou Tseng-Tsiang had envisioned the construction of a villa on the grounds of the Lou family cemetery:

Je me réservais de construire, ultérieurement, sur la seconde moitié de la propriété, une villa, où ma femme et moi projétions de terminer nos jours. Cette villa, je l’avais, par avance, appelée « Mou Lou : cabane de vénération », cabane, où j’allais vivre dans un sentiment de reconnaissance de tout ce que j’avais reçu de Dieu par mes parents et, en premier lieu, du bienfait de la vie et de l’éducation, que chacun doit à ses père et mère.\footnote{Ibid., 89.}

The construction of “Mou Lou”, or “Cabin of Veneration” would have been another act of filial piety by Lou Tseng-Tsiang. Lou had planned to live there in a spirit of gratitude for all the blessings God had given him through his parents, especially for the gift of life and his education. In practical terms, living in “Mou Lou” would also allow him to attend to his parents’ graves.

Ultimately, “Mou Lou” was not constructed because Lou Tseng-Tsiang became a monk in an abbey in Belgium. Lou later reflected on this as a monk:

\textit{Je ne me doutais guère que la providence allait disposer tout autrement de mon avenir et qu’elle allait transporter mon « Mou}
While Lou was not physically beside his family graves, they were not far from his heart. He was not able to personally clean or maintain the graves, but as a monk, he would have been able to pray and offer up masses daily for the souls of his parents. He may have believed that doing so was a better way of expressing his gratitude to his parents than merely physically maintaining their graves.

Significantly, Lou Tseng-Tsiang recounted that his wife agreed to the plan to construct “Mou Lou.” This would have been a sign of filial piety on her part towards her in-laws. She also would have accepted to die and be buried far from her own patrie. This plan of Lou’s was not realized, but he had another place of refuge, his villa in Switzerland, where he and his wife moved in 1922.

**Villa Ida**

Switzerland had long been a country of refuge for Lou Tseng-Tsiang. By his own account, Lou’s health was frail, and the stresses of his diplomatic work exacerbated this. Even while serving as a diplomat for China, he had spent some summers in Switzerland, which he saw as a place of rest where he could recuperate. He later hoped that his wife could recuperate in Switzerland:

> En 1922 ... la santé de ma femme laissant à désirer, nous décidâmes de partir pour l’Europe et de nous installer sur les bords du Lac Majeur, dans notre villa de Locarno. Pendant mon séjour à La Haye, j’avais, en 1908, acheté ce pied à terre si agréable et, tous les ans, pour autant que les circonstances le permettaient, nous allions y passer un mois.  

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352 Ibid., 89.
353 Ibid.
Lou and his wife had decided that since they were spending time in Switzerland, it made more sense to purchase a small villa of their own. Hence they purchased a villa in Locarno in 1908, while Lou was serving as an ambassador to the Netherlands stationed in The Hague. When circumstances permitted, the Lous spent a month on holiday at the villa every year. Lou’s choice of vacation spot was another stage in his Europeanization as his mentor Xu Jingcheng had instructed him.

After buying the villa, Lou Tseng-Tsiang and his wife decided to name it. According to Western practice, villas were named after a wife, but Lou pointed out that in Asian custom, a mother took precedence over a wife. However naming the villa after his own mother might pose practical difficulty for locals unfamiliar with Chinese names, so it was decided to name the villa after Berthe’s mother instead, Ida:

According to foreign custom, villas often bear the name of a wife. However in Chinese custom, the mother takes precedence over the wife, and in all affairs the mother should come first. … I (Lou) said to my wife: “… But my mother has a Chinese name, which will be difficult for the locals. In time, we may have trouble with receiving mail and messages. It is better to name the villa after your mother. Someday, if we own a villa in China, then we can name it after my mother.” … Her (Madame Lou’s) mother’s name was Ida. We thus named the villa, Villa Ida.\(^{354}\)

The choice of names reflected the close relationship between Lou Tseng-Tsiang and his wife Berthe’s family. It also revealed that in 1908, Lou had not envisioned spending his retirement in Switzerland.

The naming of the villa also showed that no matter how Europeanized Lou Tseng-Tsiang had become, he still retained his Confucian core and continued to value

\(^{354}\) Translation of “按外国习惯，别墅常用妻子的名字；可是中国习惯，母较妻尊，诸事该让母亲居前，我对太太说：‘…但我母亲的名字，是中国名字，本地人叫不惯，日后于记账通讯多不便，我想还是用你母亲的名字。日后我们若在中国再有一座别墅，便可用我母亲的名字了。’…他母亲名叫益达 (Ida) 我们即呼别墅为“益达别墅” (Villa Ida.)” From Luo Guang, \textit{Lu Zhengxiang ZHUAN} 2\textsuperscript{nd}. ed. (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1967), 63.
filial piety. It is also interesting that Lou Tseng-Tsiang transcribed his mother-in-law’s name using the characters that literally meant “arrival of benefit,” “益达”, signifying perhaps that the villa would bring benefits to his health and also perhaps that marrying Berthe and gaining her family as in-laws had brought many benefits into his life.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s filial piety and Confucian spirit was also reflected in the choice to plant and dedicate five trees in the garden of the villa:

In the garden of the villa, my wife and I (Lou) planted five pine trees in memory of loved ones. On each tree, we hung a commemoration plaque on which was inscribed the name of the tree. We named all the trees a name: “Parents tree,” “Admiring kin tree,” “Master Xu tree,” “Chinese tree,” and “Berthe tree.”

With the planting and dedication of the trees, the transformation of the villa into Lou Tseng Tsiang and his wife’s own private refuge was complete, though even there in the heart of Europe, Lou Tseng-Tsiang displayed his Chinese identity and sensibilities through the choice of name of the villa and the dedication of the trees to his parents, his kin, his mentor Xu Jingcheng, his attachment to Chineseness, and lastly to his wife Berthe.

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355 Translation of “在别墅小院里，我和太太种松树五株。留作纪念。每株树上挂一磁牌，标示树名。我们给每颗松树都定了一个名字：一颗叫“父母树，”一颗叫“慕亲树，”一颗叫“许师树，”一颗叫“中华树”，一颗叫“培德树。”” From Ibid.
The interior of the villa meanwhile revealed Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s synthesis of Western and Chinese tradition. The above photo from the Lou Tseng-Tsiang archives in Sint-Andriesabdij shows how Lou and his wife furnished the sitting room of their villa. There is a combination of Western style furniture and what are most likely Chinese porcelain vases. The statue on the mantelpiece however is the key to understanding the synthesis of East and West in this scene.

After Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s death, his friend, compatriot and fellow Chinese Catholic John Wu gave a eulogy for Lou in February 1949 at the Benedictine Collegio San Anselmo in Rome. The text of Wu’s speech was published as a short booklet entitled *Dom Lou Sa Vie Spirituelle*. Amongst the many insights into Lou that Wu provided, Wu revealed that Lou had commissioned a Master Romagnoli to sculpt a bronze sculpture entitled *Pietas*. This sculpture depicted Aeneas fleeing the sack of Troy, with his father Anchises on his shoulder, and his son Ascanius beside him helping to support Anchises. An image of this sculpture was later inscribed on a
medal Lou struck to commemorate his 1925 Jubilee Year pilgrimage to Rome, and the image of the medal was reproduced in Wu’s booklet.\footnote{Jean Wu Ching-Hioung, Ministre de Chine près le Saint-Siège, \textit{Dom Lou Sa Vie Spirituelle} (Bruges: Desclée De Brouwer, 1949), Appendix.}

The sculpture that appears in the photo above strongly resembles the image in Wu’s booklet. Hence, the sculpture that adorns the mantelpiece of Villa Ida must be \textit{Pietas}, which depicted the Aeneids fleeing the sack of Troy for Rome. Lou Tseng-Tsiang admired Aenias and Ascanius for their filial piety toward Anchises. Thus Lou had a sculpture of them made to decorate his holiday home. Significantly, Lou chose a character that binds Greco-Roman myth to be sculpted as the embodiment of filial piety. This implies that he believed that in both Western and Chinese tradition, one could find an emphasis on filial piety. Filial piety could thus be a virtue that bridges Chinese and Western civilization.

The villa was a retreat for Lou Tseng Tsiang and his wife from the storms and stresses of the world around them. It was also there that he and Madame Lou retired as Lou Tseng-Tsiang winded down his diplomatic career in order to care for his ageing and ailing wife. Lou sold off his villa and most of his possessions upon becoming a monk. What has become of the villa and the sculpture \textit{Pietas} is unknown. Perhaps Villa Ida still stands in a quiet corner of Locarno, while \textit{Pietas} may now adorn the home of an admiring antique collector, who may not be aware of its true significance.

While at Locarno, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was offered the position of Chinese ambassador to France. He turned it down, however, as that would have required him to move to Paris. Given his need for a source of income though, he took up the

\footnote{Jean Wu Ching-Hioung, Ministre de Chine près le Saint-Siège, \textit{Dom Lou Sa Vie Spirituelle} (Bruges: Desclée De Brouwer, 1949), Appendix.}
position of Chinese ambassador to Switzerland, with the embassy based in Berne.\textsuperscript{357}

Switzerland had escaped the destruction of the First World War, and while most of Europe was still recovering from the wounds of the war through the 1920s, Switzerland must have seemed like an idyll. Lou Tseng-Tsiang came to develop friendships with members of the Swiss government, his Chinese diplomatic colleagues in Switzerland, and a number of other Swiss personalities. Lou also appreciated Switzerland’s independence and liberal institutions:

\begin{quote}
... je contractai des relations empreintes de la plus cordiale sympathie avec bien des membres du gouvernement helvétique ... avec plusieurs de mes collègues du Corps Diplomatique et avec nombre de personnalités distinguées de ce beau pays de Suisse, si justement fier de son indépendance nationale et du caractère libéral de ses institutions.\textsuperscript{358}
\end{quote}

Lou would especially cherish the friendships with Mr. Motta, then Swiss foreign minister, and Mr. Musy, then Swiss finance minister, both of whom became close friends with Lou:

\begin{quote}
... j’aime à me rappeler ici plus spécialement M. Motta, ministre des Affaires étrangères et M. Musy, ministre des Finances, qui devinrent des amis très chers.\textsuperscript{359}
\end{quote}

Lou served as ambassador to Switzerland for four years. Nevertheless, during this period, for Lou Tseng-Tsiang personally, his most important vocation was no longer diplomatic, but rather it was his vocation as a married man to his ageing and ailing wife Berthe.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{357} Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, 89 – 90.  \\
\textsuperscript{358} Ibid., 90.  \\
\textsuperscript{359} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
Chapter Six

Two Devotions

A ma femme adorée, Épouse fidèle et irréprochable qui, de la Petrograde à La Haye, de l’Europe en Chine, du climat doux et tempéré aux pays des saisons extrêmes, ne me quitta pas ! Aux heures de maladie, de découragement et d’ennui comme aux jours de joie, tu es toujours là, à côté de moi... 360

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s main focus during his time in Switzerland after 1922 was caring for his wife. He had however been deeply devoted to Madame Lou ever since their marriage in 1899. The French weekly La Politique de Pekin published a personal document that Lou had shared with them as part of their 1921 feature on Lou Tseng-Tsiang. This document provided an insight into the intimacy of Lou’s

relationship with his wife. It was a message Lou had composed for his wife for the feast day of her patron saint, St. Berthe on July 4, 1916. He had used the message to frame a photo-portrait of Berthe. The original message written in red ink and the photo are now exhibited in the Lou Tseng-Tsiang memorial room in Sint-Andriesabdij, a photographic reproduction of which appears above.

This plump, older woman, who was a scion of a Belgian military family, had captivated the boyish, slender Chinese diplomat that was Lou Tseng-Tsiang in St. Petersburg. Her fine clothes reveal her bourgeois status. Yet her marriage to an “oriental” likely transgressed the sensibilities of some of her peers, and it had raised questions on the part of her family. Foreign diplomats, however, had seen her as a gracious hostess, a familiar that helped to bridge the West and China socially. For Lou however, she was so much more.

The quote in the epigram is cited from the message that frames the photo. Lou Tseng-Tsiang had written that his dear wife, a loyal and irreproachable spouse, had accompanied him from St. Petersburg to The Hague, from Europe to China, from lands of temperate climate to lands of extreme seasons. Through it all she had never left him. In times of sickness, discouragements, and trouble, as well as in times of joy she was always by Lou’s side. Lou was trying to emphasize Madame Lou’s qualities as a faithful wife who shared in his life experiences.

The language Lou Tseng-Tsiang used when writing about his wife revealed the depth of feeling he had for her. Some years after the quoted message was written, it would be Lou’s turn to repay his wife for the years of support, encouragement, and
companionship through the ups and downs of his diplomatic and political careers. He never forgot her, and years after her death, he still recalled her in tender terms.

A quotation from the great Tang Dynasty poet Li Shangyin (813 – 858 CE) may best encapsulate Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s relationship with his wife, “Chuncan daosi si fangjing, laju chenghui lei shigan.” This sentence can be rendered as “Only when the silk worm is dead does it cease to spin silk; only when the candle has burned to ashes do the tears of wax begin to dry.” This quotation has traditionally been understood as an expression of undying love. Moreover it illustrates an understanding of love as self-giving. Both the silk worm and the candle give of themselves until they are spent. Likewise, true love requires giving of oneself to one’s beloved until death, as was the case with Lou.

As Lou Tseng-Tsiang gradually withdrew from diplomacy, his main personal focus during his time in Switzerland was his vocation as a married man. In time, he would take up another vocation as a monk, which would allow him to combine two loyalties, or two devotions; to his wife and to his long deceased mentor Xu Jingcheng. It was while caring for his sick wife that Lou began seriously considering the consecrated life.

The Vocation of Marriage

Lou Tseng-Tsiang devoted so much time and energy to caring for Madame Lou while in Switzerland because shortly after the Lous left China for Europe, Madame Lou was struck by a medical congestion from which she would never fully recover:

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361春蚕到死丝方尽，蜡炬成灰泪始干.”
Ma femme fut frappée d’une congestion, et il devint vite évident que sa maladie, qui serait longue, ne permettait plus d’espérer un rétablissement. Dieu défaissait, de sa main bénie, tout ce que nous-mêmes avions, de si longue date, disposé.362

Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself was stoic about this blow, accepting with faith that God could take away what had been previously given. In this sentiment, Lou echoed the initial response of Job upon hearing of the loss of his children and wealth:

Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.363

The parallels between Lou’s and Job’s responses are so striking that perhaps Lou may actually have turned to the Book of Job for wisdom and answers in this time of trial. Nevertheless Lou’s understanding of suffering differed from Job’s.

In Job’s case his suffering despite his righteousness led him to question God’s justice, meanwhile as a Catholic, Lou Tseng-Tsiang had a conception of enduring suffering as a grace:

Les épreuves sont réservées aux amis de Dieu, et ces épreuves sont des grâces.364

As a monk Lou reflected on the various trials of his life - the early loss of his mother, “la mort de ma mère”, his marriage that was boycotted by his superiors and colleagues, “mon mariage « boycotté »”, not being by his father’s deathbed, “le décès de mon père sans que je pusse l’assister”, the execution of Xu Jingcheng, “l’exécution capitale de mon maître,” his childless marriage “mon foyer demeurant

363 Job 1: 21 (Authorized King James Version)
364 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 93 – 94.
sans enfants”, and finally the death of his wife on April 16, 1926, “enfin la dernière épreuve de ma vie privée : la mort de ma femme”.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang eventually recognized that all these sufferings were graces. Even the death of his wife, which was a heavy blow, was accepted as a grace by which God called Madame Lou back to him:

Cette dernière épreuve, elle aussi, si dure qu'elle fût, était encore une grâce, par laquelle Dieu appelait à lui ma compagne de vie.

This was a recognition that was only possible through the deepening of faith Lou experienced as a monk. His understanding of suffering was enriched. He understood that sufferings were meant to be endured, and not something from which one could flee or withdraw. Lou also accepted that all the trials he had endured were part of a larger divine plan to give him the grace to eventually take up a religious vocation.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang saw his main duty during his time in Switzerland as tending to his beloved but ill wife. He was still working as a diplomat who was concerned for an ailing China, but his primary vocation was as a married man caring for his wife:

Mon premier devoir était de rendre quelque peu à ma chère malade tout l’amour et tout le don d’elle-même dans lesquels elle s’était unie à moi, partageant ... les risques et les dangers, qui, au cours de ma carrière publique, s’étaient si souvent multipliés.

Madame Lou had been a steadfast companion and pillar of support through the various trials and challenges of Lou’s career. She had shared in all the risks and dangers with what she reportedly called the courage of a daughter and granddaughter of military officers, “avec un courage de « fille et petite fille d’officiers » - ce sont ses

365 Ibid.
366 Ibid.
367 Ibid., 94.
Lou saw his caring for his wife as being a small measure of giving back to her for all that she had given him through the years of their marriage, including guiding him by example to the Catholic faith.

This personal letter which Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote for his wife’s feast day and later shared with the weekly La Politique de Pekin provided a glimpse of the intimacy between Lou Tseng-Tsiang and his wife, as well as the importance of Madame Lou as a companion and soul mate to Lou. He praised her heart, mind and soul, even calling her his guardian angel:

*Quel hommage te rendrais-je, bon ange gardien? Sinon celui de mon amour, de mon adoration à la grandeur de ton âme, à l’excellence de ton cœur et à la largeur de tes idées.*

Lou wrote that he would have to pay homage to her qualities through his love and adoration for her. He signed off the quoted letter as a loving and loved husband, “*Ton mari aimant et aimé. René.*” René was the name Lou took upon conversion to Catholicism and his address to her revealed the delicate tenderness of his love for his wife. The eventual loss of Madame Lou would hit Lou hard, and he never forgot her.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang tried his best to seek the healing of his wife, even going on a pilgrimage to Rome to seek blessings for her:

*Cependant je tentais tout pour soulager la malade et, si possible, pour obtenir sa guérison. En 1925, je fis, en son nom, un pèlerinage à Rome…*

As a foreign minister, Lou Tseng-Tsiang had gone on a public pilgrimage to the tomb of Confucius in Qufu, Shandong to pay tribute to the sage on behalf of the Chinese

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368 Ibid.  
370 Ibid.  
delegation that had struggled for China at the Paris Peace Conference. Less than a decade after that pilgrimage to Qufu, Lou made another pilgrimage, this time to Rome, the nerve center of Roman Catholicism.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang went on that first pilgrimage as a minister of an ailing China. The deposition of the wreath at the tomb of Confucius was a gesture of faith in Chinese tradition, as well as hope in China’s recovery. It was accompanied by Lou’s efforts to revive his compatriots’ patriotism so that together they could build a strong China. The second pilgrimage was unlike the first. This time, he went to Rome in a personal capacity seeking healing for his ailing wife and perhaps even strength to accept that his wife’s condition was mortal and that he would soon have to let her go.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang was accorded a special privilege to be able to receive blessings for his sick wife from the Pope in person:

... le nonce de Berne, Mgr Maglione, depuis secrétaire d’État de Sa Sainteté, eut l’obligeante bonté de demander pour moi une audience au Souverain Pontife Pie XI. J’abordai intérieurement le Saint Père dans un esprit de piété, vénérant en sa personne le Vicaire de Jésus-Christ. ... Le Pape bénit ma chère malade, à qui j’apportai de la ville éternelle un accroissement de joie, de sérénité et de paix. 372

The Holy See probably recognized Lou’s stature as one of the preeminent Chinese diplomats of his generation, so much so that the former papal nuncio at Berne, and later secretary of state of the Holy See, Mgr. Maglione would arrange for Lou to have a private audience with the Pope. Lou had also tried to establish diplomatic relations between China and the Holy See and his role in those negotiations will be discussed subsequently. Lou likely came to know Mgr. Maglione through diplomatic work in

372 Ibid.
Switzerland, and him obtaining access to the Pope through the favor of Mgr. Maglione is a possible illustration of the power of *Guanxi* at work.

Despite the Papal blessing, Madame Lou still passed away the following year. Nevertheless, the sympathies of the Holy Father were a source of comfort to the devout Catholic couple. Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote that the papal blessing had brought his wife joy, serenity and peace. Lou also greatly appreciated the thoughtfulness of Mgr. Maglione, who personally conferred a final apostolic blessing on Madame Lou as she departed this world, “À l’heure du départ de cette terre, le nonce donna personnellement à ma chère mourante la bénéédiction apostolique.”

Lou’s close ties to the Vatican hierarchy revealed his prominence among Church officials, perhaps even exceeding the expectations of Xu Jingcheng who had merely observed the Christmas liturgies in Rome.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s journey towards the upper echelons of the Catholic hierarchy, and his parallel deepening of faith was a gradual one. His conversion did not occur overnight. The instructions of Xu Jingcheng were a source of inspiration on Lou’s journey of faith. Madame Lou meanwhile also gently guided Lou along the road of faith through the example she set by living a good Christian life.

**The Ear and Visage Dipped In Ink**

When Madame Lou passed away on April 26, 1926, Lou Tseng-Tsiang lost not only a spiritual guide but also a soul mate. According to Lou, the whole household mourned Madame Lou’s passing. Their servants were said to have wept for her as if their own mother had died, “Nos domestiques l’ont pleurée comme les

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373 Ibid.
enfants pleurant leur mère.”\textsuperscript{374} This suggests that Madame Lou was a kind mistress, who was as gracious to her servants as she was to the diplomats she entertained on behalf of her husband. In accordance with Madame Lou’s wishes, she was initially laid to rest in a simple grave marked by a wooden cross in the cemetery of Bremengarden.\textsuperscript{375}

The photo above shows Lou Tseng-Tsiang beside Madame Lou’s simple grave in Bremengarden. Lou was no longer the smartly dressed alert young Chinese diplomat. He was a bearded, weary middle-aged man, heartbroken at the loss of his wife. The many trials of his life, especially this latest loss had taken their toll on him.


\textsuperscript{375} Ibid.
While the grief of losing his soul mate, perhaps the most cherished of his loved ones never really left him, Lou was able to find a source of rejuvenation not long after this photo was taken. As a monk, Lou may have had a taste of the living waters Jesus Christ had promised Christians. Those living waters would reinvigorate Lou for the last phase of his life.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang subsequently had Madame Lou’s remains transferred in June 1927 to the Laeken cemetery in Belgium, which lies adjacent to the tombs of the Belgian royal family. Madame Lou’s grave in the Laeken cemetery was designed by Mr. Volkaert, the same architect who had designed the Lou family crypt in Beijing. The words “Familles Lou-Bovy-Harford ” were inscribed on the grave. The Harfords were another Belgian family linked to the Bovy family by marriage. The tomb was most likely going to be a family tomb, in a prime burial spot in the Belgian capital. Madame Lou was however the only one who was buried here.

While conducting research in Sint-Andriesabdij, I was told that the grave was neglected and covered by overgrown shrubs. A map was drawn to help me locate it within the large cemetery. Surprisingly, the grave was clean when I visited it. Perhaps the grave was cleaned by custodians as part of efforts to spruce up the cemetery as a whole. Or perhaps after years of neglect someone had rediscovered a connection to Madame Lou and wished to pay her respects.

376 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 91.
On Madame Lou’s epitaph written in Classical Chinese, Lou Tseng-Tsiang had inscribed amongst other things, a description of his marriage of 27 years being just like a day. He used a traditional Chinese saying to illustrate the impact of his wife on him:

…二十七年有如一日。予耳濡目染，获益实多。  

27 years are but like a single day. Through your gentle influence, I have obtained many benefits.

Errumuran (耳濡目染) is a traditional Chinese proverb (Chengyu) which means that when one listens to something often enough and sees it often enough, one will eventually be influenced by it. Ruran (濡染) however does not only mean to be influenced, it is also the verb used to refer to the act of dipping one’s brush into ink or paint before writing and painting. The two meanings are interrelated and it is a beautiful image very much rooted in Chinese tradition. Through the years of their

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marriage, Madame Lou exerted a subtle positive influence on Lou, including drawing him to Catholicism.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang rendered Madame Lou’s Chinese epitaph into French himself. He juxtaposed the Chinese and French epitaphs alongside each other on Madame Lou’s grave. Lou’s own rendering of the Chinese quote above appears below:

Durant les 27 années que tu dirigeas notre foyer tu le fis d’une manière si égale et si constante qu’elles paraissent ne former qu’un seul jour de bonheur, tout ce que je t’ai vu faire et entendu dire m’est un exemple et une leçon.  

The difference in length between the two quotations is illustrative of the differences between French and Classical Chinese. It also raises questions about how Lou and his wife navigated the linguistic boundaries between them. The precise concision of Classical Chinese and the Chinese proverb lends the Chinese quote a certain grace and elegance. At the same time, French was the language of love between Lou and his wife. The language of the French quote illustrates once again Lou’s tender affection for his wife, reflecting how he would have written and spoken to her.

One of the domains in which Madame Lou exerted her gentle, beneficent influence on her husband was their faith and religious life. Significantly, Lou Tseng-Tsiang did not convert from Protestantism to Catholicism when he married his Catholic wife in 1899, in the Catholic parish church of St. Catherine in St. Petersburg. The Lous’ marriage was one that had transgressed racial and national boundaries. In an era before the Second Vatican Council, the confessional differences were another boundary that they transgressed.

379 Ibid.
Interestingly, the Lous were married before the parish priest of the Catholic parish church in St. Petersburg, the Dominican Father Lagrange. The Dominicans had a traditional reputation as being the hounds of God, the *domini canes*, who had carried out the Inquisitions of the Catholic Church to stamp out heresies, often ruthlessly. Yet, in this instance a Dominican presided over a marriage between a Catholic woman and a Protestant man.

Madame Lou did not compel her husband to convert upon marriage. Lou Tseng-Tsiang had only promised to raise whatever children the marriage might produce in the Catholic faith:

> *La disposition dans laquelle j’avais promis d’élever nos enfants dans la religion catholique correspondait à un sentiment de respect pour le culte le plus ancien du christianisme... Ma femme n’avait jamais soulevé auprès de moi la question religieuse ; elle s’était bornée à accomplir avec beaucoup de simplicité ses devoirs de conscience.*  

Lou had made the promise even though his wife was 16 years older than him, and their chances of having children of their own were not great given her age at marriage.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s admiration for his wife’s quiet and simple quotidian faith as she fulfilled her daily duty to God was one factor that led Lou to convert on October 25, 1911. Lou was received into the Catholic Church in the same parish church in St. Petersburg where he had been married, and he was welcomed into the Church by the same Father Lagrange who had presided at his wedding. At the same time of this momentous moment in Lou’s religious life, the Xinhai Revolution had

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381 Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 57
broken out in China and aftershocks of that earthquake would reverberate through 20th century China, and some of them had marked Lou too during his return to China.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang later described his reception into the Catholic Church as the closing of the final distance between himself and his wife:

*Lorsque je rentrai à la Légation, avec quelle joie je retrouvai et embrassai ma femme, qui ne s’attendait nullement à ce que, sans autres longues formalités, je l’aurais rejointe, ce jour-là même, dans la religion catholique. La dernière distance qui avait pu exister entre elle et moi avait disparu.*

One can only imagine the joy the Lous must have shared that day as they entered into full communion of faith with each other. There was no grand or elaborate ceremony to organize, nor was there any deep spiritual crisis for Lou to overcome. The Lous were then free to fully participate in the Eucharist together.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang received his first communion soon after his baptism, and was confirmed by the Catholic Archbishop of St. Petersburg on April 5, 1912. One of the effects of the sacrament of Confirmation is to confer on the confirmand “a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the cross.” Lou received this sacrament shortly before he returned to China to begin the *pénible travail* of reforming the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

In 1912, Lou may not have fully realized the implications of his mission as one confirmed into the Catholic Church, but it was a calling he would come to appreciate with time. Lou had been learning about Christianity and the Christian vocation since childhood when he was first exposed to Protestant tracts. Lou

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382 Ibid., 58.
383 Ibid.
continued learning about the Christian faith all his life from various sources and in various ways. His understanding of Christianity and especially Catholicism grew more profound over time.

**A Sure Guide**

Apart from Madame Lou’s gentle influence, Lou Tseng-Tsiang also became increasingly drawn towards Catholicism due to his admiration of the seeming unity within the Catholic Church on various matters:

> Je trouvais dans l’Église catholique l’unité de gouvernement, l’unité de doctrine et l’unité de précepte ; je voyais en elle un guide sûr pour la conscience et un soutien stable pour la société et pour l’État.\(^{385}\)

Having studied the Confucian classics to some degree, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was influenced by the traditional Confucian ideal of a stable, united government. He thus admired the Catholic Church for its unity of government, doctrine and precept, with the magisterium governing church teachings for the global Church and the Pope acknowledged as the leader of the church.

At the same time, the Catholic Church’s universalistic claims were likely to have resonated with Lou Tseng-Tsiang, as Confucianism also had a universalistic dimension to it, as manifested, for example in the ideal of *Datong*, or “Grand Harmony,” which expressed the Confucian vision for a universal family of humanity. As previously discussed, Kang Youwei had developed a modern conception of *Datong* in his *Datongshu* or *Book of Datong*. Kang had called for the abolishment of

\(^{385}\) Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 57
differences among countries, classes, races/ethnicities, genders, families, and wealth levels to eliminate all evils in society.\textsuperscript{386}

Moreover, Lou Tseng-Tsiang saw Catholicism as a moral force and guide not just for the individual conscience, but believed that it could also be a support for society and the state, “\textit{je voyais en elle un guide sûr pour la conscience et un soutien stable pour la société et pour l’État}”.\textsuperscript{387} Given the political, social, economic, and cultural turbulence of China that Lou both witnessed and experienced, unsurprisingly he longed for something that could possibly provide China some measure of stability.\textsuperscript{388} In his time working with the government in Beijing, Lou had thought that cultivating patriotism amongst the Chinese people through the use of patriotic and national symbols might achieve this. As time went by, Lou increasingly began to see Catholicism as the answer.

The development of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s admiration of Catholicism was also influenced by Xu Jingcheng. According to Lou, Xu had been fascinated by the Catholic Church:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Le christianisme, l’Église et, en particulier, l’Église catholique s’étaient imposés à la respectueuse attention de M. Shu. Il avait été frappé par l’existence d’un gouvernement spirituel mondial, dont l’ancienneté remonte jusqu’au fondateur de la religion chrétienne. Pour observer ce fait de plus près, au cours du voyage qui l’amenaient en Europe, il était arrêté à Rome et y avait passé les fêtes de Noël.}\textsuperscript{389}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{387} Lou, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées}, 57

\textsuperscript{388} For a short story that powerfully illustrates the chaos and uncertainty of the 1911 Xinhai Revolution in the Chinese countryside, please read “The Real Story of Ah Q” in Lu Xun, \textit{The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun}, trans. Julia Lovell (London: Penguin Classics, 2009), 79 – 123. For a scholarly work that examines Lu Xun’s writings within the context of the discourse on nationalism and modernity in 20\textsuperscript{th} century China, please refer to Paul B. Foster, \textit{Ah Q Archaeology: Lu Xun, Ah Q, Ah Q Progeny and the National Character Discourse in Twentieth Century China} (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006).

\textsuperscript{389} Ibid., 45.
Xu Jingcheng was educated in the traditional Confucian academies and passed the civil service exams. The Confucian ideals and dreams of universal family, and a stable harmonious country and society were deeply ingrained in him since youth.

Amid the corruption and turmoil of late Qing China, Xu Jingcheng did not believe that the imperial court could realize traditional Confucian ideals and thus turned to alternatives including the Catholic Church. Subsequently in the 20th century, many Chinese thinkers would turn to what they believed to be another source of universal brotherhood - Marxism and its promise of a socialist utopia.

Albert Chen of Hong Kong University argues that Marxism is fundamentally different from Confucian conceptions of Datong, especially as developed by Kang Youwei. While Marx had emphasized people’s selfish material interests, Kang believed that all humans were capable of compassion and caring for others. While Marx believed classes to be the fundamental division in society, Kang thought that class boundaries were but one of a number of divisions between humans that gave rise to social evils.390

Crucially while Marx thought that class struggle and revolution were necessary for the realization of communism, Kang thought that Datong would be realized naturally, gradually and spontaneously as humans practice Ren, or the Confucian notion of compassion or love, to increasing degrees.391 Kang also believed

391 “仁” (Ren)
that rising levels of culture, civilization, education, awareness, and enlightenment among all human beings would accompany the realization of Datong.\textsuperscript{392}

Incidentally, through much of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the Catholic Church was itself wrestling with serious questions of how to deal with “modernity.” Nationalism, socialism and the wave of other –isms that swept across 19\textsuperscript{th} century Europe also placed tremendous pressure on the church, which had to choose between stubborn resistance against the oncoming tide, or adaptation to a changing world.

Like Lou Tseng-Tsiang, Xu Jingcheng had also been struck by the universalistic nature of the Catholic Church. The term “catholic” itself stems from the Greek “\textit{katholikos}” meaning universal.\textsuperscript{393} The Church teaches a doctrine that salvation is possible for all. According to official church teaching, as God is infinitely merciful and desires not the damnation of souls, it is possible that even non-believers are saved.

Catholicism also teaches that all human beings possess a common dignity as creatures made in the image of God, and that divisions of race, class etc. should not be obstacles to people treating one another with love and compassion. The teachings on universal human dignity and the importance of universal love and compassion regardless of social distinction and division echo Confucian conceptions of Datong, especially as elaborated by Kang Youwei.

The Catholic Church’s claim to have roots in the apostolic era when Christianity was founded also attracted Xu Jingcheng. As a Confucian, Xu Jingcheng


learned the importance of seeking wisdom and knowledge from the ancients. The Confucian appreciation of the value of learning from the past can be traced back to Confucius himself:

The Master said, ‘I am not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it there.’

The fact that one of the few-recorded instances when Confucius was reported to have spoken in the first person was when Confucius claimed to love antiquity and to seek knowledge from the past illustrates the importance of learning from the past in the Confucian tradition. The teachings of Confucius were themselves transmitted by his disciples and only written down as the *Analects* after Confucius’s death.

The great sage’s teachings were recorded by those who had learned from him the importance and necessity of seeking knowledge and wisdom from those who had gone before themselves. The Catholic Church, to a far greater degree than Protestantism, emphasizes Sacred Tradition, which dates back to the apostolic era, as a transmitter of religious teachings that have their basis in divine truth. Sacred Tradition was one of the legacies the early Christians bequeathed to the Church.

Apart from Sacred Tradition, Catholics also learn about their faith and Divine Truth from and through the saints. Until the present day, Catholics remain devoted to the saints, who provide past examples of lives of faith. The writings and traditions of the saints have also enriched Catholic teaching and are a key source of popular

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Catholic devotions. Such a reverence for the value of tradition and learning from the past were likely to have resonated with Confucians like Xu Jingcheng, and his protégé Lou Tseng-Tsiang who both valued the wisdom that could be found in Chinese tradition.

Apart from a reverence for the past, Confucianism also emphasized the importance of *Li* (ritual), also translated as “Holy Rite” by Herbert Fingarette.\(^\text{396}\) As discussed by Fingarette:

> The image of Holy Rite as a metaphor of human existence brings foremost to our attention the dimension of the holy in man’s existence. … it brings out also the moral perfection implicit in achieving one’s ends by dealing with others as beings of equal dignity, as free coparticipants in *li*.\(^\text{397}\)

As mentioned previously, Confucians such as Xu Jingcheng and also Lou Tseng-Tsiang would have been attuned to the importance of ritual and “Holy Rite.” They may have seen echoes of Confucian “Holy Rite” in Catholic liturgy.

The two are different, but like “Holy Rite,” Catholic liturgy also calls to attention the sacred within man’s existence, by focusing on the Divine mystery that God in the person of Jesus Christ had manifested himself as a man to share in human existence and experience. The center of Catholic liturgy is the Eucharist. All those gathered around the altar before the Eucharist, are free and equal participants in the sacrament, as participants in *li* or “Holy Rite” are.

Moreover, Catholic liturgy also involves ceremony and performance. Just as in “Holy Rite,” all participants in Catholic liturgical ceremonies have their respective

\(^{396}\) “礼” (*Li*)

parts to play in order for everything to go smoothly. Like “Holy rite,” Catholic liturgy also brings the community together.

Even if Xu Jingcheng could not understand the Christmas liturgies that he had once observed in Rome, the spectacle of it all may have awed him, and the elaborate rites appealed to his Confucian sensibilities that were attuned to the importance of ritual. As for Lou Tseng-Tsiang, he may eventually have come to see Catholic liturgy, centered on the Eucharist, as superior to Confucian ritual, despite the echoes between the two:

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Au \text{ centre du culte catholique, nous trouvons la célébration d'un sacrifice dont le caractère auguste dépasse infiniment celui de tous les sacrifices, qui, en quelle religion que ce soit, ont essayé d’exprimer les rapports entre l’homme et Dieu et de rendre gloire à Dieu.}^{398}
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While the focus of Holy Rite was the sacred as found in the communion of humanity, the focus of the Eucharist was the sacred in the communion not just between humans, but also between humanity and God.

Through the Eucharist, the faithful can partake of the Divine, and they remember that the Divine partook of human suffering and death through the person Jesus Christ. Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s appreciation of the Eucharist and Catholic liturgy, like his faith, deepened as he journeyed towards embracing and living a religious vocation.

**Remaining Faithful**

As it became clear to Lou Tseng-Tsiang that his wife would soon depart this life, he began to seriously consider a religious vocation as he recalled the instructions

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of Xu Jingcheng. Xu Jingcheng had taught Lou that he should consider joining a religious order at some point if his wife should pass away before he did:

... je vis représenter à moi, d’une manière actuelle, la suggestion que le ministre Shu King-Shen m’avait faite, trente ans auparavant : si le Seigneur m’enlevait ma femme, j’entrerai dans une institution religieuse en Europe et cet acte unirait deux fidélités: à l’épouse qui m’aurait quitté et au testament de mon maître, me conseillant d’aller jusqu’au bout de mon « européenisation » et de faire mienne cette vie intérieure religieuse....

Joining a religious order would allow Lou Tseng-Tsiang to unite two loyalties. He would remain faithful to his soon-to-be-departed wife by not remarrying, and he would remain faithful to the instructions of Xu Jingcheng who long ago had asked Lou to Europeanize himself out of love for China and to consider embracing a religious vocation as the culmination of the Europeanization process.

Unlike when he had to choose between caring for his father and serving his country, embracing a religious vocation meant that Lou Tseng-Tsiang no longer had to sacrifice one aspect of his life for another. He became a monk out of love for China, for his wife, and for Xu Jingcheng. As a monk, he could also celebrate mass daily for his deceased parents souls. Taking up Holy Orders would be the final step in Lou’s Europeanization. It would allow him to grasp the core of the moral force that he and Xu Jingcheng believed gave Europe its strength.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang tried to find a way to tell his wife about his intentions. The writings of Élisabeth Leseur published by her husband provided Lou a means of conveying the message and discussing the subject with Madame Lou:

Je recherchais le moyen d’informer ma chère compagne de vie de la gravité de son état et de la forme que j’entendais donner à ma fidélité

399 Ibid., 90.
Elisabeth Leseur was a French mystic, who had been married to a staunch anti-Christian. She had prayed for the conversion of her husband before her death due to cancer. After her death, her husband underwent a conversion experience and became a Dominican priest. He also published his wife’s spiritual autobiography, *Le Journal et Pensées de chaque jour*. The Leseurs’ marriage had also been childless.

While Lou Tseng-Tsiang was not anti-Christian, he was struck by some of the parallels between his own marriage and the Leseurs. Unlike the Leseurs however, Lou could actually share his intention of taking up Holy Orders with his wife before her death. He did so by reading Elisabeth Leseur’s spiritual autobiography with her, and there was no need for a long conversation between the two:

> Cette lecture permit à nos deux cœurs de se comprendre et de se pénétrer plus profondément que jamais, sans que nous eussions besoin d’aucune longue explication.  

Through the act of reading the spiritual autobiography of Élisabeth Leseur together, their two hearts could comprehend each other in a manner more profound than was possible via a spoken conversation.

The Lous understood that they were going to emulate the example of the Leseurs; Madame Lou would pray for her husband and continue to intercede for him after death in Heaven as Elisabeth Leseur did, while Lou would take up a religious vocation like Mr. Leseur, “Nous allions, l’un et l’autre, essayer de reproduire l’exemple, elle, d’Élisabeth Leseur et, moi, de son mari.” Such an understanding

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400 Ibid., 91.
401 Ibid.
402 Ibid.
was a source of comfort in this difficult time as they confronted their impending separation because of death.

This moment is also related to larger questions of language and meaning with regards to the relationship between Lou and his wife. There is little evidence that Madame Lou ever mastered Chinese. Since Lou Tseng-Tsiang was close to perfectly bilingual in French, French may have been adequate as the language of their relationship. Nevertheless Lou always considered Chinese to be his langue maternelle, the language in which he could most fully express the nuances of his esprit and coeur.\textsuperscript{403}

This raises interesting questions about whether or not as intimate as Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s relationship with his wife was, there were places in his esprit and coeur that she could never fully enter, because those were Chinese spaces, spaces where the boundaries were bedeuted by the limits of Chinese, in line with Wittgenstein’s aphorism on the limits of languages and worlds.

The moment when Lou Tseng-Tsiang and his wife confronted her impending mortality and his subsequent intention to enter a religious order demonstrated that while there may have been linguistic boundaries between Madame Lou and Lou Tseng-Tsiang, there were some things shared between them that even language could not express, but that did not mean that they were unintelligible or meaningless to the both of them.

Joining a religious order allowed Lou Tseng-Tsiang to remain faithful to his wife, but it also allowed him to obey the instructions of his long deceased mentor Xu Jingcheng who had been unjustly executed: “et cet acte unirait deux fidélités ... et au

\textsuperscript{403} Ibid., 31.
testament de mon maître, me conseillant d’aller jusqu’au bout de mon « européanisation».”

Lou’s multiple devotions did not cause him any internal conflict, but they likely helped to deepen his faith instead. Becoming a monk was a way for Lou to honor Xu because Xu had also wanted Lou to help spread Christianity and Christian values and learning in China.

Xu Jingcheng believed that Christianity, and not weapons nor science, was the secret to Europe’s strength. He charged his then young understudy, Lou Tseng-Tsian with the task of grasping the secret of Europe and then returning and sharing it with China:

La force de l’Europe ne se trouve pas dans ses armements; elle ne se trouve pas dans sa science; elle se trouve dans sa religion. ... Si vous le pouvez, entrez-y également ; faites-vous disciple et observez la vie intérieure qui doit en être le secret. Lorsque vous aurez compris et capté le secret de cette vie, lorsque vous aurez, saisi le cœur et la force de la religion de Christ, emportez-les et donnez-les à la Chine.  

Lou Tseng-Tsian had been living as a Catholic since the end of 1911, when he was baptized into the Catholic Church, which he believed to be the oldest branch of Christianity. Even before his baptism, he had been observing and learning about Catholicism, especially through the lived faith of his wife.

As his vocation as a married man drew to an end, Lou Tseng-Tsian recalled the injunction of Xu Jingcheng from years past to go one step further in his Europeanization, and in his embrace of Christianity. Xu Jingcheng had apparently instructed Lou that if he could do so, he was to join the oldest of the religious orders within the most ancient branch of Christianity. Lou was to become a disciple of the order, and once he had grasped the secret of the interior of the religious life, which

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404 Ibid., 90.
405 Ibid., 46.
Xu believed led to an understanding of the heart and core of the power of Christianity, Lou was to return to share the secret with China.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang thus eventually turned to the Benedictines, the oldest of the European monastic orders. The Benedictine rule was an influence or inspiration to all subsequent Catholic monastic orders. Meanwhile the Benedictine order itself was so ancient that it was not strictly a religious order with a firm hierarchy, but rather a confederation comprised of congregations of independent monastic houses.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang would later learn that Benedictine monasteries were veritable fortresses of the spirit. Even in his lifetime, they were guardians of a humanistic tradition grounded in faith. Living as a monk, Lou’s own faith and appreciation of humanism deepened, and he went beyond Xu Jingcheng’s expectations of him to simply grasp the “secret” of Christianity. In 1927, Lou took his first steps towards becoming a son of St. Benedict and entering the sanctuary of the black monks.
While Lou Tseng-Tsiang came to appreciate the Benedictine monastery as a sanctuary, his friends were initially surprised by his decision to join an abbey. Lou

later wrote that his friends and fellow countrymen had first thought that a Benedictine monastery was a tomb, or a hermitage, and therefore he had to correct their misconceptions by sharing with them the true nature of the Benedictines.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang shared with his compatriots that what he appreciated most about the Benedictine monastery was that it was a familial community. After his wife’s death, Lou was alone. In that time of inwardness and solitude he found in the Benedictines a new family, which was one of the most ancient and most representative institutions of the global family of the Catholic Church.

The abbey was not simply a crypt; through the religious life, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was refreshed. Hence. Moreover, while Lou sought a retreat from the diplomatic lifestyle, he was not looking for a complete withdrawal from the world. He remained connected with friends through letters and visits; he was up to date on Chinese and world affairs through newspapers among other means. Furthermore, he had joined a monastery that was part of a confederation that was active in educational and missionary work. The monks lived a cloistered life, yet were engaged in the world in various ways.

The above images show the front of the monastery and the external portal of the abbey church. The first is a reproduction of a photo from an album in the archives of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven dated 1943. The photo of the monastery itself is likely from the 1930s because the German army occupied the monastery during the Second World War. The second photo was taken during my research trip to the monastery in summer 2013.
Externally, the monastery seems much the same though internally it is very different. During Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s time there, the monastery was a large bustling community of more than a hundred monks. Many of the then-younger monks would become missionaries in a daughter community in the Katanga region of the Belgian Congo. The community back then owned and worked on farms and pastures to produce their own food.

Those days are no more. Sint-Andriesabdij no longer runs its own farms. Some of the surrounding land is still owned by the community and leased out to tenants, but most of the property has been sold. There are currently little more than twenty monks left, with their average age being over seventy years old. The community keeps steadily shrinking as the older monks die off with no new novices joining for years now.

Nevertheless, the monastery is still far from being a tomb. The abbey still oversees one of Belgium’s best and most prestigious boarding schools located right next door, though the monks are mostly occupied with administrative rather than teaching tasks. Some of the monks conduct retreats; others do craft work and take charge of the abbey gift shop and restaurant. The outdoor beer garden is a well-known tourist attraction in the summer. The abbey continues to be connected with Benedictine and other missionary groups abroad, and supports development projects through fundraising efforts. The monks regularly release *Echo-Satimo*, a publication
which provides updates on the development work Sint-Andriesabdij supports, as well as *Vriendschap*, a review on life and prayer in the abbey.\(^{407}\)

The abbey guest rooms are also widely utilized by Belgian university students, who use the monastery as a study spot during reading and exam period because of the tranquility and the lack of distractions in the vicinity. From time to time, there will be visitors and researchers who have followed the trail of the man the monks call simply “Dom Lou.” One such person was myself, curious to learn about the story of a man who was more than a diplomat, minister, and monk.

**“Ma Conversion N’est Pas Une Conversion, C’est Une Vocation”**

According to Lou Tseng-Tsiang, the tale of his religious vocation was intertwined with his lifelong journey of conversion. In fact, Lou wrote that his conversion was not a conversion, but rather a vocation, an answer to a calling. Lou described conversion as a search for the real Light, the Light of Truth:

\begin{quote}
*Une conversion qu’est-ce que c’est ? C’est une recherche de la vraie Lumière. Mais moi, je me suis avancé sans le savoir. Vraiment, je n’ai rien recherché, ni lumière, ni bonheur. J’ai simplement tâché de faire mon devoir. ...*  
\end{quote}

\(^{408}\)

He believed that he himself had progressed on this quest unconsciously. He had simply been doing his duty, but had ultimately been guided by God all the way. In this sense, joining the monastery could be understood as accomplishing his mentor Xu Jingcheng’s admonition to learn the “secret” of the West in order to share it with China.

\(^{407}\) Information on the history of Sint-Andriesabdij and the current state of the monastic community there was sourced from conversations with the Abbot René Fobe, O.S.B. and abbey librarian Père Victor Brokaert, O.S.B.

\(^{408}\) Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 94.
Lou Tseng-Tsiang also wrote of the profound loneliness he felt after his wife’s death and his need for a retreat, prompting his move towards a monastic vocation. Lou recalled the counsel of Xu Jingcheng to rely on none but himself, and more importantly, the advice of his father to trust in God:

_Après la mort de ma femme, je me suis senti isolé. C’est le seul moment auquel j’ai cherché quelque chose : une retraite. ... C’était une recherche basée sur le conseil de M. Shu : “Comptez sur vous-même et ne comptez pas sur autrui”. Basée aussi sur ce que m’avait dit mon père sa vie durant : “Comptez sur Dieu”._

As a diplomat and a statesman Lou often felt lonely. At least back then, he still had his wife and soul mate for support and counsel. Madame Lou’s passing left a hole in Lou’s life that could not be filled, and this spurred his need for a retreat in order to rejuvenate himself.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang later reflected on how having lost his father, mentor, and wife, he was truly alone and could count on only himself and on God:

_Je n’avais plus, alors, ni père, ni maître, ni épouse. Dès lors, j’avais à compter uniquement sur Dieu et sur moi. ... Et le bon Dieu m’a fait marcher de l’avant..._

Lou trusted that God would guide him as he discerned his religious vocation. He believed that God led him onward into the family of the Benedictines and eventually to the priesthood as well.

After the death of his wife, Lou Tseng-Tsiang got in touch with the Reverend Marc de Munnynck, a Dominican priest of Belgian origin who taught at the University of Fribourg, and whom Madame Lou had wanted as a spiritual director. Lou Tseng-Tsiang thus sought guidance from Reverend de Munnynck, including on

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409 Ibid., 94 – 95.
410 Ibid., 95.
the subject of a religious vocation. Reverend de Munnynck pointed Lou towards the abbey of Sint-Andries (Saint André), a Benedictine abbey on the outskirts of Bruges in Belgium.411

After transferring the remains of his wife to Laeken cemetery in Brussels in June 1927, Lou Tseng-Tsiang then spent the feast of Pentecost at the abbey of Sint-Andries. On the feast during which the Catholic Church celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the frightened disciples of Jesus, transforming them into fearless preachers who would go about spreading the Gospel, Lou started his transition to the religious and consecrated life.412

A traditional Chinese proverb states that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step: “Qianli zhi xing shi yu zuxia.”413 Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s first step was to join the abbey as a postulant beginning in July 1927. He began a journey that was marked by milestones such as the Benedictine novitiate, the profession of the monastic vows, ordination as a priest, and eventually even consecration as an abbot.414

When Lou Tseng-Tsiang professed his monastic vows on January 15, 1929, he also took on a new religious name, Pierre-Célestin. St. Pierre-Célestin (St. Peter-Celestine) was the last Pope to have resigned from the Papacy before Pope Benedict XVI. St. Peter-Celestine had lived as a hermit before being crowned Pope. He had also founded a religious community inspired by the Benedictine rule. He resigned the

411 Ibid., 91.
412 Ibid., 91–92.
413 “千里之行始于足下.”
414 Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 92.
Papacy after only five months in the hope of returning to a hermetic life.\textsuperscript{415} The story of St. Peter-Celestine resonated with Lou, who had recently given up his successful diplomatic career to embrace a religious vocation and who was himself thinking of spreading Christian monasticism in China.

After joining the monastery as a monk, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was persuaded to go a step further and pursue priesthood. The journey towards the priesthood was not without its complications, which Lou Tseng-Tsiang later recalled:

\begin{quote}
Je ne parle pas des difficultés que présentaient, de l’âge de cinquante-six à soixante-quatre ans, l’étude de la langue latine que j’ignorais totalement et celle de la théologie. Cette acquisition exigeait un effort laborieux, dont à cet âge, la seule appréhension pouvait susciter une lassitude.\textsuperscript{416}
\end{quote}

It was a tough battle for a middle-aged man such as Lou to take up the study of Latin and theology, subjects in which he had little prior formal instruction. Nevertheless, he tried his best. His proficiency in French meant that he could at least read theological works in that language, even if some of the Latin originals remained difficult.

More significant than the academic challenges of learning Latin and studying theology was the profound internal struggle Lou Tseng-Tsiang experienced as he moved towards the religious life:

\begin{quote}
Le vrai problème était tout différent ; il était d’ordre moral. Je me posais la question : « Comment pourrais-je, moi, devenir prêtre ? Comment pourrais-je, quotidiennement, me présenter en face de Dieu, comme représentant de l’humanité ? ». … C’était une lutte terrible contre moi-même, pour oser approcher, tous les jours, moi-même, le Tout-Puissant. Le Seigneur se porta à mon aide.\textsuperscript{417}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{416} Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 85.
\textsuperscript{417} Ibid., 85 – 86.
Lou did not feel worthy of the priesthood. He thought himself unfit as a sinful and frail man to present himself daily before the Almighty as a representative of humanity. Lou believed that it was God who gave him the strength and the courage to answer the calling to the religious life. In responding to the calling, Lou had a chance to develop a nuanced understanding of the Benedictine life and mission.

**An Unarmed Resistance**

Lou Tseng-Tsiang may have initially joined the abbey as a retreat, especially from the world of diplomacy and politics, but Benedictine abbeys were also much more than peaceful sanctuaries. Lou would come to learn about and appreciate the important role played by the monasteries:

During the long age that Newman called “the Benedictine centuries,” an age when all Europe was overrun by the brute hordes of the barbarians, each house of the monks from Monte Cassino downwards became a fortress of the spirit, consecrated to the life of prayer and labour and learning. They were the besieged strongholds of the resistance, though a resistance of unarmed men; and in them was guarded not only the Christian sanctuary, but almost everything that to-day survives of the inheritance of Greece and Rome.\(^\text{418}\)

The passage from *The Times* is quoted from an article saved by Lou Tseng-Tsiang. Lou’s secretary in the abbey, Dom Edouard Neut, probably translated the article into French for Lou. As the article argued, Benedictine monasteries were veritable fortresses of the spirit. Libraries were an essential part of any Benedictine monastery, as illustrated by a medieval proverb “*claustrum sine armario est quasi castrum sine armamentario*” (A monastery without a library is like a fortress without an

arsenal). Moreover, during Lou’s lifetime the Benedictines were no longer concerned solely with protecting the fruits of classical Western civilization and of Christianity.

The Benedictine congregation to which Lou Tseng-Tsiang belonged had a missionary presence in China since 1929, when a priory had been established at Chengdu. By the end of the Second World War, the priory had also set up the Chinese Western Research Institute (Institut d’Études Chinoises et Occidentales) at Chengdu. The institution contained a library of ten thousand volumes of material in Chinese, Latin, Greek, Hebrew among other languages. The aim of the institute was to enhance intercultural learning between China and the West. After the global destruction of the Second World War, such an institution that would have promoted the study of philosophy, religion, art, literature, sociology, history, and the languages of China and the West was sorely needed. The institute itself was ultimately short-lived, and was shut down after the Communist takeover of Chengdu in 1949, its library confiscated.

In Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s time, Benedictine monks remained dedicated as ever to a life of prayer, labor and learning, a life in which Lou participated to the best of his ability. Centuries after it was written, the Rule of St. Benedict continued to serve as a guide for those who gained insight from it. The very first injunction of the book

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419 For a discussion of the role of libraries in the Benedictine tradition of learning and the subsequent transfer of this tradition to the USA, please refer to M. Dorothy Neuhofer, O.S.B., In the Benedictine Tradition: The Origins and Early Development of Two College Libraries (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999).
was “Écoute, ô mon fils, les préceptes du Maître, et incline l’oreille de ton cœur. Reçois volontiers l’avertissement d’un père plein de tendresse…” Lou would learn to turn the ears of his heart to listen to the wisdom of the rule. The familial structure of a Benedictine community, with the abbot as a father figure of sorts, appealed to one like Lou who so strongly valued family and filial piety.

The traditional mottos of the Benedictines are “Ora et labora” (Prayer and labor) and “Pax” (Peace). Through striking a balance between prayer and labor, action and contemplation, both of which are necessary for the survival of faith, the Benedictine way is a possible path of and towards peace, which Lou Tseng-Tsiang may have been unconsciously seeking throughout the trials and tribulations of his life.

**A Christian Vocation For China**

In the peace of the abbey, Lou Tseng-Tsiang had a chance to reflect and then write on the history of Christianity in China. Lou lamented the late arrival of Christianity in China. While he valued the moral and spiritual wisdom that could be found in Confucianism, he believed that it was ultimately a secular philosophy and it lacked divine revelation:

> Quel eût été le sort de la Chine et celui de la race jaune si, à ce moment-là, le christianisme avait pu nous arriver et donner à la philosophie morale et spirituelle confucianiste cette lumière supérieure et ce complément indestructible apportés à l’humanité par Celui qui possède vraiment « les paroles de la vie éternelle. »

As a Christian, Lou believed that Divine Light and Truth and the way to eternal life had been revealed through Christianity. This divine revelation would have enhanced

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Confucianism, and thereby provided an additional moral force that he thought could support society and the state.

In the passage quoted above, Lou had referred to the Chinese as the yellow race, “la race jaune,” a term loaded with racist connotations. While it is unlikely that Lou shared the racist sentiments that accompanied the phrase, he may have chosen it because of its familiarity to the European audience for whom he was writing. Or perhaps he may have wanted to conjure an image of the Chinese as a crude and backward people, and of China as the “sick man of Asia,” in order for his readers to ponder his claims concerning China’s malaise.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang also raised a critique against Buddhism, a religion he did not seem to hold in high regard:

*C’est au début de l’ère chrétienne que pénétra en Chine le bouddhisme. À côté d’inspirations religieuses élevées et profondes, il comporte un amalgame de croyances superstitieuses stérilisantes, de sorte que, s’il a donné à bien des âmes un réconfort spirituel, il n’a jamais été en mesure de les dégager pleinement d’elles-mêmes, a fortiori, de donner un soutien à la société, encore moins à l’État.*

Lo claimed that while there was a profundity to Buddhist teachings that provided spiritual comfort, which explained the popularity of Buddhism in China, Buddhism had also become amalgamated with a range of superstitions which prevented Buddhism was serving as a source of moral stability for both society and the state. Lou’s criticism of Buddhism was probably shaped by traditional Confucian prejudices against Buddhism, and thus may not be entirely fair. Tibetans, for instance, would certainly disagree with Lou’s assessment of the role Buddhism can play with regards to society and the state.

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424 Ibid., 98.
While Lou Tseng-Tsiang lamented the late arrival of Christianity in China, there is reliable historical evidence that shows that Christianity actually had a long history in China dating back to the time of the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907 CE). The Xi’an Stele is the oldest surviving piece of evidence of the historical Christian presence in China. The stele was erected in 781 CE in Shaanxi province and recorded the coming of the first Christian missionaries to China in 636 CE.

The stele attested that the writings of the Christians were examined and approved by the Taizong Emperor (r. 626 – 649 CE, Tang Dynasty) so that the missionaries could propagate them in the Tang Empire. The inscription on the stele was in Chinese, with a Syriac inscription in Estrangela script at the bottom. At the top of the stele is a rounded pediment with an inscribed panel, which carries the title of the monument in Chinese:

中教大
国流秦
碑行景

The title can be translated as “Memorial of the introduction into China of the luminous religion from Syria.”425 Above the title is an inscription of a cross rising from a lotus blossom.426 Significantly, in this record of the coming of the first Christians to China, Christianity was referred to as the “luminous religion.”

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s later writing on conversion as a search for the true Light echoed such terminology. The language of the Xi’an stele itself referred to imagery from Taoism, Buddhism and the Persian religious tradition. God is described as

\[\text{Daniel H. Bays, } \textit{A New History of Christianity in China} \text{ (Chichester: Wiley – Blackwell, 2012), 7.}\]
“earlier than all origin and without beginning” (reminiscent of “the origin of origins” from Taoism); the Messiah is described as venerable and radiant, and propelled the ship of mercy so as to give access to the luminous palace (allusions to Amithaba the Buddha of infinite light who reigns in the Pure Land from Mahayana Buddhism); the theme of separation between light and darkness is emphasized through the inscription (a prevalent theme in Persian religious traditions).  

The first Christians in China were Nestorians (Syrian Christians) from Persia. They adhered to an ancient branch of Eastern Christianity that claimed roots in the apostolic age and which survives to this day. The stele itself recorded that there was a period of expansion of Christianity in China when monasteries were founded, which was followed by a time of persecution when the Empress Wu Zetian seized the throne. After the end of the reign of the empress, there was an era when Christianity returned to favor.

There is little evidence that ethnic Chinese converted to Christianity or became monks, and surviving evidence suggests that most clergy and converts were Persians or other foreigners, all of whom had found a place in the cosmopolitan Tang Empire. By the latter decades of the Tang Dynasty, the imperial government became less cosmopolitan and enforced nativist policies in an attempt to curtail foreign influences in China, especially that of Buddhism.

The early Christian presence in China seems to have died out in the years of turmoil following the collapse of the Tang dynasty. The memory of these Christians was eventually forgotten until the time of the Jesuit mission to China, when the Xi’an

stèle was rediscovered. Aft er the fall of the Tang dynasty, Christian communities remained in some of the lands bordering China.

**A Pacific Embassy**

While Syrian Christianity may have died out in China aft er the collapse of the Tang dynasty, it remained present in Persia. The period of the Mongol Empire that bridged China and Persia was the next stage of the history of Christianity in China. Through contacts with Persian Christians, some Turko-Mongolian tribes such as the Keraits began to convert to Christianity by the early 12th century. The Keraits eventually joined with the armies of Genghis Khan, and a Kerait Christian princess would become mother to Khubilai Khan. The Mongol conquest of China allowed for the reestablishment of a Syrian Christian presence in China.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang also reflected and wrote on this period of the history of Christianity in China:

*Au XIIIme siècle, en 1266, l’empereur Koubilai, recevant à Pékin le père et l’oncle de Marco Polo, les députait vers le pape, avec mission de lui demander l’envoi en Chine de « cent docteurs savants dans les sept arts » ; ils auraient construit, en Chine, les assises imposantes du pont entre l’Orient et l’Occident. Est-il jamais souverain qui ait conçu, dites-le-moi, un projet aussi grandiose d’ambassade pacifique?*

He wrote of the Mongol emperor Khubilai Khan in complimentary terms, which suggests that Lou valued appreciation for culture and learning more than simple ethno-racial ties. He admired the vision of the emperor who had asked that the Pope send hundred doctors of the seven liberal arts to China. If this request had been accommodated, it would have been a crucial attempt at intellectual dialogue between

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China and the West. Lou’s belief in the importance of intellectual encounters between civilizations would continue to grow.

The emperor’s demand was not met. Lou Tseng-Tsiang held the Western scholars who refused to go to China responsible for the failure of the project. He admonished the shortsightedness of cultural emissaries too caught up in the minutiae of their work that they missed the opportunities for building bridges across cultures that lay before them:

La demande demeura sans suite. À toute époque, et même aujourd’hui, les intellectuels sont tellement absorbés par leur sollicitude personnelle pour les travaux immédiats qu’ils ont engagés que, parmi ces milliers d’hommes qui se donnent à l’étude de disciplines identiques, il s’en trouve rarement quelques dizaines où même quelques unités qui aient une clairvoyance et un souffle intellectuel suffisant pour se déplacer, pour entrer dans de nouveaux horizons, pour gravir ou même pour regarder l’autre versant de la montagne.

Lou’s words may also have been a critique of both Western and Chinese intellectuals within his lifetime who were unwilling to move beyond prejudices and engage seriously with the wisdom and learning of those different from themselves. The role and responsibility of intellectuals in facilitating intercultural and inter-civilizational interaction and exchange would be a theme Lou developed further over the course of his monastic vocation.

In contrast to Lou’s assessment, there actually was contact between Western Christendom and the Mongol empire, and the Papacy sent some missions to China that achieved little success.\(^{433}\) It was only in the 1290s that another papal envoy was

\(^{433}\) The Papacy was interested in the possibility of an alliance with the Mongols against the forces of Islam that dominated the Middle East. The Pope did not send 100 doctors of the seven liberal arts to China as per the Khan’s request, but between 1245 and 1253 Pope Innocent IV commissioned two diplomatic-religious missions led by the Franciscans to the Mongols. The friars reached the then
sent to the Mongols and this emissary achieved more success with conversions. The envoy, Friar Giovanni da Montecorvino, was a Franciscan who arrived in the new Mongol capital Khanbaliq (on the site of modern day Beijing) in 1293.\textsuperscript{434}

Friar Montecorvino’s missionary efforts were apparently fruitful among some of the tribes such that the Roman Church was prompted to send more missionaries to China, both Franciscan and Dominican. Friar Montecorvino was consecrated as the archbishop of Khanbaliq in 1313 by newly arrived priests bearing papal instructions.\textsuperscript{435} Significantly, Montecorvino wrote in a letter in 1305 that he had translated the New Testament and the psalter into the Mongol language and had made arrangements for the whole of the Divine Office to be translated as well. He also recounted that mass was celebrated according to the Latin rite in the Mongol language. Montecorvino’s willingness to embrace the language of the Mongols was crucial to the success of his missionary efforts.\textsuperscript{436}

Both Syrian and Roman Christians maintained a presence in China until the collapse of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty in 1368, though neither group seemed to have been effective in converting the Chinese in large numbers. The history of Christians in China after the end of Yuan rule is obscure. The collapse of Mongol rule meant the loss of protection for the Christian missionaries. The Franciscans were also hindered by internal strife in Europe, and they were dealt a hard blow by the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century. The dream of a Christian alliance with the Mongols had

\textsuperscript{434} From Bays, \textit{A New History of Christianity in China}, 12.
\textsuperscript{435} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{436} Ibid.
meanwhile ended with the collapse of the Mongol empires in central Asia. The Christian presence in China was later revived after communication between China and the West was renewed from the 16th century onwards.

“Hommes de valeur, de science et d’un sens apostolique”

The next stage of the history of Christianity in China was the era of the Christian missions of the early modern period, with the Jesuit Mission being the most notable. Lou Tseng-Tsiang personally admired the Jesuit missionaries, as well as one of their prominent Chinese converts, Paul Xu Guangqi, who like Lou was a prominent government official originally from Shanghai:

Au XVIIe siècle – et c’est l’honneur de la Compagnie de Jésus – un groupe de jésuites, hommes de valeur, de science et d’un sens apostolique supérieur, qui étaient arrivés successivement à Macao et étaient parvenus dans le Nord de la Chine, furent appelées à Pékin.

Lou wrote of the Jesuits of the 17th century as men of value and of science who possessed a superior sensibility for apostolic work. He praised their talents, their disinterestedness, and their spirit of service, which had brought them from Macao to northern China and then to Beijing.

Their qualities had even opened the gates of the imperial palace to them and allowed them to reach the highest echelons of the Chinese court:

Leurs talents, leur désintéressement, leur serviabilité ne tardèrent pas à leur ouvrir toutes les portes, jusqu’à celles du palais impérial. Vous connaissez les noms des plus grands d’entre eux : Matteo Ricci, Adam Shall, Ferdinand Verbiest...

Lou signaled the most famous of these missionaries, Matteo Ricci, Adam Shall, and Ferdinand Verbiest. Lou’s admiration of the Jesuits had been so great that he

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439 Ibid.
constructed his family cemetery facing the Jesuit cemetery in Beijing, where Ricci, Shall, Verbiest and their colleagues were buried.

The Jesuits adopted certain policies with regard to the China mission that allowed them to appeal to the Confucian scholar-officials of China. These policies were:

- Accommodation and adaptation to Chinese culture.
- Evangelization from the top down, addressing the literate elite, even the emperor if possible.
- Indirect evangelism by means of science and technology to convince the elite of the high level of European civilization.
- Openness to and tolerance of Chinese moral values and some ritual practices.\(^{440}\)

The success of Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit mission of converting the “three pillars” of the church – Xu Guangqi (1562 – 1633), Li Zhizao (1565 – 1630), and Yang Tingyun (1562 – 1627), who were all high degree-holders and Confucian scholar-officials of the late Ming seemed to validate the Jesuit strategy.\(^{441}\) Among the three famous Ming Chinese converts to Christianity, the story of Xu Guangqi resonated most strongly with Lou Tseng-Tsiang.

**A True Patriot**

A few years after professing his monastic vows in 1929, Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote a booklet on Xu Guangqi, who was baptized as Paul after converting to Catholicism. The booklet was written in conjunction with the tri-centenary of Paul Xu Guangqi and was entitled *La vie et les oeuvres du grand Chrétien chinois Paul Siu Koang-k’i*. Lou and Paul Xu were both from Shanghai, which may have allowed Lou


\(^{441}\) Ibid.
to feel a sense of connection to his illustrious predecessor of centuries past, who was also a Chinese statesman who had converted to Catholicism.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s description of Paul Xu’s conversion foreshadowed but differed from Lou’s later account of his own proper conversion:

*En 1600, passant par Nankin, il rencontra le P. Ricci et écouta sa prédication. Tout ce qu’il en retint se résume en ce que ces prédicateurs étrangers donnaient leur Dieu comme Premier Principe de toutes choses. Siu Koang-k’i cherchait la lumière, il avait lu les livres des Lettrés, des Bouddhistes, des Taoïstes, il avait cherché à se faire des idées nettes sur la nature de l’âme et son immortalité ainsi que sur la vie future. Rien ne lui avait donné satisfaction.*

According to Lou, Paul Xu had been actively searching for the Light, the Light of Truth. Paul Xu had read the works of Chinese Confucian literati, of Buddhists and Taoists in his search for answers on questions concerning the nature of the soul and its immortality, as well as questions concerning the afterlife. Nothing had satisfied him.

In 1600, Paul Xu had passed through Nanjing where he met Matteo Ricci and heard the Jesuits preaching. The Jesuits claim that their God was the First Principle of all things stuck in his mind. Incidentally, Lou’s account of Xu’s active quest contrasts with Lou’s own claim that he had advanced towards conversion unknowingly, simply by doing his duty. The contrast may be Lou’s own way of elevating Paul Xu and then humbling himself.

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While Paul Xu had intentionally searched for the light of truth, according to Lou Tseng-Tsiang it was ultimately by the action of grace that he embraced Christianity:

*En 1603, passant à nouveau par Nankin, il se rendit à la Résidence des Pères Jésuites. La grâce le travaillait; il se prosterna, raconte le P. Colombel, devant l’image de la Sainte Vierge; il écouta avidement les explications qui lui furent données; il en fut si profondément touché qu’il résolut à l’instant de devenir chrétien.*

Paul Xu had returned to Nanking in 1603, and gone to seek out the residence of the Jesuits. According to the Jesuit Father Colombel, Paul Xu prostrated himself before the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary while listening avidly to the teachings of the missionaries. He was so moved that he decided in that instance to convert.

In the conclusion of the booklet, Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote of why he chose to write on Paul Xu, and argued for the continued relevance of Paul Xu’s example and story. His writing on Paul Xu was addressed to his compatriots, both Christians and non-Christians:

*Aux païens, nous démontrerons, par toute la vie de Siu Koang-k’i, que l’Eglise encourage, dirige et soutient le vrai patriotisme, que les vertus puissent leur lumière, leur force et leur perfection dans la connaissance de la doctrine chrétienne et dans la pratique de la vie chrétienne, que la Religion est amie de la Science, que la Catholicité est loin d’être une association d’ignorants ou une organisation étrangère : tous ces préjugés tomberont d’un coup.*  

Lou argued that for the non-Christian Chinese, the life of Paul Xu demonstrated that the Church encouraged, led, and supported a true patriotism, that the virtues derive their light, their strength, and their perfection from the knowledge of Christian doctrine and the practice of Christian life, that religion is the friend of science, and

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443 Ibid., 19 – 20.
that Catholicism was far from being an association for the ignorant or a foreign organization. The example of Paul Xu dispelled all these prejudices.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang claimed that Chinese Christians could likewise learn from the example of Paul Xu:

_Aux chrétiens, nous présenterons Paul Siu comme un modèle de vrai patriotisme, un maître de la culture chinoise, un inspirateur de l’Action Catholique, un initiateur de l’apostolat intellectuel, un patron de la vie chrétienne._444

Lou argued that Paul Xu was a role model of true patriotism. He was a master of Chinese culture. Lou claimed that Paul Xu was even an inspiration for Catholic Action, a lay Catholic movement in the modern period that attempted to encourage a Catholic influence on society, especially with regards to Catholic Social Teaching. Paul Xu was an initiator of the intellectual apostolate in China, and a patron of the Christian life.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang reminded his fellow Chinese Christians that they had a duty to know, and to venerate the great men of China’s past in order to facilitate the spread of Christianity in China:

_Ne manquons pas, nous, Chinois, à notre devoir de connaître et de vénérer les grands hommes de notre passé et, ainsi, de faciliter l’accession de notre pays à la Religion chrétienne. Car, pour que notre pays soit porté à fixer son attention sur le message religieux que nous lui présentons, pour qu’il soit désireux de le connaître et de l’approfondir, il faut qu’il ait le moyen de constater que nous, Catholiques Chinois, connaissons, possédons et aimons le génie de la vie intellectuelle et morale de notre peuple, tel que nos grands hommes l’ont forgé et l’ont vécu._445

Lou argued that in order for other Chinese to desire to know the message of Christianity, it was especially incumbent on Chinese Catholics to prove that they

444 Ibid., 20.
knew, owned, and loved Chinese intellectual and moral heritage, in the manner in which the great men of China’s past had wrought and lived this tradition.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s desire to convey the above messages to his fellow Chinese, both Christians and non-Christians, was his motivation to write and publish the booklet on Paul Xu. Notably, Lou mentioned “vrai patriotisme” (true patriotism) several times. If he is citing Paul Xu as an example of “vrai patriotisme,” this would suggest that Lou’s own conception of “patriotisme” have evolved from his younger days when he advocated for use of national symbols such as the national flag and anthem to inculcate patriotism amongst the Chinese people. Lou also used this text to assert that one could be both Catholic and Chinese. As Paul Xu could be both Confucian and Catholic, so could Lou and his contemporaries.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang also argued that Chinese Catholics could be and were lovers of Chinese heritage. Unlike some of the more radical movements that had emerged in China by the time this booklet was published in 1934, Lou was certainly not calling for a rejection of Chinese tradition in order to modernize. The example of Paul Xu and his contemporaries that embraced Western science and religion while remaining Confucian could serve as role models.

The Jesuit mission in China was eventually curtailed by the Chinese Rites Controversy and the Jesuit order itself would be suppressed by the Catholic states of Europe during the latter half of the 18th century. The Chinese Rites controversy culminated in the outlawing of Christianity in China in 1724 by the emperor
Yongzheng. Christianity was labeled an illegal religion and a heterodox sect, a status maintained until the 1840s when China was forcefully opened up to the world.\textsuperscript{446}

In his reflections, Lou Tseng-Tsiang did not dwell on this period, from the Rites Controversy until the Papal decree that the Chinese Rites did not actually conflict with Catholicism. It was a time which Lou described as distressing and painful:

\begin{quote}
Je voudrais passer très vite sur cette période pénible et douloureuse, qui va de la querelle des rites entre Européens à notre propos jusqu’au renouveau actuel, période à laquelle les grands papes Benoît XV, Pie XI, et Sa Sainteté Pie XII ont assumé l’honneur unique de mettre fin. ... Je résumerai toute cette époque en disant qu’elle fut un temps de malentendus et, par conséquent, de méfiance.\textsuperscript{447}
\end{quote}

Lou summarized the era as one of misunderstandings that had led to mistrust on all sides. He praised the Popes Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII for their role in putting an end to the tortuous Chinese Rites Controversy. Lou remarked that a quarter century had sufficed for these Popes to arrive at one of the great turning points of the spiritual history of humanity.\textsuperscript{448}

**Marvelous and Somber Grandeur**

By the time Lou Tseng-Tsiang joined the Benedictines, the Catholic Church had changed sufficiently to be able to accept Confucian-Christians such as Lou Tseng Tsiang. Lou’s honoring of his deceased parents and mentor were not seen as contradicting the practice of his Catholic faith. Lou’s own experiences in the abbey allowed him to draw connections between Catholic and Confucian practices of honoring and remembering the dead:

\textsuperscript{447} Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 99.  
\textsuperscript{448} Ibid.
Soit dit en passant: au lieu de discuter des rites chinois que n’a-t-on montré à tous les Chinois l’incomparable liturgie catholique des trépasses, qui, peut-être ne se déploie dans toute sa merveilleuse et sobre grandeur que dans le cadre des monastères.\textsuperscript{449}

As Lou discovered, Catholics also had rites of honoring the deceased. He greatly admired the somber and magnificent monastic funerary liturgies. The Catholic and Confucian traditions had something in common in their reverence for the dead and the conversation between the two should have focused on their commonalities rather than what divided them. If other Chinese had seen and experienced these liturgies, Lou believed they would also be drawn to Christianity. One day, Lou himself would be celebrated with these liturgies.

The outlawing of Christianity did not lead to the religion dying out in China. The various Catholic missions had resulted in the development of a Chinese church that remained present in the provinces. At the grassroots level, Chinese Christianity adapted itself to Chinese traditional culture and survived even as foreign oversight declined.\textsuperscript{450} Beginning in the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century, Chinese Christianity was reconnected to the rest of the Christian world through the widespread renewal of foreign missionary activity in China.

The next stage of the history of the Christianity in China, from the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} to the mid-20\textsuperscript{th} centuries was intimately connected with the history of imperialism in China. When China was forcefully opened to the Western powers, there came not only traders but also missionaries, including, for the first time in Chinese history, Protestant missionaries in large numbers. Among the various Protestant missionary groups active in China was the London Missionary Society with which Lou’s family

\textsuperscript{449} Ibid., 83.

\textsuperscript{450} Bays, \textit{A New History of Christianity in China}, 32.
was affiliated in Shanghai. The Catholic missions also experienced a revival. In some cases, the missionary cause was used by the Western powers to expand their influence in China, as was the case with France and the Catholic mission.

The close association of the Christian missionaries with the imperialism of the Western powers triggered Chinese anti-Christian backlashes from time to time, most notably during the Boxer Uprising. Lou Tseng-Tsiang also lamented the consequences of the association between Christianity and imperialism in China:

_Hélas, des actes regrettables amenèrent à ce sujet ces plus tristes confusions. Il se fit ainsi que, par la force des choses, l’Église devint aux yeux des Chinois, le bouc-émissaire de la plupart des injustices politiques dont mon pays fut l’objet et faillit être la victime._

Lou remarked that it was regrettable that due to circumstances many Chinese had singled out the Church as a scapegoat for many of the political injustices that China had suffered. Such an impression amongst the Chinese hindered conversion. It was to counter such negative attitudes about Christianity that Lou had asserted that Chinese Catholics dating back to the time of Paul Xu were true patriots and that being Catholic or Christian did not conflict with being Chinese.

By the beginning of the 20th century, most of the major Christian denominations active in China had developed Chinese congregations. Though all the Christian groups had experienced growth in China, Chinese Christians still formed a very small proportion of the Chinese population. In 1900, the number of Catholic Christians in China was estimated to number around seven hundred to eight hundred.

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thousand, while Protestants numbered about a hundred thousand, a significant increase from the few hundred Chinese Protestant Christians in 1860.\textsuperscript{452}

As Chinese congregations grew, there was a growing demand for Chinese clergy to serve these congregations. Chinese clergy would be trained to minister to their compatriots. In 1946, the Catholic Church established an ecclesiastical hierarchy in China. Chinese bishops were invested with powers and responsibilities as bishops, and Thomas Tien, archbishop of Beijing was elevated to the College of Cardinals, making him the first Chinese cardinal. Lou Tseng-Tsiang saved a news report from the French Catholic newspaper \textit{La Croix} on the establishment of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in China, with the creation of twenty archdioceses and seventy-nine dioceses, all grouped into twenty ecclesiastical provinces. Not all the provinces were conferred to the charge of local clergy as the missionary orders were also represented in this hierarchy.\textsuperscript{453}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang was clearly up to date on developments concerning the church in China. He would later be consecrated as the first Chinese Benedictine abbot in history, becoming part of this new Chinese ecclesiastical hierarchy. The establishment of a Chinese ecclesiastical hierarchy was a step forward for the Catholic Church in China. The Communist takeover of China and their subsequent persecution of Chinese Christians dealt a blow to the Christians of China but it was not a mortal one.

\textsuperscript{452} Bays, \textit{A New History of Christianity in China}, 77.

Despite continued official persecution, which was especially pronounced during the Cultural Revolution, Christianity has put down roots in China and is not going to be eliminated anytime soon. An underground Catholic hierarchy and Church loyal to the Holy See endures in China. There are currently an estimated eight to twelve million Catholics in China, and about half of whom are thought to worship as part of the underground Catholic Church.\footnote{“Joseph Fan Zhongliang, underground bishop of Shanghai, dies at 97,” \textit{South China Morning Post}, last updated March 18, 2014, \url{http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1450881/head-shanghais-underground-catholic-church-dies}.} More than five thousand people from both the official and underground Catholic communities reportedly attended the funeral for the recently deceased underground bishop of Shanghai, Joseph Fan Zhongliang.\footnote{“China: 5000 attend “underground” bishop’s funeral in Shanghai,” \textit{Vatican Insider}, March 22, 2014, \url{http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/world-news/detail/articolo/cina-china-fan-32902/}.} The tenacity of contemporary Christianity in China is also manifested in the persistence of popular devotions, such as Chinese Catholic devotions to the Virgin Mary.

\textbf{Our Lady of China}

One aspect of Catholic practice that took hold in China is Marianism. Curiously, Catholics across time and across cultures share a common devotion for the Virgin Mary, as manifested for example in the many reports of Marian apparitions from around the world across history. Chinese Catholics were no exception and they developed their own devotions to the Virgin Mary.\footnote{For a recently published work that discusses Chinese devotion to the Virgin Mary in relation to the history of Catholicism in China, please refer to Jeremy Clarke, S.J., \textit{The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities in Chinese History} (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013).}
Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself had hung a small calligraphy scroll written with the words “中華聖母” (Zhonghua Shengmu, Our Lady of China) next to the door of his room in the monastery of Sint-Andries. The scroll is photographed above. It hangs on a wall in the abbey, testifying to the abbey’s connection with China, and inviting the visiting scholar to learn more about the monk who had been devoted to Our Lady of China.

Our Lady of China was originally a Marian apparition, said to have appeared in 1900 in the village of Donglu in Hebei province during the Boxer Rebellion. The villagers asserted that the Marian apparitions were instrumental in protecting them from a wave of Boxer assaults.457

After the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion, an image of Mary was commissioned by the Donglu Catholics to commemorate Mary’s assistance and the memory of their fellow villagers killed by the rebellion.458 The first apostolic delegate to China, Bishop Celso Costantini convened the first plenary council of the Catholic Church in China between May 15 and June 11, 1924. One of the outcomes of the

458 Ibid., 26.
council was the decision to consecrate China to the Virgin Mary. Bishop Costantini chose the Marian image of Donglu to be popularized under title of Our Lady (Holy Mother) of China, Zhonghua Shengmu.

The impulses for the decision to consecrate China to Mary were: The strong Marian devotions that had spread from France in the late nineteenth century and taken root in China, and the belief amongst Chinese Catholics that Mary had been a constant and salvific presence amongst them. While there was a real influence of French Marianism on the development of Chinese devotions to Mary, the Chinese people themselves had a long history of popular devotion to Tianmu or Heavenly Mother figures, notably in the form of the Bodhisattva Guanyin.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s younger contemporary and fellow Chinese Catholic John Wu later wrote of the impact of this Chinese devotion towards the maternal side of the Divine on his own understanding of Catholic spirituality:

In dealing with the Orientals, one cannot too much emphasize that God is more motherly than a mother. The Chinese respect the father, but love the mother. One of the things that attracted me so strongly to St. Thérèse of Lisieux is that she knew well the maternal quality of God’s love. As she said, “I had long felt that Our Lord is more tender than a mother, and I have sounded the depths of more than one mother’s heart … Fear makes me shrink, whereas under love’s sweet rule I not only advance – I fly.” When I (John Wu) read it, I said to myself, “How Chinese she is!”

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460 Ibid., 42.
461 Ibid., 39.
John Wu wrote that he was drawn to St. Thérèse because of her writings on the maternal aspects of God’s love. Wu was, almost certainly, also a devotee of the Virgin Mary.

The traditional Chinese fascination and devotion to a figure of the “Heavenly Mother” may explain why Paul Xu was reported to have converted before an image of the Virgin Mary. From the time of Paul Xu, through the lifetimes of Lou Tseng-Tsiang and John Wu, until the present day, Chinese devotion to the Virgin Mary has endured. In 2013, two thousand and five hundred Chinese Catholics were reported to have celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Sheshan, another Marian apparition in China that was said to have occurred on the outskirts of Shanghai.464

Lou Tseng-Tsiang had hoped to share his Christian faith with his compatriots. Although he never got the chance to return to China as a missionary, Christianity, including Catholicism has taken root in China. A Chinese Christian community survives and grows, despite official regulation and persecution. The Chinese faithful might believe that while Lou never physically returned to China, he continues to intercede for them in Heaven, as he had prayed for them and for China during his lifetime. As for Lou himself, even during his final conscious moments he was thinking of his beloved homeland China.465

Chapter Eight

To Die Of Love

J'ai médité l’Évangile en fonction de moi-même et en fonction de mon pays. À cette lumière, j'ai revécu toutes les avanies qu'avait subies et que subissait encore le people chinois, dont, depuis un siècle, la faiblesse était devenue la risée de l’univers ...\textsuperscript{466}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote of his religious vocation as a means of remaining faithful to his departed wife, as well as to his departed mentor Xu Jingcheng. Apart from devotion to his deceased loved ones, Lou also remained dedicated all his life to his patrie, China. As a Benedictine monk, he practiced lectio divina, the traditional Benedictine way of meditating the scriptures. Through these meditations, Lou reflected on and re-experienced the affronts the Chinese had suffered and continued

\textsuperscript{466} Dom Pierre-Célestin Lou Tseng-Tsiang, \textit{Souvenirs et Pensées} (Flavigny-sur-Ozerain: Traditions Monastiques, 2009), 84.
to suffer in his day, when the weakness of China had made it the laughing stock of the world.

As a monk, Lou Tseng-Tsiang began to understand the sufferings of homeland and his own trials in the light of Catholic teachings on suffering and grace.\(^{467}\) Lou prayed for China, and continued to pay attention to developments there and advocate for his country’s cause when possible. His meditations and his religious life were a source of rejuvenation. The photo above depicts Lou wearing the pectoral cross of an abbot, after his consecration as the first Chinese Benedictine abbot in 1946.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang was no longer the boyish interpreter of St. Petersburg, nor the smartly dressed diplomat in the portrait from 1919, nor the weary, heartbroken husband by Madame Lou’s grave, worn down by years of toil and personal grief. He was an old monk, an abbot, wearing the distinctive black robes of his community and bearing the pectoral cross that reflects the dignity of his office. He appears to be at peace. Though his heart and mind continued to be turned towards China and the pains of the Chinese people, he now believed that those hardships were not meaningless.

The great Chinese poet Tao Yuanming (365–427 CE) once wrote, “Cai ju dong li xia, youran jian nanshan.”\(^{468}\) This sentence can be rendered as, “When one picks the chrysanthemum flowers by the eastern fence, the eye leisurely glimpses the mountains of the south.” Tao Yuanming painted an idealistic portrait of a bucolic life in the countryside, far from the strains of officialdom. As the poet leisurely plucks the chrysanthemum flowers growing on the eastern fence of his retreat, “Cai ju dong li

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\(^{467}\) Ibid.

\(^{468}\) 采菊东篱下, 悠然见南山.”
“xia,” his eye catches sight of the southern mountains, the direction from whence he came, “youran jian nanshan.”

In Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s case, however, though he was far away from his homeland in the peaceful sanctuary of the abbey, and he too had let go of officialdom, his thoughts and his heart were always turned towards China. He made sure to stay updated on developments about his homeland through newspapers and letters from friends and acquaintances.

**China and the Holy See**

One area of continued interest to Lou Tseng-Tsiang in the abbey was the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between China and the Holy See. While still with the foreign ministry of China, Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself had been one of those who had initiated official Sino-Vatican diplomatic contact. The Holy See had been receptive initially, but those efforts came to naught due to the opposition of a European power, France, that claimed the protectorate over Christians in China. It would take another quarter-century before full diplomatic ties were established between the Holy See and the Republic of China.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang later reflected on how the stalled development of Sino-Vatican diplomatic relations was another instance of the Western powers’ maltreatment of China:

<Comment voulez-vous, dans ces conditions, que l’opinion publique d’un pays non-chrétien ne soit vraiment induite en erreur au sujet des missions catholiques, au sujet de l’Église et au sujet du christianisme lui-même?>

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According to Lou, it contributed further to the negative perception of Christianity in China, as Christians and Christian missions there had to remain under French protection. The French had first gained that privilege through the Treaty of Tianjin that concluded the Second Opium War. The perpetuation of the French protectorate prolonged the association between Christianity and imperialism in China.

French diplomatic sources record Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s role in the first attempts to build Sino-Vatican diplomatic ties as well as French concern that such a development would jeopardize the French protectorate over Christian missions in China, thereby reducing French influence in China:

Au cours d’un entretien M. Lou Tcheng Hiang (sic) m’a fait savoir qu’à la suite d’une proposition émanant du Ministre de Chine auprès du Quirinal il envisage la création à Rome d’une Agence diplomatique auprès du Vatican. Si ce projet est réalisé, il aura sans doute pour conséquence l’envoi en Chine d’un délégué apostolique. De ce fait, notre protectorat sur les missions se trouverait diminué. Il serait opportun, à mon avis, de faire décourager par Rome une pareille initiative.470

French diplomatic pressure successfully checked the formation of Sino-Vatican diplomatic relations, though it was not until 1943 that full formal diplomatic relations were established between China and the Holy See and both sides exchanged ambassadors. There had been a step-by-step progression towards that stage of relations between the two sides. In the 1920s, despite the earlier French opposition, the Vatican sent its first apostolic delegate to China, Celso Costantini.

On the Vatican’s part, the effort to develop diplomatic relations with countries in East Asia such as China was not motivated by pure altruism either. Since the

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Italian Risorgimento, the popes had lost most of their secular authority and considered themselves prisoners in the Vatican. French diplomatic sources also record how the Papacy saw the expansion of its diplomatic network as a way of regaining influence, and during the years of the Great War, as a possible means for the Holy See to secure a presence at the post-war peace conference:

... la constatation de l’activité diplomatique déployée par le Saint-Siège en ce moment. La reprise avec le Portugal est publiée ; l’entrée en relations avec la Chine serait réalisée, bien que secrète encore ; celle avec la Roumanie amorcés. Cette activité découle avant tout du désir immodéré de faire jouer un rôle politique de premier plan à la Papauté et à cet effet d’augmenter le Corps diplomatique auprès d’elle ainsi que le sien à l’extérieur. Elle provient aussi du désir de faire abroger la clause XV de la Convention de Londres et d'(ouvrir) au Pape l’accès du Congrès de la Paix.\footnote{Barrère, Télégramme de Rome à Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de France à Paris N. 1457, December 13, 1917, Telegram, Volume 65, Collection Asie 1918 – 1940, From Archives Diplomatiques de France, (accessed July 11, 2013).}

The French criticized the immoderate desire (“désir immodéré”) of the Papacy to continue to play an important political role on the world stage. The French critique grew out of the long history of struggle between the French state and the Papacy for control and influence over the Church in France and in the wider world.

It was only in 1929, with the signature of the Lateran Treaty, that the modern city-state of the Vatican City was formally established, guaranteeing the sovereignty of the Holy See over the Vatican and the papal basilicas in Rome. The Vatican continued its diplomatic outreach efforts with East Asia after the signature of the Lateran Treaty.\footnote{For a discussion of the relations between the Holy See and East Asia in the modern period, please refer to Olivier Sibire, Le Saint-Siège Et L'Extrême-Orient (Chine, Corée, Japon) De Léon XIII à Pie XII (1880 – 1952) (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2012).} The diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Republic of China that were established in 1943 have been maintained until the present, with
government of the Republic of China now based in Taiwan. While the progressive development of Sino-Vatican relations would have satisfied Lou, the deterioration of Sino-Japanese relations during his years in the abbey was a matter of great concern for him.

The World Inferno

Lou Tseng-Tsiang watched from afar as the Japanese aggression against China, which had not been checked at Versailles in 1919, mounted with the years. Eventually, Japan devoured Manchuria in 1931, and in 1937 open war broke out between China and Japan. In Europe, Nazi Germany rearmed and was met with a policy of appeasement. A conflagration that had begun in Asia soon became a world war. Lou later reflected on the outbreak of the war:

Le 7 juillet 1937, l’incendie enflammait la Chine entière. En vain, les diplomates chinois jetèrent-ils les hauts cris : « L’incendie ne s’arrêtera pas à nos frontières ! ». ... Lorsque, parallèlement, Hitler en Allemagne, opérait le réarmement moral et matériel de son pays, l’alarme étant générale, les Puissances européennes le laissaient faire.\footnote{Lou, Souvenirs et Pensées, 72 – 73.}

He criticized the Western powers that ignored the warnings of Chinese diplomats that the flames of war in China would spread beyond Chinese borders. He also denounced the policy of appeasement by the European powers that had allowed Hitler to rearm Nazi Germany.

As he wrote in Belgium, a country that experienced first-hand the flames of war such as when the library of the university of Leuven burned down a second time in 1940, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was damning in his condemnation of the statesmen that,
in Lou’s view, had stood by and allowed Germany and Japan to drag the world into war:

<Comment expliquer ceci : les incendiaires sont à l’œuvre ; on le sait, on le voit, et on le tolère ! Mais qu’est-ce donc que la charge d’homme d’État ? N’est-ce pas de « gouverner » ?... Le feu a dévoré le monde entier.\(^{474}\)

Lou chastised those statesmen who had neglected the task of governing. They had seen Japanese and German aggression grow but they tolerated it until war broke out, and as Lou wrote, the war became a global inferno. In the early 1940s, when Lou first drafted *Souvenirs et Pensées*, the final defeat of the Axis powers was still some years away. The war itself would end in the fires unleashed by atomic weaponry, an unprecedented weapon of destruction in human history.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang had been troubled by Japanese aggression towards China from 1931 onwards when Japan invaded Manchuria.\(^{475}\) In response to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and the establishment of the Japanese puppet state Manchukuo, Lou published a booklet entitled, *L’invasion et l’occupation de la Mandchourie jugées à la lumière de la Doctrine Catholique par les écrits du Cardinal Mercier*.

The booklet was published in November 1933, after the findings of the Lytton Report investigating the developments in Manchuria were released largely vindicating the Chinese case regarding Manchuria, and after the subsequent Japanese

\(^{474}\) Ibid., 73.

\(^{475}\) The international community failed to check Japanese aggression. When the League of Nations attempted to condemn Japanese aggression, Japan simply withdrew from the League of Nations on March 27, 1933. The Japanese withdrawal foreshadowed the German withdrawal on October 23, 1933 that preceded the Nazi efforts to rearm Germany, and the Italian withdrawal from the League on December 11, 1937 following the Italian conquest of Ethiopia that the League had failed to prevent or stop.
withdrawal from the League of Nations. In this booklet, Lou Tseng-Tsiang provided a summary of what had transpired in Manchuria, and drew on the writings of Cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier to criticize Japanese aggression against China. Cardinal Mercier had been an embodiment of Belgian resistance against German occupation during World War I, and had spent the war under house arrest.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote of his reasons for publishing the booklet in the preface. He addressed his work to an international audience, including China and Japan:

Je crois accomplir un devoir de Justice, - je crois rendre un service à tous les amis de l’Ordre et de la Paix internationale, à mon propre pays, au Japon lui-même et aux véritables intérêts de ceux qui, hélas ! se sont érigés en ennemis de ma patrie, - en rappelant brièvement les rétroactes et les faits principaux du conflit sino-japonais et en publiant, à leur propos, quelques pages extraites des écrits du Cardinal Mercier au cours de l’occupation du pays dont il était le Pasteur spirituel.\textsuperscript{476}

Crucially, Lou Tseng-Tsiang declared his act of criticism to be in service of principles of justice, and truth, and world peace, and that he based this critique of Japan on Catholic teachings enunciated by Cardinal Mercier, who had been the spiritual leader of the Belgian people during World War I when the Belgians endured German occupation. Lou thought he had a duty to elucidate the facts of the history of the Sino-Japanese conflict, in which he had been enmeshed as well while serving as a foreign minister and a diplomat of China.

In the past, Lou Tseng-Tsiang had also believed other instances of foreign aggression or imposition against China such as the Boxer Protocol and the Twenty-

One Demands to be unjust. In earlier stages of his life, he would have denounced these injustices using the language of internationalism in which he had been trained as a diplomat. In 1933, as a monk living in Belgium, Lou found a new language with which to condemn foreign injustices against China. He probably believed this vocabulary and set of principles that were based on Catholic teachings on justice to be superior to those he may have believed in when younger.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang had borrowed the language and principles elucidated by Cardinal Mercier and grounded in Catholic doctrine to criticize Japanese aggression against China. Lou believed these principles to still be valid because they were based in truth, and truth is immutable and eternal:

> Les principes énoncés par le Cardinal Mercier sont immuables et immortels, parce qu’ils sont vrais. Or, la vérité se venge toujours, tôt ou tard, de ceux qui la trahissent.\(^{477}\)

As Lou noted, the truth would always triumph, sooner or later, over those who had betrayed it. Hence, it was only right that he should present a condemnation of Japanese aggression that had violated true principles of justice.

By pointing out to the Japanese the error of their ways, Lou likely believed he was also rendering them a service. They would have a chance to repent of their wrongdoing before they suffered the consequences of violating the true principles of justice. The leaders of Japan would have considered him naïve in thinking that “repentance” had a role in the public realm.

The efforts of Lou Tseng-Tsiang and other Chinese to decry Japanese aggression and marshal Western support for China did not culminate in many concrete policies to check Japanese expansionism. When open war broke out between

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\(^{477}\) Ibid.
China and Japan in 1937, China fought alone and endured the loss of some its most fertile and industrialized territories to Japan. Despite the losses, the Chinese fought on valiantly until 1945, finally emerging as victors, but at terrible cost.\footnote{478} Two years after war broke out in East Asia, Europe too was consumed by war. The abbey that had been a sanctuary for Lou was also touched by the world war when the German army requisitioned the abbey in 1943. Lou and many others of the community of Sint-Andries found refuge at the nearby priory of Béthanie.

According to Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s own account, during the war he experienced life under occupation by a foreign totalitarian enemy power that sought to dominate all aspects of public and private life:

*Cette guerre m’a donné l’occasion de connaître par moi-même le régime d’occupation imposé à un pays libre par un pouvoir ennemi totalitaire, dont la police secrète d’État s’ingère dans tous les rouages de la vie publique et de la vie privée. Il me fallait en tenir compte. Bien m’en a pris.*\footnote{479}

While giving a religious talk in the salon of Baron Ryelandt on the outskirts of Bruges on July 15, 1942, Lou was interrupted by the Gestapo who broke up the meeting. They stopped Lou from speaking and seized his manuscript. The Gestapo noted the identities of all those present before dispersing them.\footnote{480}

Lou’s brief encounter with the Gestapo made clear to him the reality of life in a totalitarian system that sought to leave no space for the individual. That occasion

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\footnote{479} Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 31 – 32.

\footnote{480} “Le 25 juillet 1942, comme de donnais une causerie religieuse, à Bruges, dans les salons de Baron Ryelandt, la réunion fut interrompue par l’irruption de trois agents de la Gestapo. Ils m’interdirent de parler et, se saisissant de mon manuscrit, l’emportèrent ; après une certaine attente, ils contraignirent l’assistance à se séparer, retendant d’ailleurs toutes les personnes présentes, afin de prendre note de leur identité.” Quoted from Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 32.
was Lou’s sole encounter with the Gestapo. Apart from being expelled from their home, no great harm befell the monks of Sint-Andries during the German occupation.\(^\text{481}\)

Ultimately, the destruction and brutality wrought by World War II was unrivaled in history and left the world in ashes:

\[
\text{Cette atrophie du sens gouvernemental est d’ordre moral et spiritual. Elle donna libre cours à de véritables génies de cruauté; ... Les sacrifices, les héroïsmes et les souffrances furent et sont indicibles.}^{482}
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Lou Tseng-Tsiang believed that the catastrophe of the war was because of a governmental atrophy of a moral and spiritual nature. This had led to unprecedented cruelties occurring during the war. According to Lou, words could not fully express the sacrifices, heroism, and suffering of World War II.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang articulated his hope that there could be a worldwide revival after the destruction of the war:

\[
\text{Les peuples revivront, pourvu que les gouvernants sachent s’oublier eux-mêmes, éduquer les populations, pratiquer la Justice et la faire régner. Ceci requiert la coopération de toutes les forces spirituelles de l’humanité.}^{483}
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Lou remarked that such a revival could only occur if those governing acted in a selfless manner, educated their populations, and practiced and implemented justice. Doing so would require the cooperation of the spiritual forces of all of humanity. In

\(^{481}\) The same could not be said for the community of Belgian Jews, which like other Jewish communities suffered from persecution and then deportations to the death camps. Nevertheless almost half of the population of Belgian Jews survived the war in hiding, thanks in part to the help of non-Jews in Belgium. As of 1 January 2002, 1322 Belgian Righteous Among The Nations had been honored at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. There were Belgian Catholic religious and clergy who did their part to defy the Nazis and protect the Jews, for instance, the Reverend Henri Reynders (Father Bruno), a Benedictine monk, who found places of safety for 320 children. Sourced from Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes Of The Holocaust* (New York, NY: Henry Holt And Company, 2003), 294, 309 – 310.

\(^{482}\) Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 73.

\(^{483}\) Ibid.
these comments, Lou communicated his conception of the ideal statesman. In addition to the concerns with justice and education, that Lou had brought with him into the monastery, as a monk, Lou also developed ideas on the importance of spiritual cooperation between peoples.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang then expressed the hope that statesmen of the future would not repeat the same mistakes and also suffer from pride and a blindness of their moral and spiritual sensibilities. If they did so, they would lose their foresight in the domain of governance:

Que les hommes d’État de demain ne commettent donc pas le crime de s’enorgueillir, de « se paître eux-mêmes », d’obscurcir leur sens moral et spirituel et, ce faisant, de perdre le principe même de la clairvoyance gouvernementale.\(^\text{484}\)

Lou drew on Ezekiel Chapter Thirty-Four to admonish the failings of statesmen. The prophet Ezekiel had criticized the shepherds of Israel, which was the flock of God. Ezekiel was especially critical of those shepherds who had fed themselves off the flock.\(^\text{485}\) Just as Ezekiel admonished the selfish leaders of Israel so did Lou critique the self-serving world leaders of his time.

Contrary to Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s hopes, the end of the world war in 1945 did not bring world peace and a revival of justice. China was torn apart by civil war, and across Southeast Asia, there were wars of liberation, race riots and revolutions. Meanwhile, Eastern Europe fell once more under the yoke of totalitarianism. While the Second World War destroyed a large swath of Europe and Asia, it was also during

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\(^{484}\) Ibid.

\(^{485}\) Ezekiel 34 (Authorized King James Version)
this period that Lou wrote his most widely read published work, *Souvenirs et Pensées*.

**Gathering Memories**

The writing and publication of *Souvenirs et Pensées* was spurred by the curiosity of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s fellow monastic brothers in the abbey who wished to learn about his life. They wondered how a man from the Far East, who had held some of the highest offices in China and whose career had taken him from Shanghai to St. Petersburg, to The Hague, to Paris and Beijing, now found himself living as a humble monk in a Benedictine abbey on the outskirts of Bruges. They were keen on learning why Lou had given up his comfortable life, his beautiful villa and his servants to take on vows of poverty, obedience and chastity as a monk.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang recalled that his fellow monks had conveyed a desire to hear his story:

... les moines de l’abbaye de Saint-André, qui, à plusieurs reprises, m’avaient exprimé le désir de connaître de plus près les principaux événements de ma carrière publique et la ligne même de ma vie. Pour répondre à cette marque de fraternelle sympathie, je fis un choix parmi mes souvenirs les plus marquants et je les rédigeai sous forme de conférences, qui furent données par moi à la communauté de Saint-André, au cours de l’année 1943.

In response to their questions, which he appreciated as a sign of fraternal sympathy, Lou decided to share the story of his life and career. Lou focused on the most striking memories, such as of the Twenty-One Demands and the Paris Peace Conference. Because Lou’s destiny had been so closely intertwined with that of China’s, he was in effect also sharing a history of China and of Christianity in China.

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During the war, despite the surrounding turmoil, life went on for the monks of Sint-Andriesabdij. They had been forced to seek refuge at the nearby Priory of Bethany after the German army occupied their own monastery. It was during this time in 1943 that Lou Tseng-Tsiang first began sharing the anecdotes of his past in the form of conferences. These conferences may have lifted some of the monotony and gloom of life under occupation. The texts of these conferences were compiled and published as *Souvenirs et Pensées*.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang claimed that these conferences and, later, *Souvenirs et Pensées* served merely to gather some memories and thoughts, and that they were not true memoirs:

>Ces pages ne forment pas des mémoires. Elles se bornent à réunir quelques souvenirs et quelques pensées. ... Si la providence m’aménait, un jour, à écrire des mémoires, je ne pourrais le faire qu’en chinois, ma langue maternelle, qui, seule peut exprimer dans toutes leurs nuances les pensées de mon esprit et les sentiments de mon coeur.488

Lou remarked that if he ever wrote his memoirs someday, he could only do so in Chinese, his maternal language in which he could best communicate the nuances of his thoughts and the sentiments of his heart.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote of the decision to publish *Souvenirs et Pensées* as a way for his account to reach a broader audience in Europe and America. It was also meant to reach his compatriots:489

>En les lisant, ils découvriront combien, au cours de ces années passées à l’étranger, spécialement des années de guerre, la pensée et l’amour de la Patrie absente se sont encore, si possible, avivés en moi.490

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487 Ibid.
488 Ibid.
489 Ibid.
490 Ibid.
Lou hoped that by reading *Souvenirs et Pensées*, his Chinese friends and countrymen would know that through all the long years abroad, his attachment to China had not wavered. If anything, it was even stronger or possibly revived in the years of war.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang included a copy of a letter King Albert I of the Belgians had written him into the foreword of *Souvenirs et Pensées*. The king’s letter was a response to a letter that Lou had written to his highness upon entry to the abbey at Saint-André. Lou held the deceased King Albert I in high regard, and was touched by the king’s personal response. Hence, Lou’s decision to reprint the copy of the royal letter in *Souvenirs et Pensées*.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang also recounted in *Souvenirs et Pensées* an audience with the king in the aftermath of the events at Versailles in 1919:

*Le roi m’interrogea avec une ouverture et une sympathie qui me frappent très vivement. Je vis aussitôt qu’il me permettait de lui exposer sans ambages tout le drame des relations de la Chine avec l’Occident. L’audience se prolongea pendant plus d’une heure.*

King Albert genuinely listened to Lou who elaborated on China’s grievances with regards to Sino-Western relations for more than an hour. That alone was more than what the Great Powers were willing to do at Versailles in 1919 and a reason for gratitude on Lou’s part.

The king himself had been loved and respected by his people, having personally commanded the Belgian army in World War I as a soldier-king. Albert I and the Belgian royal family had spent most of the war in West Flanders, in the last patch of Belgian territory not conquered by Germany and close to the front where

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491 Ibid., 33 – 35.
492 Ibid., 68.
Belgian soldiers fought. Albert I was also reported to be a devout Catholic who never missed Sunday mass if it was possible for him to attend it. He represented for Lou the ideal of a monarch and a statesman who truly cared for his people and was close to the common folk, and was a leader who stuck to his principles.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang concluded the foreword of *Souvenirs et Pensées* with the hope that the work would bear witness to his gratitude for God’s bounty, as well as to the justice of divine Providence for China. He dedicated the book to his deceased parents, wife, and mentor Xu Jingcheng. *Souvenirs et Pensées* was first published in January 1945, bringing Lou’s voice beyond the walls of the abbey of St André. Soon after the publication of *Souvenirs et Pensées*, there would be another occasion for Lou’s voice to be heard.

**The Burden Raised to the Altar**

After the publication of *Souvenirs et Pensées*, the next major opportunity for Lou Tseng-Tsiang to share his views publicly was after his elevation to the dignity of titular abbot of the abbey of St. Pierre de Gand. This was a milestone on Lou’s journey of faith.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s assumption of a new role as an abbot was intended to be a precursor to him eventually leading a mission back to China to establish a new Benedictine house there. Lou became the first Chinese Benedictine abbot in Church

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494 Ibid., 397.
495 “Je voudrais que cet opuscule soit un modeste témoignage de reconnaissance à la bonté de Dieu pour ma pauvre personne et à la justice de sa Providence pour ma chère Patrie. Je le dédie à la mémoire bénie de ceux à qui je dois, après Dieu, le plus de bien sur cette terre : mes vénérés parents, M. Lou Yong-Fong et Madame Lou, née Ou Kin-Ling, à la mémoire glorieuse de mon maître, le ministre Shu King-Shen et à celle, très aimée, de ma femme, Berthe Lou Tseng-Tsiang, née Bovy. En leurs personnes et en toutes choses, Dieu soit glorifié.” Quoted from Lou, *Souvenirs et Pensées*, 32.
history. This was an honor conferred on him by papal decree. The ceremony of his consecration as abbot was widely covered in the local press of the time.\(^{496}\)

The ceremony on August 10, 1946, was a chance for Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s voice to be heard because he delivered an address:

\[\text{Pourquoi le Ciel a-t-il voulu que, dès ma jeunesse, - sans que j’en aie fait moi-même le projet, - ma destinée personnelle ait été unie étroitement à celle de ma patrie, à celle de l’État Chinois...}^{497}\]

Lou began his address by reflecting on the question of why, ever since his youth, his destiny had been closely intertwined with that of China. It was a question to which Lou had no answer, and likely neither the historian.

On this solemn occasion, Lou Tseng-Tsiang once again recalled how he and his fellow Chinese diplomats had borne on their shoulders the burden of national humiliation:

\[\text{Ma vie durant, mes collègues du Corps Diplomatique Chinois et moi nous avons porté sur nos épaules le fardeau de nos humiliations nationales. Ce fardeau, je l’ai gardé sur moi dans ma vie religieuse. Puis, gravissant, à l’âge de 64 ans, les hauteurs du sacerdoce, je l’ai élevé jusque sur l’autel du Seigneur.}^{498}\]

Since becoming a monk, Lou began to understand these past trials in the light of Catholic teachings on suffering. Once Lou was ordained a priest, he offered up these

\(^{496}\) A collection of newspaper cuttings of reports on the abbatial benediction of Dom Pierre-Célestin Lou Tseng-Tsiang has been preserved in the archives of Sint-Andriesabdij.


sufferings to the altar of God. Moreover, Lou was likely not just offering up his own personal sufferings but those of China as well.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang continued his address by using the language of religion to describe China’s renewal:

Messieurs, ce sont nos épreuves qui ont préparé notre renaissance. Dans ces épreuves, aux aspects si divers, Dieu nous a donné deux hommes.\(^499\)

Just as Christ had to suffer before being resurrected, so too did China have to suffer before being reborn, Lou asserted. He credited China’s rebirth to Sun Yat-Sen and Chiang Kai Shek, the two of whom Lou saw as being given to China by God, perhaps in the way God had given the Israelites judges, and then kings, to lead the Chosen People in the face of their enemies.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s assessment of Sun Yat-Sen and Chiang Kai Shek was overly generous:

Le premier a réveillé son people et a modifié la forme de l’Etat. Le second a complètement redressé notre vie publique; maintenant, il nous conduit vers la seule condition conforme à nos forces et à nos richesses, qui sont immenses, à notre passé et à votre avenir, je veux dire la condition de grande puissance…\(^500\)

Lou held the two men in high regard because Sun was seen as the revolutionary father of modern China who had reawakened the Chinese people and helped topple the moribund Qing Dynasty to establish the Republic of China. Chiang, meanwhile, was seen as the leader who reunified China from the disunion of the warlord period, and who had led China during the war of resistance against Japan.

\(^{499}\) Ibid., 3 – 4.
\(^{500}\) Ibid., 4.
More importantly, Lou Tseng-Tsiang saw Chiang Kai Shek as the leader who was leading China back to the higher status befitting a country with China’s resources, that of a great power. Lou elaborated on this vision of China:

...de la grande puissance que nous serons demain, - qui, fidèle à nos traditions antiques, entend professer et pratiquer la Primauté du Spirituel et qui, au service de cette Primauté, est sûre de vaincre ses propres faiblesses, de tenir tête à ses ennemis, d’avoir la force de leur pardonner et de se réconcilier avec eux, et, ce faisant, de posséder la paix et d’aider à l’étendre.  

Lou believed that as a great power, China would remain loyal to its ancient traditions, and emphasize the primacy of the spiritual. By doing so, China would surely overcome its own proper weaknesses, stand up to its enemies, and, more crucially, forgive and be reconciled with its enemies, thereby simultaneously gaining peace and helping to further it.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s vision of China as a great power differed markedly from subsequent and contemporary Chinese government conceptions of China as a powerful country. Indeed, Chinese policy to achieve great power status after 1949 violated all the traits of a great power that Lou had named. The Chinese Communist government’s policies for national revival focused primarily on material development at terrible cost to China’s people and environment.

Mao Zedong’s plan to turn China into a steel producer to rival Great Britain during the Great Leap Forward resulted in one of history’s worst famines with millions of people dead. Mao then launched the Cultural Revolution that ruthlessly sought to remove all that was spiritual in China. After Mao’s death, Deng Xiaoping and his successors’ policies for Chinese development remained focused to this day on

501 Ibid.
material development. Spirituality and tradition are allowed only if they serve the Communist party’s agenda.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang continued his address by nodding back to his diplomatic career and his colleagues:

Vous me reprocheriez, Messieurs, un vrai manque de coeur, si, en terminant, je ne redisais, aujourd’hui toute ma profonde affection à mes propres compatriotes, à mes collègues et anciens collaborateurs du Corps Diplomatique Chinois, qui au moment où je deviens Abbé, se retrouvent à défendre la cause de la Paix à la Conférence de Paris, comme nous le fîmes ensemble, il y a 27 ans, au Congrès de Versailles.  

On this solemn occasion, Lou said it was imperative for him to remember his former colleagues in the Chinese diplomatic corps affectionately. In 1946, some of them had gathered in Paris as part of deliberations concerning the nature of the post-war international order, just as had been done twenty-seven years ago in Versailles. The 1919 Paris Peace Conference had left its mark on Lou, such that it is the only one of the multiple international conferences he attended that he mentioned explicitly in his address.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang then stated his desire to return to China to share with his compatriots all that he had received from God through Christianity:

Le Christianisme est le couronnement du Confucianisme et mon seul désir est de donner à la Chine, et, par elle, à l’Extrême-Orient, tout ce que le Seigneur a daigné me donner à moi-même.

When Lou said that Christianity is the culmination of Confucianism, it is probable that he did not mean that Christianity is superior to Confucianism. He likely meant that while the humanism and values of Confucianism are praiseworthy, Confucianism

\[502\text{Ibid., 10.}\]
\[503\text{Ibid., 11.}\]
lacks the truth and knowledge of the Almighty that can only be found through divine Revelation.

The lack of Revelation was through no fault of Confucius himself, or that of any of the other Chinese sages, but rather a matter of divine Providence. Lou believed that this truth and divine Revelation could be found in Christianity, and so he wished to share it with China and to help Confucianism attain its true fulfillment. The question of the relationship between Confucianism and Christianity was one Lou would continue to reflect on, up until the very last years of his life.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang concluded his speech with a toast that reiterated many of the themes he was deeply concerned with:

*Je lève mon verre à la Primauté du Spirituel, à l’établissement de la Paix véritable entre les hommes, à la grandeur et à la gloire de Dieu.*

It was fitting that a former diplomat turned monk and priest like Lou should toast the primacy of the spiritual, the prospect of world peace, and the glory and magnificence of God. Lou had been working towards these goals all his life. Now just as it was in 1946, Lou’s message remains relevant. Lou himself had ardently hoped that he could return to China as a missionary monk to share his message with his fellow Chinese.
The fading note in the photo above presents another opportunity to enter the interior mind and soul of Lou Tseng-Tsiang, and also provides insight into Lou’s desire to return to China as a missionary. Lou had stuck the note on one of his newspaper cutting books. There is no overt indication of the man who was diplomat, minister, monk, and more in the photograph, except for his handwriting. The usage alone of Chinese and French demonstrated once again his bilingual ability. The quotations, meanwhile, revealed his affinity for Chinese culture and Catholic tradition.

The words on the note are as follows:

借花献主
“Mourir d’amour est un bien doux martyr. C’est celui que je voudrais souffrir...” St. Thérèse de l’Enfant-Jésus 18 Septembre 1946

The phrase “借花献主” (Jiehuaxianzhu) is Lou’s take on the Chengyu (Traditional Chinese four-character proverb) “借花献佛” (Jiehuaxianfo). Jiehuaxianzhu can be rendered as “borrowing flowers to give to the lord” while Jiehuaxianfo can be
translated as “borrowing flowers to give to the Buddha.” The traditional Chinese proverb means to use something that was originally another person’s as a gift to be offered to a different person. The gift is usually something good, hence it is shared.

On Lou’s note, the character “花” (Hua, flower) has a double meaning. It does not only refer to the beauty of what St. Thérèse wrote concerning dying of love as a sweet martyrdom that she longed for, which Lou borrowed to offer to the Lord as an expression of his own sentiments. It could also be a reference to St. Thérèse herself because one of her nicknames was the “Little Flower of Jesus,” and Lou Tseng-Tsiang must have been aware of this.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang dated the note 18 Septembre 1946, signifying that it was written after he was consecrated as the first Chinese Benedictine abbot in history on the 10th of August 1946. He was preparing himself internally at this time for an eventual return to China as a Benedictine missionary. St. Thérèse is a patron saint of missions so Lou may have been seeking her intercession as part of his preparations before a mission to China.⁵⁰⁴

Due to her poor health, St. Thérèse never became a missionary herself. In lieu of serving abroad as a missionary, she prayed fervently for the missions during her short but pious life. Lou Tseng-Tsiang himself had always been physically frail since his youth, and he was aware that like St. Thérèse, his weak health might prevent him from becoming a missionary.

⁵⁰⁴ St. Thérèse herself had wanted to become a missionary in Vietnam, which during the 19th century had been the site of a persecution of Catholics on a scale of cruelty considered by the Vatican to be on par with that of the Roman persecutions. St. Thérèse herself was personally inspired by one of the French saints martyred in Vietnam, St. Théophane Venard, a young man who gave up his life for love of God.
Lou Tseng-Tsiang may also have turned to St. Thérèse to find the strength to accept God’s will for him, even if that meant that his personal dream to return to China as a missionary may not have been realized. In the end, Lou never did make it back to China, partly for health reasons, partly because of the Chinese civil war.

Although Lou Tseng-Tsiang never returned to China, he still died loving China. A mort d’amour, or death by love, is not only for martyrs. One like Lou who gave himself so completely to his patrie could also be said to have died a mort d’amour. Even in his final moments, Lou thought of and spoke of China. Dom Édouard Neut, O.S.B., a monk of the community of Sint-Andries who had served as Lou’s secretary and who had stayed by his deathbed in hospital later provided proof of this in his account of Lou’s last days:

Le 8 janvier 1949, il déclare: « Je confie mon pays à Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ ; il est en de bonnes mains. » Le dimanche 9, il exprime le désir de réciter le Pater et me prie de le répéter après lui. À l’invocation : « que votre règne arrive », il modifie le texte : « Que notre Père arrive ! » Doucement, je me permets de répondre : « que votre règne arrive ». À sa troisième insistance, je me rends à sa volonté et je dis après lui : « Que notre Père arrive ! »

On January 8, 1949, a few days before his death, Lou surrendered his care for China into the hands of Jesus-Christ. In the agony of dying, Lou and Neut prayed the Lord’s Prayer together for strength, and Lou implored for the Heavenly Father to come and claim him soon.

In his last few days of agony, Lou Tseng-Tsiang remained preoccupied with the themes that he had been deliberating all his life such as peace, justice and equality:

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Lou also conferred the manuscript of his very last book project, *La Rencontre des Humanités*, to his secretary Edouard Neut. Pope Pius XII and the Holy See had approved of the project. In the book that was published posthumously, Lou reflected on the humanistic encounter between China and the West. After handing his final work to Neut, Lou stated his hope of finding true justice, peace, and equality before God.

Edouard Neut revealed that some of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s last thoughts and words were on how he had given everything to China:


After his concluding reflection on all that he had given to China, Lou’s final recorded words were his expression of joy that he would soon meet the Lord. Soon after that, his death agony began.

Edouard Neut then described how he comforted Lou Tseng-Tsiang in his mortal agony by reminding Lou of Christ’s own agony on the cross. Lou agreed with Neut through nodding his head but could speak no more. The doctor sedated Lou to reduce his pain:

506 Ibid.
507 Ibid., 79
Son visage se marque d’une vive douleur, mais demeure calme. Je lui dis : « C’est l’offrande de la souffrance avec Notre Seigneur sur la croix. » Aussitôt, de la tête, il acquiesce vivement. – Ce fut la dernière manifestation de sa pensée. Le médecin, prévenu, intervient et atténua la douleur. Dom Lou rendit l’âme le samedi matin, 15 janvier, à 11 heures 50, vingtième anniversaire, jour pour jour et heure pour heure, de sa profession monastique. 508

Ultimately, 20 years to the day of his monastic profession, Lou conferred his spirit into the hands of God and breathed his last, on January 15, 1949 at 11:50am.

On the day of his monastic profession, January 15, 1929, Lou Tseng-Tsiang had taken the monastic vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. He was responding to the call of Jesus Christ as recounted in the Gospel of Matthew:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For, my yoke is easy and my burden is light. 509

So it was that Lou Tseng-Tsiang, who had labored long for his country and was weary and burdened, took on the yoke of Christ, and ceased being simply Lou Tseng Tsiang, his old self. He became the new and rejuvenated monk Dom Pierre-Célestin Lou Tseng-Tsiang.

Twenty years later, Dom Pierre-Célestin Lou who had worked hard in the vineyard of the lord at Sint-Andriesabdij went to eternal rest. The faithful may believe that it was no mere coincidence that he passed away on the 20th anniversary of his monastic profession. Some may even believe that his death in January 1949 was a grace, so that he would not live to see the destruction of much of what he held dear in China after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in October 1949.

Lou’s passing was mourned not just by his fellow monks but also by those of his

508 Ibid.
509 Matthew 11: 28-30 (Authorized King James Version).
Chinese compatriots who had known him and come to appreciate him for his diplomatic contributions to China, and his later humanistic vision grounded in faith and tradition.
Conclusion

What Lingers in the Mind’s Eye

January 22, at midnight, I (Lokuang) arrived back in Rome. I reread the journal of my visit to Lou Tseng-Tsiang, and looked at the mementos he had given me. The actions and spirit of his life lingered in my mind’s eye.\(^{510}\)

The quotation above illustrates how Stanislaus Lokuang, Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s younger friend and compatriot made a melancholy return to Rome after attending Lou’s funeral in January 1949. Lou Tseng-Tsiang was buried in the graveyard of Sint-Andriesabdij under the gravestone photographed above.

The gravestone mentions Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s rank at death as a titular abbot and depicts his abbatial coat of arms. The presence of the character “天” (Tian), a traditional Chinese name for Heaven, nods towards Lou’s Chinese heritage. Chinese

Catholics also refer to God as “天主” (Tianzhu). No mention, however, is made on the tombstone of Lou’s past as a diplomat, as a minister, as a husband.

To learn more about Lou Tseng-Tsiang one must look past the simple gravestone, and do as Lokuang did and regard Lou’s writings, his possessions, his photos etc. This process might stir up the voice and memory of Lou as it did for Lokuang. Some months after Lou’s funeral, Lokuang published the first edition of his biography of Lou Tseng-Tsiang to share Lou’s voice, story and message with a wider audience.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang may have passed away more than 60 years ago. But as this thesis shows, his message remains just as relevant today. As a young man in the working his way up the ranks of the foreign service of the Qing Dynasty, Lou had experienced firsthand how the imperialist powers could either disregard or look condescendingly at both international and domestic Chinese issues. As a minister for the then young Republic of China, his voice was heard in China itself, depending on the circumstances. It was heard in the Chinese foreign ministry that he helped to reform. Later, Lou was vilified and then lauded in turn: condemned as a traitor for signing the Twenty-One Demands Treaty in 1915, then praised as a hero for ultimately rejecting the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

When he retreated from the world of professional diplomacy and politics to take up a religious vocation he found a language that allowed his voice to resonate internationally. Inside China, however, the majority of his compatriots were not able to hear him. His message, nonetheless, speaks to the China of the time, and continues to remain relevant today. This thesis along with other recent works of scholarship on
Lou Tseng-Tsiang and his life and times serve to bring his views on Christianity and justice back to the audiences of today.

**A Very Delicate Notion of Justice**

Lou Tseng-Tsiang had believed for many years in the power of Christianity and what it could possibly contribute to China:

*Le Christianisme est, essentiellement, une religion de vérité et de vie ... La force sociale du Christianisme naît de ce « sens très délicat de la justice » ... Le Christianisme vient de Dieu.*

In 1938, an edited volume entitled *La Voix De l’Église En Chine (The Voice Of The Church In China)* was published by Éditions de la Cité Chrétienne in Brussels. It included contributions from prelates in the Chinese church such as Archbishop of Nanjing Paul Yu-Pin, Mgr. Marius Zanin, etc. Lou Tseng-Tsiang wrote the preface to the volume, from which the above quote is taken. He used it as an opportunity to reflect on the social force of Christianity.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang claimed that Christianity was a religion of truth and life that strengthens in individual Christians and in Christian societies the gifts of God that are put in service of neighbor for the glory of God. Lou also propounded the social force of Christianity that was grounded in a delicate sense of justice. This sense of justice was based on the faith that Christianity and its message of justice came from God.

In his preface, Lou Tseng-Tsiang had quoted from a papal Encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, issued in 1931 by Pope Pius XI. This encyclical is crucial because it contributed to the body of doctrine that is Catholic Social Teaching, which

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provides an alternative way of understanding and possibly resolving modern socio-political and economic issues.\textsuperscript{512} \textit{Quadragesimo Anno} itself discussed the question of the reconstruction of the social order, and proposed a corporatist alternative to both liberal and socialist models of society.\textsuperscript{513}

Lou Tseng-Tsiang had hoped to contribute to the transmission of Christianity in China so that Chinese society would benefit from the spread of Christian virtues such as love of justice, faith and charity. Lou himself had first experienced Christian charity as a child in Shanghai through the missionaries of the London Missionary Society. Later, the spread of Catholic Social Teaching in China was in his view, an alternative for Chinese society beyond the attractions of nationalism and communism.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s poor health, the Chinese civil war and his death in January 1949 prevented Lou from returning to China as a Christian missionary. Lou’s death also spared him from having to look on from abroad as the Chinese Communists inflicted three decades of suffering, death and destruction upon his people and country, through the initial violence after the Communist takeover in October 1949, the Anti-Rightist movement, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution. The Communists violently persecuted Christians and many others of different religious beliefs.

Despite these horrors, Christianity survived in China, and continues to grow today. Moreover Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s dream that his compatriots might someday learn from the virtues of Christianity seems be in the process of being realized. In a

\textsuperscript{512} For an overview of Catholic Social Teaching, please refer to Michael P. Hornsby-Smith, \textit{An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
\textsuperscript{513} Joe Holland, \textit{Modern Catholic Social Teaching: The Popes Confront the Industrial Age 1740 – 1958} (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003), 206.
recently published book entitled *Christian Values in Communist China*, the author Gerda Wielander argues that as contemporary Chinese increasingly believe their society has become amoral and selfish amidst seemingly endless reports of scandals and corruption, they are looking towards Christians as people with higher ethical standards and who are thereby more trustworthy and reliable.\(^{514}\)

More significantly, Wielander argues that the Christian influence in contemporary China is manifested by increasing use of the word “爱” (*Ai*) or “love” among Chinese opinion-makers and academics.\(^{515}\) Contemporary Chinese discourse of *Ai* meanwhile draws from the Greek idea of *agape*, or caring for one’s neighbors, which is expounded by Christianity.\(^{516}\)

Wielander sees current Chinese government expectations that religious groups engage in charitable work such as poverty alleviation to be a further sign of Christian influence as a century ago, most of those engaged in such work were Christians through the missionary hospitals, schools, orphanages etc.\(^{517}\) In a way therefore, Lou’s hopes that Christian values might take root and grow in China seems to be becoming a reality. During his lifetime, Lou hoped not only that Christian values might find a place in Chinese society, but also that they might provide a way towards peaceful Sino-Japanese relations.

**A New Life Between China and Japan**

In 1938 when *La Voix de L’Église en Chine* was published, war had already broken out between China and Japan. Against this backdrop, Lou Tseng-Tsiang

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\(^{515}\) Ibid., 46, 63.
\(^{516}\) Ibid., 46, 48.
\(^{517}\) Ibid., 66 – 67, 69 – 70.
presented his hope for Sino-Japanese reconciliation that was based on his faith in God:

*Daigne l’intervention divine éclairer les hommes d’État ... Alors, pourra débuter entre la Chine et le Japon une vie nouvelle, dans laquelle ces deux peuples voisins, en des relations de parfaite égalité et de sincère estime mutuelle, s’entraideront dans leurs développements politiques et moraux, culturels et économiques ; - et le cercle de leurs relations ne sera fermé à aucun peuple de l’univers.*

He prayed that God would enlighten the leaders of China and Japan and give them the grace to lead the two nations into a new era of relations.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang longed for a new era of Sino-Japanese relations that would be marked by mutual equality, respect, and mutual aid in political, moral, cultural and economic development. This hope was grounded in a broader vision for world peace that would have as its basis faith in God. In essence Lou was espousing a form of the traditional vision for “Datong” or “Grand Harmony.”

This vision of Sino-Japanese relations is striking because it came from a man who came of age in the Chinese Foreign Service as Japan humiliated China in the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894 – 1895. Lou Tseng-Tsiang then experienced for himself Japanese aggression against China when he signed the Twenty-One Demands Treaty in 1915. Later in Versailles he watched the Allied Powers recognize Japanese claims over former German concessions in Shandong in 1919. Despite these experiences, Lou did not seem to have borne any elemental or racial hatred against Japan and the Japanese.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s Christian faith may have helped him forgive the Japanese for their crimes against China, and Lou may have realized that crying for retribution

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518 Les Évêques Chinois et al., *La Voix de L’Église En Chine*, 16.
would only bring more suffering and death to both peoples. His grounding in Confucianism meanwhile led him to hope that Christianity could provide a means of realizing the ancient dream of Datong. Crucially, Lou’s vision of world peace based on a foundation of faith is markedly different from that the internationalist vision once espoused by President Wilson and which many Chinese had bought into in 1919 only to be severely disappointed. Lou was in 1938 offering his people a different vision.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s vision remains just as relevant today as it was in 1938, especially in East Asia. While both China and Japan have cultivated significant economic ties with each other, neither side currently seems to be interested in building a relationship of genuine equality and respect. Instead both sides have over the past year escalated tensions, risking conflict in East Asia once again. Lou’s hopes concerning Sino-Japanese relations should be something current Chinese and Japanese policy-makers keep in mind. Lou was not solely concerned about Sino-Japanese reconciliation, and he also thought and wrote about Sino-Western relations.

**The Humanistic Encounter**

In his final years, Lou Tseng-Tsiang reflected on the divisions between different civilizations, as well as the role of intellectuals in facilitating human unity. He was working on a manuscript of a book entitled *La rencontre des humanités et la découverte de l’évangile*. The book was published posthumously in April 1949:

> Ma pensée se résume en très peu de mots: le problème des relations internationales n’est pas, au premier chef, d’ordre politique : il est avant tout, de caractère intellectuel et moral. Dans son fondement, ce problème est celui des liens et des séparations qu’établissent, entre les hommes, la parenté ou la dissemblance qui unit ou qui sépare leurs
Lou made the argument that the problem of international relations was not primarily political but rather intellectual and moral. He saw the world as composed of multiple civilizations built on different humanistic foundation stones.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang believed that moral and intellectual forces were superior to material factors:

*L’identité de civilisation est un élément dont la force domine de très hautes toutes les divergences d’ordre économique. Les milieux intellectuels qu’unit une même culture sont la vraie puissance directrice des populations. ... Les puissances économiques sont contraintes de s’y conformer et de plier devant lui.*

Lou claimed that intellectuals who grasped the essences of their respective civilizations were capable of uniting and leading their respective societies. Even economic forces had to comply and submit to the power and influence of the fundamental humanistic cores of civilizations and the intellectuals who guided a society.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang had a very idealistic view of the role of intellectuals in society that was not realized in China during his lifetime. It was, however, a conception that has its basis in traditional Chinese ideas about intellectuals or *Wenren.*

In traditional China, the literati were simultaneously scholars and artists, and were seen as the conscience of society and the conveyors of cultural heritage. The classical Chinese education system trained educated men to serve society. In the modern era, Chinese revolutionaries labeled these intellectuals...

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520 Ibid., 12 – 13.
521 “文人” (*Wenren*).
superstitious and corrupt and believed the Chinese people needed to be “liberated” from the shackles of tradition in order for China to progress towards modernity.\textsuperscript{522} Lou was thus making a plea directed perhaps at his fellow Chinese not to discard their heritage in the very moment that Chinese Communists were starting to “liberate” their country from “feudal” traditions as they marched to power.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s reflections on humanistic dialogue were probably stimulated by the international climate of the time. He may have seen the recently ended Second World War as a manifestation of a fundamental intellectual and moral collapse rather than simply of political disputes turned violent. His valuation of humanism and intellectuals was probably a critique of Marxism-Communism that understood the world in fundamentally material terms, as well as of Fascism that worshipped the state and valued ties of race and nation above all else. A civilizational identity based on humanistic core values is certainly broader and more open than one based on racial, national or class identities.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang continued his argument by emphasizing once again the value of Confucianism and Christianity, especially Catholicism:

\begin{quote}
Le Confucianisme est une grande école de culture et de vie humaines; dans son interprétation antique, il est une géniale mise à jour des principes et des prescriptions de la Loi Naturelle. ... l’Église Catholique, qui parvint à sauver le fondement humain de la civilisation occidentale: le trésor de l’antiquité gréco-latine. Elle érigerait sur ces assises l’édifice spirituel dont la construction se poursuit, aujourd’hui sur le terrain de toutes les civilisations....\textsuperscript{523}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{523} Lou, La Rencontre Des Humanités Et La Découverte De L’Évangile, 14 – 15.
Lou understood Confucianism to be a great school of Chinese culture and way of life. He also believed the teachings of Confucianism to be realizations of the eternal principles of natural law. Meanwhile he recognized the contribution of the Catholic Church to Western civilization through the Church’s preservation of the learning of Greco-Roman antiquity that Lou understood to be the humanistic basis of Western civilization. On this foundation the Church had erected a spiritual edifice that had spread throughout the world.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s various learning experiences helped him to value both Chinese and Western humanism. Lou had received private tutoring in the Chinese classics when growing up in Shanghai and always appreciated the Confucian texts. Lou’s subsequent monastic vocation facilitated his appreciation of the humanities and the humanistic aspects of Western civilization. Benedictine monasteries were noted for their libraries that preserved the learning of Latin and Greek antiquity.524

The Benedictine rule itself, particularly Chapter 48 enjoins reading as part of the daily monastic routine.525 Chapter 38 of the Benedictine rule meanwhile regulates the reading during meal times, and no meal is to be taken without being accompanied by reading, “La lecture ne doit jamais manquer à la table des frères pendant leurs repas.”526

A love for learning is therefore very much ingrained into the Benedictine tradition, and this would have resonated with Lou Tseng-Tsiang who learnt from Confucianism the value of learning from the past. Moreover, the Chinese tradition

526 Ibid., 102.
also emphasized the value of re-reading and reflecting on good texts in order to comprehend them, as encapsulated by a saying from noted Song Dynasty poet Su Shi (1037 – 1101 CE), who wrote, “Jiushu buyan baihui du, shudu shensi zi zizhi,” that can be rendered as “One is not weary from re-reading a good book a hundred times, only by reading thoughtfully and reflecting does one understand the text.”

The questions Lou Tseng-Tsiang raised concerning the humanistic encounter between Asia and the West continue to be discussed. In a recently published volume of essays entitled The Great Civilized Conversation: Education For A World Community, William Theodore de Bary engages some of these questions:

… the major Asian traditions as well. They too had longstanding traditions of a Great Conversation, as later writers spoke to and reappropriated their own classics and thus engaged with the great minds of the past. … By the eighteenth century, at least, Western writers recognized that Asian traditions had classic thinkers who spoke to the same issues and concerns, though perhaps in somewhat different terms.

De Bary points out how in the modern period, Western thinkers began to engage with the classics of Asian traditions, recognizing that they also spoke to similar human questions and concerns, albeit in different terms. Engaging with different classical traditions therefore offered the possibility of gaining new perspectives on old questions. The Great Conversation in both China and the West did not involve merely conserving tradition. It also required analysis, reflection and the renewal of the Classics for contemporary concerns.

527 “旧书不厌百回读，熟读深思子自知” (Jiushu buyan baihui du, shudu shensi zi zizhi).
This conversation concerned Lou Tseng-Tsiang as well. His reverence of both Confucianism and Catholicism also reflect his concern with rooted modernity. Lou was a modernizer who had pursued reforms but remained grounded in tradition. This was one of the many qualities of Lou that became retrospectives celebrated by his compatriots.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang In The Memories of His Compatriots

The photo above depicts a postcard found in the Lou Tseng-Tsiang archives of Sint-Andriesabdij. On the front of the postcard is a photo of Pope Pius XII with then Chinese ambassador to the Holy See, John Wu Ching Hsiung and his family. Members of the Chinese legation staff also appear in the photo, including the future Archbishop Stanislaus Lokuang. The photo shows the harmony between the traditional Chinese value of the family and the Catholic Church and faith. Such harmony was precisely what Lou had advocated.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang, John Wu and Lokuang were all prominent Chinese Catholics and altogether they represented the different facets of Chinese
Both John Wu and Lokuang had known Lou Tseng-Tsiang and contributed to the preservation of his memory after Lou’s death.

On 15 February 1949, a month after Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s death on 15 January 1949, John Wu spoke at the Collegio San Anselmo in Rome about his recently departed friend. The Collegio San Anselmo is the seat of the Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Confederation. The death of Lou Tseng-Tsiang, the first Chinese Benedictine abbot in history was keenly felt right at the heart of the Benedictine Confederation, and in order to understand their departed spiritual brother better, the Benedictines sought help from another Chinese Catholic who was making an impression on the Catholic Church with his intellect and his abilities, John Wu.

John Wu (1899 - 1986) was born in Ningbo (宁波). He graduated with a law degree from Michigan Law School and had a distinguished public service career in China. Amongst the posts he held were: President of the Provisional Court (1929); Adviser on Municipal Affairs to the Shanghai Municipal Council (1931); and he was Vice-Chairman of the Commission for Drafting a Permanent Constitution of China. He was a member of the Legislative Yuan for some time from 1933. He also had a short diplomatic career, serving as a Chinese representative to the Vatican after the establishment of relations with the Holy See. John Wu crossed paths with Lokuang who served as an adviser to the Chinese legation to the Holy See.

Lou Tseng-Tsiang and John Wu had both converted from Protestantism to Catholicism. Lokuang, however, was born into a Catholic family and was not a convert. Furthermore unlike the other two who hailed from the Chinese coastal cities, (Lou Tseng-Tsiang from Shanghai and John Wu from Ningbo), Lokuang was from Hengyang in the inland Hunan province. Unlike Lou Tseng-Tsiang but like John Wu, Lokuang also spent time in the academic world, serving as president of Fu-Jen Catholic University, and also wrote and published a fair number of books. John Wu meanwhile worked as a professor at Seton Hall University Law School in Newark after the Communist takeover of China. He too wrote and published a fair number of books. He was also noted for having translated the Psalms and the New Testament into classical Chinese and the Tao De Jing (道德经) into English. Lou Tseng-Tsiang greatly appreciated John Wu’s translations of the Psalms and the New Testament. The similarities and differences in the lives of these three prominent Chinese Catholic men reveals a bit of the multifaceted nature of Chinese Catholicism.


Wu accepted the Benedictines invitation to speak to them about Lou Tseng-Tsiang. He argued then that Lou’s message was not just for China alone but meant also for the wider world:

Pour Dom Lou, - et pour moi-même, - ce n’est pas la Chine seulement qui est malheureuse; c’est le monde entier. … Il y a des matérialistes de gauche; il y a des matérialistes de droite. Ce sont des hommes qui ont quitté le Dieu vivant pour adorer le veau d’or…L’huizon apostolique et le zèle de Dom Lou ne se sont pas confinés à la Chine ; ils embrassent l’univers.

From a Catholic perspective, John Wu and Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s assessments of the whole world being in a wretched state in the aftermath of World War II were strikingly insightful. According to Lou and Wu, the world had left the path of truth and turned to both left and right wing materialism. Communism and Fascism were both fundamentally atheistic systems that created false idols of their own, and cared little for the dignity of the human person, resulting in the deaths of millions.

In the wake of World War II, a large swath of the world, including China would fall under Communist rule. In many other parts of the world, authoritarian right-wing regimes came to power. Both types of governments would inflict death and suffering on their peoples. Meanwhile in Western Europe and north America, there was a time of material development and prosperity in the decades after World War II, but material comforts alone were clearly not enough to satisfy people, as evidenced by the outpouring of dissatisfaction, frustrations, and disenchantment particularly among Western youth, that began at the end of the 1960s.

John Wu did not end on a note of despair but rather with a call to action to Christians:

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Le monde entier s’est plongé dans une nuit de matérialisme. Nous y sommes plongés avec lui. Mais il nous est possible de nous comporter différemment de lui. Le Seigneur nous invite à lever nos têtes.\footnote{531}{Ibid.}

While the world had fallen into a dark night of materialism, it was possible for Christians to conduct themselves differently. Their faith gave them a reason to raise their heads in hope in God. If Christians lived according to the instructions of God they could bring the light of God to others and change the world around them.

John Wu concluded his eulogy of Lou by borrowing from the classic Chinese Book of Odes:

Il est écrit dans le Livre des Odes : ‘Je pense à mon ami ; il est doux comme le jade’.\footnote{532}{Li-Chee, chap, XLVIII.} Ce jade est sorti des montagnes et des fleuves de Chine et il a été introduit dans le sanctuaire céleste.\footnote{533}{Wu, Dom Lou Sa Vie Spirituelle, 65.}

Wu remarked that his deceased compatriot was as gentle as a piece of precious jade that had originated from the mountains and rivers of China but which had now entered the celestial sanctuary.

The expression of someone being gentle as jade seems initially like an oxymoron. Jade is a hard stone and not a supple material. The Chinese have valued jade since ancient times for its various qualities, such as hardness, durability and color. In the hands of a skilled master, a rough piece of jade could be turned into a graceful work of art. The refinement of jade ornaments gives the illusion of their fragility yet they are remarkably durable.

Likewise, Lou Tseng-Tsiang was like a piece of jade that was refined by a skilled master Xu Jincheng. While Lou’s grace and frail body made him appear weak, in reality he had a strong and durable core. With Xu Jingcheng’s guidance, Lou was
brought out of China and allowed to make his presence felt in the wider world. After John Wu’s eulogy in Rome, another Chinese Catholic, Stanislaus Lokuang commemorated Lou’s life in a different way.

**La Patrie Across The Seas**

Stanislaus Lokuang meanwhile wrote the first full-length published biography of Lou Tseng-Tsiang that was published in the very same year of Lou’s death, 1949. Lokuang’s main sources were *Souvenirs et Pensées* and his own conversations with Lou during visits in 1939 and 1948 to the abbey where Lou lived as a monk. Lokuang’s biography of Lou was republished in 1967.

The two men had candid conversations in which Lou Tseng-Tsiang reminisced about various memories such as his Swiss Villa and his family cemetery in Beijing. Lokuang’s works were the sources on which the discussions of Villa Ida and the Lou family cemetery in this thesis were based. Lokuang was also touched by Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s kindness and hospitality towards him.

Apart from notebooks scribbled with notes, Lokuang also left the abbey with mementos and tokens of affection Lou had given him. Lokuang’s publication of his biography of Lou Tseng-Tsiang and his interview transcripts allowed him to share what he had learned of Lou with the wider world. Lou himself had the chance to tell the story of his life in his own voice through the publication of *Souvenirs et Pensées*.

**The Voice of Lou Tseng-Tsiang**

In Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s own lifetime, the publication of *Souvenirs et Pensées* helped to bring Lou’s voice and his story to a wide international audience. *Souvenirs*

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535 Ibid.

For instance, a certain T. Bowyer Campbell was moved to write to Lou after reading *Ways of Confucius and of Christ*. Campbell shared with Lou his love for China, having worked as a missionary in China and then taught Far Eastern History at Notre Dame University in Indiana for sixteen years before retiring. Campbell also shared with Lou his own conversion from Anglicanism to Protestantism.537

Meanwhile, a certain P. K. C. Tyau to whom Lou had given a copy of his book wrote Lou to share memories of what had transpired behind the scenes at the Chinese Foreign Ministry in 1919 concerning deliberation about whether or not to sign the Treaty of Versailles. By his own account, Tyau was recruited into the Foreign Ministry as a secretary by Lou and remained grateful to Lou for the opportunity he received to work his way up the Chinese diplomatic service.538

The examples above illustrate how the lives of Lou Tseng-Tsiang had meaning for people from different walks of life. This was possibly because it was

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536 Ibid., 13.
much more than a story of how a boy from Shanghai became a diplomat, a minister and a monk. For some, Lou’s story was also a narrative of China’s modernization and internationalization. Others understood it as a love story, of Lou for his wife, his parents, China, Confucianism and Christianity. In the contemporary period, Chinese and Taiwanese both seek to claim Lou Tseng-Tsiang for their own respective national narratives of Chinese history, while the Belgians also have their own vision of how Lou fits into Belgian history and Sino-Belgian relations.

This thesis represents a humble effort to fill in the historical texture that frames the disparate lives of Lou Tseng-Tsiang. It is also a way to explore activities and thoughts for understanding modern Chinese history.

Upon his departure from his last visit to Lou Tseng-Tsiang, Lokuang wrote for his older compatriot a poem the following poem:

Since yesteryear,  
finally, the humble solace  
of this secluded cloister,  
waiting to fulfill the embassy  
of Heaven’s eternal kingdom  
while your passion for justice  
grows ever stronger.

Half this life you built upon  
fortitude and endurance,  
gazing, glimpsing la patrie  
from across many seas.

Today, your human heart  
and Heaven are one.539

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The simple gravestone of a Chinese abbot in the cemetery of Sint-Andriesabdij bears silent witness to Lou who spent his twilight years in the Benedictine sanctuary while his heart and mind remained turned towards China. His pursuit of a religious vocation meant that he was buried away from his homeland, and apart from the graves of his family and his wife.

Nevertheless, Lou Tseng-Tsiang believed that death was only the beginning of an eternal reunion with loved ones, and through death he experienced what Lukuang understood to be a union between Heaven and the human heart.
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The collection of Lou Tseng-Tsiang’s papers and documents at the Sint-Andriesabdij Archives is unprocessed and not catalogued. Hence, items from this archive that were cited in the thesis are listed individually in the bibliography by alphabetical order. To standardize the bibliography, all other archival sources cited are also listed individually in the bibliography and categorized by archive consulted. For information on access dates of archival material, please refer to footnotes.

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