

Geliş Tarihi : 20.06.2021  
Kabul Tarihi: 06.07.2022

Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi  
*Journal Of Modern Turkish History Studies*  
XXII/44 (2022-Bahar/Spring), ss. 409-443.

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

## AMERICAN BOARD ACTIVITIES IN CHINA AND SUN YAT-SEN\*

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### Abstract

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), shortly known as the American Board, was one of the leading Protestant missionary organizations in the United States in the nineteenth century. This study concentrates on the American Board's missionary activities in China, which have great importance in terms of China's history. The study also provides information about the history of missionary work that took place within mainland China and formed a partial basis of the regional policies of the Asia-Pacific region and concentrates on their purpose and results. In this study, to limit the American Board's activities in China, only its impact on Sun Yat-Sen (1866-1925) has been focused on. Sun Yat-Sen was the first provisional President of the Republic of China and is widely known as the "founding father" of the Republic of China, which ended thousands of years of dynastic rule. He is considered one of the most outstanding leaders of modern China. He attended missionary schools and was baptized by American Board missionaries. Although missionaries influenced him throughout his life, he thought the USA had failed him before he died. This study aims to show how effective the American Board was in China through the example of Sun Yat-Sen. After all, as a Christian and an American citizen with a Western-style education, Sun Yat-Sen is a missionary product and has come to the highest position possible in his country.

**Keywords:** American Board (ABCFM), Missionary Activities, China, Sun Yat-Sen, Charles Robert Hager, England, Hawaii.

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\* Bu makalede Etik Kurul Onayı gerektiren bir çalışma bulunmamaktadır.

*There is no study that would require the approval of the Ethical Committee in this article.*

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## AMERİKAN BOARD'UN ÇİN FAALİYETLERİ VE SUN YAT-SEN

### Öz

Kısaca Amerikan Board olarak bilinen Amerika Yabancı Misyon Temsilcileri Birliği (ABCFM) on dokuzuncu yüzyıl içinde ABD'nin önde gelen Protestan misyonerlik örgütlerinden birisiydi. Bu çalışma Çin tarihi açısından büyük öneme sahip olan Amerikan Board'un Çin'de yürüttüğü misyonerlik faaliyetleri hakkındadır. Çalışmada ayrıca Çin anakarası içinde cereyan eden ve Asya-Pasifik bölgesel politikalarının kısmi temelini oluşturan, misyonerlik çalışmalarının tarihi hakkında bilgi verilmekte, bunların ne amaç ile yapıldıklarına ve sonuçlarına bakılmaktadır. Amerikan Board'un Çin'deki faaliyetlerini sınırlayabilmek amacıyla çalışma içinde Board'un Sun Yat-Sen (1866-1925) üzerindeki etkisi üzerinde durulmaktadır. Çin Cumhuriyeti'nin ilk lideri olan Sun Yat-Sen, binlerce yıllık hanedanlık yönetimine son veren Çin Cumhuriyeti'nin "kurucu babası" olarak bilinmektedir. Modern Çin'in en büyük liderlerinden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Misyoner okullarında eğitim almış Amerikan Board misyonerlerince vaftiz edilmiştir. Hayatı boyunca misyonerlerin etkisinde kalmış olsa da hayatının sonunda Amerika'nın kendisini hayal kırıklığına uğrattığını düşünmüştür. Çalışmada Amerikan Board'un Çin'de ne kadar etkili bir örgüt olduğu Sun Yat-Sen örneği üzerinden gösterilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Sonuçta, Sun Yat-Sen Batı tarzı eğitimi almış bir Hristiyan ve Amerikan vatandaşı olarak bir misyonerlik ürünüdür ve ülkesinde gelebileceği en üst makama gelmiştir.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* Amerikan Board (ABCFM), Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri, Çin, Sun Yat-Sen, Charles Robert Hager, İngiltere, Havai.

### Introduction

The policies inherited from the founding period of the United States in the early 1800's such as land purchases, high immigration rates, and inadequate infrastructure policies in cities, left the country in a troubled atmosphere. Because of the civil war and slavery problems experienced in the following years, the country has turned its policy and position in the Pacific region into an expansionist tendencies policy. In this period, the US had put military and diplomatic power concepts at the forefront and thus successfully reduced the number of actual threats to the country's security. However, the current situation has led to US activism and expansionism. One of the reflections of the expansionist policy seen in the civilian field has been missionary work.

When the Pacific regional policies are closely examined in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is seen that China represented the reasonable ground needed for US missionary activities. During this period, the United States carried out several missionary activities to inject Western-centric types of administrations into the Asian region. Because of these activities, Chinese politicians and rulers

brought up under the influence of missionaries came to power and found an area of application of Western-oriented modeling in the Asian region.

Due to its vast geography, dense population, and abundant resources, China has been in the permanent interest of Western powers throughout history. In order to maintain their struggle for influence and existence in China and to engage in political interventions, Western states have also been active in the military and political field, as well as in missionary work. For their interests, they used the power of religion through their missionaries. With its central location in the Asian region, China became a frequent destination for numerous missionaries.

This study tries to examine Christian missions and the study of Christianity in China in general and the China activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM or, as it is shortly known, the American Board) in particular.

In one of its publications in 1920, the American Board defines itself as such:

*"It is the oldest foreign missionary society in America, having been organized June 29, 1810, at Bradford, Mass., during the session of the General Association of Massachusetts. Its charter was received from the General Court of Massachusetts in 1812. Its object, as stated in its charter, was "for the purpose of propagating the gospel in heathen lands by supporting missionaries and advancing the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures." From the beginning, it sought the cooperation of all Christians, without distinction of sect, who desired "to propagate the gospel among the unevangelized nations." This undenominational character has been maintained through the century of its life. During the century, various religious denominations have withdrawn from its support, believing they could labor for the same great object more efficiently through denominational boards, but the American Board, still receiving support from churches and individuals of different names, is in the main supported by Congregationalists."*<sup>1</sup>

The American Board was one of the leading Protestant missionary organizations in the United States during the nineteenth century and became very influential in China. In this study, Sun Yat-Sen, the first provisional President of the Republic of China, is chosen as an example to show the activities of the American Board in China. Sun Yat-Sen (1866-1925) was educated in missionary schools and became a Christian when there were few converts in China. He is widely known as the "founding father" of the Republic of China. As an enthusiastic Christian and an American citizen brought up by missionaries, he is a missionary product and has come to the highest position possible in his

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1 *Facts You Should Know Regarding the American Board 1923-1924*, ABCFM, Boston 1920, p.2., <https://archive.org/details/factsyoushouldkn00amer/page/n11/mode/2up> (Date accessed 01.04.2022). For the Turkish translation of the quotation see: Füsün Çoban Döşkaya, "Amerikan Board'un Kılavuz ve El Kitaplarının Analizi" [An Analysis of American Board's Manuals and Handbooks], *History Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2021, p. 1127-1128.

country. The other revolutionary leaders in 1911 were also young Chinese with whom the missionaries had contact.

*A large measure of the missionary enthusiasm and optimism for the course of the revolution centered in Sun Yat-sen, the revolutionary leader who appeared to epitomize what the missionary endeavor was trying to accomplish. Born in southern China near Canton, where the Western impact had been most pronounced, Sun had been educated in mission schools in Hawaii and Hong Kong.<sup>2</sup>*

Sun Yat-Sen was influenced by his studies of Western ideas in missionary schools. He “formally embraced Christianity and was baptized in Hong Kong by Dr. Charles R. Hager”<sup>3</sup> in 1884. At the end of his life he felt that America had failed him, but during his early travels through the United States, in 1895-96 and again in 1903-04, his mood was one of hope and expectancy.<sup>4</sup>

Studying the relationship between the American Board and Sun Yat-Sen, the first President of the Republic of China, is important because the American Board has the policy of educating the leaders of the countries in which they work. Sun Yat-Sen’s life story and upbringing by missionaries constitute an excellent example of this policy. Likewise, the American Board, after sending its first missionaries to Ottoman State in 1820, played an active role in the dissolution of it, and after the emergence of the new Turkish Republic, the American Board has changed its policy to educate those who would become leaders of the country in the future.<sup>5</sup>

## 1. Different Cultures and Missionary Understandings

In the United States, missionary work and expansionist policies have worked hand in hand throughout history. Expansionism and expansionist policies are dominant themes in the American way of thinking, and the regions targeted by the expansionist policies always wanted to be tamed. The taming of target regions has become a continuous policy in the Asian region since the 1830s. While Western civilization was making efforts to develop its sphere of influence and expansionist politics with the change brought by capitalism and

2 Michael V. Metallo, “American Missionaries, Sun Yat-Sen, and the Chinese Revolution”, *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 47, No. 2, 1978, p. 266.

3 *Ibid*, p. 266.

4 John K., Fairbank, “Foreword”, *Sun Yat-Sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution*, University of California Press, 1968, p. xi.

5 For more information on American Board’s activities in the Ottoman State see: Füsün Çoban Döşkaya, *Amerikan Board Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında Corinna Shattuck, Mary Haratounian ve Urfa Körler Okulu* [Corinna Shattuck, Mary Haratounian and Urfa School for the Blind in American Board Archives], Berikan Yayınevi, Ankara, 2021; Füsün Çoban Döşkaya, “Mary Lyon: Mount Holyoke Kız İlahiyat Okulu ve Mezunlarının Osmanlı Devleti’nde Eğitim Misyonerliği Faaliyetleri” [Mary Lyon: Mount Holyoke Female Seminary and Educational Missionary Activities of Its Graduates in the Ottoman State], *History Studies*, Vol. 12, No.4, 2020, pp. 1665-1701; Füsün Çoban Döşkaya, “Osmanlı Devleti’nde Amerikalı Misyonerlerin Antlaşma Hakları” [Treaty Rights of American Missionaries in the Ottoman State], *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 2021, pp. 769-798.

technology, the centers in the East were forced to adapt to these changes, and they existed in a system in which they had to rearrange themselves according to the changing needs of the day. This situation has dramatically strengthened the hand of missionaries coming to China from the West. However, it is seen that the value that motivates Chinese leaders and people against western civilization is not the religion of the West.

US missionaries from the West who engaged in missionary activities have faced many difficulties in China. For example, for a Chinese person to teach Chinese to a westerner is an act that could result in the death penalty. Similarly, Westerners who devote themselves to missionary activities are assigned to small and insignificant official positions within the Chinese government if they cannot achieve their goals within the borders of China.

*Protestant Missions [began] with Robert Morrison of the LMS [London Missionary Society], sent out in 1807. With the aid of R. Milne [Reverend William Milne] (1813), he translated the whole Bible into Chinese; but he could not really get at the people. He lived in the East India Company's factory at Canton.*<sup>6</sup>

Reverend Robert Morrison (1782-1834), a missionary known as the “*the father of Protestant missions in China*,”<sup>7</sup> appears as a British citizen in missionary texts; however, John R. Haddad states in his book *America's First Adventure in China* that Morrison was taken under the auspices of the US Minister, James Madison, and became a US citizen and entered China on behalf of the US.<sup>8</sup> However, his name is not listed in the American Board list of missionaries to China. Robert Morrison worked under the most trying circumstances in China, “*but in 1832, after 25 years' work, despite great progress in translation, education, and literature distribution, he had to report that there were only 25 converts ... When asked, 'What do the Chinese with all their ancient civilization and wisdom require from Europe?' he replied, 'The knowledge of Christ.'*”<sup>9</sup> He served as “*a translator for the British East India Company from 1809 to 1815, and in 1816 accompanying the Lord Amherst embassy to Peking as interpreter.*”<sup>10</sup> He translated the Bible into Chinese and wrote the first Chinese-English dictionary in history.

The values that direct and influence China against the West are western political movements. In the most general sense, Christianity symbolizes only the limited religious aspect of western orientations in China. According to the Chinese, missionary activities were seen as a system that enabled foreign ideas

6 Eugene Stock, *A Short Handbook of Missions*, Longmans, Green and Co, London, 1904, pp. 129-130.

7 Samuel Colcord Bartlett, *Historical Sketch of the Missions of the American Board in China*, Published by the Board, Boston, 1878, p. 11.

8 John R. Haddad, *America's First Adventure in China: Trade, Treaties, Opium, and Salvation*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 2013, p. 81.

9 “Robert Morrison (1782-1834)”, <https://web.archive.org/web/20130323080254/http://www.wecf-cong.org/articles/robertmorrison.pdf> (Date Accessed 10.04.2022). p. 3,

10 Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Eds), *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 10 Late Ching 1800-1911 Part I, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978, p. 549.

to reach the Chinese in the lower class of society. During the mid-1800s to the 1900s, the meaning of missionary activities for the Chinese was seen as a means to understand and analyze the West. It was also an act to receive news about a civilization that seemed different to them. The Chinese government discouraged its people from contacting foreigners, and if they taught their language to foreigners, they faced death. Missionaries, in exchange, perceived the Chinese as a source of information for their civilization. For this reason, it is common for early missionary movements operating in China to take initiatives for social activities such as building schools, hospitals, or cultural centers.

The Chinese, who have a much older and deeper culture than the missionaries, have neutralized those who acted for these purposes. At the end of this opposition, the missionaries' most extraordinary claim is their deep commitment to the proposition that Chinese culture can only be served through a series of fundamental revisions. In other words, missionaries, who could not achieve the religiously desired goal during their missionary activities, sought to advance their goals by undermining and manipulating cultural norms or targeting political authorities. *"When reviewing the fields in China where a Catholic missionary society was active, it is important to remember that prior to 1856, Catholic missionaries in China were generally not assigned specific mission territories."*<sup>11</sup> For example, Catholic missionaries operating in the region until 1856 were not settled in the Chinese continent. On the contrary, they wanted to make an impact at more than one point.

## 2. US-UK Rivalry over China

From the second half of the 1800s, England lost its influence on the Western Alliance and prioritized the colonies and their management. England has followed policies that attach importance to mobility in the Pacific Region and revealed its power reallocation policy with the United States of America, the leading player in the region. In particular, the USA's attempts to show activity in the region by following the containment policy have emerged most clearly with the dominance and competitive environment on the island of Hawaii.<sup>12</sup> Academic life in the region started with the British missionary schools, and afterward, American missionary schools continued their educational initiatives. Having lost its influence in the western bloc, England has sent messages to Europe that it is still an effective power through the port of Hong Kong, which it has allocated to it in the East. Because of the British missionary's successful attempts, the country, which weakened on the Western flank, showed a power rise on the Eastern flank. The ongoing missionary activities in the British

11 R. G. Tiedemann, *Reference Guide to Christian Missionary Societies in China: From the 16th to the 20th Century*, M. E. Sharpe, Inc, New York, 2009, p. xii.

12 For more information see: Harold Z., Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-Sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution*, University of California Press, 1968.

domination and exploitation of states over the Hong Kong port gained great importance and paved the way for England to realize its interests in Asia.

The competition also affected the Asian region and China, becoming the permanent target of the period's two influential naval power countries. China has risen to a necessary position to be seized between the two states during this period. England lost the missionary rivalry in mainland China to the USA in the 1850s and focused her missionary efforts on the Hong Kong region due to the importance of commercial activities. Instead of following an integrative strategy covering the whole of China, the British followed a policy that targeted private institutions and strategic points and aimed to seize and control the region's dynamics from within.

For this reason, British missionary activities significantly increased during this period. The case of Reginald Fleming Johnston and the "Forbidden City", which served as the home of Chinese emperors, can be cited as an example of the missionary strategy that shows the British progress in the direction of targeting institutions. Reginald Fleming Johnston (1874-1938), a British diplomat, was responsible for serving as the special adviser and mentor of Aisin-Gioro Puyi (1906-1967). Puyi is recognized as the last Emperor of China in history. He became Emperor of China in 1908 but was forced to abdicate on February 12, 1912, during the Xinhai Revolution. Reginald Fleming Johnston was taken to the Forbidden City exclusively to the Emperor's residence immediately after Puyi was enthroned as a child. He was the Emperor's special mentor and was responsible for his upbringing.

Reginald Fleming Johnston was also responsible for bringing the Emperor under British influence. On the other hand, he carried information that conveyed the dynamics of the Forbidden City and how the British governed China. After the Emperor was dethroned, Johnson wrote a book about his observations about the Forbidden City and the forms and principles followed by the Chinese government. The book was published as *Twilight in the Forbidden City* in 1934.<sup>13</sup>

Contrary to the British strategies in China, the Americans prioritized containment strategies and did not directly target Chinese institutions. They have placed the policy of showing activity in the regions around China at the forefront.

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13 Reginald Fleming Johnston, *Twilight in the Forbidden City*, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing, 2008.

### 3. US Missionary Work:

#### American Board Missionary Activities in China

Congregationalists established the American Board in 1810 in Boston with “the aim of sending missionaries abroad for religious and altruistic work”.<sup>14</sup> During the early days, members from other denominations were associated with or worked under the ABCFM: Presbyterians (1812–1870), Dutch Reformed (1826–1857), and German Reformed (1829–1866).<sup>15</sup> The American Board joined other societies to form the United Board for World Ministries in 1961.<sup>16</sup>

According to the *Guide to the Microfilm Collection* of PABCFM<sup>17</sup>, American Board had five missions under “Missions to China” (ABC 16.3): Amoy Mission (ABC 16.3.3), Foochow Mission (ABC 16.3.5), South China Mission (ABC 16.3.8), North China Mission (ABC 16.3. 12), and Shiansi Mission (ABC 16.3.15).

In another American Board publication, *Facts You Should Know Regarding the American Board 1923-1924*, it is noted that the Board functions in three missions in China, namely, “Foochow in Southeastern China”, “North China”, and “South China”.<sup>18</sup>

*Foochow in Southeastern China, 1847. Stations, 3; out-stations, 71; missionaries, 50; native helpers, 288; churches, 46 with 2,440 members, 143 added on confession; pupils under instruction, 4,234.*

*North China, 1854. Stations, 7; out-stations, 188; missionaries, 141; native helpers, 7491; churches, 116, with 11,600 members, 1,479 added in 1922-23; pupils under instruction, 7,607.*

*South China, 1883 (disorganized as a mission). Station, 1; out-stations, 33; missionaries, 3; native helpers, 81; churches, 21, with 2,680 members; pupils under instruction, 1,041.*<sup>19</sup>

The American Board appointed its first missionary to China,<sup>20</sup> Elijah Coleman Bridgman (1801- 1861), in 1830. On October 6, 1829, he sailed to China

14 <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/1?locale=en> (Date Accessed 10.03.2022).

15 Tiedemann, *ibid*, p. 114.

16 For more information on the history of American Board in the 20th century see: Füsün Çoban Döşkaya, “Amerikan Board ve Misyoner Corinna Shattuck’ın Urfa Faaliyetleri” [The American Board and the Orfa Activities of Missionary Corinna Shattuck], *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi*, Vol. 5, No. 14, 2018, pp. 84-119; Füsün Çoban Döşkaya, “Amerikan Board (ABCFM) ve Fetullahçı Terör Örgütü (FETÖ)” [American Board (ABCFM) and Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO)], *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2020, pp. 1431-1474.

17 *Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Documents administered by the Houghton Library of Harvard University, Also includes individual reel units from 1-6, Guide to the Microfilm Collection*, Research Publications International, Woodbridge, CT, 1994, pp. 398-403.

18 *Facts You Should Know*, pp. 6-8.

19 *Ibid*, pp. 6-8.

20 The Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (PABCFM) about China are in section ABC. 16.9 of Houghton Library of Harvard University. Documents regarding missions established in China and all records kept by American missionaries that arrived in China as of 1831 can be reached from that section.



with David Abeel (1804-1846), a missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church (he was also an American Board missionary), arriving in Guangzhou (Canton) city on February 19, 1830. After sixteen years of working with the Chinese, Bridgman said the following about them:

*“The longer I live in this country, the more do I see of the wickedness of this people. All that Paul said of the ancient heathen is true of the Chinese, and true to an extent that is dreadful. Their inmost soul, their very conscience, seems to be seared, dead – so insensible that they are, as regards a future life, like the beasts that perish. No painting, no imagination, can portray and lay before the Christian world the awful sins, the horrible abominations, that fill the land.”<sup>21</sup>*

In 1830 with the arrival of Elijah Coleman Bridgman in Guangzhou, the South China Mission began, and it continued until 1866. The mission was reopened at the urgent request of Cantonese Christians in California. It was at first called the “Hong Kong Mission” and was begun by Charles Robert Hager. Work was gradually extended into Guangdong, and Guangzhou itself was reoccupied in 1890. The “Chinese California Missionary Society” played a prominent role in the work.<sup>22</sup> Some South China mission stations were Singapore, Siam, Foochow, Shaowu, Japan, Canton, Shanghai, and Hong Kong.

*After a brief ABCFM presence in Shanghai, the base of operations was moved to Tianjin (Zhili) in 1860. The North China Mission was begun at Tianjin by Henry Blodget in 1860. In 1864 he opened the Beijing station. Tongzhou [Tungchow] (Zhili) was opened in 1867 by Lyman Dwight Chapin and wife. The local boys’ boarding school was the nucleus of Tungchow College. In 1873 a Theological College was started here. Further work was started at Baoding (1873) and Zhangjiakou [Kalgan] in 1865. After itinerating work had been going on for over a decade in western Shandong from Tianjin, the village of Pangzhuang was opened as a station by Henry Dwight Porter and Arthur Henderson Smith in 1880. In 1915 this station was moved to nearby Dezhou. Linqing was opened in 1886. The work in Shanxi originated in the Theological Seminary at Oberlin, Ohio, in 1881, when some of the students decided to form an “Oberlin Band” for foreign mission work. In 1883, 6 workers arrived at Taigu. Fenzhou was opened in 1887.<sup>23</sup>*

Some North China Mission stations of the American Board in China were Paotingfu, Kalgan, Shantung, Peiping, Tung Chou, Tientsin, Shansi, Shanghai, Taihu, Tunghsien, Panchung, Fenchow, and Peking.<sup>24</sup>

American missionaries working in China<sup>25</sup> continuously informed American citizens in the US through their reports, in which they created an

21 Bartlett, *ibid*, p. 8.

22 Tiedemann, *ibid*, p. 114.

23 *Ibid*, p. 114.

24 The South and North China station names are gathered from the “Chinese Missions” section of PABCFM, Guide to the Microfilm Collection, *ibid*, pp. 172-193.

25 For various aspects of American missionary work in China see: John K. Fairbank, (Ed.) *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1974.

interest in China. It is said that they have faced many difficulties in China due to the differences between cultures. Samuel C. Bartlett described the differences between the American and Chinese cultures in 1878 in an American Board publication as such:

*So diverse have been all their customs from our own, as to place a barrier between us from the outset. "We read horizontally, they perpendicularly; and the columns run from right to left. We uncover the head as a mark of respect, they put on their caps. We black our boots, they whitewash them. We give the place of honor on the right, they on the left. We say the needle points to the north, they to the south. We shake the hand of a friend in salutation, they shake their own. We locate the understanding in the brain, they in the belly. We place our foot-notes at the bottom of the page, they at the top. In our libraries we set our books up, they lay theirs down. We now turn thousands of spindles and ply hundreds of shuttles without a single hand to propel, they employ a hand for each."*<sup>26</sup>

It is seen that the missionary work of the USA showed its first reflection in the 1830s. Missionary activities in the USA are the activities that emerged in a relatively late period compared to the UK. It is manifested by attempts of different US groups, which are divided into two periods and express the desire to achieve more than one goal. The period that can be called the first period covers the years between 1830 and 1890. This period represents the era when the American Board saw China as a place that needed to be saved spiritually and had its first encounter with the Chinese mainland. Elijah Bridgman and David Abeel are this period's two most important representatives. The period was opened in 1830 with the arrival of American Protestant missionaries to China for the first time. However, unlike their English counterparts, *"in the 1830s and 1840s, which marked the early years of American Protestant missionary activity in China, the American missionaries lived and worked in the Thirteen Factories at Canton, under the restrictive Canton system."*<sup>27</sup>

*"Foreigners, including American merchants and missionaries, were forbidden from traveling outside of the Thirteen Factories, could not engage in business deals with any Chinese citizens except for a select few, and were forbidden from learning Chinese. The missionaries, including Bridgman's contemporaries Dr. Peter Parker and Samuel Wells Williams, faced penalty of death if they were discovered to be preaching Christianity. In this unwelcoming environment, Bridgman, Parker, and Williams began secretly learning Chinese and translating the Scripture into Chinese. Like missionaries after them, Bridgman, Williams, and Parker learned Chinese and used their other skills to bring Christianity to the Chinese citizens. Both Bridgman and Williams translated the Bible into Chinese."*<sup>28</sup>

26 Bartlett, *ibid*, p. 5.

27 Jessica Hannah, "American Missionaries in China: 1830-1900", 4.20.2009, p.1 <https://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/jlhannah/americanmissionariesinchina> (Date Accessed 27.05.2022).

28 *Ibid*, p. 2

Samuel Wells Williams wrote the book *The Middle Kingdom* about China's geography, government, education, social life, arts, and religion. Between the years 1848 to 1851, he was the editor of the *Chinese Repository*, a periodical published in Canton, to inform Protestant missionaries about China. Another publication, *The Canton Press*, was a newspaper issued between 1835-1844. American missionaries published their works and conveyed the atmosphere in China to the United States through certain official Board periodicals. Some of these periodicals were in the US, whereas the others were in China.<sup>29</sup>

*"The history of printing is intimately connected with the expansion of religion. Ever since Buddhists in China produced the world's first known printed book, published literature has been the silent agent of missionary endeavor. Certainly for the Protestants who went to China in the nineteenth century, the press was an ever-present ally."*<sup>30</sup>

It is seen that the first publications were printed outside the borders of China with the safety of the missionaries in mind. Printing houses were formed with devices sent from New York. With the commissioning of the written press, the American Board has gained significant momentum in the region.

*"The Board is at present [in 1872] represented in China by thirty-nine Americans, male and female, who, with their native preachers and helpers, occupy some seven stations, and fifteen out-stations, where they have organized eleven small churches."*<sup>31</sup>

*"Bridgman was one of the first Americans to undertake the study of China's history and culture, and also wrote a Chinese language history of the United States."*<sup>32</sup> Bridgman and Abeel's work in China lasted from 1830 to 1866, with major missions in Canton, Amoy, Shanghai and Foochow focusing on the "urgency of World evangelization."<sup>33</sup> However, it is seen that the American Board's entry into China parallels some of the adverse developments that have manifested in Chinese history. For example, the main reason for the period of high inflation, which began in the 1820s and reached its peak in the 1830s, was the high-priced trade with foreign visitors to the country. *Later, in the 1820s and 1830s, economic considerations also entered the picture, for the trade was causing a rapid outflow of silver.*<sup>34</sup> The commercial activities of these years paid off with high inflation resulting from the rapid outflow of silver into the Chinese coffers. These years also cover the period in Chinese history known as the "Opium Wars." *"Unfortunately, the efforts of Bridgman, Williams, and other contributors to the Chinese Repository*

29 For a list of these periodicals see: Tiedeman, *ibid*, p. 114.

30 Suzanne W. Barnett, "Silent Evangelism: Presbyterians and the Mission Press in China, 1807-1860", *Journal of Presbyterian History* (1962-1985) Vol. 49, No. 4, 1971, p. 287.

31 Bartlett, *ibid*, p.12.

32 U.S. Department of State Archive, "United States Relations with China: From Trade to the Open Door (1784-1900)", <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/pubs/fs/90392.htm> p. 1.

33 Linda Lear Center Digital Collections and Exhibitions, "Efforts of the ABCFM in 19th Century China", <https://lc-digital.conncoll.edu/exhibits/show/gold-journal/essays/abcfm> (Date Accessed 22.05.2022)

34 Immanuel C. Y. Hso, *The Rise of Modern China*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 169.

to turn Western opinion against the opium trade did little to thwart the activities of the smugglers... Bridgman's hopes for a more "just and honorable" relationship with the Chinese thus fell increasingly victim to the greed and unscrupulous profiteering of Western opium smugglers."<sup>35</sup>

In the post-1890 period<sup>36</sup>, which included the second period of US missionary work, missionaries strengthened their activities in the first period. This time represents the period in which the way to reach the upper goals of the country began to be opened by creating established structures within China. During this period, American missionaries continued to pursue the theme of "saving the soul" of China. However, it seems that they add to this theme the policy and political interests of their country.

*"A desire to save the heathen from damnation was the traditional motive of foreign missions. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, told the convention of Student Volunteers meeting at Detroit in 1894, The gospel must be preached to these people in a very short time, for they are passing away. Every day, every day, oh how they sweep over! . . . There is a great Niagara of souls passing into the dark in China. Every day, every week, every month they are passing away! A million a month in China they are dying without God!"*<sup>37</sup>

*"Dr. Parker's fellow missionary, S. Wells Williams, in a similar vein praised the work of the British in the Opium War and on one occasion in 1858 confessed that he was afraid "that nothing short of the Society for the Diffusion of Cannon Balls will give them the useful knowledge they now require to realize their own helplessness."*<sup>38</sup>

It is seen that the presence of the US during its missionary activities in China has also enabled the US capitalist perceptions to settle in China in the following process. *"The missionary movement of the late eighteenth century was not only the product of the enthusiasm of the evangelical revival, but gathered strength within a context provided by debate about the meaning of civilization and especially the possibility of civilizing, or improving the conditions of, non-European peoples."*<sup>39</sup>

When American missionaries, like their British counterparts, had the opportunity to settle in China and expand their fields of activity, they put topics such as law, trade, and state administration in the foreground. In order to be able to operate in these areas, they directed the missionary institution to non-purpose (non-religious preaching) goals.

35 Michael C. Lazich, "American Missionaries and the Opium Trade in Nineteenth-Century China", *Journal of World History*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2006, pp. 202-203.

36 For detailed information on American Protestant missionary activities in China after 1890s see: Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement in China, 1890-1952*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1958.

37 Paul A. Varg, "Motives in Protestant Missions, 1890-1917", *Church History*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1954, p. 71.

38 *Ibid*, p. 73.

39 Andrew Porter, "Commerce and Christianity: The Rise and Fall of a Nineteenth-Century Missionary Slogan", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 1985, p. 599.

*“Charles Denby Jr, [1861-1938], former minister to China, in an article for the Independent, suggested that missionary leaders should use this argument, for “the statesman, the diplomatist, and the businessman look at this work with reference to its influence on commerce and the general prosperity of the world.” A prominent woman journalist who had travelled in the Orient and who lectured extensively, Margherita Arlina Hamm, argued that the missionaries’ western goods excited attention and created a demand for these things. “From this point of view,” the writer said, “every missionary is a salesman for the manufactures of Christendom!”<sup>40</sup>*

#### 4. Missionaries in China

It is argued that most missionaries from other countries exhibited highly intolerant approaches to Chinese culture. *“The vast majority of missionaries, Protestant and Catholic, were intolerant of Chinese culture and unwilling or unable to make meaningful adjustments to it. They devoted themselves tirelessly to religious proselytizing and tended to relegate secular change to a position of secondary importance.”<sup>41</sup>*

It is claimed that the Protestants showed more flexible approaches in China than Catholics or Anglicans in practice.

*“A much smaller contingent of missionaries, mostly Protestant, were tolerant and even appreciative of certain facets of Chinese culture and defined their mission more in terms of the ‘fulfilment’ of this culture than its destruction... Thus, although some missionaries concentrated on attacking the old order in China while others placed more emphasis on the erection of a new order, all missionaries, by the very nature of their calling, posed a revolutionary challenge to the traditional culture. It is for this reason, more than any other, that so many Chinese felt so threatened.”<sup>42</sup>*

Catholics, focused solely on saving the soul of mainland China, saw the Chinese as “needy souls” and took their approach to practices that sometimes reached militant dimensions.

With the trade agreement between France and China in 1858-1860, the French had the right to trade with China. France’s treaty signing was due to its trade rivalry with Britain and its desire to play the defender of Catholicism in China. However, the French saw the Chinese execution of Auguste Chapdelaine (1814-1856), a French missionary in Kwangsi province, on February 29, 1856, as a clear violation of the trade agreement. This gave France the legal pretext for launching a military campaign against China. France, the winning side at the end of the campaign, focused on establishing Catholic missionary work in the country rather than the material income it could obtain from China as the spoils

40 Varg, *ibid*, p. 74.

41 Twitchett and Fairbank (eds.), *ibid*, pp. 543.

42 *Ibid*, pp. 543-544.

of victory. Article XXIX of the Treaty of Tientsin (1858), signed between China and the occupying states of the period, Great Britain, the United States, France, and Russia, clearly concerns the American Board.

Article XXIX of the treaty is as follows:

*“The principles of the Christian religion, as professed by the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, are recognised as teaching men to do good, and to do to others as they would have others do to them. Hereafter, those who quietly profess and teach these doctrines shall not be harassed or persecuted on account of their faith. Any persons, whether citizens of the United States or Chinese converts, who according to these tenets peaceably teach and practice the principles of Christianity shall in no case be interfered with or molested.”*<sup>43</sup>

The article recognizes the freedom of Catholics and Protestants to preach and practice their religion anywhere in the Empire. The treaty also guaranteed the right of foreign subjects to practice Christianity without penalty and formalized missionary activities. The Chinese government has been left with a formal promise that Catholicism and other sects, primarily represented by missionaries, will be tolerated throughout China. Other articles of the Tientsin agreement include punishing those who illegally arrested Christians. The title deeds of churches, schools, cemeteries, land, and buildings that belonged to the missionaries but were confiscated were transferred to the French representative in Beijing, and *“Catholic missionaries would be permitted to rent and purchase land in all the provinces and to erect buildings thereon at will.”*<sup>44</sup>

Tientsin agreement, which the French government had the Chinese government sign under the pretext of Catholicism, was seen on the Chinese side as one of the most humiliating agreements directed against them by the Western powers. The agreement not only formed the basis of the winds of cultural change that the missionaries wanted to spread in China but also served the purpose of manipulating China and its internal dynamics. With this agreement, France entered the inner regions of China and obtained permanent settlements. A few years later, opium merchants powered by French practices and supported by the Indian government began opium trading in China’s hinterland.<sup>45</sup> Again, the French government forcibly initiated the silk trade with China, which was necessary for its industrial development.

43 “Treaty of Tientsin [Tianjin], 1858”, *China’s External Relations: A History*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160304224140/http://chinaforeignrelations.net/node/206> (Date Accessed 22.04.2022);

USC US-China Institute, “Treaty of Tianjin (Tien-Tsin), 1858: Treaty between the United States of America and the Empire of China”, <https://china.usc.edu/treaty-tianjin-tien-tsin-1858> (Date Accessed 12.04.2022).

44 Twitchett and Fairbank (eds.), *ibid*, p. 553.

45 A. C. Sahu, “Genesis and Growth of Indo-Chinese Opium Monopoly under East India Company”, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 38, 1977, p. 531.

*"We attach . . . very great importance to this revision of the Treaty of Tientsin, for it is silk which forms the principal element of our commerce with China. Further, the use of Chinese silk is necessary to the work of our looms. Under this double relationship, we have a more direct interest than England in the question of the increase of duties on the export of silks, and we must be especially alert that this tax is not increased."*<sup>46</sup>

The agreement is not only in France's interests. Other states have also benefited greatly from this agreement. For example, British delegations were given the right to go wherever they wanted on any date, and it was noted that their luggage could not be opened without authorization. These officials will be treated with traditional Chinese courtesy, and arrangements will be made to prepare hotel accommodations and the rental of their vehicles. On the other hand, the Chinese delegation will cover all its expenses and not be asked for financial support from foreign countries. The article of the treaty is as follows:

*"It is recorded in Article IV of the Anglo-Chinese Treaty of Tientsin that "the British plenipotentiary and the officials of his suite may come and go at their pleasure; and the communications which they receive and send and their baggage may not be opened without authority"; also that "they shall be treated with the same courtesy as is customarily accorded by Western Powers to officials of corresponding rank." The Chinese officials appointed at this time must act in accordance with the British treaty, and the Treaty Powers must avoid the least appearance of slighting them. Such arrangements as the preparation of hotel accommodations, the procurement of provisions, and the hiring of conveyances must be delegated to Your Excellency. In all matters not herein fully provided for, Your Excellency must rely upon the special guarantees of the treaties. China will itself meet all the expenses of the mission; not one cent is to be asked of foreign countries."*<sup>47</sup>

American missionaries enjoyed similar interests. However, US missionaries were more tolerant of certain aspects of Chinese culture than Catholics and even expressed gratitude for that culture. They defined their mission as "satisfying Chinese culture's needs" rather than destroying them. However, among the missionaries who held this outlook, the American Board was the most insistent on the need for a comprehensive overhaul of the Chinese perception of the world. Therefore, some missionaries focused on attacking the "old existing order" in China, while others emphasized establishing a new order. The "new order" concept became a policy often pronounced during missionaries' active duty in China. On the way to reaching this goal, it began to occupy a more central place in the mindset of Chinese intellectuals over time. The belief in fundamental change has been transformed into a perception of the necessary need over time and an idea more recognized by the masses. Loyalty to

46 John F. Laffey, "Roots of French Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of Lyon", *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1969, pp. 82-83.

47 Knight Biggerstaff, "A Translation of Anson Burlingame's Instructions from the Chinese Foreign Office", *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1942, p. 279.

the old order among the population weakened, and by the 1890s, many Chinese intellectuals and a large part of the population began to see the emergence of a new China as a clear concept.

*“In 1858, after a half century in China, the total number of Protestant missionaries had grown to a scant eighty, and with sporadic exceptions, their work was confined to the five treaty ports and Hong Kong. Fifty years later, in 1905, the Protestant missionary force had multiplied forty times and was engaged in work throughout the Chinese empire.”*<sup>48</sup>

As a result of this new situation, China’s feelings towards Christianity were greatly intensified, *“it activated suspicions, fears, and resentments which the non-Christian populace accumulated on its own through direct, personal experience with the missionary and convert.”*<sup>49</sup>

Arthur J. Brown’s *Report of a Visitation of the China Missions*, written in 1902, defines the position of the American missionaries in China quite clearly. In work, U.S.-China mutual relations are defined as follows;

*“We have Chinese exclusion laws, but we will not allow China to exclude Americans. We sail our gunboats up her rivers, but we would not allow her to sail gunboats into ours. If a Chinese commits a crime in America, he is amenable to American law as interpreted by an American court. But if an American commits a crime in China, he can be tried only by his consul; not a Chinese court in the Empire has jurisdiction over him, and the people naturally understand from this that we have no confidence in their sense of justice or in their administration of it.”*<sup>50</sup>

It is known that during 1830, the US missionary groups did not use a particular style and description when conveying their experiences with China. Each missionary group evaluated the country by acting on its subjective judgment. In transferring letters, diaries, and reports to the United States, it is seen that the discourse on China formed by the US missionaries has gradually become increasingly harsher. In the 1830s, missionaries who talked about rural landscapes and natural beauties began to describe China as *“The villages were collections of filthy hovels”* or *“The cities were decaying areas with walled inner centers and sprawling outlying.”*<sup>51</sup>

It is inevitable that the USA, which operates on the Chinese mainland and is primarily in competition with Britain, does not limit its initiatives only to China’s main cities such as Beijing, Guangzhou, and Fuxin, which compete

48 Paul A. Cohen, *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism 1860-1870*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1963, pp. 44-45.

49 *Ibid*, p. 87.

50 Arthur J. Brown, *Report of a Visitation of the China Missions*, Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, New York, 1902, p. 18.

51 Jonathan Goldstein, Jerry Israel and Hilary Conroy (eds.), *America Views China: American Images of China Then and Now*, Lehigh University Press, Bethlehem, 1991, p. 76.



with the actors of the period at peripheral China. The Hawaii Region, among the surrounding regions, is worth examining both in terms of Pacific dominance and the importance of the future position and reputation of the leaders trained under the influence of American Board missionaries.

### **5. Missionary Activities in Hawaii and Sun Yat-Sen**

The Hawaiian region appears to have been under intense American influence since the early 1800s. During these years, America adopted a policy of westward movement in the Pacific. The US has strengthened its spheres of influence and population in the Asia Pacific region over the period but has not been able to maintain a holistic dominance in the region. It is seen that the region was necessary for the interests of the British and that British influence had spread to the region long before the Americans. Britain had a large navy based in the region, and America was threatened by British naval superiority at the period. On the other hand, the Hawaii region was in the middle of the American-British conflict and was forced to change sides to survive constantly.

Britain's strengthening of its presence in the region was often due to the influence of the missionary schools. Iolani, the first missionary school, led by the Anglican Rev. Bishop Willis and founded during the colonial race with the United States, is seen as the first educational institution to establish missionary influence in the region with its position as a school that followed the anti-American sentiment. The school's teaching staff comprised British citizens, and the language of instruction was English. The Iolani conception of education consisted of narratives about Anglo-Saxon ideals and the autocratic power of the English throne. The school aimed to incline its students towards English ideals. The Iolani school was located outside mainland China, but it was the focus of British missionaries due to its location in the Hawaiian region.

As argued before, the goal of the United States was not to carry out its activities in the heart of China. Instead, it aimed to achieve its ideal by surrounding China with its soft power strategy. Therefore, the Hawaiian region provided the ideal conditions for the American Board to conduct its activities. As a result of the gathering of the Chinese people around the imperial administration and their negative sensitivities towards foreigners, the Hawaiian region provided ideal conditions for permanent missionary schools at the time. Over time, the island turned into a base operating on the Chinese mainland, which was the main target of the missionaries. Historically, the region's independence from the established warlords coincided with the American Board's entry into the region. In 1810, when the American Board was established, Kamehameha I (1734-1819), the first ruler of the Kingdom of Hawaii, *defeated competing warlords to take control of Hawaii. The ensuing peace and prosperity drew eager missionaries, who began making the arduous trip to the remote Pacific islands. When they arrived, they discovered not*

*only native islanders in need of Christianizing but foreign traders, some of whom had lived in Hawaii since the 1790s.*"<sup>52</sup>

The activities of missionary schools in the Hawaii region began in 1820 with the missionaries of the American Board. Until 1822, missionaries operating in the region first worked to make the Bible conform to the Hawaiian alphabet and then took part in opening institutions providing education by the Bible translated into the local language.

*American missionary Reverend Jonathan Green [to describe the natives in Hawaii used the term children and ] declared in 1832, "We have a nation of children 'very small,' and exceedingly dark hearted to instruct."*<sup>53</sup>

In the first twenty years of their activities, the missionaries built schools under the roof of the state institution. They aimed to undertake the education of the Hawaiian people. By 1840, they had effectively transferred these institutions to the state, not covering the expenses of the instructors and buildings. One of the schools established in the first term, Lahainaluna Seminary, was a high school in Maui that dated back to 1849. It was established to evaluate young Hawaiians in the position of ministers in the state. Missionary schools have increased their numbers over time with their successes. The Punahou School (also known as the Oahu College) "*opened on July 11, 1842, and over its nearly 180 years, has educated generations of students and had a place in Hawai'i's history.*"<sup>54</sup>

*"[T]he Congregationalists (ABCFM missionaries) opened Punahou School to provide a secondary college-preparatory education for their own children. In 1846 the Department of Public Instruction was established with William Richards as its first minister of instruction. In 1855 Punahou was opened to students of Hawaiian blood. In 1859 Sacred Hearts Academy, a Catholic school, was founded for girls. In 1862 Bishop Staley arrived to establish the first Anglican schools. In 1867 St. Andrew's Priory, an Anglican school for girls, was founded. In 1872 Bishop Willis arrived and founded Iolani College, another Anglican institution."*<sup>55</sup>

Between 1879 and 1883, Sun Yat-Sen attended Christian educational institutions. The first school he attended was Iolani College of the British. The second school was a Catholic institution called St. Louis College, and the third was American Board missionaries' Oahu College. "*It is unlikely that there had been any Christian influence in Sun's life before his departure for Hawai'i. It is doubtful that*

52 Jennifer Fish Kashay, "Agents of Imperialism: Missionaries and Merchants in Early-Nineteenth-Century Hawaii", *The New England Quarterly* Vol. 80, No. 2, 2007, p. 280.

53 Jonathan Green to Rufus Anderson, 18 October 1832, Missionary Letters to the ABCFM, Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Library Collections, Mission Houses Museum, Honolulu as cited by Kashay, *ibid*, p. 281.

54 Punahou Archives, "History of Punahou", <https://www.punahou.edu/archives/history-of-punahou>, (Date Accessed 15.03.2022)

55 Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Hawaii Foundation, "Sun Yat-sen's Christian Schooling in Hawai'i", 02.10.2008, <http://sunyatsenhawaii.org/2008/09/02/sun-yat-sens-christian-schooling-in-hawaii> (Date Accessed 28.05.2022), p. 7.

he ever saw a Christian missionary or evangelist while a youth."<sup>56</sup> All of these three schools exposed him to Western ideas.

*"Early in the disturbances the revolutionary military leaders in the Yangtze provinces and in southern China established a cabinet form of government with Nanking as headquarters, and convoked an assembly composed of their representatives.*



*On December 29, 1911, this Nanking assembly unanimously elected Dr. Sun Yat Sen Provisional President of the Republic of China and he was inaugurated on January 1, 1912. On February 12 the Manchu Emperor abdicated, vesting the sovereignty in the people, declaring for a republican form of government, and appointing Yuan Shin Kai to organize such, a government. On February 15 Yuan was elected Provisional President by the Nanking assembly, to succeed Dr. Sun, who resigned in his favor."<sup>57</sup>*

*"Sun was born in the Hsiang-shan village of Ts'ui-heng in the delta of the Pearl River on November 12, 1866. His given name (ming) was Wen, and his courtesy name (tzu) was Ti-hsiang."<sup>58</sup> His family was living under modest conditions.*

**Photo 1:** *Dr. Sun Yat-Sen*<sup>59</sup>

Sun Yat-Sen's two brothers immigrated to America when he was very young. It is known that the brothers who settled in the California region died while searching for gold during the "Gold Rush" (1848-1855) period. Afterward, his father sent Sun Yat-Sen to Hawaii at an early age (elementary school age) to stay with his uncle and brother Sun Mei, who resided in the state of Hawaii after the siblings' deaths. His journey to America was completed with his entry to Hawaii in 1879 for his education. Sun Yat-Sen was subjected to traditional

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, With the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 3, 1912, "Revolution; abdication of the Manchu rulers; establishment of a provisional republican government; concerted action of the Powers; correspondence concerning recognition of the Republic of China", <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1912/ch11>

<sup>58</sup> Schiffrin, *ibid*, p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> Sun Yat Sen, *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary: A Programme of National Reconstruction for China*, AMS Press, London, 1970, p. ii.

Chinese education during his time in China. However, his education remained at a level sufficient only to read the Chinese language. *“His systematic education began in Hawaii. Because there was no Chinese school in the Islands at this time, the only alternative was one of the foreign institutions.”*<sup>60</sup>

Here, the school named “Iolani” has created an essential change in Sen’s identity. Due to the colonial race with the United States, the school followed an anti-American tradition.<sup>61</sup> His teacher Bishop Willis, who taught the lessons under Christian doctrine, can be seen as the person who instilled him in all kinds of Christian beliefs. There were only seven Chinese students during Sun Yat-Sen’s time in Iolani. These seven students were taught the Bible every evening by another Chinese and evangelical student commissioned by Willis. However, all Chinese boarding students had to attend services at St. Andrew’s Cathedral every Sunday. As a result of these regular practices, the Chinese boys were attracted to Christianity at a young age. Sun Yat-Sen’s education at Iolani and his family’s traditional Chinese beliefs were completely different.

It is argued that after studying at St. Louis College for a semester, Sun applied to “Oahu College”<sup>62</sup>. It was one of the important schools in the region to continue his education after graduation. However, his brother Sun Mei, one of his most important supporters in Hawaii, opposed his education by saying that he had moved away from his traditional Chinese identity. Despite opposition, Sun Yat-Sen transferred to Oahu, the second most crucial school in his educational career, due to his high grades at the Iolani School. *“It was the island’s most advanced institution of learning.”*<sup>63</sup> The school was first named Punahou and was established in 1841 for the children of American Board missionaries. In 1853 the school was opened to everyone. The name of the school was officially changed to Oahu College in 1859.

*“In 1855, the ABCFM began to withdraw its direct support of Oahu College. The control of the school’s estate was transferred to the local board of trustees. It was no longer a missionary institution. It became an endowed private school that included a secondary curriculum. The school attracted more and more students from the community with its very high standards for college preparation.”*<sup>64</sup>

Sun Yat Sen’s brother Sun Mei did not provide Sen with the money needed for his education at Oahu, and in 1883, Sun Yat-Sen was sent back to China. However, Sen’s education in Hawaii, first in a British school and then in an American school, has shaped his worldview and moved him away from

60 Schiffirin, *ibid*, p. 12.

61 Schiffirin, *ibid*, p. 13.

62 The name of the Oahu school was changed in 1934. Nowadays the school is known as Punahou School. Barack Hussein Obama, the 44th president of the United States is also a graduate of this school.

63 Irma Tam Soong, “Christianity and Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s Schooling in Hawai’i, 1879–83”, *Chinese Historical Society of America*, [https://chsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/CHSA\\_HP2010\\_07\\_Soong.pdf](https://chsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/CHSA_HP2010_07_Soong.pdf) p. 82.

64 *Ibid*, p. 82.

the traditionalist Chinese worldview. The seemingly secular religious education provided in the Iolani and Oahu schools was incompatible with the village's traditions and beliefs that Sen belonged to. Shortly after returning to the village, Sen and his peasant friend Lu Hao-Dong *destroyed the statue of the Beiji Dijun (Emperor of the North Extreme) and an ear of the Jinhua Furen (Goddess of Gold Flower) of the village temple when villagers were making obeisance to them. This was considered both treason and heresy, for which Sun's father had to make a full apology and pay for the repair.*"<sup>65</sup> According to Chinese traditions, Sun Yat-Sen brought great shame to his family with this gesture and was asked to leave the village.

In 1883 Sun Yat-Sen went to Hong Kong, where *"he enrolled in the Diocesan Home run by the Church of England."*<sup>66</sup> In this school, he was baptized by the American missionary Dr. Charles Robert Hager (1851-1917). Charles Robert Hager was a missionary who went to southern China in 1883 as a missionary of the American Board and resided in the city of Hong Kong for twenty-seven years.

The significance of Sun Yat Sen's meeting with Hager was not limited to his baptism. Hager's memoirs for the publication *The Missionary Herald* mentioned that after Sen's baptism, they decided to set off together and went to Sun Yat-Sen's home in Heung Shan. Along the road, they made their living by selling Gospels.

*"After Sun Yat Sen became a Christian, he immediately began to witness for Christ, and such was his earnestness that in a short time, two of his friends accepted Christianity. This was at a time when few converts were made and when many feared to identify themselves with Christians."*<sup>67</sup>

His brother Sun Mei, who learned he had become a Christian, threatened Sen with cutting off his financial income. Sun Yat-Sen is known to have left Hawaii and returned to Hong Kong, saying that he would not renounce his faith. After his return, the missionaries from America took Sun Yat-Sen to medical school. Hager also wrote a personal letter to Dr. J. G. Kerr, President of the Faculty of Medicine in Hong Kong, asking for Sun Yat-Sen's admission to the faculty. No tuition fee was charged to Sun Yat-Sen. However, *"Sun himself explains that he planned to 'use the school as a place for propaganda and to exploit the medical profession in order to reach people.'"*<sup>68</sup>

Sun Yat-Sen began studying medicine at the Hong Kong Chinese Medical College, founded in 1877. This institution still exists and is known as the University of Hong Kong, and the London Missionary Society founded it.<sup>69</sup>

65 Kan-Wen Ma, "Sun Yat-Sen (1866-1925), a man to cure patients and the nation- his early years and medical career", *Journal of Medical Biography*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1996, p. 162.

66 *Ibid*, p.162.

67 Charles Robert Hager, "Doctor Sun Yat Sen: Some Personal Reminiscences", *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 108, No. 4, April 1912, <https://archive.org/details/missionaryherald1084amer/page/171/mode/1up?view=theater> pp. 171-172.

68 Schiffrin, *ibid*, p. 19.

69 The University of Hong Kong Medical Alumni Association, "Photo Gallery-The Foundation

According to Hager's testimony in the *Missionary Herald*, there is a direct connection between Sun Yat-Sen's Christianization and the Manchu dynasty's deposition. "But so great was the influence of Sun that he won these men to the truth. It was the same power that he has always had of making men accept his opinions. That is the reason nearly all of the 7,500,000 Chinese who are now abroad in other countries came to hold his views that the Manchus must go. True, many of the Christians could not ally themselves with him, but at heart they were one with him. It was the same power by which he has given to China a republic, instead of continuing the old monarchy."<sup>70</sup> Hager "felt that his resignation proved anew that Sun was still the same simple-hearted and earnest Christian patriot that he had always been and that he would continue to play an influential and positive role in China's future."<sup>71</sup>

Sun Yat-Sen paints the image of a heroized and idealized figure in the eyes of the Chinese people. He is generally assumed as someone born in China but was reborn in the United States through missionaries' initiatives. As a missionary-trained leader, Sun Yat-Sen returned to Hong Kong to study medicine with the recommendation letter of American Board member Dr. Hager and went to Europe and the United States to raise money for a republican revolution after a failed coup against the government in 1895. It is stated that he raised more than \$ 140,000 (equivalent to \$ 3,540,600 today) during his time in the United States.<sup>72</sup>

However, it is known that this trip was not Sun Yat-Sen's first trip to the United States. He first entered the United States in 1896 during a trip to North America. Despite the reward placed on his head by the Manchu Government, he was not caught inside the United States. The US introduced the Chinese Exclusion Act Laws and banned Chinese citizens from entering the United States during the same period. Despite the law, Sun Yat-Sen moved freely to the US and collected aid from US citizens. However, he was caught by British officials. It is noteworthy that Sun Yat-Sen, who started his education at the Anglican missionary school but continued his education at the American Board school, traveled to the north of the United States to raise money despite the Chinese Exclusion Laws of the US Government of the time, but was caught when he crossed to England. This situation is seen to have emerged as a result of the research in the American archives dated back to 1997. It turned out that Sun Yat-Sen had re-entered the United States in 1904 and had presented documents of his US citizenship on this trip. Sun Yat-Sen, at that time, was anticipating

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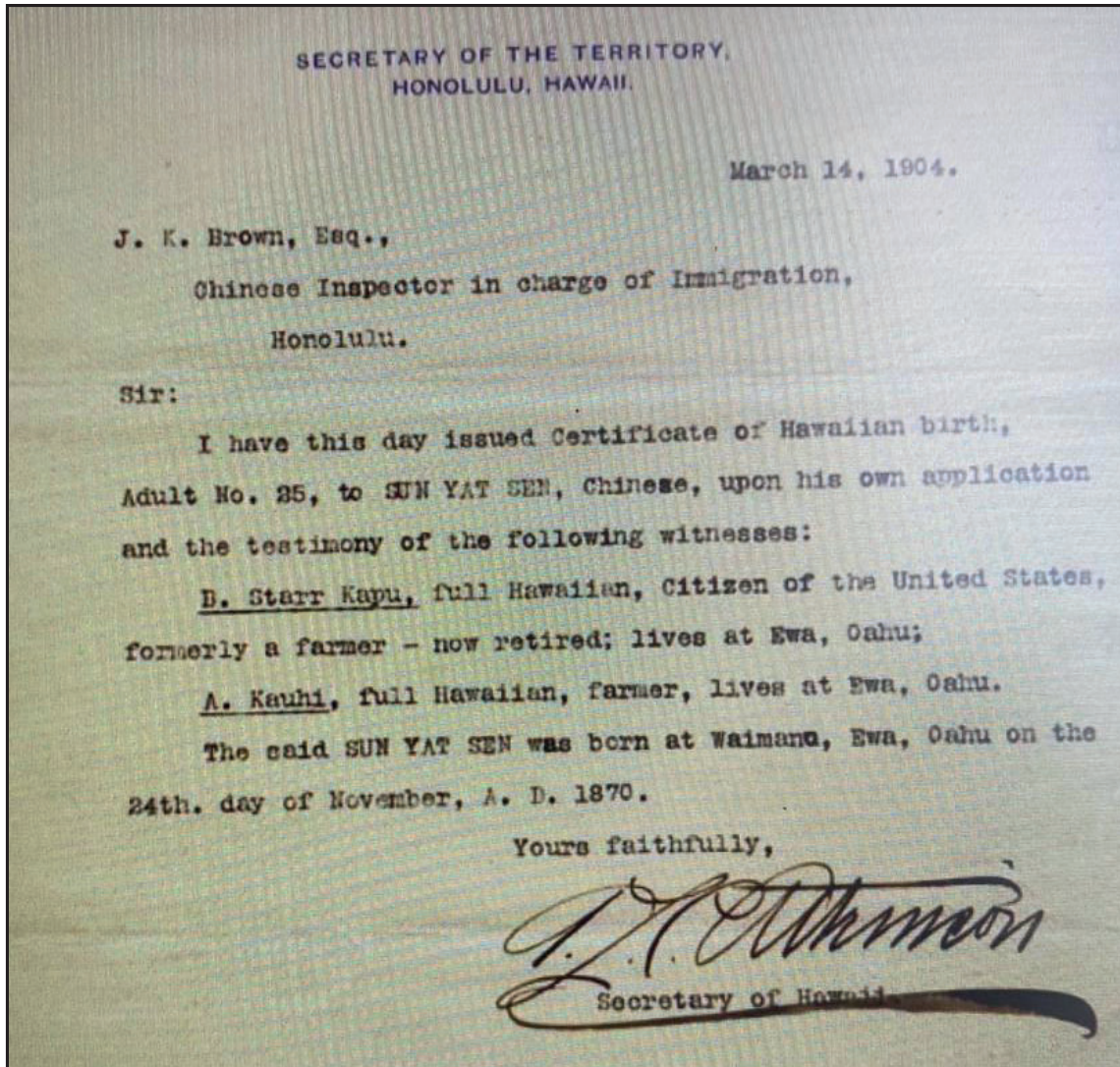
of Medical Faculty", <https://www.med.hku.hk/hkumaa/history-part1.php> (Date Accessed 15.03.2022) p. 1.

70 Hager, *ibid*, p. 172.

71 Metallo, *ibid*, p. 271.

72 Chinese Historical Society of America, "Sun Yat-sen's 1911 Tour of America", <https://chsa.org/exhibits/online-exhibits/sun-yat-sen-an-american-legacy/sun-yat-sens-1911-tour-of-america> (Date Accessed 08.02.2022) p. 1.

any action the Imperial Government might take against him.<sup>73</sup> The 1997 case file contains Sun Yat-Sen's sworn and signed testimony of two Hawaiian-born farmers.<sup>74</sup> According to the affidavit, Sun Yat-Sen appears to have been born in Hawaii but not in China.<sup>75</sup> (See Figure 1 below)



**Figure 1:** Document about Sun Yat-Sen's being a "native-born Hawaiian". Sun Yat-Sen's archival file. The document states that he was born on November 24, 1870, on one of the islands of Hawaii called Oahu.<sup>76</sup>

73 National Archives San Francisco, "Immigration Arrival Investigation Case Files, 1884-1944", Record Group 85 Immigration and Naturalization Service, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a81dadde9bfdff9a97b0da7/t/5d276e576e392d000188df98/1562865246177/NARA+San+Francisco+District+Inventory+%28rev.+12-2018%29.pdf> pp. 15-16.

74 For detailed information on how Sun Yat-Sen's archival file was found see, Neil L. Thomsen, "No Such Sun Yat-Sen: An Archival Success Story", *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, 1997, pp. 16-26. <https://caamedia.org/separatelivesbrokendreams/sunintro1.html>

75 The Center for Asian American Media, "9995/Sun Yat Sen", <https://caamedia.org/separatelivesbrokendreams/sun8.html> (Date Accessed 11.5.2022), p. 8.

76 The Center for Asian American Media, *ibid*, p. 8.

It has not been proven who was responsible for granting American citizenship to Sun Yat-Sen. After establishing the Republic of China, his status changed, and he became the head of state, but he did not apply to renounce his US citizenship. The US State Department approached the issue regarding long-term American interests in China and did not take action.

It is known that Sun Yat-Sen and the rebel groups were not the only groups that supported the Republican revolution in China. The missionaries also wanted this revolution to take place. The missionaries, who had to work in hiding with insufficient means in China, saw it necessary for their work that a government focused on western ideas should replace the old administration. Obstacles to the success of the American Board and other missionary groups in the region were seen as the ideas and management understanding of the imperial institution. It is known that republican pro-government and new generation leaders who were educated according to Western values in the West or grew up in mission institutions in China were supported by missionaries. It is also possible to say that the American Board's activities in the region, its publications, and the perception of China it has created within the United States have strengthened the sense of revolution and provided the necessary support. As a result of missionary initiatives, the revolution was perceived as a necessity in China. The activities of the leaders and missionaries trained in the missionary schools of the 19th century bore their fruits in the 20th century.

The expression of the "three principles of people," the system envisaged by Sun Yat-Sen for China, described as nationalism, democracy, and the people's welfare, provides another example of the seeds of thought sown by missionary activities. Sun Yat-Sen acknowledges that these statements are quotes from Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States and the first president of the Republican Party. The Three Principles of the People are the same as President Lincoln's. These principles are expressed on the US side as "the government of the people, by the people, for the people." Sun Yat-Sen has merely adapted these values to Chinese society.<sup>77</sup>

It is also known that Sun Yat-Sen did not break ties with the missionaries during his trip to the USA and often stayed in the missionaries' houses. He regularly shared with the missionaries the revolutionary plans he wanted to carry out in China. During his time in the United States, he established close relations with Dr. Hager. In his meetings with Hager, Sen was often told that the Chinese people embraced the reform movements. Sun Yat-Sen even found a chance to have meetings with US President Roosevelt.<sup>78</sup> From Sun Yat-Sen's education to the overthrow of the Chinese Empire, the American Board and its missionaries have never missed an opportunity. On the other hand, Sun Yat-Sen

77 Lyon Sharman, *Sun Yat-Sen His Life and Its Meaning: A Critical Biography*, Stanford University Press, California, 1968, p. 271.

78 Sharman, pp. 91-93.



demonstrated his commitment to the church in his speech in the United States by calling on the church to support the Chinese revolution. He described his feelings towards the church as such;

*“Those from Europe and America with whom I associated put the ideals of freedom and liberty into my heart. Now I call upon the church to help in the establishment of the new government. The Republic cannot endure unless there is that virtue – the righteousness for which the Christian religion stands – at the center of the nation’s life.”*<sup>79</sup>

Whether the activities of the American Board and other missionary groups operating in China have been successful has often been a matter of debate. Those who approach the issue based on the number of people converted to Christianity in China see the situation as a failure because missionaries have been able to convert very few Chinese to Christianity.

In the *Atlas of Religion in China*, the number of Protestants varies:

*“According to the official figures released by the SARA, there were about 23 million Protestants in China in 2010.50. However, the World Christian Database estimates there were more than 100 million Protestants in China. The Pew Research Center’s report on global Christianity estimated that there were 58 million Protestants in China in 2010. In surveys, only about 3 percent of respondents self-identified as Christians. If we look at specific Protestant beliefs or practices, however, the number of believers or followers doubles or triples.”*<sup>80</sup>

The actual figure is unclear, as different institutions offer different numbers. However, the actual achievement of the American Board or other missionary groups is that their organizations, churches, and missionaries in China are socially and culturally creative and revolutionary through their activities and institutions.

Missionaries trained the leading figures of Chinese culture in China and took China to their axis with the institutions they opened. *“Those trained in our medical schools stay in the big coastal cities where the accustomed facilities are available – those “treaty ports” which were the spearheads of “western imperialism”.*<sup>81</sup> Missionary activities have not only progressed with social policies in the institutional sphere. As can be seen from the example of China, these institutions have also intervened in the internal dynamics of the regions they wish to govern within the framework of their understanding.

Sun Yat-Sen’s reaction to his people’s local cultures after meeting with the missionaries should not be underestimated. Sun Yat-Sen, who was exposed

79 Sharman, p. 148.

80 Fenggang Yang and J. E. E. Pettit, *Atlas of Religion in China: Social and Geographical Contexts*, Brill Publications, Boston, 2018, p. 31.

81 A China Missionary, “First Thoughts on the Debacle of Christian Missions in China”, *African Affairs*, Vol. 51, No. 202, 1952, p. 35.

to missionary activities from a young age, could be seen as a result of these activities. It seems that the process in China, which resulted in overthrowing the imperial system, did not only occur with a series of uprisings within the country. The process began with creating the need for uprisings to break out. Even in his memoirs, Sun Yat-Sen states that Christian newspapers were used to propagate the movement in regions outside China.

*“This revolutionary movement amongst the Chinese students found its way into China. At Shanghai, the students Chang-Tai-Yang, Wu-Wei-Hoi, Cho-Chang, and others utilized the Christian papers for revolutionary propaganda. Their actions were complained of by representatives of the Imperial authorities, in consequence of which they were arrested and imprisoned on the territory of the foreign concession.”<sup>82</sup>*

Looking at Sun Yat-Sen in the light of today’s documents, Marie Claire Bergère states the following about him:

*“Sun Yat-Sen, a Cantonese raised in Hawaii and Hong Kong, was a pure product of maritime China, the China of the coastal provinces and overseas communities, open to foreign influences. The travels, encounters, and education that the young peasant received in missionary schools initiated him into the modern world and aroused in him a desire to give China a rank and role worthy of it in that world.”<sup>83</sup>*

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82 Yat Sen, *ibid*, p. 200.

83 Marie-Claire Bergère, *Sun Yat-Sen*, Trans. Janet Lloyd, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1994, p. 3.

## Conclusion

This study focused on how different missionary groups have influenced China since the early 1800s. It dealt with the practices and consequences of the missionary understandings of British and American missionaries. China, the Asian region's largest state, was the permanent target of the two major powers. However, the way they operated in China differed. While the British aimed for an administration of their own in China, the American missionaries aimed for a government that was not theirs but was subordinate to them in terms of US interests and regional effectiveness. Thus, while the American missionaries surrounded China with a containment strategy, the British missionaries preferred to infiltrate China's institutions. Puyi, the Chinese Emperor of the time, was taken under British control and, as a result of the nationalist revolutionary movement in China, was exiled to the region of Manchukuo.

As one of the leading missionary organizations in the US, the American Board played an important role in the upbringing of Sun Yat-Sen, who carried out the revolution. Missionary practices of the American Board are carried out in secrecy within China, and they were reluctant to operate inside the country like their British counterparts. This situation has brought great benefits to the United States over time.

The activities carried out in secrecy within the borders of China have moved to Hawaii over time. The equipping of Hawaii with institutions that would influence China in the following period strengthened the missionary policy of the United States. The situation is also in line with the understanding of the containment strategy followed by the United States. They built educational institutions and hospitals to educate future leaders of China. Sun Yat-Sen, who overthrew the Chinese Empire with his nationalist revolution, was also a result of missionary schools established in Hawaii. Throughout his life, he used the advantages of these schools and entered the United States more than once. The missionaries not only trained him to carry out the revolution but also provided him with material and moral aid. As a result of this study, it is clear that the American Board was effective in China and its leaders.

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### **Extended Abstract**

At the beginning of the 1800s, the position of the USA in the domestic political plane, under the influence of policies left off from the establishment period, was in a troubled atmosphere. This situation was overcome with a series of entrepreneurial activities towards the end of the period. The fixed policy and position in the Pacific Region have been translated into a policy of pro-active political initiatives and expansionist tendencies. In the new order, the country has taken two essential concepts to the forefront; military power and practical diplomatic power. The country has reduced the actual threats to its security, but the current situation has led to US activism and expansionism. One of the essential manifestations of the expansionist policies in the civilian sphere has been the US missionary understanding.

When the Pacific regional policies are examined closely, it is seen that China represents a suitable ground for the US missionary activities in the second half of the 1800s. The US has conducted several studies intending to use the people it has trained through its mission activities in the Asian region and inject western-centric administration models into it. Studies have shown that they bear fruit as political leaders and rulers in China. People brought up under the influence of missionaries have found a field of application of western-oriented management modeling in the Asian region.

American Board (ABCFM), one of the earliest missionary organizations in the United States, was established in 1810 to spread Christianity worldwide. The organization sent its first missionaries to China in 1830. American Board missionaries saw the Chinese as “darkened souls” which needed saving and forced Western culture on the Chinese in their schools. On the other hand, according to the Chinese, missionary activities were seen as a system that enabled foreign ideas to reach the Chinese in the lower class of society. From the mid-1800s to the 1900s, the meaning of missionary activities for the Chinese was seen as a means to understand and analyze the West, and it was an act to receive news about a civilization that seemed different to them. Missionaries, who could not achieve the religiously desired goal during their missionary activities, sought to advance their goals by undermining and manipulating cultural norms or targeting political authorities.

US and UK rivalry in China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was also an important issue. The US attempts to show activity in the region by following specific policies have emerged most clearly with the dominance and competitive environment on the island of Hawaii. England lost the missionary rivalry in mainland China to the US in the 1850s and focused its missionary efforts on the Hong Kong region due to the importance of commercial activities. Instead of following an integrative strategy covering the whole of China, the British strategy followed a policy that targeted private institutions and strategic points and aimed to seize and control the region's dynamics from within. On the contrary, the Americans prioritized their strategies and did not directly target Chinese institutions. They have placed the policy of showing activity in the regions around China at the forefront. In addition, despite their large number in China, American missionaries worked without attracting attention.

The death penalty imposed on all missionary groups in exchange for preaching Christianity also applied to American missionaries. The experiences of the first US missionaries were limited to learning Chinese in secret ways and translating sacred texts into Chinese. In the post-1890 period, American missionaries continued to pursue the theme of saving the soul of China, but they added to this theme the policy and political interests of their country.

Sun Yat-Sen graduated from Christian schools of the missionaries in Hawaii, where Western ideas and Christianity influenced him. Between 1879 and 1883, he went to a boarding school established by the Church of England called "Iolani College" in Hawaii. Afterward, he attended the preparatory school of "Oahu College" ("Punahou School") of American Board missionaries. He became one of the first two graduates of the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese, founded by the London Missionary Society, and became a medical doctor. American Board missionary Dr. Charles R. Hager baptized him in Hong Kong in 1884.

He is widely known as the "father of the nation" since he ended thousands of years of dynastic rule in China. He had a significant role in overthrowing the Manchu-led Qing dynasty, which had ruled China since 1644, in the Xinhai Revolution and became the provisional President of the Chinese Republic in 1911. The 1911 Revolution (or Xinhai Revolution), which led to the establishment of the Republic of China, ended China's last imperial dynasty.

American missionaries in China approved and saw great opportunity in the 1911 Revolution, for which they worked hard for many years. They educated its leaders in their missionary institutions in China. When the revolution erupted, Sun Yat-Sen was in the United States, raising money and recruiting members for the T'ung Meng Hui. After returning to China in December, he became the provisional President of the Republic of China on December 29, 1911. Sun Yat-Sen's being the President and other Christian leaders' being in

prominent positions made the missionaries happy, and they felt their activities would prosper. However, some thought he had little knowledge about Chinese people because he was away from his country for an extended period and was educated abroad.

China had two regimes at the end of 1911; the revolutionaries at Nanking and the Manchu government at Peking. Since neither of them was superior to the other, they negotiated a compromise. The Manchus issued a rescript announcing their formal demise as rulers of China, Sun Yat-Sen surrendered his provisional presidency, and a permanent republican government was established. Missionaries also favored this compromise, and they continued their good relationship with Sun Yat-Sen because his life could be an inspiration for other Chinese. On the other hand, Sun Yat-Sen always extolled the American Board's missionary contributions to China.

Although many aspects of Sun Yat-Sen's missionary-based life and activity are examined, few people know that Sun Yat-Sen was someone who claimed to be a "native-born Hawaiian." Immigration officials discovered in 1997 that he was a famous Chinese revolutionary searching for refuge and support for his cause in America.

Compared to the Chinese population, the number of American missionaries was not much, but by founding many hospitals, schools, and other agencies, they still successfully transmitted their ideas to China. Sun Yat-Sen was counseled and befriended by missionaries throughout his life, but he thought that America had failed him in the end. Since the American Board missionaries' impact on Sun Yat-Sen remains relatively unexplored, this study examines Sun Yat-Sen's role in history through missionary practices and tries to shed light on the American Board's effect on educating the future provisional President of the Republic of China.