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From Sorrow to Happiness: Spiritual Competition in Famine Relief
Activities in Late Nineteenth-Century China

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Sowing Happiness: Spiritual Competition in Famine Relief Activities in Late Nineteenth-Century China*

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While famine relief in Qing-China was and remains one of the most important tasks of various state agencies, during the dreadful drought-famine that afflicted North China in the late 1870s, Western missionaries as well as Chinese philanthropists from Southern elite groups assumed an influential role as fund-raisers and relief administrators. For both groups genuine religious beliefs were crucial as motivating forces, though in quite different ways. To put it in simplistic terms, Christian missionaries saw the famine as a welcome opportunity to promote their faith, whereas members of the Chinese elite seem to have used the deeply rooted belief in karmic retribution to support their relief activities aimed at the maintenance of social order. Western engagement clearly was perceived as a challenge on the Chinese side, but the competition did not stop at the material level; there was also a subtle sense of competition at the spiritual level. While all efforts to solicit relief subscriptions and the fact that we do have ample evidence about them might be an indication of the difficulty of soliciting donations from the Chinese populace in the first place; at the same time the necessity for a spiritual renovation of the Chinese people must have been pushed into the foreground of people's consciousness through the impressive — and hardly intelligible — performance of the missionaries, at least in the Jiangnan area, the national center of non-official relief work. These considerations together with some circumstantial evidence form the basis for this paper's hypothesis, that the experience of Sino-Western cooperation in famine relief work was one of the crucial ingredients of the so-called "Buddhist revival" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Key words: famine relief, the Great North-China famine 1876-1879, karmic retribution, Christian mission, Buddhist revival.

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"The scholar does not talk about the doctrine of retribution, but the principle is not to be called in question that the accumulation of good deeds leads to superabundant blessings."¹ It is with this seemingly contradictory statement that the short text accompanying an illustration showing all the blessings awaiting those who make a contribution to the famine relief fund established late in 1877 by members of the Suzhou elite to relieve the starving people in Henan begins. Contributors are promised wealth, examination success and good harvests, many sons and grandsons and an increase of happiness and longevity as rewards for their good deeds. While the first part of the statement dismissing this kind of belief belongs to the shared rhetoric of the learned elite and is more a marker of group identity than a substantial pronouncement, the second part in fact stems from the *Zhouyi* and gives highest authority to the doctrine declared as a non-topic by this very rhetoric. The doctrine is confirmed by yet another quotation from the *Zuo zhuan* promising blessings to those who relieve the starving and help their neighbour. The interplay of text and illustration nicely represents the interconnectedness of elite and popular culture and it shows a rather pragmatic approach to questions of belief on the side of members of the Chinese elite.²

There obviously was a need for incentives instigating people to make donations for their suffering compatriots. During the protracted drought in the Northern provinces of China which led to a devastating famine of unprecedented scale in the years 1876-1879, non-official agents assumed important roles in the collection of funds and in the administration of relief. The main agents besides those of the

1. "Henan qihuang tieleitu" 河南奇荒鐵淚圖 (Pictures of the terrible famine in Henan, that might draw tears from iron), postface dated 11th month of the third year of the Guangxu reign, i.e. 1877, reprinted in *Yu-zhen zhengxinlu* 豫賑徵信錄, 1879, j. 4.

2. Cf. the figure on p.215. This attitude was commonly shared among the scholar elite. There is a similar statement in Feng Guifen's "Taishang ganying pian tushuo xu" 太上感應篇圖說序: "The scholar does not talk about [the doctrine of] cause and effect, but the principles of action and response between heaven and man are all contained in the Scriptures." *Xianzhiang gao* 顯志堂稿, j. 1, 26a.

state were, on the one hand, foreign missionaries and, on the other, members of the Southern elite. The commitment of both of these groups was unprecedented. This was the first time that international agencies intervened into a sphere which hitherto had been regarded as being the responsibility of either the state or of the local elite. It was also the first time that non-official relief efforts by members of the Chinese elite extended beyond the local and operated on a national scale.³ It was these two factors which made it necessary for the relief activists on the Chinese side to wage a campaign to encourage contributions, given also the considerable publicity for foreign relief in the treaty-port and international press, and to reinforce their own belief systems in order to meet that end. Whereas the concern for social peace and economic security, striving for social prestige and probably a hint of national pride might have been the moving forces of elite activism, religious beliefs were crucial for the mobilization of a broader populace for the cause of famine relief.

Although there had been a considerable degree of cooperation or at least coordination of official, non-official and foreign relief work, the general atmosphere was characterized by a subtle sense of competition; this became noticeable on a material as well as on a spiritual level. It was in such an atmosphere that the dreadful famine was represented as a welcome opportunity by both the missionaries and the Chinese relief activists. As the Baptist missionary Timothy Richard (1845-1919) reveals in his reminiscences, the missionaries perceived the famine as a "rare opportunity" and a "direct leading from God to open up the interior of China." This sense of a divine calling is well expressed in his words reflecting his mood after con-

3. See Paul Richard Bohr, *Famine in China and the Missionary: Timothy Richard as Relief Administrator and Advocate of National Reform, 1876-1884*; He Hanwei 何漢威, *Guangxu chunian* (1876-1879) *Huabei de da banzai* 光緒初年 (1876-1879) 華北的大旱災; Li Wenhai 李文海, "Wan-Qing yizhen de xingqi yu fazhan" 晚清義賑的興起與發展, and recently Kathryn J. Edgerton, "The Semiotics of Starvation in Late-Qing China: Cultural Responses to the 'Incredible Famine' of 1876-1879."

templating the prospects of famine relief work in Shanxi: “[...] I was so profoundly impressed with the deep feeling that God was giving us an opportunity of exercising influence over many millions of people, that a powerful physical thrill affected me so that I could hardly walk back across the courtyard to my own room.”⁴ Chinese relief activists also represented the famine as a providential opportunity (*jiyuan* 機緣), albeit with a very different outlook: it was an excellent chance for people to accumulate merit to ensure the future well-being of both individual and family.⁵ Yet there was still another dimension, as a call for contributions for relief in Henan by Zheng Guanying 鄭觀應 (1842-1922), one of the most eminent relief activists, shows. After remarking that not only Chinese but also Westerners raise funds and distribute relief, he states: “Among those wishing to do good nobody comes equal to us. This is not to be doubted.”⁶

Religious beliefs were thus used quite rationally by members of the Chinese elite in order to support the relief effort, whereas foreign missionaries, in a rather enthusiastic mood, saw the famine as a means to gain firmer ground in China through the conspicuous practice of selfless charity. Religion had thus quite a different meaning for the secular Chinese elite and for the foreign religious professionals. For the former, religious views became a function of their social and political commitment, whereas for the latter, commitment to famine relief became a function of their religious persuasion.

4. *Forty-Five Years in China. Reminiscences by Timothy Richard, D.D., Litt.D.*, 124-26.

5. See e.g. “Zhong fu mo ru zhenji lun” 種福莫如賑飢論 (To sow happiness there is nothing superior to famine relief), *Shenbao* 申報 (hereafter SB) 14.3.1878; [*Taozhai*] *Jiubuang fubao* [陶齋] 救荒福報 (Blessings received as recompense for famine relief [collected by Zheng Guanying]), 1935 printing, preface by Zheng Guanying dated 1878.

6. “Shanghai quan mu zhen Yu qi” 上海勸募賑豫啟 (Announcement calling for contributions for relief in Henan), *Xinbao* 新報, 30.3.1878.

To Sow Happiness, Nothing Is Better than Famine Relief

The link of the “doctrine of cause and effect” (*yinguo zhi shuo* 因果之說) or “action and response” (*ganying* 感應) to famine relief dates from at least Song times:⁷ a couple of exemplary stories are included in a section on “recompenses for famine relief” (*jiubuang baoying* 救荒報應) in the oldest transmitted Chinese manual on famine relief.⁸ It is not clear since when the primacy of famine relief as the foremost act to accumulate merit was proclaimed, but the notion that “to save one man’s life is superior to building a seven-storied pagoda” (*jiu ren yi ming sheng zao qi ji futu* 救人一命勝造七級浮屠) goes back to at least the Yuan. In this Buddhist outlook the doctrine became an important factor for fund-raising activities by members of the late Ming elite,⁹ and it again experienced a renaissance during the nineteenth century. By the late Qing period the doctrine was clearly used to instigate elite action and to give the populace a kind of moral instruction. A rather pragmatic and rational approach seems to have come to dominate over the actual spiritual persuasion of many of those propagating the doctrine.

In a manual on “effective methods of famine relief” from early nineteenth century Suzhou, the rationale underlying elite support of (official) famine relief is made explicit. It was commonly believed that to save a man’s life was the foremost way to accumulate secret merit (*yingong* 陰功). Therefore, if there was an extraordinary sub-

7. For a concise outline of the development of these concepts in the Chinese context see Cynthia J. Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China*, esp. ch. 2.

8. Dong Wei 董煒, *Jiubuang buominshu* 救荒活民書, Congshu jicheng ed., j. 3. Even more stories are included in the version reproduced in *Zhongguo huangzheng quanshu* 中國荒政全書 (ed. by Li Wenhai 李文海 and Xia Mingfang 夏明方, 110-15), as this is mixed up with later additions and commentaries from Yuan and Ming times.

9. Joanna F. Handlin Smith, “Chinese Philanthropy As Seen through a Case of Famine Relief in the 1640s,” in Warren F. Ilchman et. al., ed., *Philanthropy in the World’s Traditions*, esp. 147-52.

sistence crisis and millions of people were on the brink of death, then the benevolent gentlemen should take it as his foremost duty to save the starving people and, as the possibilities of one person were very limited, he should encourage others to make contributions in order "to turn the ditches and moats into sleeping-mats." Doubts concerning the human effort to intervene in cosmological processes are dissolved by saying that to defy the punishment inflicted by Heaven is in order to redeem it. But besides the virtue of "loving the people" and doing good to others, a distinct concern for social order and economic security was also present. "In terms of *li* or principle, those kindly relieving the poor and needy are sure to receive universal protection. In terms of profit and loss [it is true that] if there are no starving people, then there are no robbers and bandits, and if there are no robbers and bandits, then our native place is in peace. This is in the interest of the wealthy families. These words are even more accurate, the wealthy and powerful should consider them carefully."¹⁰

With the advent of even greater calamities in the second half of the century and of the foreign missionaries taking these as a welcome opportunity to promote their faith, social commitment in the form of famine relief gained entirely new dimensions, geographically, culturally, and spiritually. While members of the elite reinforced the doctrine of retribution in their effort to raise funds, controversial discussions concerning the conformity of the doctrine with the orthodox teaching arose again. Philanthropists supported the doctrine against its critics, and eminent scholars such as Feng Guifen 馮桂芬 (1809-1874) from Suzhou, who became famous for his early advocacy of "Western learning," and Zheng Guanying, the reformer-entrepreneur from Xiangshan, Guangdong, who became famous for advocating "commercial warfare" with the Western powers, promoted it by writing prefaces to the Song-dynasty "Treatise on action and response" and by publishing collections of stories of retri-

10. "Quan zhen" 勸賑 (Encouraging relief), in *Jiubuang liangfang* 救荒良方 (preface dated 1840), 31.

bution for famine relief.¹¹

In his *Deyilu* 得一錄 (A Record of Sincerity), a manual for philanthropists published in 1869 in Suzhou, Yu Zhi 余治 (1809-1874), who has been called the master of all those later engaging in "righteous relief" (*yizhen* 義賑),¹² justifies the notion of retribution, or blessings received in consequence of famine relief. The manual includes a collection of rewards-for-relief stories, whose moral is that all the wealth and nobility of the great clans stem from the hidden virtue (*yinde* 隱德) of their ancestors, and that the greatest merits can be gained by famine relief.¹³ An essay on the belief in blessings resulting from famine relief included in this collection shows that this belief was not uncontested. The topic is introduced by quoting the ubiquitous phrase from the *Zuozhuan* promising blessings to those who pity and relieve their neighbour in distress.¹⁴ Then two voices critical of this notion of "inviting happiness" (*yao fu* 邀福) criticize the attitudes promulgated in popular tracts such as "On determining one's own fate" and the "Tract on Action and Response"¹⁵ as heretical because of the petty-minded demand for effects and merits, which was inappropriate for a (sincere) scholar. Such an attitude was in contradiction to the principle not to strive for profit and not to reckon with merit. Admitting that these critiques indicate a mind which is noble, the author objects that it might be too noble, and

11. Feng Guifen, "Taishang ganying pian tushuo xu," in *Xianzhitang gao*, j. 1, 26a. Zheng Guanying, *Taozhai jiubuang fubao*, 1878 (numerous reprints, the one used here is from 1935). It should be noted that Zheng's postface added in 1921 bespeaks a deep faith in Buddhist teachings.
12. Yan Chen 嚴辰, *Mohua yinguan ganjiu buairen ji* 墨花吟館感舊懷人集 (Melancholic remembrances from the Mohua poetry hall) [1889], reprint in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, 029-409.
13. *Deyilu*, j. 5, 19a (section on "Jiuhuang fubao" 救荒福報), Suzhou Dejianzhai, 1869, rpt. in *Guanzhenshu jicheng* 官箴書集成, vol.8, 543.
14. "It is the [right] way to relieve the calamity and pity one's neighbour, those practicing the [right] way will receive blessings." *Zuozhuan*, "Xi gong," thirteenth year.
15. On the Song dynasty "Taishang ganying pian" 太上感應篇 and the late Ming "Liming shuo" 立命說, the foundational texts of the late imperial retribution business, cf. Brokaw, *Ledgers of Merit and Demerit*, passim.

that to assume an uncompromising attitude might in fact deprive one of any means to induce people to be benevolent. Quoting equally ubiquitous passages from the *Shangshu*¹⁶ and the *Zhouyi*¹⁷ to support the denounced doctrine, he asks why the critic dares to judge on the "Tract on Action and Response" but not on the Classics. In his own concluding passage the rationale for the validity of the doctrine is expounded. It is admitted that the Buddhists' doctrine of cause and effect is rather absurd (*huangdan* 荒誕), but that nevertheless the responses to good and bad deeds are unmistakably manifest everywhere! When it is the right way to relieve one's neighbour in distress, and to practice the way and receive blessings is profitable and meritorious, then there is no profit beyond what is proper. Thus the doctrine of blessings resulting from practicing the way is intended to imbue people with morality, and indeed with the knowledge that not to strive for profit is the way to achieve it, and not to reckon with merit is the way to perfect it. It might be that those who calculate their actions have an impure mind, but, it is objected, will not those who hold too noble an opinion in turn lose the aim to do good which the saints conferred on people?¹⁸ This statement addressed at an elite readership is typical insofar "popular" Buddhist beliefs are explicitly disqualified, while the implications of such beliefs are reinforced for the sake of pragmatism.

Nine years later in the midst of the Great Famine, in an article on "sowing happiness" which the Shanghai daily *Shenbao* 申報 reprinted from the Hong Kong *Xunhuan ribao* 循環日報, this pragmatic attitude was again reinforced. It served to establish a positive, action-oriented attitude enabling people to face both an increasingly

16. "On the doer of good, heaven sends down all blessings, and on the doer of evil, he sends down all calamities." *Shangshu*, "Shangshu" 尚書, j. 8, trans. following Brokaw, *Ledgers of Merit and Demerit*, 29.
17. A shortened version of "The family that accumulates good will have abundant good fortune. The family that accumulates evil will have abundant bad fortune." *Zhouyi*, j. 1, trans. following Brokaw, *Ledgers of Merit and Demerit*, 33.
18. "Jiuzai you fu shuo" 救災有福說 (To relief a calamity brings [abundant] blessings), *Deyilu*, j. 5, 26a-27b, reprint 546-7.

fatalist worldview which regarded life as determined by an arbitrarily acting heaven and an increasingly disenchanting worldview which regarded life as determined by pure coincidence. Again the *Shangshu* and the *Zhouyi* are quoted, emphasizing the notion of the accumulation of merit and demerit, in order to encourage also small contributions.¹⁹ This time it is said that the calamity was not sent as a punishment but as an opportunity for the contemporaries to receive a lot of happiness! "In peaceful and prosperous times those who have good intentions and want to sow good karma (*zhong shanyuan* 種善緣) can do nothing more than build bridges and roads, worship the Buddha and feed monks. These are inconsequential things one can have and can not have, it's nothing one desperately needs." Now there were lots of opportunities for everybody! Even those of little means, if they only exhausted their hearts and did what they could, could save one life, and this could turn into unbelievably great merit.²⁰ The same attitude is promoted also by Zheng Guanying. In the preface to his own collection of reward-for-relief stories published in the same year he says that those who were in the upper echelons of society were there because of the secret virtues of their ancestors, and the distribution of relief in times of famine is what brought most and quickest recompense — in the form of wealth, longevity, and examination success. He represents the terrible calamity in Zhili, Henan, Shaanxi and Shanxi as the crucial juncture for the accumulation of merit and demerit. The state which opened its coffers and redirected tribute grain, as well as the scholars and commoners who contributed funds to help to relieve the disaster, all took advantage of this providential opportunity (趁此

19. "If acts of goodness be not accumulated, they are not sufficient to give finish to one's name; if acts of evil be not accumulated, they are not sufficient to destroy one's life. The small man thinks that small acts of goodness are of no benefit, and does not do them; and that small deeds of evil do not harm, and does not abstain from them. Hence his wickedness becomes great until it cannot be covered, and his guilt becomes great until it cannot be pardoned." *Zhouyi*, "Xici xia," trans. following Brokaw, *Ledgers of Merit and Demerit*, 33.
20. "Zhong fu mo ru zhenji lun," SB 14.3.1878.

機緣).²¹

The frequent inculcation of the doctrine of action and response,²² combined with reports in the press from the famine districts meant to arouse people's compassion, indicate that it was not easy to raise private funds from people in wealthy Jiangnan to help famine victims in the poor North. In fact, famine relief had by no means been the foremost method for accumulating merit: by far the most popular method among the wealthy southern elites had been spending money for lavish ceremonies or liberating living creatures.²³ Whereas wealth and examination success still were important incentives, it turned out that the urban environment of the treaty-ports created a strong concern for physical health. The most conspicuous feature in the news coverage was the frequency of reports on the curing of illness as a consequence of contributions made. In June 1878 the *Shenbao* published a letter in which a man told about his sixty-seven-year-old father suffering from chronic asthma, which became very severe after he caught a cold. The physicians were helpless and their prayers ineffective. Then, the letter-writer continues, he remembered that giving famine relief could have a life-prolonging effect, and thus he prayed to heaven promising to make contributions to the relief fund if his father was saved. When the physician came the next day, the father's pulse already showed signs of betterment and soon he was completely healed. The letter-writer discloses that all his life he was deeply opposed to every kind of religious teaching. As he has now received such an immediate response from Heaven, he dares recommending to all those suffering from illness or any other hardship to promise to

21. *Jiubuang fubao*, preface by Zheng Guanying dated 6th month of the 4th year of the Guangxu reign (1878).

22. "Quan zhen wen" 勸賑文 (Exhortation to famine relief), SB 6.5.1878. "Jiuhuang gongde shuo" 救荒功德說 (On the merits resulting from famine relief), SB 22.11.1878. "Lun ganying shensu" 論感應神速 (On marvellously quick responses [to famine relief]), SB 26.3.1878.

23. "Lun wei shan wu bu bao" 論為善無不報 (No benevolent act will stay unrewarded), SB 14.12.1877.

relieve the starving people. The reward will be better than imploring the gods or worshipping the Buddha.²⁴

The effectiveness of contributions even found a concrete material expression in the receipts issued by the relief office of the Shanghai Silk Guild, which during the 1880s developed into one of Shanghai's major relief centres. The old father of a certain Mr. Zhu, it is reported, suffered from typhoid fever. The medicines prescribed for him all proved ineffective. The family was told that a receipt from the said relief office, if silently burnt at the shrine of the Kitchen God (who as the guardian over people's good and bad deeds had to report on them to the other-worldly authorities) and its ashes brewed up with boiled water, would serve as a universal remedy. 20 *shi* of relief grain and a sum of 50 dollars were immediately sent to the relief office. Everything was done as prescribed and the father's illness was cured.²⁵ The promise of rewards, especially the birth of sons, curing of illness, longevity and examination success, were standard elements of incessant relief campaigns.²⁶ There certainly was a genuine belief in the benefits of doing good on the side of elite people, as is revealed in the diary of Sun Chuanhu, one of the Southern relief activists. He believed that it was through his commitment to famine relief that he was suddenly healed from a chronic illness he had suffered from for about twenty years.²⁷ Nevertheless, reports on the healing forces conferred by giving relief became more prominent in the newspapers in subsequent years, which can be read as a sign for weakening enthusiasm as famine relief became a

24. "Juanzhen yu ji" 捐賑瘡疾 (Illness healed following contribution to relief fund), SB 27.6.1878.

25. "Zhuzhen yu bing" 助賑瘡病, SB 26.4.1884. See also SB 3.2.1884.

26. These four rewards are illustrated in the "Jiuhuang fubao tu" 救荒福報圖 (Illustrations of blessings received for famine relief), supplement page to SB 13.9.1885. See also "Lei ji zhuzhen huobao shi" 類紀助賑獲報事 (Categorized reports on cases of rewards for relief), SB 30.4.1888.

27. Sun Chuanhu 孫傳鳳, *Bian-you zhuzhen congchao* 卞游助賑叢鈔 (Collected notes on a journey to Bianliang to distribute relief), dated Guangxu 10, i.e. 1884, rpt. in *Zhongguo shixue congsbu san bian*, 409. I am very grateful to one of the anonymous referees for pointing out this reference to me.

routine, with one disaster following the other in an endless chain.²⁸

The Spirit of Competition and Spiritual Competition

By the spring of 1878 the famine in the northern provinces had developed into a true national crisis. Whereas during the 1876/1877 famine in Shandong foreign fund-raising activities remained by and large limited to the treaty-port communities, the Committee of the China Famine Relief Fund founded in Shanghai in January 1878 soon set up a branch in London and launched an international campaign, making the famine in China widely known in England and America.²⁹ Guo Songtao 郭嵩濤 (1818-1891), the Chinese minister in London, even felt obliged to write a letter to *The Times* expressing his gratitude to the English people for “their benevolent desire, instantaneously expressed, to relieve the suffering of a people many thousands of miles distant from them,” without however forgetting to mention that “I regret that it should be necessary for China to appeal to the sympathies of other countries.”³⁰ The assistance of people who “do not know our language and have different predilections” is an irritating fact. In the article on “sowing happiness” it is stated with some sense of consternation that the Westerners do not even intend to receive any reward for their charitable deeds. Appealing to the pride of his compatriots, the author urges for contributions, empha-

28. For more examples of reports on cured illnesses see SB 10.5.1880, 9.6.1880, 16.6.1880, 16.4.1884, 25.2.1885, 21.3.1885. A fund-raising initiative by the Shenbao publishing house in imitation of the Western practice of charity events not promising any personal profit, in contrast, did not yield the expected results. In July 1878 the Shenbao editors announced the charity publication of a volume called *Kuipinliang* 饋貧糧 (Offering grain to the poor). 2000 copies were printed, each to be sold for half a dollar. The revenue was meant to support the relief work done by the Guoyutang. Two and a half weeks later only 311 copies were sold and the editors wondered whether the price might have been too high. See editorial announcements in SB 5.7.1878 and 23.7.1878.

29. China Famine Relief Committee, *Report of the Committee of the China Famine Relief Fund*.

30. *The Times*, 15.2.1878.

sizing that a lot of small donations also may result in a big sum (*ji ye cheng qiu* 集腋成裘) and promise plentiful heavenly rewards. The sense of competition is very explicit here, and readers are called on to emulate the generosity of the foreigners.³¹

Western fund-raising activities were reported on regularly in the Shanghai press.³² In December 1877 the *Shenbao* reports that a contribution of 500 Tls (i.e. taels) raised from Western merchants in Shanghai has been sent to Taiyuan via Tianjin.³³ At the end of January 1878 one can read that telegrams asking for aid are being sent to England and America.³⁴ Two weeks later a sum of 2,500 Tls is reported to have been sent from England,³⁵ and another two weeks later the Shanghai Famine Relief Committee is reported to have collected 11,512 Tls 6 *qian* 9 *fen* (note the accurate listing of every *qian* and *fen*), including another 3,000 Tls having arrived from England.³⁶ Another two days later the total is indicated as being 11,690 Tls 4 *qian* 5 *fen*,³⁷ and after another week it is 25,092 Tls, with another 5,000 Tls sent from London. 10,000 dollars have been contributed by Western merchants resident in Hong Kong.³⁸ These numbers are countered by the sum of 11,000 silver dollars collected within, it is stressed, just two days by Chinese merchants resident in Singapore — even though they had long since left the country and some of them were even naturalized British subjects — and another sum of 14,000 dollars sent by Chinese merchants in Yokohama.³⁹

31. “Zhong fu mo ru zhenji lun,” SB 14.3.1878.

32. The following passages survey the *Shenbao* reporting from January to June 1878. Similar reporting is to be found in the *Xinbao* 新報, a Chinese-language daily published by the North-China Herald Co. and in the Western-language press, which usually is the source of the reports in Chinese.

33. SB 1.12.1877, report by Rev. Muirhead.

34. “Xiren zhenji” 西人賑飢 (Famine relief from Westerners), SB 28.1.1878.

35. “Youyin zhuzhen” 郵銀助賑 (Postal remittance of relief funds), SB 12.2.1878.

36. “Zhenyin jishu” 賑銀紀數 (Relief fund statistics), SB 25.2.1878.

37. “Juanyin yongyue” 捐銀踴躍 (Enthusiastic contributions), SB 27.2.1878.

38. “Zhenyin jishu,” SB 6.3.1878.

39. “Kemin zhuzhen” 客民助賑 (Contributions by “guest people”), SB 15.2.1878. “Jizi zhuzhen” 集資助賑 (Fund-raising for relief), SB 13.3.1878.

Only towards the end of February there is an announcement by the Guoyutang 果育堂, a Shanghai benevolent hall, reporting the comparatively modest sum of 800 Tls raised for relief in Henan, 500 of which were from one single person — but more is needed and those making subscriptions are promised immeasurable merits.⁴⁰ The claim that Chinese should not let themselves be outdone by foreigners in the relief of Chinese people is contained implicitly in the report on a missionary in Hankou distributing 10 *wen* to each refugee family. This is not much, but, it is asked, how does it come about that a foreigner can regard these miserable people with impartial kindness, whereas our compatriots see them as if they were from distant countries?⁴¹

Apart from the sheer sums of the contributions, both the spirit of donating and a sense of accountability on behalf of the relief administrators towards the contributors is touched on in these short accounts. Western residents in Fuzhou, it is reported, are discussing possibilities of raising funds. Western ladies in Hong Kong had organized a charity bazaar which brought in 1,200 dollars, and 47 dollars were earned through a benevolent performance. This might not be much, but the good intention is what counts. In contrast to these private initiatives, the Liang-Huai salt merchants had to be ordered to make contributions.⁴² In reports on the distribution of foreign relief the persons who are responsible for the transfer of the money are indicated, and the Jardine & Matheson Co. is said to have transported 15,000 Tls of silver for free, whereas the sum of relief silver provided by Hubei officials remains unknown.⁴³ In late March Western contributions total 45,679 Tls. 2,000 dollars are said to have

40. "Xiang zhen Henan quan juan xu qi" 襄賑河南勸捐續啟 (Second announcement encouraging contributions to support relief in Henan), SB 26.2.1878.

41. "Xishi shi qian" 西士施錢 (Western scholar distributing money), SB 6.3.1878.

42. "Juanyin yongyue," SB 27.2.1878. "Juanzhen xuxin" 捐賑續信 (Continued news on contributions), SB 8.3. 1878. "Jin-sheng zhenjuan" 晉省賑捐 (Contributions for the province of Shanxi), SB 7.3.1878.

43. "Ji yin shi zhen" 寄銀施賑 (Money sent to distribute relief), SB 7.3.1878. "Zhenyin ji Jin" 賑銀寄晉 (Relief money sent to Shanxi), SB 11.3.1878. "Zhenwu jieyin" 賑務解銀 (Allocation of relief money), SB 13.3.1878.

been contributed by the Japanese court, with the total sum of subscriptions from Japan being 23,000 dollars. The spirit of "making no distinctions" (*bu fen zhenyu* 不分畛域) is repeatedly praised.⁴⁴ By that time, the activities initiated by members of the Shanghai and Suzhou elite had also begun to find expression in the press.

In Suzhou the Taohuawu gongsuo 桃花塢公所, a "public hall" managed by Xie Jiafu 謝家福 (1847-1897), who himself came from a family with a long philanthropist tradition, took a leading part in the relief campaign. Funds had been collected there for relief in Shandong already a year earlier. The main method of fund-raising then was so-called "Wild-Goose Pagoda forms," a clear case of making use of the prospect of accumulating merit to solicit subscriptions. These subscription lists featuring a seven-storied pagoda had already been used by Xie's father Huiting 謝蕙庭 (?-1860)⁴⁵ during the Daoguang reign (1821-1851) for a local relief campaign.⁴⁶ But as the famine in the Northern provinces dragged on more effective means to evoke people's compassion with the starving had to be found. As the Taohuawu was famous for its New Year prints the idea suggested itself of using a form of visual representation of the misery to create a stronger emotional response to the calls for relief. Several series of illustrations showing the dire distress of the people in the afflicted areas were produced, and all included a picture showing the blessings awaiting those making a contribution. These materials were part

44. "Xishang zhenshu" 西商賑數 (Statistics of relief by Western merchants), SB 20.3.1878. "Ribben zhuzhen" 日本助賑 (Relief from Japan), SB 23.3.1878.

45. Biographical information on the two Xie is included in Cao Yunyuan 曹允源, Li Genyuan 李根源, eds. *Minguo Wuxian zhi* 吳縣志, j. 70 shang:24b, 44b-45b. The father and 20 other members of the family had died during the Taiping assault on Suzhou in 1860. Xie Jiafu could escape to Shanghai.

46. "Dongzhen yanta tu" 東賑雁塔圖 (The Wild-Goose Pagoda form [used for] the Shandong relief campaign), in *Qi Yu Jin Zhi zhenjuan zhengxinlu* 齊豫晉直賑捐徵信錄, n.p., 1879. The use of pagoda forms was a common method of fund-raising. It was also practiced in Jinling by the gentry managers of the Life-saving office collecting donations for Shanxi. To have one's name signed on the Pagoda-form one had to pay 100 *wen*, one pagoda made a sum of 5000 *wen* ("Jinling zhenjuan" 金陵賑捐, SB 2.1.1878). The same method is reported already for Ming times. See Handlin, "Chinese Philanthropy," 149.

of an effort to broaden the basis of fund-raising activities by enticing a broader populace to support the Suzhou philanthropists in their effort to relieve the starving people in Henan.⁴⁷

Most famous was a series of twelve woodblock prints called *tieleitu* 鐵淚圖 — “pictures that might draw tears from iron” — depicting the misery of the people suffering from the “terrible famine in Henan” produced in the winter of 1877/1878.⁴⁸ The pictures quickly became known internationally because they were reprinted in London by the Committee of the China Famine Relief Fund, in *The Graphic*, and again in *China's Millions*, the organ of the China Inland Mission.⁴⁹ According to the statement of accounts published at the close of the campaign, 9,650 copies of the *tieleitu* were printed — in addition to more than 10,000 copies of a variety of similar devotional materials. The *tieleitu* was by far the most popular, followed by the *fuyoutu* 福幼圖, intended to arouse pity for children abandoned, sold or killed (5,000 copies), and the *guanyintu* 觀音圖 featuring the goddess of mercy (3,000 copies).⁵⁰

By March of 1878 the philanthropists from Shanghai, Suzhou and other Jiangnan cities, following the Western example, had begun to publish the sums received in the press. An account on the work in Jiyuan, Henan, on which the effort of the Suzhou initiative was

47. “Henan zhuzhenju lai han” 河南助賑局來函 (Letter from the Henan famine relief office), SB 27.2.1878. On the popularising effect of the use of illustrations see also Kathryn J. Edgerton, “The Semiotics of Starvation,” 316-17.

48. “Yue Henan qihuang tieleitu shuhou” 閱河南奇荒鐵淚圖書後, SB 15.3.1878. On Xie Jiafu and his design of the *tieleitu* see ch. 7 of Edgerton, “The Semiotics of Starvation.”

49. *The Famine in China*, London, 1878. The translations were prepared by James Legge.

50. *Yu-zhen zhengxinlu*, preface to the statement of accounts received and distributed by the Taohuawu Office in Suzhou. There must have been at least two different collections of illustrations appearing under the title *tieleitu*. *The Yu-fi tieleitu* 豫飢鐵淚圖 reprinted in yet another “statement of accounts,” the *Qi Yu Jin Zhi zhenjuan zhengxinlu* 齊豫晉直賑捐徵信錄, consists of 16 illustrations which are all different from the *Henan qihuang tieleitu*, with the exception of the last picture showing the blessings bestowed by the gods, although some of the texts are the same.

concentrated, appeared in the *Shenbao*. There it is reported that 4,500 Tls have been distributed in Henan, and it is stressed that those administering the funds are famous and reliable gentry-merchants.⁵¹ At the beginning of April the Guoyutang reports a sum total of 16,690 Tls received, with the accounts showing a sum of 2,000 dollars from Mr. Xie of Suzhou, and another 2,000 dollars from Mr. Zou of Changzhou, etc., etc. Three gentlemen in Suzhou are reported to be collecting funds using the Pagoda-forms.⁵² Another item reports on a lady in Suzhou who, after having read about the famine in the newspaper, took 11 dollars from the small income from her needlework and gave them to the relief fund. As in the case of the contribution by the Western ladies in Hong Kong it is said that although the sum was small, the intention is important.⁵³ In late April the accounts on the revenue from Xie Jiafu's *tieleitu* are published. In contrast to similar Western announcements, a sum total is not given, but instead a long list of individual subscriptions to the various lists, with contributions ranging from one to several hundred dollars.⁵⁴

From a spiritual point of view the relatively well-organized missionary relief work was supported by a zeal that took the form of religious fanaticism. In the last analysis, the commitment of the missionaries to famine relief was not driven by selfless compassion and charity, but by a distinct sense of spiritual competition. As the history of the China Inland Mission shows, the missionaries took full advantage of the situation. Famine relief was the point of departure for the

51. “Yu-zhen jishi” 豫賑記事 (Report on relief work in Henan), SB 21.3.1878. “Yu-zhen leiji” 豫賑類記 (Categorized report on relief work in Henan), SB 28.3.1878.

52. “Yu-zhen zaji” 豫賑雜記 (Miscellaneous notes on relief work in Henan), SB 5.4.1878.

53. “Guifu zhenji” 閩婦賑飢 (Lady giving relief to the starving), SB 11.4.1878.

54. “Zhaolu Su-yuan Taohuawu Xie Suizhi shou san yue shang xun Henan tieleitu juanshu” 照錄蘇垣桃花塢謝綏之收三月上旬河南鐵淚圖捐數 (True copy of the sum of contributions received for the Henan *tieleitu* during the first ten days of the third month by Xie Suizhi (i.e. Jiafu) from the Suzhou Taohuawu), SB 22.4.1878. This is continued in SB 7.5.1878 and 16.5.1878. The Guoyutang and other benevolent halls also publish their accounts in the *Shenbao*.

establishment of the Protestant mission in the interior provinces of China. Their missionizing success in Shanxi by and large rested on a combination of their use of a “language of demonology” with financial and medical aid.⁵⁵ And, similar to their Chinese counterparts, their success in fund-raising relied at least in part on a strategy of instigating a sense of competition. When the “Pictures on the terrible famine in Henan that might draw tears from iron” introduced above were reprinted in *China's Millions*, in the explanation to the last of the twelve illustrations it is stated: “In this way do the Chinese encourage one another to acts of mercy and deeds of renown. And the events of the past year show that no small success follows the circulation of such representations. Should we, who have *the truth* — who have such higher motives and rewards — who should be *constrained by the love of Christ* — shall we do less?”⁵⁶ The missionary mouthpiece made it a point to denigrate the other. By that time the English National Fund had in fact already been closed, but the missionary enterprise continued to draw profit from the famine.

Only a handful of Protestant missionaries were active in Shanxi during the famine. The bulk of the work was accomplished by the Catholic missionaries resident there, who after an initial reluctance agreed to cooperate with the Protestants. Their reports are characterized by a slightly different — no less fanatic but more modest — tone. They talk about the famine having opened the path to heaven for countless children.⁵⁷ There are even pronouncements reminiscent of Chinese ethics, with baptised children intervening on behalf of

55. Cf. Alwyn J. Austin, “Pilgrims and Strangers: The China Inland Mission in Britain, Canada, the United States and China, 1865-1900.” This is an excellent survey of the early history of the China Inland Mission, focusing on the case of Shanxi as “not typical but a larger than life exaggeration of its best and worst aspects” (p. 17).

56. *China's Millions*, 1878, 177 (November issue). The September issue is entirely devoted to the famine. The illustrations are said to have been reprinted from *The Graphic*.

57. *Missions Catholiques* X, 159 (12.4.1878), 376 (2.8.1878). I am grateful to Elisabeth Kaske who was so kind to send me copies from this journal from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

their parents before God. Catholic missionaries, too, represent the famine as a unique opportunity:

Au milieu de toutes les angoisses causées par cette horrible famine, nous avons la consolation d'envoyer au ciel une quantité incalculable d'innocentes petites créatures qui, je l'espère, intercéderont pour leurs parents auprès du trône de la miséricorde divine. ... Vous pouvez dire à nos bienfaiteurs d'Europe qu'il ne se présentera jamais pareille occasion de faire le bien.⁵⁸
[In the midst of all the anxieties caused by this horrific famine, we have the consolation of sending to heaven an immeasurable number of innocent little creatures, who, I hope, will intervene for their parents at the throne of divine mercy. ... You may say to our benefactors in Europe that there will never present itself a similar opportunity to do good.]

But the more selfish part of the believer longing for his own salvation is also present, manifest in the words of a priest concerning the children in his care:

... la moitié sont déjà au ciel. Petits anges, souvenez-vous du pauvre prêtre qui vous a ouvert les portes du paradis et récompensez-le du bienfait que vous avez reçu de lui.⁵⁹
[... half of them is already in Heaven. Little angels, recall this poor priest who opened for you the gates to paradise and give him recompense for the good deeds you have received from him.]

This irrational side of the missionary commitment to famine relief might partly explain the reluctance on the part of Western diplomats to be involved in it.

To the missionaries famine relief work was a kind of crusade. Timothy Richard talked about a “religious conquest” — an undertaking which again was planned quite rationally and in which the

58. *Missions Catholiques* X, 433 (13.9.1878), letter by Mgr Grassi dated 1.6.1878.

59. *Missions Catholiques* X, 554 (6.12.1878), letter by M. Genini dated 29.6.1878.

famine in Shanxi had played an important role.⁶⁰ Their belief, combined with the material support coming from the missionary societies and the relief funds raised in the treaty-ports, turned them into rather vigorous activists with a solid institutional backing, something which did not fail to make an impression on their Chinese counterparts. Even though some enthusiasm was evident on the part of the non-official Chinese relief administrators, on a spiritual level they had nothing which could have generated a devotional commitment comparable to that of the zealous missionaries.

Famine and the Buddhist Revival-A Hypothesis

The impressive performance and the zeal of the missionaries who were crucial in launching and administering the foreign relief campaign certainly did not go unnoticed, although it is hard to find explicit evidence on Chinese approval of missionary activity in the Chinese sources. Nevertheless, in the course of the successive relief campaigns leading members of the Southern elite, including some who were also active in the political sphere (such as Zheng Guanying and Feng Guifen), developed strong Buddhist inclinations⁶¹ and, I would argue, the search for a spiritual meaning pushed ahead during the famine experience was a crucial ingredient for the so-called "Buddhist revival" which unfolded in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.⁶² Whereas during

60. "Thoughts on Chinese Missions: Difficulties and Tactics," *The Chinese Recorder* XI (1880), 430-441.

61. Confucian rhetoric (such as the ubiquitous phrase "The feeling of commiseration belongs to all men" 惻隱之心人皆有之 from the *Mengzi* 6a.6, James Legge, *The Works of Mencius*, 402) is only a thin cover over syncretistic, but mainly Buddhist notions of retribution (such as "great wealth and prestige must stem from good deeds done in secret" 大富貴必從陰鷲中來, and urging the benevolent gentlemen "to be merciful to a great measure" 大發慈悲 and "to weed the fields of blessings for [everybody]" 代耘福田 in Zheng Guanying's call for contributions published in the *Xinbao*. "Shanghai quan mu zhen Yu qi," 30.3.1878. Zheng's postface to the 1921 *Jiubuang fubao* reprint is entirely written in a Buddhist mood.

62. Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*.

Qing times the practice of the accumulation of merit by charitable deeds was linked more strongly to secular Confucian than to religious Buddhist ethics, the spirit empowering the Christian missionaries seems to have left a deep impression on the learned elite. In response to the death of three missionaries from famine fever, Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 is reported to have said that there "must be something in a religion that teaches men to lay down their lives for their fellow-men."⁶³ Whereas this stems from a missionary source and therefore has to be read with some suspicion, a link certainly was established between the success of the Western nations and Christianity, and therefore a counterpart had to be found on the Chinese side.

Thus in the final analysis the famine indeed was a turning-point. For Timothy Richard it was the crucial experience for his later dedication to social and political reform.⁶⁴ In missionary publications China's "religious loss" and the "Buddhist defect" of having failed as a religion "to convince the intellect of the country" were diagnosed.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Richard developed a genuine interest in Buddhism and was well acquainted with Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (1837-1911), who during the 1860s had started scriptural presses in Nanjing, Suzhou and Hangzhou and was one of the main early figures of reform Buddhism.⁶⁶ Looking from the other side, Yang

63. *China's Millions*, 1878, 125 quoting from the *Methodist Recorder*. Unfortunately but perhaps predictably, I have not been able to find a similar statement in Li Hongzhang's own writings.

64. Paul R. Bohr, *Famine in China and the Missionary*, 1972.

65. Joseph Edkins, "Chinese Buddhism: Its Excellencies and Defects," and Timothy Richard, "China's Appalling Need of Reform," in *The China Mission Hand-Book*, Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1896 (rpt. Taipei, 1973), 19, 88.

66. Richard was assisted by Yang in his translation of the *Mahayana-sraddhotpada-sastra* (Chinese: *Dacheng qixin lun* 大乘啟信論), which was published 1907 in Shanghai as *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana Doctrine: the New Buddhism* by the Christian Literature Society. Gabriele Goldfuß says about the *Qixin lun* that it "appeared like a clear and distinct teaching, with a liberating message apt to be on a par with Christianity." *Vers un bouddhisme du XX^e siècle. Yang Wenhui (1837-1911), réformateur laïque et imprimeur*, Paris:

Wenhui himself travelled to London late in 1878, accompanying Zeng Jize 曾紀澤 (1839-1890), who was succeeding Guo Songtao as the Chinese envoy to England. In his study on the "Buddhist revival" Holmes Welch finds that "it is safe to assume that he felt a twinge of national pride. Did China even lag behind in the study of her own books?" And referring to the defeat by Japan in 1895 he argues that "Yang must have been disheartened by his country's backwardness."⁶⁷ Given the disrespectful writing on China in the English press at the time, asserting that such a thing as a famine could not possibly "occur in England, or, indeed, among any of the civilized nations of the world"⁶⁸ and thus excluding China from these, would it not be equally safe to assume that Yang was led to commit himself to a spiritual renovation going much further than just "to replace [the books] destroyed during the Taiping rebellion?"⁶⁹

Neither in the literature on Yang Wenhui nor in that on reform Buddhism are there any references to the famine, let alone on the impact of the famine on the development of Buddhism. But the link between the two can also be established at the level of society. In his article on Buddhist charity in medieval times Quan Hansheng reflects on the strong desire in early Republican times to establish a Buddhist ecclesiastical organization with a strong emphasis on charitable activities. According to him, the popularisation of good works was promoted by promising "to get rid of calamities and to obtain blessings" in this world, and certainty about the future existence in another world.⁷⁰ The emphasis on social work could well have grown out of the acquaintance with missionary work with its financial and institutional backing, which had become very conspicuous during the famine years, and which again served as an incentive for

Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 2001, 44. On the encounter of Richard and Yang see *ibid.*, 112-18.

67. Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, 21.

68. *The Times*, 30.3.1878.

69. Timothy Richard quoted in Welch, *The Buddhist Revival*, 20.

70. Quan Hansheng 全漢昇, "Zhonggu fojiao siyuan de cishan shiye" 中古佛教寺院的慈善事業 (Charitable undertakings by Buddhist monasteries in medieval times), *Shihuo* 1.4 (1935): 1-7.

the philanthropic and social activities of lay Buddhists. But in contrast to the missionary societies, Buddhism in the late Qing period could not provide any organizational structure for or financial support of large-scale charitable work.⁷¹ That this has not always been the case and, indeed, that this must not be the case, is what Quan Hansheng in fact argues.

In the case of famine relief, what Buddhism could provide on a spiritual level was the belief in the this — and other — worldly profits resulting from the accumulation of virtues. This was the belief reinforced by the elite managers waging the fund-raising campaigns. For themselves, however, striving for social prestige and economic security, and, no less important, national strength and unity might have been the stronger motives for their commitment. This last point also explains the political orientation of the commitment of people such as Zheng Guanying, which is also perceptible in Xie Jiafu's reference to "protecting the people and being loyal to the state."⁷² In other calls for subscriptions the unity of the world/country/nation (*tianxia yitong* 天下一統) was evoked.⁷³ This notion of an inclusive unity actually far exceeded the pragmatic self — and family — centred doctrine of retribution and, indeed, demanded something new. This was fully played out only in the Republican period, when the reforms of Taixu 太虛 (1889-1947) "called for a regeneration of the clergy, the rededication of Buddhist property for the benefit of the people, and the renewed study of Buddhist doctrines." Regarding the political dimension of the new Buddhism, he emphasized "the part that Buddhism with its emphasis on love and compassion could play

71. C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 335-37.

72. Xie Jiafu's preface to the 1888 reprint of Zheng Guanying's *Jiubuang fubao*.

73. "Xiang zhen Shanxi Henan quan juan di er qi" 襄賑山西河南勸捐第二啟, SB 11.2.1878. The expressions used are "tong wei shimao jiantu zhi min" 同為食毛踐土之民 (which could read "we all are equally grateful for the emperor's kindness" but also "we all are people eating the produce of this soil and living on this earth") and "bu fen zhenyu" 不分畛域 ("making no distinctions," and thus "not drawing borders [between the north and the south]"). With the orientation towards the "benevolent gentlemen" and the merchant-gentry these terms originally carrying a universal meaning gained a new significance.

as a unifying element in bringing together the five different ethnic groups (...) in the *national entity*.⁷⁴

The preface to the 1878 volume of *China's Millions* ends with the following words as a kind of *leitmotiv*: "Can we whose souls are lighted,/With wisdom from on high,/Can we to men benighted/The lamp of life deny?/Salvation! O, Salvation!/The joyful sound proclaim,/Till each remotest nation/Has learnt Messiah's name."⁷⁵ Statements such as these show clearly enough that the Christian mission was an integral part of the colonial enterprise. Therefore the rivalry pursued on a material level in the fund-raising campaigns during the Great Famine had to be paralleled by a rivalry on the spiritual level. This in the long run led to the "Buddhist revival" as a conscious attempt to fill the spiritual vacuum created by an all too mechanical belief in action and response.

74. Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China. A Historical Survey*, 456. Italics added.

75. *China's Millions*, 1878, "Preface," v.

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preserved at the Dewenzhai Kezipu, Liulichang 琉璃廠德文齋刻字鋪, which would be Beijing).

Figure: "To the benefactors who open their purses, the gods bestow their blessings." Illustration drawn from the *Henan qibuang tieleitu* 河南奇荒鐵淚圖 (postface dated 1877), reprinted in *Yu-zhen zhengxinlu* 豫賑徵信錄, 1879.



種福：十九世紀末 中國賑饑活動中的心靈角力

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光緒初年華北蒙受慘酷的旱荒，當賑饑成為清政府各級單位一個重大挑戰時，西方教會以及華南精英的慈善人士便成為具有影響力的募捐者與救災管理者。儘管方法各有不同，二者真正的宗教信仰成為動員的關鍵力量。簡而言之，基督教會視饑荒為傳教的大好時機；而中國的精英似乎是利用深植人心的果報信念，來支持他們的救災活動，用以維持社會秩序。西方的參與對中國來說是一種挑戰，然而這競爭不止於物質的層面，在心靈的層面還有微妙的競爭。當竭盡所能去尋求賑災捐款時，有充足的證據應可指出一個事實：最初他們向中國人徵集募捐時有困難，但至少在非官方賑災工作的全國中心的江南地區，中國人的心靈復原的需求一定已推到一個地步，使人民的意識對令人印象深刻並難以理解的教會的表現前景可期。以上的思考以及一些有關證據構成本文假設的基礎，即中西合作賑饑工作的經驗，是十九世紀末至二十世紀初所謂「佛教復興」的重要成份之一。

關鍵詞：賑饑，丁戊奇荒，因果報應，基督教會，佛教復興。