CHAPTER 5
“Shooting the Eagle”: Lin Changyi’s Agony in the Wake of the Opium War

Introduction

In discussing China’s response to the West in the nineteenth century, Paul A. Cohen generalizes that “the vast majority of the educated classes of China either passively or actively rejected Christianity”. He places this Chinese reaction to Christianity in historical perspective, suggesting that the roots of Chinese xenophobia were long and deep, and might be better understood by making an extensive study of Chinese intellectual history and the strong tradition of Chinese ethnocentrism. Ellsworth C. Carlson also observes that much of the Chinese response to the missionary presence was hostile, and that gentry led the resistance—as in the case of the Wushishan (Black Rock Hill) Affair of 1850 in Fuzhou. This confrontation was caused by an attempt by two missionaries from the Church Missionary Society to acquire lodgings within the walled city of Fuzhou. After the incident, the missionaries found the attitude of the people toward them had changed, with frequent manifestations of friendliness and curiosity giving way to hatred and anger. Explaining the difficulties experienced by the missionaries, Calson describes the nature of their interaction with the Chinese as an encounter between

1. I would like to record my sincere thanks to Professors Huang Guosheng and Lin Rizhang, who rendered their kind and generous assistance during my research trip to Fuzhou. My deep appreciation also goes to the libraries of the Fuzhou Normal University and People’s University of China in Beijing. They greatly facilitated my access to their excellent collections of Lin Changyi’s works.
3. Refer to Chapter 4.
representatives of Western religion and culture and residents of a thoroughly Chinese city that foreigners found hard to penetrate.

Moreover, the Chinese literati’s response to the Western presence in the nineteenth century is not infrequently viewed in the literature as reflecting a division between two groups: the conservatives and the open-minded. The former often included the local literati or gentry presented more or less as an anti-foreign faction. Often their anti-foreignism is ascribed to the inflexible Confucian culture that was incompatible with the modern era.\(^5\) The latter consisted of an enlightened few such as Wei Yuan (1794–1856), known especially for his work *Haiguo tuzhi* (Illustrated gazetteer of the maritime nations),\(^6\) and Xu Jiyu (Hsu Chi-yu, 1795–1873), who served in Fujian in the late 1840s. Xu later produced a frequently cited treatise entitled *Yinghuan zhilue* (A short account of the maritime circuit) in 1848. He is said to have fallen victim to conservatism when he failed to resolve conflicts with the West in Fuzhou. Against this background, Fuzhou’s local literati are often perceived in the Western literature as the conspirators behind the Wushishan Affair. They are lumped together as a faceless homogeneous group and labeled advocates of resistance to a foreign presence.\(^7\)

The scope of this chapter does not permit an examination of the broader and more complex issue of cultural traditions. Neither does it discuss what the Fuzhou literati should have done or assume they were in the wrong owing to their “ethnocentrism”. Such a Sinocentric approach not only emphasizes differences between cultures, but also suggests another kind of “centrism”. More often than not, it masks the realities. To highlight this aspect, the chapter profiles a Fuzhou scholar, Lin Changyi, and looks into the issue of “anti-foreignism” by exploring his mental world. It hopes to understand his feelings, emotions and intellectual horizon in the wake of the humiliating defeat of his country in the First Opium War (1839–42). His works are used as the illustration not so much of his anti-foreignism, but of the situational factor of his perceptions. Lin was apparently the core member behind the Wushishan Affair.


\(^7\) Drake, *China Charts the World*. 
Perceived Threats from Fuzhou

In late 1851, the British Vice-Consul in Fuzhou, J. Walker, was informed about a recent publication by a local scholar named Lin Changyi. It caused him great alarm because the work seemed inflammatory in its anti-foreign message. Such a reaction is understandable following the recent tension between the British and the local authorities aroused by the Wushishan Incident. To the consular officer, the work provided clues to the incident the preceding year and the thinking of the local literati community in Fuzhou. A report was immediately forwarded to the Governor of Hong Kong, Sir Samuel George Bonham. In it Walker commented:

As illustrative of the disposition prevailing at Foochow [Fuzhou] in regard to Foreign Intercourse, and of the position which the Authorities hold between their own people on the one hand and just and conventional rights of Foreign nations upon the other, I have the honor to bring to Your Excellency’s notice the fact of the publication, within the last few months, of a work in six volumes by a Keu Jin [juren, a provincial graduate] named Lin-chang-e [Lin Changyi] of which the first volume is chiefly devoted to the criticism … aimed against the establishment of foreigners within the City of Foochow.9

The work was partially translated, and commented upon by the Consular Interpreter Charles A. Sinclair. It reached Bonham shortly afterward, and in his covering note Walker elaborated on his earlier message:

The compiler started for Peking a few days since, to compete in the forthcoming Examinations for the Third Literary Degree [jinshi, or metropolitan degree], and this circumstance may be not unimportant in assisting your Excellency to form an estimate of his motives for the compilation of such a book … and I understand that he takes with him a considerable number of copies for circulation at the Capital... 9

In explaining the title of Lin Changyi’s work, namely Sheying lou shihua (A commentary on poems from the Eagle Shooting Pavilion), Sinclair noted that the word “ying” (eagle) had the same pronunciation as the Chinese term for England (Ying Ji Li). Lin had a house on the Wushishan inside the walled city of Fuzhou, facing a temple rented by British consular officials, and he had chosen the phrase “Shooting the Eagle” to

9. FO 228/144, no. 4, Walker to Bonham, 8.1.1852.
name the pavilion. In Sinclair’s view, this literary work was produced for the consumption of “a greedy and biased reading public”. In particular, the inclusion of “political poetry” was calculated “to excite the animosity of the people against the English in particular and Foreigners generally”. Sinclair pointed out that the compiler was related to the late Imperial Commissioner Lin Zexu, whose hostile policy toward the English had contributed to the outbreak of the Anglo-Chinese war, and blamed the late Lin Zexu for a revival of bitter, inimical anti-foreign feelings in the minds of his political and patriotic friends and adherents in Fuzhou.10

Lin Changyi and His Works

Lin Changyi (1803‒76) was a native of Houguan district, Fuzhou prefecture, Fujian province. His father Lin Gaohan had traded overseas.11 Lin Changyi derived great benefits from his teacher Chen Shouqi (1771‒1834), who was a Compiler in the Halin Academy and the Editor-in-Chief of Fujian tongzhi (The general gazetteer of Fujian). Chen permitted his disciple access to his private library containing works totaling some 80 thousand juan (volumes).

In 1839, Lin passed his imperial provincial examination and became a juren. However, although he took the metropolitan examinations six times between 1840 and 1850, he was unsuccessful. He did not succeed in two more subsequent attempts. During his trips to and from the capital to take the examinations, he traveled widely in many parts of the country and saw the general conditions of the people, on which he commented in his works. Also during his journeys he made new acquaintances among the literati. Despite his repeated failures in the metropolitan examinations, Lin Changyi’s contemporaries acclaimed his literary achievements and deemed him to be in the same class of literary laureates such as Gu Yanwu (1613‒82) and Zhu Yizun (1629‒1709), leading scholars in the early Qing.12

10. Ibid., enclosure.
His work *Sheying lou shihua*, a collection of poetry composed before and after the Opium War, was published in 1851. Lin had been gathering and reviewing poetic works composed by others since the 1820s, and the material reflected the prevailing somber mood among the literati at Fuzhou about foreign intercourse. After the defeat of Qing China in the First Opium War and the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, Lin began to pay special attention to poetic works relating to the events surrounding the conflict, and to make remarks on the foreign presence in Fuzhou, one of the five treaty ports opened to foreign trade. He was most offended by the influx of opium and the presence of foreign missionaries. Explaining why he named the pavilion “Sheying lou”, he said:

> There is a pavilion to the northeast of my study. It faces the Jicui Temple on the Black Rock Hill that is now the hiding-place of a flock of hungry eagles. They have built their eyries there and have resided in them ever since. Whenever I rest my eyes upon the spot, the sight of it disgusts and embitters me. My first impulse is to snatch my strong bow, and shoot a deadly arrow at them. But, alas! My dart would not be fatal, and I relinquish my purpose in despair! To console myself I have sketched a painting to which I have given the name “Shoot the Eagles and Hunt the Wolves”. Hence I named my study the Eagle Shooting Pavilion.

Lin Changyi had frequent discussions on current affairs with his acquaintances. Whenever the conversation turned to the humiliating defeat of Qing China in the war, the atmosphere was immediately charged with emotion and indignation. Lin felt great anguish and was on the verge of “drawing his sword and dancing” to express the depth of his feelings.

In 1853, Lin Changyi presented his major work entitled *Sanli tongshi* (A general analysis of the three *li* Classics) to the Xianfeng Emperor. The court highly commended his solid scholarship and awarded him the position of Education Instructor of Jianning prefecture in Fujian. However, he resigned shortly after assuming the post because he was greatly disturbed by the malpractices within official circles.

During the 1860s and the early 1870s he spent a substantial amount of time in Guangdong, where he lectured at the Haimen Academy. His

13. Lin Changyi (comp.), *Sheying lou shihua* 射鷹樓詩話 (hereafter *SYLSH*) [A commentary on poems from the Eagle Shooting Pavilion], 24 juan (prefaced 1851).
14. Ibid., 1, la. See also the abridged translation in FO 228/144, enclosure in no. 4, Walker to Bonham, January 8, 1852, 7b–8a.
scholarship was so greatly appreciated that the Acting Governor of Guangdong, Guo Songtao (1818‒91), who was known for his reformist views, employed him as a tutor for his son, and the Provincial Education Supervisor Liu Xizai appointed him textual copy-editor.

During his sojourn in Guangdong, he published a work entitled *Yiyinshanfang shiji* (A poetry anthology from the Yiyinshanfang Studio) in 1863. These essays lament the British intrusions, the devastation caused by natural catastrophes and the sufferings inflicted by the dereliction of duty by greedy and corrupt officials. The currency reform that introduced iron coins was severely criticized because the measure had been poorly prepared and contributed to the inflation that affected the life of commoners. He also felt saddened by the victories of the Taiping rebels.

Following the steps of the traditional statecraft scholarship of the Ming-Qing periods on coastal defenses (*haifang*), Lin wrote an essay entitled “Haifang shi’er ce” (The twelve tactics in coastal defense) in 1833. After much revision, it was presented to the Xianfeng Emperor in 1853. This work advocates the purchase of Western warships and cannon to “beef up” defenses and stresses the strategic importance of Taiwan. He recognized the strength of Britain’s warships and on these grounds did not advocate direct confrontation with them, but he observed that, although the powerful guns on the foreign warships were terrifying, they were not suitable for land battles owing to the problems associated with shifting the heavy equipment around. Once the British troops landed, they relied on light weapons for swift movement. Another constraint faced by the foreign warships was their immobility once they had entered shallow coastal waters. These considerations highlighted the importance of mobilizing fishing-boats to obstruct them, while strengthening inland defenses by building strong fortifications.

Two other works by Lin, compilations of poetry by contemporary authors entitled *Haitian qinsi lu* (A poetry commentary) and its sequel, *Haitian qinsi xulu*, were printed in 1864 and 1869 respectively. Although he did not abandon his earlier anti-British feelings, he did observe events...
and modern developments in foreign countries, such as the steam-propelled trains used in Egypt as a means of modern transportation, which he found amazing. Like many eminent scholars in traditional China, Lin Changyi had interests that were wide-ranging, including history, astronomy, technology, medicine and geography, as shown in his work *Yangui xulu* (An introductory interpretation of the classical texts), printed in 1866. His comments on historical events often reveal solid scholarship and deep insights.

In 1873, he wrote a foreword to the work *Wengyou yutan* by Wang Tao (1828‒?). Wang had close association with Walter Henry Medhurst (1796‒1857) of the London Missionary Society and was invited by the latter to become the Chinese editor of the mission press in Shanghai. Wang had earlier asked Lin to pen a foreword for another publication, which Lin did. Mutual respects were clearly shown between Lin Changyi and the reformists. He had said he was fortunate to have made the acquaintance of Wei Yuan during his sojourn in Beijing and of Wang Tao in Guangzhou. He was greatly impressed by their works, singling out Wei’s *Haiguo tuzhi* and Wang’s *Pu Fa zhanji* (An account of the Franco-Prussian War).

**Lin Changyi’s Relationships with Lin Zezu, Wei Yuan and Shen Baozhen**

Lin Changyi’s interest in international affairs and his country’s fate following the First Opium War brought him into close contact with such scholars as Lin Zezu, Wei Yuan, and Shen Baozhen. Lin Zezu has often been seen in modern scholarship as a hardliner, whose anti-opium actions when he was Imperial Commissioner in Guangzhou had sparked off the Opium War in 1839; Wei and Shen were considered to be among the few open-minded yiwu (barbarian affairs) experts.

Lin Zezu was Lin Changyi’s clansman of the same generation, although the Imperial Commissioner was 18 years older. They greatly admired each other’s literary achievements, shared common perceptions of Sino-
British relations and lent each other moral support in their endeavors to make known their views on foreign affairs. Lin Zexu read Lin Changyi’s works with great interest and admiration. When Lin Changyi returned to Fuzhou in 1850 after another failed attempt in the metropolitan examination, Lin Zexu was then also living in the city in retirement. During this period tensions between the local literati and the two missionaries from the Church Missionary Society were mounting, culminating in the Wushishan Affair. The two men met frequently to discuss current affairs during the few months before the senior Lin left for his new appointment. Lin Zexu died soon afterwards in eastern Guangdong.

As mentioned earlier, Lin Changyi formed strong ties of friendship with Wei Yuan, compiler of a 60-volume work entitled *Haiguo tuzhi*. Lin Changyi placed great value on his friendship with Wei Yuan, and during his journeys to and from the north he always lodged at Wei’s home in Yangzhou. On these occasions, they exchanged views about scholarship and admired each other’s works. Lin lauded Wei Yuan’s work, that he considered an outgrowth of Lin Zexu’s *Sizhou zhi* (A gazetteer of the four continents). What impressed him about Wei’s work was that, unlike its predecessors that were written by the Chinese themselves and explained maritime affairs from a Chinese perspective, it offered a history and an account of the Westerners as written by Westerners themselves. In compiling his work, Lin commented, Wei Yuan emulated the barbarians’ expertise, using barbarians to attack barbarians, and barbarians to entertain barbarians. Lin fully agreed to the effectiveness of these methods to reduce the influence of the English. His own ideas of coastal defense were similar to Wei’s, and were probably influenced by the latter.

Although he and Wei Yuan shared many ideas regarding maritime affairs, Lin Changyi was less receptive to Western learning. He believed that such Western inventions as the clock and the armillary sphere had all originated in China. Since the Chinese were able to manufacture the same products, where was the need to import them? He hoped that along with opium China would ban the import of other manufactured goods. However, as mentioned above, curiously and inconsistently Lin Changyi advocated the purchase of Western warships, an option that he saw as more cost-effective than building them in China.

On the other hand, both Wei Yuan and Lin Changyi belonged to a category of traditional strategists who accepted the concept of coastal defense developed since Ming times. This approach was defensive in nature, using geographic advantages to enhance defense capability, and Lin stressed the importance of familiarizing oneself with the terrain and garrisoning strategic locations.28

Lin Changyi was also close to Shen Baozhen (1820–79), Lin Zexu’s nephew (Shen’s mother was Lin Zexu’s sister29) and son-in-law. At the age of 17 Shen had studied under Lin Changyi, and he became a renowned reformist. One significant contribution he made to China’s efforts to modernize was the construction of an up-to-date naval dockyard in Mawei, Fujian.30 In an introduction to Lin Changyi’s work *Sheying loushihua*, Shen expressed his high regard for his mentor’s literary achievements, and praised his strategic thinking, saying it was on par with that of Lin Zexu.31

Lin’s Reflections on War Atrocities and the Foreign Presence

The depredations of the barbarians along the Chinese coast, especially in Dinghai (Chusan) and Ningbo, aggrieved Lin Changyi, and he lamented the cruelty and the atrocious behavior of the barbarians toward his people. He particularly mentioned the sufferings of Chinese women: Some, he understood, had been carried off to the barbarians’ country, some sold in human traffic, some after having been debauched inhumanely thrown into pits and drowned, and some given as presents to Chinese adherents of the foreigners.

He blamed not just the foreign troops for the atrocities and horrors committed during the war, but also the imperial forces that used the conflict as a pretext for pillaging innocent families. The poems collected in Lin Changyi’s work include one written by his friend Sun Zhifang that vividly portrays the terrible atrocities perpetrated by government soldiers.

30. Shen obtained his metropolitan degree in 1847 and was made a Compiler of the Hanlin Academy in 1850. In 1854, Shen became a Censor. He was appointed Imperial Commissioner and Director-General of an arsenal for the construction of a navy in 1867. See Hummel (ed.), *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 642–4.
31. *SYLSH*, “Fanli 凡例”.
Reflecting on the conduct of some high-ranking officials who had taken charge of foreign affairs, Lin commented that their duty was to defend the country and uphold the dignity of their nation, but instead they made peace with the English and even ceded Hong Kong to them, adding insult to injury. By way of contrast, he alluded to the British attack on Dinghai, where the defenses were poor and the garrison force unprepared for the attack, but in which a few “brave men” (yong, or irregular troops) fought nobly and died in battle. In particular, he commended the bravery of Guan Tianpei and Chen Huacheng, who spearheaded the defense and sacrificed their lives. The latter was a native of Tong’an, Fujian province, who had distinguished himself at the battle of Wusong and showed consummate daring and valor in a struggle that lasted for many hours. Lin Changyi described Chen Huacheng, who sank several barbarian vessels unaided, as a hero worth a hundred combatants. Unfortunately, reinforcements did not arrive and he lost the advantage that he had initially gained. Despite his great courage and struggle, he was overcome and killed. His friend, Chen Qingyong, who was a native of Jinjiang, Fujian, made the death of this patriot the subject of an ode that vigorously describes the splendor of Chen’s actions, and this piece naturally found a place in Lin Changyi’s volume. Lin was at an utter loss to interpret the sentiments that actuated those who counseled and conducted peace negotiations with the English, and the stipulations in the treaty immediately aroused his indignation.

He proposed two alternatives to rescue China from the disastrous effects of its contact with the West. One was to cut off commercial intercourse entirely; the other to lift maritime prohibitions. The first could only be accomplished by waging a war. However, Lin Changyi argued that a policy of peace would cause officials and the people to fall into a state of apathy and indifference, enjoying only the present without any heed for the future, as pointed out earlier, therefore he did not suggest another war to resolve the conflict. Instead, he proposed the lifting of the prohibitions on seaborne trade, believing that the Chinese people would then be able to participate fully in trade with those nations that had come to trade in China. In this way, he said, “the riches of the empire would be divided amongst our own people and not, as at present, allowed to go out of the country to foreign lands”.33

He certainly did not advocate a policy of seclusion. On the subject of Macao, for example, he seemed to subscribe to the traditional jimí or loose-rein approach that treated foreign people from afar generously.

32. Ibid., 1: 6a.
33. Ibid., 1: 12a.
He did not suggest the expulsion of the Portuguese and other foreigners from the territory.\(^{34}\)

**Lin’s Perceptions of Christian Missionaries**

The missionaries in Fuzhou formed another subject of Lin’s discussions. He pointed out the abuses committed by the Christian missionaries, and observed that, after the removal of the prohibition of the Roman Catholic religion in the aftermath of the war, chapels of worship were erected in each of the ports. Every seventh day was called a Sunday or Prayer Day, when some “stupid and ignorant people” were lured to meetings in all sorts of ways. At a Roman Catholic chapel within a mile of the South Gate of Fuzhou city, about 80 to 90 persons of both sexes, male and female, “swarmed together like moths while attending services”. Most of the exponents of this religion were Europeans, but there were some Chinese priests amongst them. Lin said,

> The tracts or pamphlets they publish for that purpose are written and composed in the most extravagantly foolish style and contain fallacies. The book of the Ten Commandments recently printed by them goes to even greater lengths in ridiculing and vilifying our Confucius and Mencius. In order to catch the eye, lofty chapels with carved pillars executed in the most extravagant manner have been erected. Men and women go to these places and huddle together without the least shred of decency. But it is very true that most of these ignorant and deluded people attend these chapels out of necessity. They have been driven to do so by poverty and the need to relieve their distress.\(^{35}\)

Although the court accepted a submission by Keying, the former Governor-General of Liang-Guang, on behalf of the French government, that the penalties against all Chinese professing the Roman Catholic religion be revoked, Lin Changyi warned that this change should not mean that “our people and women would be lured to those chapels by wicked means and for wicked purposes”.\(^{36}\)

The missionary presence in Fuzhou naturally aroused both curiosity and suspicion. There was little communication between the church community and the local community. As a result, speculation was rife about their activities. For example, Lin heard about the extraction of eyes of the...
dead by the priests, most likely resulting from rumors about the surgical treatments performed by missionary doctors. This misunderstanding provoked a strong reaction, and Lin considered that such actions, that he described as crimes, should be punishable by law. He also mentioned that new proselytes to this religion were made to swallow a pill and received a small payment of money. The sum given to a new proselyte was about 130 tael as capital to set the person up in a trade. Should he fail in his first enterprise, he received a supplementary sum. (Possibly on account of an increase in conversion, the sum was greatly reduced later to less than one-seventh or one-eighth of the original amount.) Lin particularly objected to the requirement that renounced the worship of their ancestors. However, he was relieved to find that “very few men of conscience agreed to the demand. After all, what person with any human decency would relinquish the worship of his ancestors or let his wife and children succumb to such infernal temptations and debauchery?”

The Opium Issue: Conflict and Convergence of Minds

Britain’s involvement in the opium trade hugely influenced Lin Changyi’s antagonistic view of the West. He remarked that opium had been the cause of misery and calamity, and that the barbarians in fact wanted a higher prize than the opening of the five ports for trade.

Let us take, for instance, just the single port of Fuzhou.... Here the drug comes in at a fearful rate. Three large chests valued at eight hundred dollars each and more than sixty smaller chests valued at six hundred dollars each pass through the port every day, totaling more than six thousand dollars per day, ... therefore, no less than three million dollars are spent on this vile drug every year. Taking all five ports into account, the total consumption of the drug must be twenty million dollars at the very least. Neither the hills of Fuzhou, even if made of gold, nor the seas, even if filled with silver, could satisfy the rapacity of these barbarians, to say nothing of the fact that Fuzhou is barren and its population lives in poverty. Alas, to what misery will our people be doomed in a few years!

Surprisingly perhaps, Lin’s views found unexpected proponents among his Western antagonists, and they in fact used much stronger language in discussing the issue. For example, The Right Rev. George Smith, the Bishop of Victoria (Hong Kong), stated that drugs worth two million

37. Ibid., 2: 2b–3a; see translation in FO 228/144.
38. SYLSH, 1: 2a–b; translation from FO 228/114, enclosure in no. 4, 8b–9a.
dollars were annually imported into Fuzhou. An opium depot for the smuggling vessels operated at the mouth of the River Min, just beyond the consular limits of the port. A considerable portion of the opium found its way from Fuzhou to other places in the interior, and Smith estimated that half of the population were addicted to the drug. The lowliest coolies and beggars often denied themselves the necessities of life in order to enjoy this costly luxury. There were some one hundred smoking dens scattered throughout the city, and even the police and military frequented these places. Smith suggested that the failure of the mandarins to enforce the law against those involved in this contraband traffic was their fear of the consequences of a clash with foreigners arising from a lurking suspicion of the connection of the British government with the opium system, a sense of inability to put down by force the well-armed foreign vessels stationed at the smuggling depots and the lure of profits that could be reaped from connivance in the smuggling trade. Smith concluded:

> These separate causes operate conjointly in fostering and upholding an evil which, by the general stagnation of native trade, and the constant drain of the precious metals from the country, is fast producing a crisis, involving alike the commercial ruin of the cities along the sea-board, and the financial improvement of the empire... 39

Lin Changyi contrasted the “cruelty of the barbarians” with the humanity of the Chinese. He said that China fed these barbarians with its rhubarb and tea “rescuing them from death”, while the latter spread their poison, called opium, amongst the Chinese and robbed China of its money and treasures. He believed this state of affairs would arouse the wrath of Heaven and the universal rage of mankind.

From what Lin could gather, the duties derived from the exportation of this drug alone were the cause of the immense wealth and trade in Calcutta, the capital of Bengal. From this source alone, England obtained substantial revenues, amounting to more than three million dollars. This revenue meant that England attached great importance to the trade that was so calamitous for his country, Lin perceived.

What puzzled Lin Changyi most was England’s inconsistency in the opium issue. Although opium was prohibited in England itself, it was spread in China. He asked, “Does not so much deliberate barbarity and cruelty fill one with feelings of injustice and lawful anger?” 40

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40. *SYLSH*, 1: 18b.
The Christian missionaries in Fuzhou shared this critical view of the opium trade, although they and the Fuzhou literati were at odds over many other matters. For instance, in his early days in Fuzhou William Welton of the Church Missionary Society blamed the local literati for obstructing his efforts to rent a place to stay within the city walls on the Wushishan. On the other hand, he also expressed scorn at the "libertine and licentious conduct" of his countrymen in the city. Among other disturbing matters, consulate officials and merchants openly kept Chinese concubines. Since his arrival in 1850, Welton had been deeply involved in the fight against opium addiction. He had been shocked to find that opium-smoking was widespread and that regular dens were kept for the purpose, and he helped addicts to get rid of their drug-taking habit not only by medical means but also by making the patients deposit their opium pipes with him as a way of showing their sincerity in discontinuing the habit.

In a letter to the Church Missionary Society, Welton reviewed the whole subject of the opium trade and its evils, giving instances of the misery caused by opium-smoking and earnestly entreating Britain to cooperate with China in the suppression of the trade. He thought that the opium trade had direct bearing on the future progress and success of missionary work in China. He referred to the anticipated revision of the Chinese treaty with foreigners and the pending renewal of the East India Company's Charter in connection with the growth and supply of opium. He wished to draw the serious attention of British Christians to the great hindrance that the opium trade was posing to the reception of Christian truth by the Chinese. It was an evil of great magnitude and the trade, as Welton pointed out, was carried on in China almost exclusively by reputable British merchants using English ships and sailors.

In Welton's observation, the trade was attaching "such a stigma to the English name and character that some of us, engaged in missionary operations, would almost be glad not to be known as such". In his words, it was also a fact that the Chinese people felt so deeply the injury the British were inflicting upon them, individually and nationally, that "when we attempt and profess to give them good doctrine, religion, and rules of life, they meet us with the rebuff, 'Why do you bring us opium?'" He pointed out that opium was a prohibited article according to Chinese law. Nevertheless, large quantities of it were openly, and with the use

41. For his confrontation with the local literati, see Chapter 4.
42. William Welton's "Journal", in Church Missionary Society Archives, C CH/0 91, 26.5.1856.
43. Ibid., 2.8.1850.
of force, smuggled into China by English merchants, English ships and English seamen.

One cannot but blush and be grieved for those of our countrymen who are living and getting rich upon such unhallowed gain, at the sacrifice of Chinese morality and welfare, and thus placing so great a stumbling-block in the way of religious improvement and Christianity among them.

As the Chinese had no physical force to stop the contraband trade, they were obliged to submit to it. The Englishmen were lost to Christian duty and philanthropy, he lamented, and earnestly bent on personal gain to the exclusion of every right principle or means. He said, “We must always owe this people a great debt for the misery and wretchedness Englishmen have been the instrument of entailing on them.”

He found his position in Fuzhou anomalous, for he was an English missionary protesting to the Chinese against the practice of opium-smoking, and giving them medicine and encouraging them to eradicate the addiction, whereas a body of Englishmen was at the mouth of the river supplying the Chinese with all the opium they could dispose of. “It is by no means surprising”, he admitted, “that the Chinese, the intelligent at least, should regard the English among foreigners as their greatest enemies, and be led to ask, how can we receive any good from such a people?” Welton likened the opium trade to the slave trade, except that it produced slavery of both mind and body. He asked, “Should not some sympathy and effort be shown and made by British Christians and by a British government, to co-operate with the Chinese government, if possible, in its suppression?” Opium “is desolating China, corrupting its government, and bringing the fabric of that extraordinary empire to a state of more rapid dissolution”. The existing situation, he lamented, was a disgrace to the English people.44

Here at last we find a convergence of minds between the two antagonists.

Final Remarks

The opium trade conducted by the Westerners along the China coast threatened the very survival of Chinese society. The strong response to it on the part of the Chinese literati was natural and understandable.

44. The above quotes are taken from The Church Missionary Intelligencer 3.12 (1852): 273–6.
Moreover, missionary activities were simultaneously posing a challenge to fundamental cultural values. As Paul A. Cohen observes, “The missionary then—partly by the mere fact of his presence in the Chinese interior and partly by the manner in which he made his presence felt there—clearly played a major role in encouraging the growth of Chinese antiforeignism.”

Lin Changyi’s worldview reflected the general feeling of the Chinese literati in Fuzhou. He was among those literati known as writers on statecraft (jingshi zhiyong) who were commentators on their own times. His knowledge of foreign nations was fragmentary, and inferior to that of Wei Yuan, Xu Jiyu, or Wang Tao, who had carried out active and systematic enquiries and investigations. He did not always get his facts correct, and there was considerable confusion in his understanding of the Protestant and Roman Catholic religious denominations; he was evidently quite ignorant of the distinction that existed between them. However, misinformation and skewed perceptions were common on both sides in a situation of cultural contacts, and conflict often emerged from the mutual misunderstandings that existed between two parties.

Despite these limitations, Lin Changyi was a significant figure in an emerging group of Chinese literati who were concerned about the great disparity in national strength and inequality apparent in many aspects of contact between China and foreign powers, and felt powerless and helpless at being unable to improve the situation and rectify what they perceived to be wrong. Lin’s response to the foreign presence was situational rather than metaphysical. He had strong patriotic sentiments, and the way he employed the terms Zhongguo (China)—rather than the Qing dynasty—and Yin Ji Li (England), showed a rudimentary idea of conflict between nation-states.

The sense of helplessness, patriotic consciousness and humanitarian concerns found in Lin’s works explains the great frustration and anger among the Chinese literati in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the spectacular growth of anti-foreignism. Dividing the literati into conservative and open-minded camps obscures an understanding of the nature of their common concern with the fate of their country.

47. For a fuller discussion on their works, see Drake, China Charts the World and Leonard, Wei Yuan.
48. Cohen also states that, “the Chinese response to Christianity was conditioned not by metaphysics”. See China and Christianity, p. 265.