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On the Localization of the Evangelistic Work of the Disciples of Christ at Batang in the Border Region of Sichuan and the Close of Its Mission 1919–1932

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Abstract: In 1908, The Disciples of Christ from the U. S. established a mission in Batang/Ba'an located in the Border Region of Sichuan, aiming to launch evangelistic, educational, medical work, etc. Chuanbian Ba'an Jiduhui was established by the baptized Chinese and western Christians in 1919. This paper discusses the localized characteristics of the Disciples' evangelistic work in Batang and its interaction with a local society through the examination of the initial Contract signed by all the baptized members in 1919, the organizational features and membership structure, evangelistic work, the situation of local pastors and other employees, and the entrustment of the mission work to the local Board of Trustees before all the missionaries evacuated Batang in 1932. It reveals how missionary activities affected the social lives of both Hans and Tibetans through organized activities in Batang, and how complex local factors, especially armed conflicts, conversely restricted missionary activities. Serving as a typical case, the study indicates that a local society in modern China, with its own logic for development, did not passively accept the impacts of the West and globalization.

Keywords: Batang/Ba'an; localization; Sichuan; the Disciples of Christ; Tibetan

Batang/Ba'an (巴塘/巴安; Ba for short), located in Chuanbian (川边 [the Border Region of Sichuan]),¹ was “the most distant and isolated station in the world” (The United Christian Missionary Society [The UCMS], 1921a,

¹ In the early 20th century, Chuanbian 川边 or the Border Region of Sichuan was a region roughly covering the area which is under the administration of the present-day Ganzi Tibetan Prefecture of Sichuan province, China.

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p. 39)² with “about forty days’ journey from the railroad through West China,” (The UCMS, 1921b, p. 21) as written in the annual reports for the overseas work of the Disciples of Christ (基督会, DOC or Disciples for short) between 1920 and 1921. In 1908, the DOC mission was moved from Tachienlu (打箭炉) or Kangding (康定, present-day Kangding in Sichuan province) to Batang adjoining Tibet. In 1914, it was given both a formal English name The Tibetan Christian Mission (TCM; it can be translated into Chinese as 基督会涉藏差会) and a Chinese name Ba’an/ Batang Jiduhui (巴安/巴塘基督会), actually meaning The Disciples of Christ at Batang. In November 1919, a local church was co-founded by the missionaries of the Mission and local baptized Christians, who signed a contract at the founding ceremony together. The Church was also named Chuanbian Ba’an Jiduhui (川边巴安基督会) in Chinese—also called The Batang/Ba’an Church (巴塘/巴安教会) in English documents. Therefore, the Chinese name Ba’an Jiduhui (巴安基督会) actually can refer to both the Mission and the Church. For this reason, the name can be translated into English as The Disciples of Christ at Batang in the Border Region of Sichuan, referring to both, which will be sometimes used in the following parts of the article (*Jiduhui Chengliri Jinian Hetong ji Qianmingdan*, 1919; Zhao & Zhu, 2014, p. 125).³ Currently, few studies focus on the evangelistic work of both the DOC Mission and its church in Batang. This paper summarizes the evangelistic work of both the Mission and the local Church, and proposes that the two entities influence each other in their work. Although very small in size, they were both formed by Han, Tibetan and western members with cross-ethnic and cross-cultural characteristics. Meanwhile, both had localized aspects in evangelistic strategies, forms, contents and employment in order to adapt to the local community. Conversely, complex local factors from 1919 to 1932, especially wars and Ba’s isolation with the outside world at times, restricted their evangelistic activities. This study, by providing a unique perspective and typical case, contributes to facilitating our understanding of westerners’ activities in modern China and their impact on local society, understanding of the restrictions imposed on westerners by local society on the contrary, and of the transformation of a local society in that period as well.

2 The United Christian Missionary Society is written as UCMS in the following paper and footnotes; Batang/Ba’an was located on the eastern bank of the Yangzi/Jinsha River, was renamed “Ba’an” in 1908 and changed back to its original name in 1951. It is now Batang County of Sichuan province. Westerners used the phonetic name Batang in most of their English writings and documents in the modern times, while occasionally using Ba’an or Ba.

3 基督会成立日纪念合同及签名单 [The Contract Signed on the Founding Day of The Disciples of Christ Church at Batang]; See a photocopy for the original contract and signature. (Zhao & Zhu, 2014, p. 125)

1 The founding of the Church Chuanbian Ba'an Jiduhui with baptized Sino-Western members and localized characteristics in 1919

According to *Jiduhui Chengliri Jinian Hetong ji Qianmingdan* (基督会成立日几年合同及签名单, [the Contract Signed on the Founding Day of the Disciples of Christ Church at Batang], later as the Contract for short) and the attached roster of all signed members, the following paragraphs examine the basic information of the Batang Church and its membership structure.

1.1 “The Contract Signed on the Founding Day” and the organizational structure of the Disciples’ Church at Batang

In September 1919, the missionary Roderick A. MacLeod in Batang started to prepare for erecting a local church, and reported that they were organizing local Christians to become one church, that the elders and deacons had been selected, and that a grand ceremony would be held to ordain pastors the next month (MacLeod, 1919). On November 6, the Church was established, with the members agreeing on and signing the Contract in Chinese as the basis for the Church’s evangelistic work. The original text is stated as follows:

This Church has been established for more than ten years in the Border Region of Sichuan. With God’s love, a branch has been established to spread Gospels from the Heaven. Meanwhile, the Church surely has a promising future, for it is located in Batang, the best place in the Border Region of Sichuan, due to its geographical importance for social interaction and gatherings for people from all walks of life, temperate climate, and numerous plantations. In recent years, with God’s grace, the evangelistic work has been greatly advanced. People from all walks of life, including agriculture, industry, commerce, military and education, have been baptized or considering being baptized. Tens of believers have joined the Church. More than a hundred enquirers have signed up to study in the Bible Schools and Sunday Schools. The enthusiasm of the faithful and the number of volunteers are increasing day by day—the Church has been rejuvenated with its founding. Without God’s grace and work upon us, how could we have such achievements? How can we as church members disregard such blessings? To commemorate what has been jointly promoted and look forward to the future, we collectively form this Contract. On November 6th, 1919, all the Chinese and Western baptized Christians in the Church signed and recognized the Contract. All members, relying on the Lord Jesus Christ and becoming one in Christ, will be joyful together, aid each other, advise each other, fulfill one’s duty, obey the teachings, comply with the church rules, get rid of fakeness and pursue truth, restrain oneself with rites, love God and love people, and work together on spreading the Gospel. We work to help every brother and sister in the Border Region of Sichuan get out of confusions, become

children of the Lord, worship the one and only God, be led by the Holy Spirit on all the things, embrace the new lives, and live out of Jesus Christ's love to all. With the consolidation of the Republic of China as one world, all people are treated equal regardless of race and ethnicity. All the good deeds within the Church and outside the Church should be motivated and sustained in the spirit of God's mercy and love, and there should be no deflection and no partiality. We should be led by the true teachings and be God's children. May God our Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit the everlasting King, the only God, and be with you forever and ever. Amen! (Jiduhui Chengliri Jinian Hetong ji Qianmingdan, 1919, p. 1)⁴

The Contract above, with localized characteristics, can be examined and interpreted from the following perspectives. First, it contained prominent features that the missionaries tried to adapt to local society. It briefly reviewed the Disciples' work in the Border Region of Sichuan (1904–1908 at Tachienlu), especially the reasons why the Mission was moved to Batang. It overviewed the development of the evangelistic work in Batang. Up to the establishment of the Church in 1919, there had been tens of Christians with various backgrounds and more than a hundred inquirers. It pointed out that the founding of the Church was a natural result with divine help, and thus the Church had acquired an all-new outlook. It noted that the purpose of the commemoration of the establishment was “to commemorate what has been jointly promoted and look forward to the future.” It stated that the Church was established by means of a contract signed and recognized by “all the Chinese and western baptized Christians,” thus regulating the conduct of the organization. It presented the specific contents of the Contract, including the relationship between church members and the “Savior Jesus Christ,” the relationship among church members, the relationship between members and church organizations, the target of the mission (“all the brothers and sisters in the Border Region of Sichuan”), the purpose of the Mission, etc. It was also evident from the content of the Contract that the membership of the Church was composed of baptized Christians both from China and the West. It also pointed out that the Church's responsibility to the local society is to respond to the trend of the times and China's national situation, to practice its faith in the spirit of “mercy and love,” and to do its best to sustain “good deeds within the Church and outside the Church.” It made it clear that the date of the formation of the Contract (Nov. 6th, 1919) was the time of the founding of the Church. Secondly, the Contract reflected the good interaction between the Church and the local community in Batang. Thirdly, the Contract

⁴ In the contract, Border Region (边) means Border Region of Sichuan (川边); Ba means Batang, referring to Batang as the exemplar district (巴安为首善之区), for it was once proposed to use Batang as the provincial capital during the preparation for the establishment of the Xikang Province.

showed that a strategy of cultural adaptation to traditional Chinese Confucianism was adopted in spreading gospels. In terms of linguistic expressions, the use of such Chinese idioms as “克己复礼” [self-restrain with rites], “克己爱众” [self-restraint and love to all] and “无偏无党” [no deflection and partiality] reflected an adaptation to the context of the traditional Chinese culture, especially the unification of Christian evangelistic work with the concepts of “rite” (*li* 礼) and “benevolence” (*ren* 仁), and the pursuit of “rite” and “benevolence” in the Confucian system of thoughts and discourse. The language was also a reflection of the localization of the Mission’s pursuit. It showed that the local Christians who were involved in establishing the Contract had the basic cultivation of the traditional Chinese culture. Besides, the text showed that the traditional Confucianism and culture gained some popularity in the remote ethnic society in western China.⁵ Meanwhile, in the context of the era of “the consolidation of the Republic of China as one world, [and] all people are treated equal regardless of race and ethnicity,” the promotion of “no deflection and partiality” and the pursuit of “the true teachings and being God’s children” established a basic criterion for the conduct of church activities in the fairly complex local ethnic relations.

1.2 The founding Chinese and Western baptized Christians: the membership of the initial Batang Church

The Disciples of Christ in America has strict rules for church membership, and only those who has been baptized could become members of the Church then. From the founding Contract above, it can be seen that the missionaries formed the local Church at Batang in accordance with this Disciples’ rule. There were 42 Christian members in the Batang Church when it was founded, including 40 baptized “Chinese and Western people”, along with Mr. MacLeod in charge of establishing the Church and his wife Esther MacLeod. These members fall into three types: 1) The first type included 8 missionaries from North America; besides the MacLeod

5 “Love to all” (爱众) is from “their love going out freely towards all, cultivating good-will to men” (泛爱众, 而亲仁) in *the Analects of Confucius* (《论语·学而》); “no deflection and no partiality” (无偏无党) is from “Avoid deflection, avoid partiality; Broad and long is the royal way” (无偏无党, 王道荡荡) in *Book of Documents: Great Plan* (《书·洪范》); “aid each other” (相友相助) and “sustain” (扶持) are from “In the fields of a district, those who belong to the same nine squares render all friendly offices to one another in their going out and coming in, aid one another in keeping watch and ward, and sustain one another in sickness” (出入相友, 守望相助, 疾病相扶持) in *The Works of Mencius: Teng Wen Gong I* (《孟子·滕文公上》).

couple, they were James Ogden and Mrs. Ogden, William M. Hardy and Mrs. Hardy, and Harold A. Baker and Mrs. Baker; 2) The second type was the clergy comprising 5 Han and Tibetan male members, with Lee Gway Gwang as Minister and Lee Gway Yui as Director, two brothers raised by missionaries, Zhu Bicheng as President, Huang Bingtian as Elder, and Ma Haishan as Deacon; 3) The third type comprised 29 common Han and Tibetan residents, including Gan Desheng, Xiao Huafu, Li Mingshan, Hu Yucheng, Yang Zongwen, Gao Qingyun, Zhou Jinshan, Yang Zeru, Yang Jianting (or Yang Gien Tin), Zhang Zhenquan, Zhou Yongfu, Fu Kaigui, Hu Zhaopin, Fang Chonghan (or Fang Tsung Han), Ah Jie, Ye Yingxiang, Zhao Yuansheng, Shen Huanchen, Chen Jiantang, Kou Xingfa, Lin Changming, Zhu Keyuan, Bai Lingyun (or Be Lin Yui), Zhang Jianyun, Huang Yulan, Shi Da Gu Niang, Gui Ying, Luo Song Qu Zhen, and Ci Ren Na Mu (or Tsering Lhamo) (Duncan, 1999; *Yearly Report of the Batang Mission (Apr. 1917–Apr. 1918)*, n.d.).⁶ In terms of the composition of its membership, 34 Chinese people including Hans and Tibetans accounted for 80% of the membership (Zhao & Li, 2022).⁷ The Lee brothers with half-Han and half-Tibetan descent were appointed Minister and Director respectively. According to the names, there were at least seven female women, accounting for 16.7% of the membership—including three missionary women, one Han and three Tibetans respectively. Small as it is, the Church was characterized by its cross-ethnic and multicultural composition. In terms of the members' positions in the Church, the Church had a relatively complete organizational structure, and had ordained pastors, presidents, elders, deacons, directors, etc.; all of these positions were taken by national or native Christians which showed evident localized characteristics. The 1920s saw the Church's change and development. According to a name list, up to 1928, a few senior members were still active in the Church (Peterson, 1928).⁸

⁶ The original list in Chinese has only titles and names. Other items and information were added by the author after verification and collation; at this time, Dr. and Mrs. Shelton were preparing to return to the U. S. and not included in the church list. For other missionary names in English, see: Duncan, Marian L. (1999). *A Flame of the Fire: The Batang Tibetan Mission of the Disciples of Christ Missions*. Marian L. Duncan, Spring Hill., pp. 18–25, 26–33, 48–49; for a biography of the MacLeod couple, see: Marian L. Duncan, *A Flame of the Fire*, p. 42; *Yearly Report of the Batang Mission (Apr. 1917–Apr. 1918)*. (n.d.). Secretary's Books 1916–21, TCM Administration Box 1, The Disciples of Christ Historical Society (DCHS). p. 1.

⁷ In 1906, the *Batang Gaitu Guiliu Zhangcheng* (《巴塘改土归流章程》) issued regulations on the naming of non-Han people. Local Tibetans had Chinese names from then on, but their ethnicity cannot be identified only from their names. Cf. Zhao & Li, 2022, pp. 14–15.

⁸ Some members were not recorded in the report for various reasons. For instance, some did not attend the conference, or some others might left Batang due to local social unrest.

For quasi-Christians such as local believers and missionary descendants who were about to become members of the Church, the Baptismal Service was conducted in strict accordance with the rules of Disciples of Christ. Between 1915 and 1919, Dr. Shelton was in charge of the construction of the buildings of the Mission Compound, including the missionary residence, hospital and other buildings—the church building was located in the town at that time—as well as the baptistery. The Compound was located halfway up the hillside of Jia Paoding (架炮顶) outside the town of Batang. Baptisms for prospective Christians who joined the Church were mainly held there for the next decade. In May 1930, Dr. Bare continued to use the old baptistery and administered baptisms to 11 prospective Christians (The UCMS, 1930b, p. 53).

2 The Disciples' evangelistic work and its localized characteristics in Batang from 1919 to 1932

According to statistics in 1927, there were more than 28,000 residents in Batang, among whom most were Tibetans with the religious faith of Buddhism. The rest were Han and Hui residents as well as foreigners—all were missionaries, approximately a thousand in total (Yang, 1935, p. 50). Besides the above-mentioned missionaries, about 13 more missionaries in total were dispatched to the Batang mission in different times, including Miss Grace Young and six couples—Mr. and Mrs. Morse, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan, Mr. and Mrs. Emerson, Mr. and Mrs. Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. Worhley, and Mr. and Mrs. Bare (The UCMS, 1923b; Duncan, 1999). Between 1926 and 1927, there were approximately 30 Disciples' missionaries as well as their children in Batang (Zhao & Zhu, 2014).⁹ In order to effectively conduct their evangelistic work, they adopted two strategies in line with local conditions. One was to organize Hans and Tibetans in different groups, preaching to them respectively. The other was to rely greatly on local preachers. The preacher team of the Ba'an Jiduhui was composed of missionaries and local preachers such as ministers and Bible men and women. The Disciples' Year Books, with the statistics of the number of missionaries and native workers for each year, inform us of the preaching work in Batang from 1919 to 1932 as shown in Table 1.

⁹ For an image of their group photo, see: Zhao & Zhu, 2014, p. 151.

Table 1: Annual statistical report for the number of missionaries and native workers in 1919–1932.^a

Start & end dates	Number of workers		
	Missionaries	Native workers	Total
10.1, 1918–9.30, 1919 ^b	12	6	18
10.1, 1919–6.30, 1920 ^c	10	6	16
1921 ^d	10	19	29
1922 ^e	12	21	33
1923 ^f	11	24	35
1924 ^g	17	21	38
1925 ^h	17	22	39
1926 ⁱ	19	27	46
1927 ^j	13	14	27
1928 ^k	13	8	21
1929 ^l	9	11	20
1929 ^m	6	21	27
1930 ⁿ	6	20	26
1931 ^o	6	18	24
1932 ^p	6	19	25

Note. Start and end dates are July 1 and June 30 since 1921. ^aThe Year Books contain some of the annual statistics for two years on end. ^bThe United Christian Missionary Society (Disciples). (1921). *The Year Book and Annual Reports (July 1, 1920–June 30, 1921)*. The United Christian Missionary Society, Cincinnati, p. 437. ^cIbid. ^dThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1923). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1921–June 30, 1922)*. The United Christian Missionary Society, St. Louis, p. 502. ^eIbid. ^fThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1923). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1922–June 30, 1923)*, p. 709. ^gThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1925). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1924–June 30, 1925)*. The United Christian Missionary Society, St. Louis, p. 734. ^hIbid. ⁱThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1925). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1925–June 30, 1926)*. The United Christian Missionary Society, St. Louis, p. 730. ^jThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1928). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1927–June 30, 1928)*. The United Christian Missionary Society, Indianapolis, p. 685. ^kIbid. ^lThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1929). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1928–June 30, 1929)*. The United Christian Missionary Society, Indianapolis, p. 694. ^mThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1931). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1930–June 30, 1931)*. The United Christian Missionary Society, Indianapolis, p. 681. ⁿIbid. ^oThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1933). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1932–June 30, 1933)*. The United Christian Missionary Society, Indianapolis, p. 540. ^pIbid.

2.1 The Disciples' adaptation and development in Batang from 1919 to 1932

The following expounds the overview of the DOC's church development, focusing on its evangelistic work during this time period.

2.1.1 The chapels and meeting spots and the number of local christians in the church

The number of DOC chapels, meeting spots and local church members in Batang from 1919 to 1932 is shown below (Table 2).

Table 2: The table of DOC chapels, meeting spots and membership in Batang from 1919 to 1932.

Start and end dates	Number of meeting spots (including churches)	Church membership (missionaries not included)
Apr. 1, 1919–Mar. 31, 1920 ^a	1	34 local members in Nov. 1919
Oct. 1, 1920–June 30, 1921 ^b	1	39
1922 ^c	3	27 (25 at the end of 1921)
1923 ^d	3	49 (23 were added by baptism during the year)
1924 ^e	2	50
1925 ^f	3	60 (“20 were added by baptism during the year”)
1926 ^g	2	80 (“24 were added by baptism during the year”)
1927 ^h	2	67
1928 ⁱ	2	67
1929 ^j	2	75 (“There were 15 baptism”)
1930 ^k	2	82
1931 ^l	4	98 (“There were 19 baptism during the year”)
1932 ^m	2	80

Note. Start and end dates are July 1 and June 30 since 1921. ^aSource of the annual data from April 1, 1919 to March 31, 1920: Duncan, Marian L. (1999). *A Flame of the Fire*, pp. 55–56. The annual report of 6 church members in total was for the year ending September 30, 1919. See: The American Christian Missionary Society. (1920). *The Year Book of Churches of Christ (Disciples)*, The American Christian Missionary Society, Cincinnati, pp. 32, 173. ^bThe United Christian Missionary Society (Disciples). (1921). *The Year Book and Annual Reports (July 1, 1920–June 30, 1921)*, p. 436. ^cThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1922). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1921–June 30, 1922)*, p. 501. ^dThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1923). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1922–June 30, 1923)*, pp. 708, 81. ^e“There were 50 members in the Tibetan Church with a regular attendance of 33” and an average attendance of 30 “at the Chinese preaching service.” See: The United Christian Missionary Society. (1924). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1923–June 30, 1924)*, pp. 750, 69. ^fThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1925). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1924–June 30, 1925)*, pp. 696, 80. ^gIbid., pp. 729, 57. ^hThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1927). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1926–June 30, 1927)*, pp. 675, 36. ⁱThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1928). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1927–June 30, 1928)*, p. 645. ^jThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1929). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1928–June 30, 1929)*, pp. 694, 15. ^kThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1930). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1929–June 30, 1930)*, p. 706. ^lThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1931). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1930–June 30, 1931)*, pp. 675, 40. ^mThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1933). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (July 1, 1932–June 30, 1933)*, p. 540. The book contained the data for 1932.

During this period, Ba’an Jiduhui (The Disciples of Christ in Batang) remained one church established in 1919. After ten years of development, it added 2 to 3 chapels and 2 to 4 meeting spots. From 1919 to 1929, the Church had one chapel building located in the town. From 1929 to 1930, after its new chapel was completed, the Church had 2 chapels (one was located at the Mission Compound of

Jia Paoding, the mission station outside of the town, the other in the town). From 1930 to 1931, there were three chapels (probably one temporary chapel was added). The preaching range covered Batang and nearby Tibetan villages scattering in the Batang valley. The Church had three regular meeting spots in 1922, 1923 and 1925, 2 in 1926–1930 and 1932, and 4 in 1931 (The UCMS [Disciples], 1921, p. 49; The UCMS, 1923a, pp. 7–10; 1924, p. 70; 1925, p. 82; 1926, p. 59; 1927, p. 37; 1928, p. 40; 1929, p. 45; 1930a, p. 56; 1931, p. 42; 1932, p. 31; 1933, p. 18).

During this time period, while the overall number of the people who were baptized was increasing, the total number remained under 100 all the time. Probably, two major factors resulted in the small size of the Church. One is the social unrest with high mobility of local population, which was shown by the facts that it “lost 30 members and inquirers out of 162 by their moving away” from Batang between 1919 and 1920 (Duncan, 1999, pp. 55–56) and that 11 church members had “left for other parts” during the year between 1926 and 1927 (The UCMS, 1927, p. 36). The other factor is also related to the unrest of the Board Region of Sichuan. For instance, it was reported that “itinerating was confined to the villages in the Batang Valley” in 1923 (The UCMS, 1923, p. 8), and that “the evangelist attempted to go outside the town for work, but was turned back by robbers” in 1924 (The UCMS, 1924, p. 69). In 1926, “24 were added by baptism during the year,” when there were 19 missionaries and 27 native workers, and totally 46 personnel members shown in Table 1—all the three annual statistical figures for the Mission were the largest numbers during the years between 1919 and 1932.

2.1.2 The traveling evangelistic work or itineration outside of Batang

During this time period, Ba'an Jiduhui remained a small size. The main reason for the increase or decrease in the number of Christians, preaching spots and preaching tours in different years was related to the change of local situations. Although Batang was located on the main traffic route of the Sichuan-Tibet Route, the local society was characterized by armed conflict, rampant banditry, social instability, and high mobility of people, which created obstacles to missionary work and church development. In particular, preaching out of town and into the countryside and surrounding areas was more dependent on the local situation and the directives of the local government (Zhao, 2020). In 1920, an intense armed conflict resulted in the burning of more than 80 houses totally in the town of Batang (Bai, 1942), while “50 (half of Ba) homes are burned” by April 20, 2020, according to a missionary report (Duncan, 1999, p. 58). In 1924–1925, when the local society was more stable, 2 Bible Men (Women) were allowed to travel to preach outside of the town in 5 days a week. Missionaries and local pastors even traveled far to Atuntze (阿墩子, present-day Deqin County 德钦县, Yunnan 云南)

and Yan Jin or Yanjing (present-day Yanjing Township 盐井 of Mangkang County 芒康县, Tibet Autonomous Region) to investigate the possibility of opening new missions there, while preaching to more than 3000 people on the trip. Mr. Ogden wrote in his General Annual Report: “The year 1925 has been crowded with difficulties, problems, obstacles, internal and external strife, bad economic and political conditions all around us, with collapse of trade bringing money stringency.” (Ogden, 1925, p. 1) In this situation, the Mission was difficult to survive, as Ogden described, “general depression of spirit, distrust, turmoil, war, and banditry, epidemics, have made mission work difficult in the extreme, and over-turned some of our plans, forcing us to modified lines of activity.” (Ogden, 1925, p. 1) In 1927, the local situation worsened. “The TCM has been cut off by lawlessness, a state of rebellion and banditry, making money and supplies difficult to get,” as a missionary reported (Duncan, 1999, p. 174). In 1929–1930, they were also able to make short trips and hold fixed preaching in six Tibetan villages around Batang. In 1930–1931, however, when the circumstances changed and local security was in question, they were only able to preach in two villages, with only 12 and 22 listeners respectively, and were never able to travel to places far away to preach. The situation then improved and the local officials re-sanctified them to travel in the Kham area (康区), so the Church sent 2 teams to Mangkang /Gartok (芒康) for evangelistic work (The UCMS, 1925, p. 80; 1930a; 1931, p. 40; 1932, p. 30). However, the war made the work of the Mission in Batang come to an end in 1932.

2.2 Separate evangelistic work with Tibetans and Hans due to language barriers and cultural differences

Based on archival records and typical cases, the following is an overview of the monthly and annual reports and statistics of preaching, and the Bible School profiles from 1920 to 1932.

2.2.1 Preaching as shown in monthly reports and statistics

Despite the huge barriers between the two languages, there were also differences in Tibetan and Chinese cultures and customs. In order to effectively carry out evangelistic work, Ba'an Jiduhui organized Tibetans and Hans into separate groups, each with its own person in charge. Missionaries responsible for this work were required to submit monthly and annual work reports to the UCMS headquarter in the U. S. as required. As far as monthly reports were concerned, in January 1920, for instance, the statistics were given in the mission reports by MacLeod in charge of evangelistic work as follows. First, evangelistic work to

Hans: the average attendance at services was 45; the average attendance at enquirers' classes was 16; available funds were \$55 (All the sums in this paragraph are Mexican dollars); contribution of \$197 from local fellow Christians; expenditure of \$45; and balance of \$207. Second, evangelistic work to Tibetans: Sunday school attendance averaged 165; about \$15 was donated by local Christians and other people; expenses \$5; accounting \$9.86 (MacLeod, n.d.). While most missionaries in charge of the evangelistic work had only basic monthly statistics, the monthly statistics in 1928, when Mr. Peterson was in charge of the work, were more detailed and thus are analyzed below (Table 3).

Table 3: Statistical table of the “Number of Participants in Sunday Services in June,” 1928.^a

No.	Tibetan adult services in the Batang valley		Services for Tibetan children	Services for adult Hans
	Village name	Attendance	–	–
1	Tao Yuan Zi 桃园子	33	107	36
2	River Side 河边	25	100	22
3	River Side 河边	41	85	36
4	Tao Yuan Zi 桃园子	25	–	28
5	River Side 河边	30	–	15
6	Tao Yuan Zi 桃园子	7	–	–
In Total		162	292	137

Note. ^aMacLeod, R. A. (n.d.). *Number of People in Services in June*. Box 2 of Peterson Personal Papers, The Disciples of Christ Historical Society (DCHS).

As can be seen from the above table, there were 6 Tibetan adult services in the two villages with a total of 162 participants; five Han adult services with a total of 131 participants; three special services for children with a total of 292 participants, which was about the total number of Han and Tibetan adult participants; children's interest in Christianity was significantly higher than that of Hans and Tibetans outside the town. The total number of services and preaching attended during the month was 591 when all three were combined. Thus, the distribution and worship statuses of the Disciples' Christians and quasi-Christians outside the town in the late 1920s can be seen from the monthly reports.

2.2.2 Preaching as shown in annual reports with statistics

Disciples' annual reports were also required to include a textual summary and statistics. Again, in the case of MacLeod, his 1920 annual report for evangelistic work done during the year was reported in detail as follows: A Tibetan Communion

Service was held at 9:30 a.m. each Sunday; “the members received a short message, suited to the occasion, at each service.” Tibetan Sunday School met at 10 a.m. every Sunday. The lessons for the year were about the life and teachings of Jesus. Each Sunday, the school memorized one choice passage from *the New Testaments*; an average of 250 participants attended the exercises in the assembly room. A preaching service to the Han Christians was held each Sunday at 11 a.m. with an average of 50 participants. On Sunday afternoons, the Han Christians “held cottage-prayer-meetings” with an average of 18 attending each time. Tibetan prayer meetings were held each Monday evening with an average of 10 participants. Every Tuesday evening the Han Inquirers’ Class met. Eleven of them had called for baptism. Each Wednesday evening, Han Christians “met and prayed for the advancement of the work,” and for specific people and specific needs. Every Thursday evening, Tibetan enquirers met with an average of seven attending each time. Each Friday evening, the Han and Tibetan Christians were trained in religious work; members were taught to sing 30 new hymns, 30 people to read scriptures, and four people to play the organ. On each Saturday, preparation was made for the special services of the following Sunday; a great deal of visiting and personal work had been done. Services were held on the street when an occasion called for such a service. The church gave a Christmas dinner to 200 of the poorest people in Batang. During the year, there were 50 new members of the church, of whom 10 left Batang, one died, and 39 remained; 30 were baptized; and 112 were registered as enquirers, of whom 20 left Batang and 90 remained. Most of the work during the year was undertaken by local Christians. As soon as a sufficient number of people had been baptized, “They were instructed in the meaning of church organization.” When this instruction was fully underway, a pastor, elders and deacons were ordained. “All were then set to work.”¹⁰ In fact, the table showed the specific circumstances and the daily routine evangelistic work from Monday to Sunday each week, providing us with primitive historical information on how the Disciples of Christ conducted its evangelistic work among the local Hans and Tibetans, and on how it developed and organized the enquirers into Christians. As an example, the complete statistics for the whole year of 1928 showed the specific and general situations of the annual target number, locations, festivals, etc. of the Disciples’ evangelistic work in Batang (Table 4).

The above table shows that the total number of people who participated in various activities and ceremonies of the Mission in the whole year was more than 16,000 (If a person took part in 5 activities in the year, the total number was

¹⁰ For the original text of the January report and the two-page report of Mr. MacLeod, see *Secretary’s Book* (1920). TCM Administration Box 1. The author of this article abbreviated the citation to the monthly and annual reports and cannot be put in quotation.

Table 4: Statistical table of the evangelistic work in Batang for the year 1928.^a

Category	Number of activities	The least attendance	The most attendance	Number of participants each time on average	Total attendance for the first half of the year	Total attendance for the second half of the year	Total attendance for the year
Tibetan communion service	53	14	39	29	697	845	1,542
Tibetan Sunday school	53	78	119	98	2,637	2,561	5,198
Service for Han people	52	7	48	25.5	621	734	1,355
Han communion service	53	6	15	9	168	287	465
The meeting spot of Tao Yuan Zi	14	19	53	30	339	74	413
The meeting spot of river side	15	15	63	38	307	271	578
Bible school on Thursday	48	51	269	109	2,481	2,757	5,238
Special service on Easter	10	5	28	9.24	165	–	165
Special service on Christmas	4	About 200	About 350	–	–	About 1150	1150
Total	302	–	–	–	7,324	8,697	16,021
Among 53 weeks	–	149	1,363	302	–	–	–

Note. ^aSource: *Evangelistic Work Statistics for 1928: Recapitulation of Attendances*. The folder of Evangelistic Reports, Box 2 of Peterson Personal Papers. The Disciples of Christ Historical Society (DCHS), Bethany, WV.

recorded as five people); the total number of people in the second half of the year was 1000 more than that in the first half of the year due to Christmas ceremonies. As far as various activities are concerned, the number of Han and Tibetan participants in one activity with the least number ranged from 6 to 78, while the number of Han and Tibetan participants in one activity with the most number ranged from 15 to 269. The week with the least number of participants was 149, while the week with the most attendance was 1,363. In addition, the ceremonies over the Christmas season saw far more participants than usual.

In 1928, Mr. Peterson also made a separate registration of the local male and female Christians who attended services in the year as follows (Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5: List of local male Christians attending services in 1928.^a

No.	Male Christian's name	Date of Baptism	Living in Batang	Notes
1	Li Qichang	1898	Yes	Baptized in the Episcopal Church
2	Lee Gway Gwang	1910	Yes	Officially ordained minister of the Church in 1919; Half Han and half Tibetan descent
3	Lee Gway Yuin		Yes	Ordained president of the Church; Physician Assistant for Dr. Shelton; Half Han and half Tibetan descent
4	Bai Lingyun	1919 or before	Yes	Founding member of the Church in 1919
5	Ye Yingxiang	1919 or before	Yes	Same as above
6	Ynag Zeru	1919 or before	Unknown	Same as above
7	Yang Jianting	1919 or before	Yes	Same as above
8	Fang Chonghan	Unknown	Not in Batang	Same as above
9	Zhu Bicheng	1919 or before	Not in Batang	Same as above
10	Yang Zongwen	1919 or before	Yes	Same as above
11	Xiao Shuisheng	1922	Not in Batang	
12	Wu Guangyao	1922	Not in Batang	
13	Zhang Zhenquan	Same as above	Yes	
14	Fu Kaigui	Same as above	Yes	
15	Chen Shouxi	1924	Yes	

Table 5: (continued)

No.	Male Christian's name	Date of Baptism	Living in Batang	Notes
16	Yang Tianxi	1924	Yes	
17	Zeng Zhuorong	1924	Yes	
18	Song Mingyang	1924	Yes	
19	Zhou Yongfu	Unknown	Yes	
20	Wang Tifu	1924	Yes	
21	Ni Hongxing	1924	Yes	
22	Hu Guozhong	Unknown	Yes	Assistant Director of the DOC Orphanage; Tibetan
23	Lei Buyun	1924	Yes	
24	Huang Chunting	Unknown	No	Assistant for Dr. Hardy; left Batang in 1927
25	Huang Jiujiang	1924	Yes	
26	Lan Jinshan	1924	Yes	
27	Wan Huizhai	Unknown	Not in Batang	
28	Xie Jianting	1924	Yes	
29	Hongyun Fu	1924	Not in Batang	
30	Zhu Keyuan	Unknown	Unknown	
31	Sang Pi	Unknown	Unknown	Tibetan
32	Ao Kui	Unknown	Unknown	
33	Zhou Wubao	Unknown	Yes	
34	Han Wensheng	Unknown	Yes	
35	Huang Shijie	1924	Yes	Medical Assistant; Tibetan
36	Caizheng Wu	1924	Yes	
37	Hu (Fu) Chongru	Unknown	Not in Batang	Tu De Bao (Tibetan name); Tibetan
38	Zhao Yuansheng	Unknown	Yes	
39	He Sanbao	1924	Not in Batang	
40	Ma Haishan	Unknown	Not in Batang	
41	He Yongfu	1924	Unknown	
42	Zhang Weiming	Unknown	Unknown	
43	Sheng Shui	1924	Not in Batang	Tibetan
44	Wang Ruisheng	1924	Yes	
45	Wang Xinan	1926	Yes	
46	Zeng Yangsheng	1928.04	Yes	

Note. ^aSee Peterson, R. (n.d.). *List of Local male Christians*. attending services in 1928, The folder of Evangelistic Reports, Box 2 of Peterson Personal Papers.

From the above table, it can be seen that in 1928, there were 46 local male Christians in the Batang Church, of whom 29 were living locally and 10 were off, while the situations for the remaining six were unknown. Li Qichang from northern Sichuan was formerly a member of the Episcopal Church and was baptized at Xindianzi 高店子, Baoning 保宁 of Sichuan in the 24th year of Guangxu's reign 光绪二十四年 (1898). Between 1922 and 1928, 36 men joined the Church while figures between 1920 and 1921 were not shown in the table. It is impossible to identify Tibetans as more information is to yet be found. According to the name list and other archival records, it is certain that there were at least eight Tibetans including the Lee brothers in the Church.

The profile of local women Christians in 1928 is as follows (Table 6).

Table 6: List of local women Christians attending services in 1928.^a

No.	Female Christian's name	Date of Baptism	Living in Batang	Notes
1	Zhang Laxi (Lhashi)	Unknown	Yes	Early church member; Tibetan
2	Hu Laxi (Lhashi)	Unknown	Yes	Same as above; Tibetan
3	Ah Jie	Unknown	Yes	Same as above; Tibetan
4	Di Di	Unknown	Yes	Lee Guo Ruin's wife and Tibetan orphan adopted by the Ogdens in the early years
5	De La (Chinese name as Fu Wenlin)	Unknown	Yes	Hu Chongru's wife and Tibetan orphan adopted by Mrs. MacLeod in 1918
6	Yu Lan	Unknown	Yes	A Tibetan orphan adopted by Mrs. MacLeod in 1918
7	Da Wa	1925	Yes	Tibetan
8	Zhang Guixiang	1922	Yes	Tibetan
9	Ye Xi Qu Zhen	1924	Yes	Chinese name as Liu Xiuying; Tibetan
10	Luo Zong Qu Zhen	1922	Yes	Member at the time of the Church's founding in 1919; Tibetan
11	Yong Zhu	Unknown	Yes	Tibetan
12	Ah Zhen	Unknown	Yes	Tibetan
13	Huang Zhuma	Unknown	Yes	Tibetan
14	Zha Xi Zhu Ma	1925	Unknown	Tibetan
15	Ye Xi Na Mu	Unknown	Yes	Tibetan
16	Tan Guiying	Unknown	Not in Batang	
17	Chen Guiying	Unknown	Yes	
18	Ye Luo Song Qu	Unknown	Yes	Tibetan
19	Deng Zhu Na Mu	1925	Unknown	Tibetan
20	Hao Dangqiu	1925	Yes	
21	Ma Quzhen	1925	Yes	Tibetan
22	Yao Guixiang	1925	Yes	
23	Wu Yongzong	Unknown	Yes	Tibetan
24		1926	Yes	Tibetan

Table 6: (continued)

No.	Female Christian's name	Date of Baptism	Living in Batang	Notes
	Ci Ren Na Mu (Tsering Lhamo)			
25	Jin Xiu	Unknown	Yes	
26	Chun Xiu	Unknown	Yes	Tibetan
27	Cao Yongjin	1925	Yes	Tibetan
28	Che Gu Niang	1925	Yes	
29	Zhu Qiongzong (Xia Duo)	1928	Yes	Tibetan
30	You Zhen Na Mu	1928	Yes	Tibetan
31	Zeng Laci	1928	Yes	Tibetan
32	Zhang Baozhen	1928	Yes	
33	Ci Yong	1928	Yes	Tibetan
34	Xia Zhusheng	1928	Yes	
35	Li Guixiang	1928	Yes	
36	Hao Guixiang	1928	Yes	
37	Bai Chong (Zhang Guiying)	1928	Yes	Tibetan
38	Ah Yong	1928	Yes	Tibetan
39	Ah Yi Na Xi Mu	Unknown	Yes	Tibetan
40	Hu Shunu	1928	Unknown	
41	Li Dezhen	1928	Unknown	
42	Yong Zong	1922	Unknown	Tibetan
43	Li Shi Ying	1920	Yes	Baptized in the Episcopal Church in Yunnan in 1920

Note. ^aSee Peterson, R. (n.d.). *List of Local female Christians* (Attending services in 1928), The folder of Evangelistic Reports, Box 2 of Peterson Personal Papers.

The table above shows that in 1928, there were 43 national or native female Christians, of whom 37 were local residents while an alien moved in; the statuses of the rest were unknown. One from Yunnan was originally a Christian in the Episcopal Church. Judging from their names, there were at least 29 Tibetan women. 37 women joined the Church after 1920, among whom there were at least 23 Tibetans.

In sum, with a total of 89 male and female believers registered in 1928, Table 5 and 6 showed that, in the late 1920s, the Disciples' Church at Batang was still small in size. The situation is supposed to be directly related to the local situation of wars and isolation in and around Batang during the period.

2.2.3 An overview of the Bible Schools in 1921–1932

According to Disciples' annual reports, statistics on the number of Bible Schools and the number of students enrolled in the evangelistic work from 1919 to 1932 are summarized as follows (Table 7).¹¹

Table 7: Student statistics in the Bible Schools in Batang, in 1919–1932.

End date (June 30, except 1919)	Number of Bible Schools	Total number of students at the Bible Schools
Sept. 30, 1919	1	60 ^a
1920	1	2,000 ^b
1921	1	150 ^c
1922	1	200 ^d
1923	2	145 ^e
1924	2	157 (Attendance) ^f
1925	2	226 ^g
1926	2	153 ^h
1928	2	200 (registered in Tibetan Bible School) ⁱ
1929	2	205 ^j
1930	2	205 ^k
1931	2	203 ^l
1932	2	250 ^m

Note. ^aThe United Christian Missionary Society (Disciples). (1921). *The Year Book and Annual Reports (1920–1921)*, p. 436. ^bIbid., pp. 436, 680. ^cThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1922). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1921–1922)*, p. 501; The United Christian Missionary Society (Disciples). (1921). *The Year Book and Annual Reports (1920–1921)*, p. 680. ^dBoth by The United Christian Missionary Society. (1922). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1921–1922)*, p. 501; The United Christian Missionary Society. (1923). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1922–1923)*, p. 708. ^eThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1923). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1922–1923)*, p. 708. The total number included a Tibetan Bible or Sunday School and a Bible School in the chapel open to children on the street, which was the same in the following years. ^fThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1924). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1923–1924)*, p. 750; The United Christian Missionary Society. (1925). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1924–1925)*, p. 733. ^gThe total number included 114 students in Tibetan Bible or Sunday School and 112 in the Bible School on the street. See: The United Christian Missionary Society. (1925). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1924–1925)*, pp. 80, 696, 733; The United Christian Missionary Society. (1926). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1925–1926)*, p. 729. ^hBesides this number, 90 other children were in the Bible School on the street. See: The United Christian Missionary Society. (1926). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1925–1926)*, pp. 57–59, 729; The United Christian Missionary Society. (1927). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1926–1927)*, p. 675. ⁱThere were about 270 participants for various church activities per week on average. See: The United Christian Missionary Society. (1928). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1927–1928)*, pp. 39, 645, 684; The United Christian Missionary Society. (1929). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1928–1929)*, p. 693. ^jThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1929). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1928–1929)*, p. 693. ^kThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1931). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1930–1931)*, p. 680. ^lIbid., p. 680. ^mThe United Christian Missionary Society. (1933). *The Year Book of Disciples of Christ (1932–1933)*, p. 540.

11 The starting and ending dates each year from 1920 to 1932 were July 1 and June 30 in the next year.

As can be seen from the table above, Ba'an Jiduhui organized Chinese and Tibetan Bible Schools for Han and Tibetan residents during this period with the total number of students over 200 annually in 8 years. There were only one Bible School (or Sunday school) between 1919 and 1922, which was located at the Mission Compound at Jia Paoding out of the southern gate of the town. In 1923, one more Bible School was open to the children living on the street; as reported in the Year Book, "The Tibetan Bible School was in two divisions – one which meets in the graded classes in the new school building, and the other which meets in the street chapel and is composed of children from the street." (The UCMS, 1923a, p. 81) This situation lasted till 1932, which showed that the missionaries took full account of the distribution of local residents and the actual language and cultural situations facing them. There were surprisingly 2000 students in the Bible School, which probably resulted from the temporary peaceful environment in Batang and its vicinity due to the end of the severe armed conflicts in the Border Region of Sichuan from 1917 to 1919 (Zhao, 2008). In most years, the total number of students at all the Bible Schools exceeded 200.

In addition, Ba'an Jiduhui combined its evangelistic work with charity, school, orphanage, hospital and other work. For instance, the Mission raised 28 orphans, half male and half female in 1923. Not only did they receive a school education, but they also studied in the Bible School on each Sunday. In May of that year, the three oldest boys and three girls were baptized at the same time (The UCMS, 1923a, p. 81). After the DOC hospital was opened in 1917, preaching, done to different patients, was held each morning before the dispensary was opened (The UCMS, 1923a, p. 81). This practice lasted till 1932. Nonetheless, based on years of experience and surveys, the missionaries in the Mission made it clear in a 1919 report that, undoubtedly, at least 95 percent of local residents who had interest in Christianity were interested in direct evangelistic work (*TCM Secretary's Book*, 1919). In other words, preaching conducted to patients had little effect. So the missionaries adjusted some of their evangelistic work to local needs, while at the same time keeping local characteristics in preaching by emphasizing the ideas of 公义待人 [treating people with justice] and 安分守己 [keeping one's nose clean] in hymns that were conducive to social stability and harmony in the face of the unrest and complex social situations at Batang in the 1920s.

2.3 The training and role of local preachers, other workers and their income

This section discusses the training, function, and income of local preachers and other workers.

2.3.1 The role of local pastors and Bible men and women

Ba'an Jiduhui paid attention to the cultivation of local pastors and preaching workers among its orphans and students in schools. One of the “powerful” native pastors was Lee Gway Gwang, an orphan adopted during Tachienlu. After the breakout of the 1911 Revolution, the missionaries were forced to leave Batang, and most of them returned to the United States. During the three years since they left, Lee Gway Gwang undertook the mission work in Batang for the first time on his own, so that the missionary work was maintained (*TCM Secretary's Book*, 1919). In 1914 when the missionaries returned, Lee became one of the capable local pastors. In the Church organized by MacLeod in 1919, Lee was the first ordained minister, and could preach in both Chinese and Tibetan (Duncan, 1999, p. 51). The missionary Ogden thought highly of him: “The oldest Lee Gway Gwang is a powerful preacher. No foreigner can equal him.” He also exclaimed that he saw the oldest orphan, brought up by the missionaries, growing up to be powerful “Timothy.” Besides, Ogden recorded that MacLeod was in tears when seeing those local people being baptized by Lee with MacLeod's assistance (Ogden, n.d., p. 2). The missionaries believed that local pastors had advantages over foreign missionaries, for it was not only easier for them to work with other local church members, but also easier for them to influence the missionary target. For example, before Baker left Batang in 1919, he had trained Lee to be a diligent and supportive pastor, and “his expertise in drawing pictures and making charts to illustrate his sermons on the Gospel were excellent.” His preach was vivid, attracting a large number of people to go to listen (Duncan, 1999, p. 49). He used evocative graphics to list “Sixteen Big Thoughts for A Christian,” asking the question “How to Be a Disciple of Christ.”¹² He preached in simple terms with illustrations, urging people to quit drinking, smoking, gambling, and other vices and misdeeds (Figure 1).

In 1919, MacLeod stated in his monthly report that Lee Gway Gwang did an excellent job with the help of other church members. He spoke highly of him again that Lee was well trained (MacLeod, 1919). Lee's characteristic of “being local” and his power at work were fully reflected by his devotion to the development of the work. From 1922 to 1923, he organized a Young Men's Club, “composed of young men who are interested in religious problems.” They met each week “with an average attendance of eight young men.” (The UCMS, 1923b, p. 81) As a minister of the Church, Lee often played an important role as the moderator of the ceremonies on holidays such as Christmas (Peterson, n.d.). “Being local” was also reflected in that Lee Gway Gwang voluntarily and “eagerly” requested to be dispatched to Yan Jin, about 290 km away from Batang, in 1930. He later reported from Yan Jin that

¹² For the image, see Zhao & Zhu, 2014, p. 198.



Figure 1: Pastor Lee Gway Gwang with His Drawings about the Three Vices (Photo by Albert Shelton before 1922)¹³. Note. The image and its copyright: © The Disciples of Christ (The Christian Church). ¹³For the image, see Zhao & Zhu, 2014. *Far, Far Away in Remote Eastern Tibet: The Story of the American Doctor Albert Shelton and His Colleagues from the Disciples of Christ 1903–1950*. Lucas Park Books, St. Louis, p. 197.

the progress was “promising” and requested to open a clinic, hoping to preach through providing medical care (The UCMS, 1923a, p. 81; 1931, p. 40). In short, The Disciples of Christ in East China didn’t begin to hand over the leadership of the church to local pastors until in the 1940s, while the Batang Church did it much earlier than other Disciples’ Churches in China.

In addition to the preacher Lee, the Church also trained and hired a number of Bible men and women from time to time. For instance, the missionary Baker adopted a poor local Tibetan kid Fu Tsung-ru (胡/傅崇儒) and gave him training in the project of Rug Industrial in 1918, and then MacLeod sent him to school. Fu later became a Bible man and was employed by the Mission in July 1919 (Duncan, 1999, p. 51).¹³ From 1919 to 1920, Ogden trained a youth as a pastor (*Report of Evangelistic Work in January 1920*, 1920). In 1921, the Mission hired Whang Tien-Lien (王天林) and the Tibetan Bible woman Tsering Lhashi (次仁拉喜) (*Reports of Evangelistic Work in 1921*, 1920).¹⁴ From

¹³ The Chinese name corresponding to Fu-Tsung-ru in English document was Hu Chongru. See: *The Name List of the Employees Paid by the Mission*. (n.d.). Peterson Box 2.

¹⁴ *The Name List of the Employees Paid by the Mission*. (n.d.). Peterson Box 2.

1924 to 1926, there were two Bible men who preached 5 days a week. There was also a Tibetan Bible woman Lhatsu (拉措).¹⁵ In 1931 a part-time Bible woman was hired to preach (The UCMS, 1925, p. 80; 1926; 1931, p. 41).

2.3.2 Sources and conditions of income for the local preachers and other workers

In 1919, Article 12 of “The Constitution of the Batang Church”, formulated collectively by the missionaries in Batang, stipulated that all the payments salaried by Ba’an Jiduhui to its personnel were limited to 50 rupees per month till they found a more competent employee. In 1925, “The Constitution of the Batang Church” was expanded with the Article 10 maintaining the same bylaw.¹⁶ This bylaw was inherited in 1928 and the following years. There were two sources of income for local ministers and Bible men and women. One is the annual grant from the UCMS headquarter in the U. S. to the Batang Mission. For instance, the Mission’s annual expenditure budget or “estimate” from 1920 to 1921 was approximately \$29,664 (Mexican dollars). The payroll showed that local ministers and Bible men and women were paid in a different way. Three employees were engaged in mission work that year. Minister Lee Gway Gwang had an annual salary of \$300 while the Bible man Whang Tien-Lien and the Bible woman Tsering Lhashi had an annual salary of \$120 respectively.¹⁷ The other source was donations by local Christians and other parties. These donations were used mainly for three types of purposes: for mission work and charity, for education (excluding the tuition paid by students), and for self-support. According to statistics, the total funds raised in Batang in 1920–1921 was about \$395 (Mexican dollars—“\$” shows the same unit for the following sums of money in this paragraph), including the personal donations by members of the Church to local mission, clinic, school and other mission work (The UCMS, 1922, p. 10). In 1926–1927, the total donation from the locals was \$942, to which the local Christians donated a total of \$56; the missionaries in Batang donated \$600, and others donated \$342 (The UCMS, 1927, p. 38). The 1931–1932 annual report stated that missionaries had always followed the Mission’s bylaws on salary. Namely, the Mission paid each local minister and Bible man/woman 50 rupees out of local Christians’ donation, and the rest went to charity (The UCMS,

¹⁵ For an image of her in Tibetan costume, see: Zhao & Zhu, 2014, p. 163.

¹⁶ In 1919, the Mission had 17 bylaws; the 1925 bylaws were increased to 32; there was another copy of the Constitution and Bylaws in 1928, almost the same as the 1925 copy, but did not provide any data of the employees’ monthly salary. See: *Mission Rules adopted by the TCM in Meeting Assembled on February 2, 1925*. (n.d.). Peterson Box 2.; *The Motion Passed at the Annual Meeting of the TCM, April, 1919*. (1919). Secretary’s Book.; *Bylaws*. (n.d.). Peterson Box 2 and *Constitution*. (n.d.). Peterson Box 2.

¹⁷ *The Name List of the Employees Paid by the Mission in 1928*. (n.d.). Peterson Box 2. 2 Mexican dollars was equivalent to 1 American dollar at the time.

1932, p. 30). Generally speaking, the amount of donation the Mission received from the locals was quite small, which was uncertain. Most of the funding for salaries came from the grant, mainly based on the Mission's annual budget, allocated by the national office in the U. S.

In 1932, before they evacuated Batang, the Disciples' missionaries passed a motion to end their employment with local employees on July 31 of that year, and then paid each local employee a sum of "bonus" according to the length of time he or she had been employed by the Mission. There were altogether 15 local employees on the name list, including Lee Gway Gwang (李国光), Yan Jen Tien (杨青天), Trauming (胡国忠), Norje Tsering (洛吉泽仁), Shao Ge Sen (肖格桑), Shaumchu (松曲), Tsamden (查登), Tseden (泽登), Ge Ge Tse Den (格格泽登), Ge Ge Ah lay (格格阿来), Lhashe (拉什或拉喜), Ge Ge Ah Tring (格格阿称), Shado (夏多), Sha Je Ru (谢吉儒), and Lhatso. In total, 1465 Rupees were paid to them (Duncan, n.d.).¹⁸ The fact with statistics typically shows that the Mission tried to adapt itself to local situations and communities by hiring local Han and Tibetan workers.

2.4 Prominent characteristics of localization in the Late 1920s

After more than a decade of development, by the late 1920s, "self-governance" and self-propagation" characters of the developing Batang Church had become apparent. For example, the Mission had proposed to involve Christian nationals in the evangelistic work, and at the 1926–1927 annual meeting, in addition to the work report of the missionary head from each department, emphasis was placed on native input and the views of native workers, with native assistants from each department speaking. For instance, Lee Gway Gwang spoke on Viewpoint of Native Christians (本土基督徒的观点), representing the Missionary Committee with Chongru Fu; Liu Jiaju (刘家驹) presented on Native Criticisms of the School (关于学校的本土批判), representing the Education Committee with Chen (陈某); and Lee Gway Yuin (李国荣), on behalf of the Medical Committee, talked about Things Needed to be Remedied (需改进的事工). Consultation with local employees in specific matters also received great attention. For instance, a notice and list of participants in the "Consultation on All Sunday School Events" in 1928 showed that in addition to the Bares and Petersons, eight relevant local employees and Christians were invited to participate, including pastors Lee Gway Gwang, Zhang Wenying (张文英), Hu Guozhong, Zhang Chongrui (张崇瑞), Chen Yulan (陈玉兰), Zhang Guixiang (张桂香), Li Qichang (李其昌), and medical assistant Lee Gway Yuin.¹⁹

¹⁸ "Ge Ge" was an address to a teacher in Tibetan. "Rupee" was a common currency at Batang then.

¹⁹ "To be held at the chapel on the 27th day....." Box 2 of Peterson Personal Paper.

In 1930–1931, two events became landmarks in the spirit of its “self-governance.” The first was the election and appointment of a board of elders and deacons by the “local church,” and the other was that the local minister Lee Gway Gwang took the initiative to open up the preaching work in Yan Jin (Duncan, 1999, p. 161; The UCMS, 1931, p. 40). Meanwhile, the Batang Church had grown to the point at which it was able to organize larger and more distinctive ceremonies. For instance, on the Eve of Christmas in 1929, it staged a play on the Christmas story in the chapel, which attracted a large audience (The UCMS, 1930a, p. 53). In 1931–1932, the teachers and students of the School run by the Mission, led by Wu Guangyao (or Wu Gwan Yao 吴光耀) and others, rehearsed and held a large theatrical performance about the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, with 40 actors filled by the teachers and students of the school and an audience of up to 300 in and outside the School and Church (Zhao & Zhu, 2014, p. 137).²⁰ That same year in Yan Jin, 208 locals attended an Easter service led by pastors Lee and others. In both Batang and Yan Jin, many people from within and outside the church took part in Christmas services with great interest (Zhao & Zhu, 2014). In 1930–1931, The World Day of Prayer was held for the first time in Batang (The UCMS, 1931). In 1931–1932, it was held again with about 40 participants. Apart from a few missionaries and their seven kids, most of the participants were Tibetan and Han women, as shown in the group photo at the time (Figure 2) (Zhao & Zhu, 2014). Moreover, large annual charity activities for the poor and beggars were held each year (Zhao & Zhu, 2014, p. 126),²¹ which were well attended and mostly organized by local church members, employees, enquirers, and other church-related people. The process of organizing and participating in the above-mentioned activities reflects both a certain degree of the adaptation of the Mission to local community and the enhancement of the Church’s spirit of “self-governance” and the development of its “self-propagation” nature.

3 The entrustment to the board of trustees before the missionary evacuation from Batang in 1932

In 1932, the UCMS headquarter in the U. S. ordered the close of the Mission and the evacuation of the missionaries for various reasons such as severe armed conflicts in Batang and its vicinity—in which the mission hospital and school buildings as well as

²⁰ For images of the four scenes of the theater performance, see Zhao & Zhu, 2014, p. 137.

²¹ For an image of the 1919 Christmas scene of the distribution of alms to 300 beggars.



Figure 2: The World Day of Prayer Service in Batang in 1932 (Photo by M. Duncan, April 1932)^a. Note. The image and its copyright: © The Disciples of Christ (The Christian Church). ^aZhao Aidong & Zhu Xiaoling. (2014). *Far, Far Away in Remote Eastern Tibet*, p. 164.

residences were severely damaged,²² insufficient funding for the Mission, and difficulties in transportation and communications between Batang and the outside world. In this situation, the missionaries entrusted the mission and church work to the local members in the Church. Therefore, Mr. Duncan drafted a letter of the entrustment before leaving Batang in 1932. The letter written in three languages was printed (in English) and handwritten (in Chinese and Tibetan) on a piece of stationery with his address and the signatures of four missionaries who were in charge of the Mission. They were Minnie Ogden (the widow of James Ogden), Miss Grace Young and the Duncan couple. The original English version of the letter of the Entrustment, with four original names and expressions in Chinese, was written as follows:

We, the undersigned members of the Tibetan Christian Mission, do hereby authorized the Batang Board of Trustees (巴安基督教务委员会) to take over all the Mission property – real estate, movable and otherwise; and give said Board of Trustees power to sell any and all movable Mission property, and to rent the real estate and land, for the purpose of carrying for the remaining orphans and continuing the Mission work (教事业) according to the Constitution (照章) as drawn up. (Secretary's Book, 1932, p. 1)

²² The event was commonly called Gesang Zeren Shijian (格桑泽仁事件, [Gesang Zeren Event]); for its detailed account, see Wang C., “the Biology of Gesang Zeren”, *Journal of Southwest Minzu University*, 2009 (03), 28–32, pp. 29–30; Gesang Zeren. (1932) (printed). *A Report on the General Situation of Kang Zang*. Meng Zang Wei Yuanhui, pp. 14–19. For the images showing the damages of the buildings, see: Zhao & Zhu, 2014, pp. 175–176.

The Entrustment showed some characteristics of localization of the Disciples' work in Batang. First of all, the names used in it were localized. The English name for this Mission in the English version was "The Tibetan Christian Mission," given as the official name by the missionaries when they returned to Batang in 1914 (*Mission Rules adopted by the TCM in Meeting Assembled on February 2*, n.d.; *The Motion Passed at the Annual Meeting of the TCM, April, 1919*, 1919; *Constitution & Bylaws*, n.d.), while the Chinese name was given as "Ba'an Jiduhui." It showed the missionary thorough understanding of the local situation and took into account the reality of Batang lying in the Border Region of Sichuan under the jurisdiction of Sichuan Province (Xikang Province 西康省 was under construction at the time) rather than the local Tibetan government on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau. Second, the fact that the Mission "authorized the Batang Board of Trustees to take over all the Mission property – real estate, movable and otherwise; and give said Board of Trustees power to sell any and all movable Mission property" not only showed the trust of the missionaries in local members, but also laid the foundation for them to independently assume the responsibility of the Church and to carry out work, so that they could achieve "self-governance." Lastly, that the movable property could be sold "for the purpose of carrying for the remaining orphans and continuing the Mission work" showed that, in addition to taking over the Mission's realty, the responsibilities of the local Board of Trustees also involved raising orphans and maintaining mission work. According to the statistics in 1927, the total value of the property owned by the Batang Mission was up to 28,642 Mexican dollars (The UCMS, 1927, p. 38). In short, renting out realty and selling items might be quite practical ways of "self-support" for the local Church after 1932.

The Entrustment clearly stated the basis and guidelines of the local Board of Trustees. "The Bylaws set by the Western Christian Mission" and "according to the Constitution" referred to the constitution that had been adopted and improved from the original "Constitution of the Batang Church" passed in 1919. The Constitution of 1919 was actually a collection of pieces of stipulations and motions collectively formulated and approved by the DOC missionaries. It was the earliest and the central charter, one copy of which was handed to the UCMS headquarter, the other copy for educating new missionaries and familiarizing them with both the Bylaws of the mission to follow and the local community. In 1925, more articles were added to the bylaws. Thus the charter became expanded and divided into two parts "Constitution" and "Bylaws." The 1919 constitution contained 17 clauses, among which 4 ones closely related to the above Entrustment are as follows: "2. It shall be the policy of the Mission not to 'dang' property. The Chinese word 'dang' means to accept property on a loan, the property to be forfeited if the loan is not paid when due;" (p. 1) "10. All contracts for the rental or purchase or real estate shall be ratified by the mission;" (p. 2) "16. All books, furniture, and stampable property of the Mission shall be

stamped for identification with a stamp marked ‘Property of the F. C. M. S.’ ” (p. 2) “17. The individuals of the Mission, in their mission activities, shall be under the control and direction of the Mission...” (p. 2) (*The Motion Passed at the Annual Meeting of the TCM, April, 1919, 1919*, pp. 1–2)

In 1932, when the Board took over the mission work, the trustees performed according to the above-mentioned bylaws. In June and July of that year, the missionaries still in Batang discussed with the Board of Trustees on how to devolve the work and property and on how to continue their mission work, following which the Board formed a work plan. In early August, the missionaries handed over the property and work to the local Board composed of 16 members, with Lee Gway Gwang as Chairman, Shay Ge Ru as Secretary, and Fu Gway Chong as Trustee. Other board members were Tsering Lhamo (次仁拿木) as Orphanage Matron, Shao Chu Sun (肖品琨, once local medical assistant) and Whang Shih Ji (黄世杰) as medical assistants, Gezong Tsering, Norjetsering, Lha His, Lhatsu, Tringshuh (probably 水生), Bay Shang Wun (白尚文), Ho Gway Shang (何桂香), Wu Gwan Yao, Wang Tongsu (王端生), and Wang Shing Ngau (王信隆). An image of the group photo with 15 members (one absent) in it is shown below (Figure 3). Four members, judged from their clothing, are Tibetan women (Tsering Lhamo, Lha Hsi, Ho Gway Shang, etc.); there is a Han woman. In the middle of the first row is Lee



Figure 3: 15 members of the Batang Board of Trustees, 1932 (Photo by Duncan on Oct. 20th, 1932)^a. Note. The image and its copyright: © The Disciples of Christ (The Christian Church). Zhao & Zhu, 2014, p. 164.

Gway Gwang.²³ According to “The Bishop and Pastor List” of Sichuan in 1949, there remained two national or native pastors in the Disciples’ Church in Sichuan, who were probably Lee Gway Gwang and Wang Kunyuan (王昆元) of the Batang Church—the latter joined the Church in the 1940s (Liu et al., 1992, p. 333).

4 Conclusion

In 1908, the missionaries from the Disciples of Christ, an American Christian Church, established a mission among Han and Tibetan residents at Batang in the Border Region of Sichuan. In 1919, along with Christians, they founded a local church named Ba’an/Batang Jiduhui. Disciples’ work in Batang was characterized by the following localized features in 1919–1932.

First, the missionaries named both the Mission and the local Church Ba’an Jiduhui in the Chinese language, which reflected their strategy of localization. However, they named the mission in English as “The Tibetan Christian Mission.” The use of the name “Tibetan” reflected that Tibetans or Tibet were targeted for the Mission, but it is actually incorrect. In so doing, probably they hoped to gain more attention from the western world in order to gain more support, or they dreamed to establish a station in “Tibet.” However, such naming cannot avoid creating misconceptions and misunderstandings about the place of Batang and its geographical and administrative relationship with “Tibet,” and thus affected the world’s perception of Batang in an improper way. It has also brought difficulties to relevant historical research.

Second, the Batang Church initially was composed of 42 Chinese and Western baptized converts, including 34 local converts and 8 missionaries. All the clergy members in the Church were Han and Tibetan converts.

Third, “The Contract Signed on the Founding Day of The Disciples of Christ Church at Batang” in 1919 reflected an adaptation to the context of traditional Chinese culture, by expressing the missionary pursuit of faith with the concepts of *li* 礼 and *ren* 仁 in the ideological and discourse systems of Confucianism, in order to reconcile the conceptual differences between Christianity and the traditional culture inherited by local Han people as well as Buddhism believed in by Tibetans.

Fourth, they remained one church with less than 100 local converts before 1932, with the maximum number of 98 in 1930–1931, despite the facts that the

²³ Only old-fashioned Chinese phonetic names can be found in the documents in English. See Duncan, Marian L. (1999). *A Flame of the Fire*. For an image of a group photo of 15 trustees, see Zhao & Zhu, 2014, p. 164; four members can be identified as Tibetan women from the clothing shown in the photo.

mission and church members comprised a small cross-cultural and -ethnic group, that the Mission and Church became an organization for local public social activities, and that the missionaries kept Han and Tibetan Bible Schools in and outside the town and occasionally made journeys to other places for preaching. The fact showed that the Disciples' evangelistic work had an insignificant or limited impact on local society, considering the population of Batang and the vase area of its vicinity during the period. For more local people, statistics shows that they only felt curious about or interested in the Church or the activities organized by the Church.

Fifth, the mission work was closely linked to the activities of the local Church. In the late 1920s, the latter was characterized by more self-government and self-propagation with some prominent events and activities, which shows the impact of the national trend and campaigns concerning Christianity in China during the period.

Sixth, in the 1920s, the Disciples' activities in Batang were greatly affected by local situations and wars. In 1932, local armed conflicts, combined with traffic, financial and other reasons resulted in the close of the Mission and the evacuation of the missionaries, but the local church was remained, which was taken over by the Board of Trustees composed of local Tibetan and Han members. The Disciples' Year Books from 1933 to 1940 showed that under the leadership of Lee Gway Gwang and other members, the local church was able to maintain part of its work, which largely resulted from its self-propagation, self-support, and self-governance (The UCMS, 1934, p. 14; 1935, p. 13; 1936, p. 13; 1937, p. 13; 1938, p. 15; 1939, p. 17; 1940, p. 19).

In conclusion, the paper reveals how modern missionaries and foreign cultures acted on a local society in southwestern China and on the Han and Tibetan social lives in the Border Region of Sichuan, and conversely how the local community and complex situations affected missionary survival and confined their activities to a narrow space. It shows that the local society in the Border Region of Sichuan was not passively accepting the impacts of foreign organizations and their activities from 1919 to 1932. Despite the fact that the Disciples' missionaries tried hard to adapt themselves to local society, such complex factors as geographical environment and various social factors, especially political and military situations, affected the social development and transformation of the Batang region, which greatly restricted missionary activities at the same time. These factors combined, to a large extent, led to the close of its mission in 1932.

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