

**The Northeastern
Connection: American Board Missionaries
and the Formation of American of Opinion Toward
China: 1830-1860**

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Introduction

In 1830 the general American attitude toward the Chinese was one of guarded admiration, but by 1860 it had shifted to one of contempt. American missionaries in China played a part in bringing about this change in attitude. Missionaries used the press and the pulpit to carry their message and their image of China home to the American Protestant public; their writings and their speeches convinced many Americans that the Chinese were 'perishing heathen'. This paper will examine missionary modes of communication and explore how they were related to the processes of attitude change in the years from 1830 to 1860.

Missionary perceptions of China and the impact of such perceptions have been dealt with by two modern historians. In *The Chinese Chameleon*,⁽¹⁾ Raymond Dawson examined a variety of missionary images and suggested that 19th Century Protestant missionaries helped to negate positive image of China which earlier Catholic missionaries had popularized. Dawson's canvas was a large one for he wrote a history of Western images of China. Stuart Creighton Miller worked on a smaller canvas; his book, *The Unwelcome Immigrant*, was an examination of 19th Century American images of China.⁽²⁾ Miller intended to show that the negative image, which missionaries, merchants and

(1) Raymond Dawson, *The Chinese Chameleon* (London, 1967).

(2) Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant* (Berkeley, 1969).

diplomats created and which the Americans who then became convinced of the cultural inferiority of the Chinese. Both books were essentially image Studies. They were examinations of how missionaries and others who saw the Chinese and described them in published books and articles. Miller was more ambitious in his attempt to link image with action; to demonstrate that the American acceptance of the hostile image produced anti-oriental violence and restricted immigration.

I, too, am interested in the nature of the missionary image of China. While I was in agreement that the missionaries did influence American attitudes toward China, I wondered about just how the missionary image was transmitted from the missionary to his audience. An image is valuable as a subject of study only to the extent that its impact can be discerned. An image is only one element in the communications process. It is a message which is sent from one individual or group to another. A missionary image does not occur in a vacuum and it can be examined only within the context of a total communications system. Miller examined the media which served as the carriers or transmitters of the image but did not focus upon the way the image was received. He assumed that the public read the newspapers and accepted the image of China these papers contained. Communications systems are closed environments, however, which consist of sources, messages, channels, receivers and effects.⁽³⁾ One should study the entire system in order to be

(3) Studies of communications networks are included in the following:

Reed H. Blake and Eide W. Haraldsen, *A Taxonomy of Concepts in Communication* (New York, 1975).

F. Gerald Kline and Phillip J. Tichenor, eds., *Current Perspectives in Mass Communication Research* (Beverly Hills, 1972).

Wilbur Schram, *Men, Messages and Media* (New York, 1973).

Wilbur Schram and Donald F. Roberts, eds., *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication* (Urbana, 1972).

Charles S. Steinberg, ed., *Mass Media and Communication* (New York, 1972).

Allan R. Pred, *Urban Growth and the Circulation of Information* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1973)

Studies of the effects of communication include the following:

Carl J. Hovland, Irving Janis and Harold H. Kelley, *Communication and Persuasion* (New Haven, 1953).

Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence* (Glencoe, Illinois, 1955).

Joseph T. Klapper, *The Effects of Mass Communication* (Glencoe, Illinois, 1960).

able to understand the specific problems of affect and impact. In the pages ahead I map out one such communications system, the one created by members of the South China Mission and their superiors, the Prudential Committee of The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. I then discuss a subsidiary system which directly linked the South China missionaries and their home audience. I conclude by suggesting a process of media interaction and effect which explains how an image or set of ideas developed by one group is accepted as valid by another.

Three distinct groups were integral parts of the communications network which was created to transmit the missionaries' image of China. The first of these was the mission itself which served as the source of the message. The second was the Board which, as "gatekeeper", edited the missionaries' image. The final group was the American Protestant public which received the image and reacted to it. The South China Mission of the American Board was the source of information and images. The mission began its operations in 1830 in the port city of Canton. The members of the mission, Elijah Coleman Bridgman, David Abeel, Samuel Wells Williams Peter Parker, Edwin Stevens and Samuel Brown worked hard to create a base for a large scale missionary enterprise. They first studied the Chinese language. with the language at their command, they translated, they translated tracts, prepared gospel and bible lessons, established schools, operated clinics, distributed books and pamphlets and preached to the Chinese of Canton and Macao. They also set up an English language press and published materials for the Western community of South China and for the American public. The missionaries considered their's to be a 'mission of preparation'.⁽⁴⁾

When war came, in the wake of the Sino-British conflict over opium,

(4) This first phase of the Board's mission is covered in the following: Peter Ward Fay, *The Opium War* (New York, 1976)
John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume Ten, Late Ching 1800-1911 Part 1a* (Cambridge, England, 1978)
Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (London, 1929).
It is examined in some detail in Murray A. Rubinstein, *Zion's Corner* (Dissertation for Ph.D., New York University, 1976).

the missionaries moved to safer quarters at Macao.⁽⁵⁾ They returned to Canton in 1841 before the signing of the Treaty of Nanking.⁽⁶⁾ In the next few years, the missionaries expanded the American Board presence in China by helping to establish mission stations at Foochow, Amoy, Ningpo and Shanghai.⁽⁷⁾ The South China Mission did not expand during this second period in its history. This period, which coincided with the Treaty Port Era (the years 1842 to 1860), was a time of confrontation between Chinese and Western communities. Riots and outbreaks of anti-Western hostility were common.⁽⁸⁾ The South China missionaries continued to work along lines established in the 1830's.⁽⁹⁾ They also lobbied for a Christian opening of China, i. e., a time when missionaries could feel free to rove China at will, spreading the Word. Finally, they operated as China watchers, and kept the Board and the American public aware of conditions in China.

The missionaries kept in close touch with the Board during these years by writing letters, preparing formal reports, keeping personal and institutional records and publishing books, pamphlets and magazines about the China scene. These materials contained information and insights which would be extracted and reworked to form a distinct missionary image of China.⁽¹⁰⁾

(5) Frederick Wells Williams, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams*, Lt. D. (New York, 1889) 118.

(6) Bridgman to Anderson, April 5, 1841 in A.B.C. 16.3.8, Vol. 1a. The South China Mission Correspondence is part of the American Board Collection which is housed at the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. The series which were used in this paper were A.B.C. 16.3.8, Vols. 1, 1a, 2, A.B.C. 16.3.11, and A.B.C. 2.01, Vol. 1-30.

(7) 'Journal of the South China Mission' in A.B.C. 16.3.11. Clifton Jackson Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969) 195-198.

(8) The Sino-Western confrontation is examined in Frederick Wakeman Jr., *Strangers at the Gate* (Berkeley, 1966). The classic work on the Treaty Port Era is John King Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953). The American role in the diplomacy of the period is examined in Te-Kong Tong, *United States Diplomacy in China, 1844-60* (Seattle, 1964).

(9) 'Journal of the South China Mission' in A.B.C. 16.3.11. The Journal is a detailed record of events kept by the members of the South China Mission. It is the best brief account of the mission's history, deserving of editing and publication.

(10) The Board lobbied for Christian rights. The missionaries took an active role in diplomatic affairs. See Williams, *Life and Letters*, cpts. VIII, IX, X. See also Tong, *United States Diplomacy*, cpts. 13-18.

Personal letters from the missionaries to the Board's Foreign Secretary were the most numerous type of communications. The missionaries had been told to send back information. Bridgman, the first American missionary to China was informed that, "It will be desirable that you make as full communications respecting the character, condition, manners, and rites of the people, especially so far as these things are affected by religion".⁽¹¹⁾ He and Abeel, his companion during the first year in China, wrote many letters which gave the Board explicit word pictures of conditions in Canton.⁽¹²⁾ Bridgman spent his next year, 1831, alone. He wrote many long pieces of doubt and depression.⁽¹³⁾ The Board respected him for his honesty but also took advantage of him by publishing these long melancholy passages.⁽¹⁴⁾ In the years that followed he was more reserved in his letters. The later missionaries also wrote home frequently. Some described their day to day lives, so me dealt with their specific activities,⁽¹⁵⁾ while others, such as Stevens and Williams, often wrote about excursions they had gone on and sights they had seen.⁽¹⁶⁾ The letters formed a rich reservoir of material which could be tapped by those interested in China and by those who wished to make a case for further Christian expansion in East Asia.

The missionaries also wrote richly detailed reports. In 1836 they organized a formal mission, elected officers and decided to prepare detailed, carefully

(11) Prudential Committee to Elijah Coleman Bridgman, "Letter of Instruction", A. B. C. 2. 01. See also Eliza Bridgman, *Pioneer of American Missions in China* (New York, 1894) 20-27.

(12) Two such letters were:

Bridgman to Evarts, Oct. 21, 1830, A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vol. 1.

Bridgman to Evarts, Nov. 13, 1830, A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vol. 1.

(13) Bridgman, "Journal", February 25, 1831 in A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vol. 1.

(14) The Board's Annual Report for 1832 contained excerpts from this journal entry.

(15) These letters are to be found in A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vols. 1, 1a, 2. Some examples were:

Bridgman to Anderson, Jan. 17, 1832, A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vol. 1

Williams to Anderson, Feb. 27, 1834, A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vol. 1

Parker to Anderson, June 21, 1836, A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vol. 1

Bridgman to Anderson, Feb. 19, 1864, A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vol. 2

Bonney to Anderson, May 20, 1858, A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vol. 2

(16) Two examples are Stevens to Anderson, Nov. 1835, A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vol. 1. Williams to Anderson, Nov. 29, 1836, A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vol. 1.

South China Mission (Bridgman) to Anderson, April 7, 1836 in A. B. C. 16. 3. 8, Vol. 1,

structured statements which they planned to send to the Board twice a year, in May and September. They then summarized the work of the previous six-month period in a long letter ending each letter with a demand for additional missionaries and more funds.⁽¹⁷⁾ In the 1840's, they decided that the semi-annual meetings were impractical and thus began to hold full scale conclaves only once each year. The meeting was held in September, at the beginning of the trading season. The report was then drafted and sent home to Board headquarters at Boston. These reports reached the United States three months later, in late December.⁽¹⁸⁾ During the 1850's, the missionaries changed their procedures once again. This time they decided to meet in May. The annual report they then prepared at the May meeting reached America in August. It was accompanied by a budget request. The Board thus was able to use the South China Mission's yearly report in preparing its own Annual Report. The mission's new schedule was maintained for the remainder of the decade.⁽¹⁹⁾

The semi-annual and annual reports were valuable documents. They contained descriptions of each type of mission activity and summarized both the mission's accomplishments and problems. They⁽²⁰⁾ also indicated the state of mind of each of the missions' members. Finally, they contained brief descriptions of China and the Chinese and thus gave the Board a sense of what the people were like. They were materials the Board could use for future planning as well as for publicizing the work of the mission.

The missionaries also sent the Board their diaries and journals. Bridgman and Abeel were the first of the journal keepers. Bridgman's contained infor-

was the first of these reports. Other examples include: South China Mission to Anderson, April 24, 1837 in A.B.C. 16.3.8, Vol. 1. South China Mission to Anderson, March 1838 in A.B.C. 16.3.11.

(18) The first of these Annual Reports is Parker to Anderson, September 1, 1846 in A.B.C. 16.3.8, Vol. 2.

(19) The initial end of season Annual Report was Williams to Anderson, June 1, 1855 in A.B.C. 16.3.8, Vol. 2.

(20) One example is the Annual Report for 1849 South China Mission to Anderson, December 1, 1849 in A.B.C. 16.3.8, Vol. 2.

(21) Elijah Coleman Bridgman, "Journal for 1830" in A.B.C. 16.3.8. Vol. 1.

mation on his trip to China and his first years at Canton. Abeel's dealt with his journeys to Southeast Asia. ⁽²²⁾ In the mid-thirties, Stevens, Williams and Parke kept similar day to day records. Stevens' was an account of his expeditions along the China coast. Williams' dealt with his voyage to Japan. ⁽²³⁾ Parker filled his with detailed descriptions of his operations in the ophthalmic clinic in Canton. ⁽²⁴⁾ The missionaries as a body also began a journal for the mission in the mid-thirties and kept it through the next sixty years. ⁽²⁵⁾

The missionaries also provided the Board with published materials which had been printed on the mission's presses at Canton and later at Macao. A number of materials were prepared during these decades. Among them were *A Chinese Christomathy in the Canton Dialect* (Macao, 1844), *Easy Lessons in Chinese* (Macao, 1842) *Chinese Topography* (Macao, 1844), *A Chinese Commercial Guide* (Macao, 1844, and Canton, 1848), and *A Tonic Dictionary in the Canton Dialect* (Canton, 1856). ⁽²⁶⁾ These works were written for the merchants in Canton. Copies of each book were also sent to America. These works thus served to introduce some Americans to Chinese language and literature and to the particulars of the China trade.

The Chinese Repository was the most important published work the missionaries produced in China. Its editor was Bridgman and its publisher was Williams, but other missionaries and laymen contributed articles and information. ⁽²⁷⁾ The first issue of the magazine appeared in 1832 and the last was printed in 1851. Twelve monthly issues were put together each year. During the first two years, the format was rather rigid. Each issue contained specific sections on set topics. Missionary affairs were often focused upon,

(22) David Abeel, "Journal for 1830-31" in A. B. C. 16.3.8, Vol. 1.

(23) Edwin Stevens, "Journal of Expeditions" 1835, 36 in A. B. C. 16.3.8. Vol. 1. Samuel Wells Williams, "Journal of Expedition to Japan" 1837 in 16.3.8. Vol. 1.

(24) Parker's journals were excerpted in George B. Stevens, *The Life, Letters and Journals of th Rev. and Hon. Peter Parker* (Boston, 1896).

(25) South China Mission, "Journal" in A. B. C. 16.3.11.

(26) These titles are listed in Alexander Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant Missions to the Chinese* (Shanghai, 1867) 71, 78-79.

(27) *The Chinese Repository*, 20 volumn (Canton, 1832-51).

though the missionaries had stated the secular nature of the magazine. ⁽²⁸⁾ The situation changed after 1834. A looser format was adopted and the only fixed section was the last one entitled, 'Journal of Occurrences'. Although a wide range of subjects were covered in the magazine, the topic of greatest attention was that of Sino-Western confrontation. Over three hundred twenty articles concerned the diplomatic situation and the problems related to trade. ⁽²⁹⁾ Background articles dealing with such subjects as history, geography, politics and society were also numerous. ⁽³⁰⁾ The missionaries were also interested in the language and the literature of the Chinese and ninety separate articles on the topic were listed in the final index Williams prepared in 1852. ⁽³¹⁾ Religious matters were dealt with at length. Over two hundred forty pieces appeared on subjects such as the medical mission, the book translation effort, the Morrison Education society and Ultra Gangetic missionary enterprise. ⁽³²⁾ Paganism, i. e., the indigenous religious structure was also studied and a variety of articles on Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism were included in the *Repository*.

As has been demonstrated, the missionaries made extensive use of the written medium to communicate with the Board. They wrote the letters and reports to keep the Board informed of their progress and to make the Board aware of the problems they faced. The published material had a wider audience but was also sent to the Board. The missionaries used the print medium to provide their superiors with background material which would help them to understand the full extent of the challenge which China posed. Each missionary had his own individual perception of China, and this perception could be seen in the letters he wrote. The missionary who wished to had the opportunity to articulate his own vision in articles and books. Some did so during this early period. David Abeel, who had his journal published, was one of

(28) *The Chinese Repository*, Vol. 1, 2 (Canton, 1832-33, 33-34).

(29) *The Chinese Repository*, List of Articles, xxv-xxxviii.

(30) *The Chinese Repository*, List of Articles, ix-xix.

(31) *The Chinese Repository*, List of Articles, xxii-xxv.

(32) *The Chinese Repository*, List of Articles, xlii-lii.

these. (33) Others, such as Williams, pre-ferred to wait until his particular vision had crystalized. (34) There were still others who never defined their vision in their lifetimes; it was done by those who memorialized them. Bridgman and Parker were in the latter category. (35) However, most missionaries did not take the time to define clearly their own vision of China. They were too busy dealing with the day to day business of running a mission. The directors of the mission enterprise, the members of the Board's Prudential Committee, undertook that task themselves.

The transmission mechanism was the mails. Missionaries had a number of friends in the Western community who were sympathetic to the cause of Christian expansion. These merchants--D. W. C. Olyphant was the most accommodating (36)-- took the missionaries' letters, journals and publications with them and had them delivered to Board headquarters. The Foreign Secretary wrote his replies and the messages were sent back to China by merchant vessel. The time involved in this exchange of letters was over six months. This timedelay was one cause of mission-Board tensions. (37)

The American Board, as editor of missionary magazines, played the role of 'gatekeeper' in this communications network. (38) The American Board of Commissioner For Foreign Missions was the first American society to fund, organize and direct the work of Protestant mission-aries in pagan lands. In 1810 a group of conservative Congregationalist ministerst had established the

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- (33) David Abeel, *Journal of a Residence in China and the Neighboring Countries From 1829 to 1833*, (New York, 1834). (34) Samuel Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*, two volumes (New York, 1848).
- (35) Eliza Bridgman, *Pioneer of American Missions in China*. George B. Stevens, *The Life, Letters and Journals of Peter Parker*.
- (36) Olyphant was a New York merchant who operated a trading concern in the Western factory area of Canton. He was one of the small group who called upon the American Board to send missionaries to China. He provided passage for Abeel and helped them obtain housing. Over the years he helped the mission in other ways, such as underwriting the cost of the *Chinese Repository*.
- (37) This mission-Board dialogue is examined in Murray A. Rubinstein, "Zion's Corner", *op. cit.* 9.
- (38) George A. Donohue, Phillip J. Tichenor, Clarice N. Olien, "Gatekeeping: Mass Media Systems and Information Control" in F. Gerald Kline, Phillip J. Tichenor, ed., *Current Perspectives*, 41-69.

Baord. They had acted in response to a dramatic letter which had been written by a number of students attending the Andover Seminary. These students had volunteered to serve as missionaries if a coordinating society were set up to support them. The ministers reacted to the students' plea by establishing the Board. ⁽³⁹⁾ Two years later the Board, after the Board had collected sufficient funds, a few of these students were sent abroad as missionaries to India. In 1830, the year the South China Mission began to function, the Board's officers could point with pride to the establishment of mission stations in India, the Sandwich Islands, the Middle East, and among the Cherokee Indians of Georgia. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

The Board was one of those bodies which fit Perry Miller's categorization of bureaucratized benevolence. ⁽⁴¹⁾ In the years from 1830 to 1860, it organized and directed numerous missions. Its China enterprise expanded, as has been pointed out. Stations in other areas were also set up. ⁽⁴²⁾ The Board also raised funds for the support of this far flung benevolent empire. In its first decades, auxiliary societies had been set up and these provided a steady source of funds, year after year. ⁽⁴³⁾ Finally the Board acted as a propagandist or publicist for the cause of missions. It ran a large scale publishing concern which produced upwards of eighty thousand copies of varied types of materials per year. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

The Board was Congregationalist at heart, though Presbyterians and members of Dutch Reformed churches had supported the Board's enterprise during its first three decades. It was theologically conservative and its leaders stressed concepts such as Millenarianism, Active Benevolence and Obedience

(39) James A. Field Jr., *America and the Mediterranean World, 1776-1882* (Princeton, 1969) 84-86.

(40) activities in period are covered in Frederick Jackson Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World*, cpt. II-V.

(41) Perry Mille, *The Life of the Mind in America* (New York, 1965) cpt. II.

(42) Fredrick Jackson Phillips, *Protestant America and the Pagan World* cpt. VI.

(43) Rufus Anderson, *Memorial Volume of the First Fifty Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (Boston, 1861) 178.184.

(44) These figures are an average of the yearly statistics published in the *Missionary Herald* in the period 1830-1860.

to Christ's Last Command. Each of these ideas had been worked [out by Jonathan Edwards and had been further developed by Edward's disciple, Samuel Hopkins. A third generation of New England School theologians, men such as Timothy Dwight of Yale, had helped found the Board. (45) The Board's missionaries believed they were working to bring the Millenium closer by converting the heathen peoples of the non-western world. The Board tried to promote the work of its missionaries by informing its supports in the American churches about the conditions in the outside world and telling them of the efforts of its dedicated, self-sacrificing missionaries. Before the Board's officers could publish their messages, however, they had the task of editing and excerpting volumes of material. In doing so, they acted as gatekeepers.

Gatekeepers is a term first used by Kurt Lewin to describe those editors of midwestern newspers who chose stories for their newspapers from the many items coming into their press rooms on the news service wires. (46) These officers of the Board who edited and prepared the *Missionary Herald* and the other Board publications, served similar functions. They had to weed out and sort this material and fit it into a magazine of about forty pages per monthly issue. They had vast amounts of material at their disposal (As anyone who works with the Board's archives soon discovers.), They wanted to create a climate of interest in China as a mission field, rather than develop one particular and distinctive image of China. They chose material which was colorful and emotion provoking and which often pictured the Chinese at their worst. The suffering and hardship of the perishing heathen was depicted again and again in pages of the *Herald*.

Various types of South China Mission materials were chosen for inclusion in the *Herald*. *The Repository* was often used as a source of articles.

(45) The best introduction to the New England School is in Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, 1972) cpt. 25.

(46) George A. Donohue, Phillip J. Tichenor, Clarice N. Olien, "Gatekeeping" in F. Gerald Kline, Phillip J. Tichenor, ed., *Current Perspectives*, 41-69. Reed H. Blake, Edwin O. Haroldsen, *A Tazonomy of Concepts in Communication*, 109-110.

Bridgman's introductory article from the first issue of the magazine was printed and the *Herald's* editors added their own comments in which they noted the importance of the new Canton based publication. In that same year, an article on geography and a description of Canton were also published in the *Herald*.⁽⁴⁷⁾ In 1834 more articles on geography and others on such topics as Buddhism and Chinese printing⁽⁴⁸⁾ were taken from the missionaries' magazine. The 1835 volume of the *Herald* included two *Repository* articles, one on Robert Morrison, the London Missionary Society missionary to China, and one Chinese grammar. The *Herald's* editors continued to make use of the *Repository* during the last years of the decade, but took fewer and fewer articles with each passing year. The Board and the missionaries fought over the issue of the importance of the *Repository*.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The Prudential Committee demonstrated its disapproval of the missionaries' position by refusing to publish *Repository* articles. It turned instead to the unpublished materials the missionaries sent home -- the journals, personal letters and formal reports.

The Board-mission dispute over the *Repository* had begun a few years after publication of the magazine had begun. The Board felt that Bridgman was spending too much of his time editing and writing for the magazine. They suggested he devote effort on the *Repository*. He replied by defending the magazine and his role in its publication. He argued that his time on the magazine was well spent. The debate continued for the next few years, and the tone of the missionary-Board dialogue grew harsher. The Board finally got back at Bridgman by relying less on the *Repository* and more on the unpublished materials as has been mentioned. This an example of how Mission-Board tensions were reflected in the *Herald's* editors' choice of materials to be reprinted.

Journals had been used since the early 1830's. In 1832, parts of Abeel's

(47) *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 29 (1833) 72-74, 144-45.

(48) *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 30 (1834) 189-91, 234-37.

(49) Murray A. Rubinstein, *Zion's Cove* pt. 9, 10.

journal and passages from Bridgman's diary had been published.⁽⁵⁰⁾ In the next few years, the journals written by Williams, Stevens, Tracey and Parker were also used. Some of these gave insight into the day to day life of the missionaries at Canton and Macao.⁽⁵¹⁾ Others gave the readers an idea of the dangers and excitement involved in participating in book distributions.⁽⁵²⁾ In the 1840's and 50's other journals were edited for the *Herald*.⁽⁵³⁾ The journals were used to present detailed pictures of people, places and events.

The missionaries' letters also appeared in the Board's magazine. The formal letters were particularly valuable because of their standardized formats and their comprehensive coverage of the mission's activities. A semi-annual report first appeared in the May, 1838, issue of the *Herald*.⁽⁵⁴⁾ *The Herald* for March of 1840, contained another such report, one which had been written in the first months of the opium crisis.⁽⁵⁵⁾ During the war years, the editors made use of the letters of individual missionaries to give their readership a feel for the events.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The more formal letters were relied upon again after the war. Examples are a Williams authored report which was included May, 1845 *Herald*, a Bridgman report published in January of 1847, and a report on missionary efforts during the Taiping Rebellion which was printed in the December, 1857 *Herald*.⁽⁵⁷⁾

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- (50) Bridgman, "Journal" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 28 (1832) 137-39, 205-206. Abeel, "Journal" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 28 (1832) 68-71.
- (51) Williams, "Journal" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 32 (1836) 202-203. Parker, "Journal" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 32 (1836) 381-383.
- (52) Tracey, "Journal" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 31 (1835) 67-70. Stevens, "Journal" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 32 (1836) 57-59.
- (53) One example: Abeel, "Journal" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 41 (1845) 87-89.
- (54) South China Mission, "Semi-Annual Report" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 34 (1838) 169-71.
- (55) South China Mission, "Semi-Annual Report" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 36 (1840) 81-82.
- (56) For example:
Bridgman, "Letter" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 37 (1841) 471-73.
Bridgman, "Letter" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 39 (1843) 119-20.
Pohlman, "Letter" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 41 (1845) 52-53.
- (57) Williams, "South China Mission Report" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 41 (1845) 155-57.
Williams, "South China Mission Report" in *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 53 (1857) 403.

The *Herald's* editors chose mission materials carefully. They wished to demonstrate certain themes, such as the unusual mix of degradation and enlightenment which the missionaries found in China. They wished to defend the use of military force against a closed minded and despotic heathen state. They wished to show that the Chinese were capable of learning and would accept the word of Christ if the message were announced clearly and with great frequency. They also wished to show that the missionaries were flexible enough to use a variety of methods in their enterprise. No one image of China emerged in the pages of the *Herald*. Instead, a sort of mosaic was created out of the scattered bits and pieces of the missionaries' writings and publications. The vehicle the message to the protestant lay leadership and to the public they represented was the *Missionary Herald*. The *Herald's* first incarnation was *Panaplist*. The *Panaplist* became the *Panaplist/Missionary Herald* in the 1820's. During the period under study, twenty-two thousand copies of the *Herald* were distributed each year. The *Herald* averaged about four hundred fifty pages per year over this span. In the first fifteen years, from 1830 to 1845, each yearly volume contained four hundred eighty pages, while in the second fifteen years, from 1846 to 1860, the number of pages per yearly volume dropped to about four hundred.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Changes in layout of the magazine allowed for reductions in the actual number of pages, though the content seemed to have increased with the slightly revised format.

The magazine's format remained little changed from year to year. The first and longest section of each issue contained reports from the various mission fields. Letters, reports and journals from many mission stations were used in this section. The second section was devoted to domestic matters. A third section contained information about the work of other mission societies, while a fourth was given over to brief notices and snippets of information about the missions. The fifth section was a listing of contri-

(58) The averages for pages per volume was arrived at after page counts and tabulations conducted during a study of *The Missionary Herald*, for the years 1830-60.

butors to the Board for a given month. Next to each name was a figure of what the individual or the group had given. The Board used this fifth section to give recognition to those who actively supported the cause of missions. This then was the *Herald* as it appeared to a reader in the 1830's, 1840's or 1840's or 1850's.⁽⁵⁹⁾ It was, in its own way, an average reader's window to a world he probably never saw.

The missionaries and the Board had other ways of reaching their public. Thus far only the written medium has been examined. Other networks linking missionary and home public were also developed. These other networks involved the use of the spoken word. They linked preacher with congregation and lecturer with his assembled audience. Missionaries often returned to the United States. Some came back to retire from their field, while others came to recuperate from serious illness. One group, including such men as Williams, Bridgman and Parker, simply wanted to take a much needed furlough. The reasons for the return to American shores may have differed, but each man soon found he had the opportunity to speak directly to an American audience and many found that were in demand as speakers. The furloughs of two members of the South China Mission will be examined to demonstrate this interpersonal network.

Peter Parker returned to the United States in December of 1840 and went back to South China in the fall of 1841. He spent the months of his furlough in almost ceaseless activity. Three days after he landed in New York, he spoke at the Tabernacle Church. Edward V. Gulick, Parker's modern biographer, noted that Parker, ".....was chagrined to find that he spoke poorly" and suggests that the missionary ".....was undoubtedly still groping for a readjustment to America" and further suggests that, "his culture shock must have been accompanied and compounded by nervousness over the new

(59) This is the format of a typical issue of the *Herald*. Each yearly volume had two special issues. In the January issue there was a review of each mission station. In the November issue was an account of the proceedings of the Board's Annual Meeting.

le of itinerant propagandist".⁽⁶⁰⁾ In the months that followed, he conquered his nervousness, one may assume, and spoke before groups of clergy and friends in New Haven, before a congregation Washington, D.C., and before members of the Senate and the House in the of the Congress. Early the next year, he went on a series of short engagements in Philadelphia, New York and New Brunswick. He married in late March. His honeymoon was spent on the road and his new wife had to be content to listen to her husband talk about China in such cities and towns as New Haven, Springfield and Framingham. One of his most impressive performances was before the Medical Association of Boston where he spoke at a heavily attended special meeting.⁽⁶¹⁾ His next months were spent in London and when he returned to the United States, he was reunited with his bride and soon thereafter arranged passage to China. He had made his fellow Americans aware of China. He also made them aware of the work of the mission, particularly the medical effort.

Smuel Wells Williams left China in late 1844 and spent the better part of the next year making his way slowly toward Europe and America. For the adventurous Williams, this was a grand time and his letters to family and friends reflected his sense of wonder and excitement.⁽⁶²⁾ He reached New York in October of 1845 and soon found that he was the center of attention, as had been his friend Parker before him. He spent the next year travelling through the states of the northeast and the midwest. He found that people wished to hear him speak and soon had organized speaking tours which took him to many cities. Williams was a stickler for detail and a very parsimonious soul. His personal account book for the years 1844 to 1848 reveal this side of him and also provide information about his itinerary during his speaking

(60) Edward V. Gulick, *Peter Parker and the Opening of China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1973) 96.

(61) *Ibid.*, 97-101. Also see George F. Stevens, *The Life, Letters and Journals of Peter Parker*, cpt.

(62) Samuel Wells Williams Frederick Williams, March 10, 1845 in Folder 1845, Box 1, Williams Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Sterling Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. Samuel Wells to Bridgman, March 12, 1845, Folder 1845, Box 1, Williams Family Papers.

tours. In early 1846 he travelled to his family home at Utica and then made visits to Cleveland, Oberlin, Buffalo, Rochester, Geneva and Rome. Later in the year he visited New York City, Washington, D. C. and Plattsburg, New York⁽⁶³⁾ His son and biographer, Frederick Wells Williams, talked about his father's tours. It was his opinion that, "their success was considerable, owing both to his extended and accurate knowledge of the subject and the general interest which the recent war and opening of the country had excited in the minds of all intelligent persons".⁽⁶⁴⁾ A son is not an unbiased observer, especially a son who succeeds his father as professor of Chinese studies at a major university, but there is some evidence to support Frederick Wells' assertion. A letter written to Samuel Wells Williams by a number of prominent citizens of the City of Rochester demonstrates the missionary had created.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Williams' furlough had an interesting conclusion. The lectures Williams wrote were so well organized that the missionary printer and his associates thought they could be easily turned into a valuable book. Williams' magnum opus, *The Middle Kingdom*, became a best-seller work generally recognized as the most influential text written on China during the Nineteenth Century.⁽⁶⁷⁾ In this instance the spoken work became the written word, and even more Americans were given the opportunity to learn about China.

But just what was the missionary/Board image of China? There was no single image, for each missionary had his own vision of China. It was this vision which was conveyed in his letters and in his lectures. However, a

(63) Samuel Wells Williams, "Account Book for Expense" 1844-48 in Box 22, Williams Family Papers.

(64) Frederick Wells Williams, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams*, 146-47.

(65) Citizens of Rochester to Williams, March 1846, in Folder 1846 Box 1, Williams Family Papers.

(66) Frederick Wells Williams, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams*, 155-60. The details of the writing and publication of *The Middle Kingdom* are contained in Folder 3847, Box 1 and Folder 1848, Box 1, Williams Family Papers.

(67) William J. Brinker, "Commerce, Culture and Horticulture: The Beginnings of Sino-American Cultural Relations" in Thomas H. Etzold, ed., *Aspects of Sino-American Relations Since 1784* (New York, 1978) 13-14.

composite image may be constructed if we remain aware of its arbitrary and rather tentative nature.

China was described as a beautiful land which had been despoiled by its inhabitants. The countryside was scenic and sometimes spectacular. The cities and the villages were just the opposite. The villages were collections of filthy hovels. The cities were decaying areas with walled inner centers and sprawling outlying suburbs. The city streets were winding and narrow; a human flood flowed through them. The missionaries, it seems, could never become comfortable with the sheer numbers of Chinese and their use of the flood metaphor indicated their discomfort.

The Chinese were depicted as a superior type of Perishing Heathen. Missionaries wrote about the Chinese love of education, their concern for the family, their belief in the essential goodness of man, and their stress on morality and proper conduct. These American Protestants then went on to present the negative side of the ledger. The Chinese were notorious gamblers, who destroyed their families with their love of games of chance. They were a lascivious, depraved people who treated their womenfolk with contempt. They acted in a way to make a mockery of their high minded morality.

These flaws in the Chinese character stemmed from the hollow nature of Chinese religion. There was no belief in God. There could be no morality. As might be expected, the religious structures the Chinese had developed came in for the harshest criticism. Confucianism was an empty humanism. Taoism was a form of philosophical gibberish which had degenerated into superstitious nonsense. Buddhism was an imported, effete form of paganism. What was even worse, as the missionaries saw it, the Chinese could not even decide what they were for they combined the three religions into one amalgam which they called the San Jyan (三教), the Three Teachings.

This then was the missionaries' China -- a beautiful land of stinking, crowded cities which was populated by learned but corrupt and degenerate heathens.

But what of the missionaries' audience? How did the messages the missionaries and the Board transmitted affect the American public's attitudes towards China? In this paper I have mapped out and described all the elements in two interrelated communications system but one, the receiver of those messages. Now is the time to deal with the receiver and take up the question of effect.

The audience itself was the American public, but there were intermediary groups, one composed of church leaders, and then another larger group of church members. In Elmo Roper's schema of concentric circles of influence, the church leaders would be categorized as the, lesser disseminators' while their congregants would be termed 'participating citizens'. Beyond them lay the outermost circle of the 'politically inert'.⁽⁶⁸⁾ The American public had been attuned to religious currents and had been and was constantly being affected by those waves of religiosity usually associated with the Second Great Awakening. Ray Allen Billington has shown how this public was reached during the decades of the Protestant Crusade.⁽⁶⁹⁾ The missionary effort was made easier because its audience had been conditioned by this crusade, a crusade which manifested itself in anti-Catholic and anti-foreign outbreaks. To say that the shift in American attitudes toward China was simply side effect of the Protestant Crusade still does not answer the questions of why attitudes changed or how they changed, however.

The answer I propose may be charted as follows: The missionaries sent the Board volumes of material which contained multiple images of China. The Board reviewed that material and extrapolated more defined images of China from it. They presented this material to the church leaders, the 'lesser disseminators and the 'participating citizens' in the pages of the *Missionary Herald*. In doing so, they created an interest in missions and in China as a field. They also convinced their readers (or at least those who could be convinced by the opinions of distinguished clergy) that China was a rather

(68) Elmo Roper, Forward, in Elihu Katz, Paul F. Lazarfeld, *Personal Influence* (Glencoe, Illinois, 1955) xvii-xix.

(69) Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade* (New York, 1938)

terrible place populated by intelligent, but morally corrupt 'perishing heaten'. When the missionaries came home they spoke to the congregations who had read about China. They talked about the land, the government, the people. They discussed language, culture and religion. They also tried to make a case for expansion of the mission effort. Thus, Parker talked at length about medical missions while Williams discussed the work of the mission press in what must have been exhausting detail. The sermons they preached and the lectures they gave contained a message which reinforced the message conveyed in the *Missionary Herald* and the *Chinese Repository*. The image of China was thus conveyed by two means, the written word and the spoken word. Joseph T. Klapper discussed this use of different media and it was his conclusion that the use of one type of media, reinforced by face to face contact, did prove to have a decided effect upon the target audience. His comments were directed toward modern situations but are applicable to the historical circumstances under discussion. ⁽⁷⁰⁾ Missionary furloughs provide a clear example of the media reinforcement process.

This then is the hypothesis-- that the missionary image did affect a change in American attitudes but only when the print media image was reinforced by a verbal picture created by lecturing or sermonizing missionaries home on leave. These are two types of evidence which can be brought to bear in support of this thesis. One is literary evidence, letters and journals which describe audience response or reaction. The letter from the citizens of Rochester to Samuel Wells Williams is one example. The good citizens wrote, "Believing that the lectures would be both interesting and profitable to our fellow citizens we would respectfully request that you deliver the same course in Rochester". ⁽⁷¹⁾ A letter from Caleb Cushing, the American diplomat who negotiated the Treaty of Wanghia was of a similar nature. Cushing commended Williams on his decision to engage in a lecture tour and assured him of the

(70) Joseph T. Klapper, *The Effects of Communication*, 106-112.

(71) Citizens of Rochester to Williams, March 1846, in Folder 1846 Box 1, Williams Family Papers.

value of the effort. ⁽⁷²⁾ Cushing and the good citizens of Rochester were 'lesser disseminators' who recognized the value of an expert delivering informative lectures and who felt that public opinion could be influenced by such speeches. A second type of evidence is the contribution list included in each issue of the *Missionary Herald*. A preliminary study of contributions lists extracted from the *Herald* for the period 1830 to 1860 indicates that in those months, when the missionaries were in America, contributions from the cities visited did increase. ⁽⁷³⁾ Letters from the missionaries to the Board during this period and from missionaries to friends and congregants at home supports this financial evidence. ⁽⁷⁴⁾ Edward V. Gulick's analysis of Parker's lectures focused upon missions but supports my argument about the impact of the speeches. He stated that "Their (the American public's) reception of his message also says a good deal about them. Whereas the very idea of missions had been repugnant to Americans of an earlier generation, missions were now widely acceptable.....". ⁽⁷⁵⁾ One might add that missions were acceptable because the American public had been familiarized with mission work through such publications as the *Herald* and that this familiarization was carried a step further when the missionaries came home to address their public.

In the end, I return to the beginning. American attitudes did undergo a change. The change occurred because Americans came to accept the missionary image of China, an image conveyed in Board and mission publications and an image restated and amplified by missionaries when they returned home.

(72) Caleb Cushing to Williams, January 26, 1847 (#1) Box 1, Williams Family Papers.

(73) Contributions, *The Missionary Herald*, Vol 26-56 (1830-60).

(74) For example:

Williams James Danna to Williams, Oct. 10, 1846, in Folder 1846 Box 1, Williams Family Papers.

Williams to Mrs. Harriet Wood, Aug. 10, 1844, Folder 1844, Box 1

(75) Edward V. Gulick, *Peter Parker*, 101-102.