H. H. Kung (1880–1967) and Multiple Religious Belonging: Christian–Confucian–Buddhist Interfaith Encounters in the Early Twentieth Century

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ABSTRACT

H. H. Kung (1880–1967) is well known as a politician and financier who held prominent offices in Republican Era China (1911–1949). This paper argues that he is also an early example of what Peter Phan has called multiple religious belonging, well before theologians developed the category in a more open, post–Vatican-II era.

First, this paper considers Kung's Christian influences. Kung encountered Oberlin missionaries in Shanxi Province at the end of the nineteenth century. He saw beloved Christian friends killed during the anti-foreign, anti-imperial, anti-Christian actions of the Boxer Rebellion. As an act of love for his friends, Kung journeyed to Oberlin to pursue further studies and to console the families of the departed. Kung brought his education to bear on his later years in leadership within the Republican government, as well as in his efforts with Ming Hsien, an Oberlin-affiliated Christian liberal arts school in Shanxi.

Second, this paper considers Kung's legacy as a proud bloodline descendant of Confucius and an upholder of Confucian institutions. Kung's embrace of Confucian values can be seen in how conceptions of family inform his thinking and action, as well as in his support for the Temple of Confucius in Qufu in the late 1920s. I argue that Kung's Confucianism was a second aspect of his multiple religious identity.

Third, this paper considers Kung's gifts of Buddhist material culture to Oberlin College. Kung promoted Asian culture abroad by cultivating ties to his alma mater. Kung gifted the College a Buddhist temple bell in 1929, and also supported the erection of a replica Buddhist temple in the 1940s. Tracking the legacies of the Buddhist bell and temple reveals a reception history of Buddhism in the United States, in a time of incipient religious pluralism. This paper suggests that Kung's quiet support of Buddhist material culture abroad should be read as a further prong of Kung's multiple religious belonging.

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The paper concludes by considering the importance of viewing other Republican-era thinkers in China through the lens of multiple religious belonging. This is significant as a matter of political theology and reminds us of the connected histories between Asia, North America, and elsewhere.

Keywords: H. H. Kung (Kong Xiang Xi), Republican Era China, multiple religious belonging, interreligious dialogue, political theology, connected histories

INTRODUCTION: H. H. KUNG AND MULTIPLE RELIGIOUS BELONGING

H. H. Kung (1880–1967)—Kung Hsiang Hsi (孔祥熙, Kong Xiang Xi in today's *pinyin* romanization)[1] is well-known as a politician and financier who held prominent offices during the Republican era in China. Kung interfaced with many of the most prominent figures of his time and place: Sun Yat Sen and Chiang Kai Shek, to name two prominent examples, whom he also claimed as brothers-in-law through marriage to the three Soong sisters. Sun Yat Sen is remembered as the first president of the Republic of China, a revolutionary who, along with Kung, participated in the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911. Chiang Kai Shek was Sun's successor and is claimed as the founding father of modern Taiwan.

Less well known are Kung's contributions to interreligious or interfaith encounter.[2] Today, the importance of interfaith dialogue in a religiously plural world is widely accepted, at least among scholars of religion and theology. This paper revisits Kung's story to see the important example he set in the early twentieth century for what interfaith encounter could look like. Kung's example is especially noteworthy when considered in the context of his time and place, which was an era well before the more open atmosphere of Vatican II—indeed, an era during which non-Christian peoples were routinely either pitied or denounced as "heathen." This paper argues that Kung's interfaith efforts were so deep and involved that they qualify as an early example of what Peter Phan has called multiple religious belonging.[3]

Phan's theology of multiple religious belonging is an important contribution to interfaith dialogue in a religiously plural world. Phan, a Vietnamese-born American Catholic theologian, reckons with the history of the Christian mission in Asia, writing that "in our time we need a new church and a new way of being church" —not the "civilizing" mission that assumes the superiority of the Christian church, but a "church willing to empty itself of its own cultural traditions" and that can learn from the "treasures" of others.[4] Phan's distinctive position is that "a person need not and must not renounce his or her cultural identity and traditions upon becoming a Christian."[5] In other words, upon conversion, one need not and indeed *must not* renounce wholesale the ideas and practices of one's past. Rather, one can and should theologically integrate or make coherent the various ideas and practices one encounters—even those learned from someone outside of one's community of birth or belonging.

It is to be acknowledged that the work of multiple religious belonging is demanding, in a way that goes beyond the scope of traditional understandings of interfaith or interreligious dialogue. As Phan writes, interfaith dialogue, as it has traditionally

been practiced, emphasizes that participants stay rooted within their own distinct tradition, carefully preserving differences even as journeys of crossing over into other traditions occur. In contrast, Phan writes:

> multiple religious belonging or hyphenated religious identity refers to the fact that some Christians believe that it is possible and even necessary not only to accept in theory certain doctrines or practices of other religions and to incorporate them, perhaps in modified form, into Christianity, but *also to adopt and live in their personal lives the beliefs, moral rules, rituals, and monastic practices of religious traditions other than Christianity, perhaps even in the midst of the community of the devotees of other religions*.[6]

This paper considers H. H. Kung's life as an early or proto-example of multiple religious belonging, well before the emergence of this category in theological literature. Such an argument requires a foray into some aspects of Kung's life and formation. As we will see, Kung learned and took into consideration Christian, Confucian, and Buddhist ideas, practices, norms, and rituals, living as Phan writes "in the midst" of such communities of devotees.

First, I consider how Kung was formed by Christian missionaries in China at the end of the nineteenth century. He saw some of his beloved Christian friends killed during the anti-foreign, anti-imperial, anti-Christian actions of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. Kung's instructors were missionaries affiliated with Oberlin College, and in loyalty to them, as an expression of love, he journeyed with his friend Fei Chi Hao (whose sister and parents were killed as Chinese Christians)[7] to Oberlin, Ohio to pursue further studies, and to console the families of those whose lives were lost. These were formative years for Kung, and his uptake of democratic and republican ideas happened here, during his education in North America, where he pursued studies in politics and economics with the support of his missionary friends. This was an education that he brought back to the development of a Christian liberal arts school in his native Shanxi province, and that he took into his later years in leadership in the Chinese Republican government.

Importantly, however, Kung should not be thought of as strictly Christian in identity. Kung himself, as well as his biographers, repeatedly emphasized the fact that he was a direct bloodline descendent of Confucius—a descendent who also revered his ancestor and patriarch. Kung's practices of ancestor respect are in continuity with the Confucian social norms and mores of his time and place. In addition to this acceptance of ancestor reverence, Kung's advocacy of Confucianism can be seen in his defense of Confucian institutions, including the main Confucian temple and ancestral estate in the city of Qufu (曲阜) in China's Shandong (山東) Province, and in his support of the commemoration of Confucius in response to an anti-Confucian faction of the republican government. These aspects of Kung's institutional Confucianism are significant. But an equally significant indicator of Kung's Confucianism—and harder to see, because of how implicit it is—is Kung's lived experience of family formation, which I suggest should be read as a further aspect of his Confucian sensibilities.

The theoretical stakes of making Kung's Confucianism clear can be seen when we consider how easy it is to mistake Kung as only, purely, and strictly a Christian, if one assumes an exclusivist approach to religion. Phan recognizes that his theology of multiple religious belonging is constrastive with exclusivist approaches to theology and religion, which understand a single religious tradition as the absolute, true way of approaching the Good. However, exclusivist approaches are not the only way to hold religious commitments.[8] Such absolutist and exclusivist commitments—while common in some branches of Christianity—are not necessary to religious commitment in general, and they are not found in many religious traditions. For instance, Phan makes the empirical point that "in Asian countries, such as China . . . multiple religious belonging is the rule rather than the exception, at least on the popular level."[9] This claim tracks with descriptive stories and anecdotes provided by scholars of Asian religious and intellectual traditions.[10] There are also many normative arguments for why we should hold a more pluralist approach to religious commitment, rather than an exclusivist approach—the elaboration of which is beyond the scope of this immediate work.[11]

I take the claim of multiple religious belonging further and suggest that Kung was also quietly accepting of Buddhist rituals and ideas, which his extended clan in Shanxi Province had practiced for many generations in combination with Confucianism.[12] Kung's own positive view of Buddhist tradition can be seen in his gift of a Buddhist temple bell to Oberlin College in the late 1920s. Kung also supported the erection of a Buddhist temple building at Oberlin College in the 1940s, proposed as a site for an incipient department of Asian Studies. Tracking the legacies of the Buddhist bell and the Buddhist temple—noting what people thought of them and how they spoke of them—will be of interest as a part of the reception history of Buddhism and religious pluralism in the United States. I believe they also demonstrate Kung's multiple religious identity—albeit quietly, at least in part because the Christian audience to whom he was presenting the gift did not hold the same kind of pluralistic, multiple approach to religion that this paper suggests Kung held. Rather, American theology of religion at the time held, in "exclusivist" or perhaps "exclusively inclusive" fashion, that Christianity was the "fulfillment" of all religious forms that had come before. On this view, Christianity supersedes all other religious traditions.

In the concluding remarks, I consider further why we should care that Kung is presented as someone with a hyphenated religious identity, rather than as someone espousing a strict exclusivist worldview. Kung's thoughtful and active life gives us lessons in multiple religious belonging, in how to theologically integrate new ideas and practices in deep interreligious encounter with friends, who were first strangers. The conclusion also draws out how religious ideas, with multiple provenances, featured in the political work of Kung and his compatriots, such that we can talk about the politics of the Republican era in China as a kind of operative political theology. This political theology is demonstrative of the connected histories between Asia, North America, and elsewhere.

H. H. KUNG AND THE CHRISTIAN OBERLIN MISSIONARIES IN SHANXI, CHINA

The Christian mission in China, and globally, is a complex and fraught enterprise. There is no denying the idealism in the aspirations of many of these missionaries, who were called to serve in lands far from their loved ones, sometimes at tremendous personal sacrifice. There is also no denying the complexity and difficulties in understanding that come alongside such vastly cross-cultural encounters. Some of these nineteenth-century encounters were explicitly hierarchical: one might say—missiology as Christian supremacy. This is the context in which Kung first encountered his Christian teachers.

We can acknowledge some of the more fraught aspects first, for this is indeed a difficult history. The letters of missionaries home are rife with expressions of a cultural or worldview hierarchy with Christianity at the top. For instance, Charles Price, a member of the Oberlin Band of missionaries present in Shanxi Province, China in the 1880s–1890s—the group with which Kung was in contact—laments that the Chinese people he encounters "can't grasp the idea of self sacrifice for the sake of Christ."[13] His wife and fellow missionary, Eva Jane Price, laments that the Chinese "cannot read and know so very little of the world around them and no knowledge of God or hope for a future life."[14] Talk of the Chinese being "heathen" and "idolatrous" abounds.[15]

This language can be seen vividly in a letter home to Des Moines, Iowa, in which Eva Price relates her own conceptual self-understanding of her mission work in China:

> The Kingdom of God is to prevail over all this heathen idolatrous nation whether it come peacefully or by bloodshed. Christ came not to bring peace but the sword, for He could see that this was the only possible way to overcome the prince of this world. The devil is to make a mighty struggle against the work of the Holy Spirit in China, and we must be willing to go where duty calls even if it means suffering and danger if not death. Can we hope for the gospel to be established in the very stronghold of Satan and he leave anything undone to prevent it? The gospel has had to find its way into other places through the martyred bodies of many, why not in China?[16]

Here we can hear Eva Jane Price self-reflexively commenting on her own place in a grand struggle of the Christian Kingdom of God, pitched against the heathen and Satanic devil—in a land that is the "very stronghold of Satan." These missionaries understand their purpose as that of converting the benighted, ignorant people of a "heathen" land into the Christian faith. Confessing faith in a Christian God and Father is central to this work. As Eva Price writes: "how like a mountain the work in a heathen land is with this difficult language and the dark superstitions and dense ignorance of the people who never heard of there being a true God much less a loving heavenly Father."[17] This is not a time of pluralism and the coexistence of ideas. Christian teachings are the one and the true (in Eva Price's words, there is a "One True and Living God").[18] Other teachings are heathen, idolatrous, and false.

These proclamations, though they ring quite offensively in some modern ears, perhaps belie a kinder sort of practical coexistence in Shanxi. The Oberlin missionaries in China, in addition to their dogmatics (their metaphysical preaching and evangelizing), did important social and humanitarian work. They provided medical care to the sick and needy, to the extent that they could give the limited resources that they themselves had. They helped to run opium refuges in which people who were addicted to opium could recover from their affliction, and perhaps even learn to break their habit.[19] Importantly to our story, the Oberlin missionaries also ran schools and educational centers. These centers were places where young children could be sent for schooling. Here, our young protagonist Kung enters the scene.

H. H. Kung, born in 1880 and bereft of a mother at the tender age of eight, came to the Oberlin missionary school in the Taigu district of Shanxi province, where he met the Oberlin missionary Alice Moon Williams in 1891.[20] There, H. H. Kung received his education (we might think, his secondary or "high school" education) until 1899. The Christian aspects of Kung's formation occurred most primally in this time and place, as an important part of who Kung became.

On all accounts, H. H. Kung developed deep attachments with his Oberlin missionary friends and teachers. The missionaries first helped him in a medical way. Different accounts say that the missionaries helped to remove either a tumor under his jaw,[21] or perhaps "persistent boils on his body."[22] The mission (the Williams family) also helped H. H. Kung to prevent his father from selling his sister into marriage with an opium addict, for the sum of $50 (denominated in a mid-1890s dollar).[23] Kung's sister came to live with the Williams family in their compound, where she was persuaded by progressive missionary ideas such as the unbinding of feet.[24] Kung was particularly close to Rowena Bird, who writes home in the anxious days before the Boxer massacres and her death, of his comfort to her in this time.[25] Alice Moon Williams, who was not in China at the time of the uprising and who was therefore spared the fatal moment of unrest, says that during the uprisings H. H. Kung "kept watch night after night at the front gate of the compound in order to give warning in case the Boxers should appear – this at great personal risk."[26] H. H. Kung was forcefully detained by family during the height of the troubles in his family compound, and in this way was spared (unable to participate in) the deaths that awaited the other Christians—and this reportedly against his will.[27]

Kung's ongoing relations with the Oberlin Band missionaries were what brought him to Ohio to study at Oberlin College. On all accounts, this was motivated by a great love of the missionaries, especially Rowena Bird. Luella Miner, a missionary and educator in China who knew Kung during this time, writes of his great grief after the Boxer uprisings. Miner reports of Kung:

> For weeks the very mention of Shanxi would bring tears to his eyes. He could not join his college mates in their studies. For the first time in nine months he could gather with God's people for church services, but his despairing question "why?" "What good" still seemed to deafen his ear to every message . . . . One day a teacher who was talking with Hsiang Hsi, trying to help him pick

> up again the broken threads of life with some interest and purpose, asked him if there was any occupation, any object, which could revive in him energy and enthusiasm. His face quivered as he answered, "There is just one thing now that I would like to do; I would like to go to America to try in some way to serve Miss Bird's aged mother and Mrs. Williams, and other friends of those whom I loved. Perhaps in trying to bring comfort to them, a little comfort would come to my own heart.[28]

We might take the motives and sentiments apparent here at face value: that Kung wished to come to Oberlin to be with the families of those whose lives were lost. These were friends he loved dearly. Kung had been entrusted with the last letters, journals, and memories of the departed. He felt it his duty to deliver these items to family members. He felt it important to deliver a recounting of his beloved's last days.

During his years of travel and education, Kung received encouragement and assistance from his Oberlin missionary friends, which solidified his commitment to the Christian tradition through bonds of love and friendship. He received emotional and practical help, like the translation help just mentioned, from Luella Miner. He also received financial support from Miner, from Alice Moon Williams, and many others. Miner writes with solicitude to Kung from Beijing on October 11–13, 1903:

> How much longer do you think your money will last? Will it be enough for you to use until the autumn of 1905? I am sure by that time I can send you enough money for a year with what comes from the book and what I have myself, so I do not want you to be anxious.[29]

Here, Miner is speaking of her book, *Two Heroes of Cathay*, which provides biographical accounts of H. H. Kung and Fei Chi Hao; the proceeds from this book went toward supporting the education of these two young men. Later, during Kung's education at Yale during the 1906–1907 academic year, Alice Moon Williams writes: "I do not want you to feel worried about your finances while there for I shall hold myself responsible for a certain amount while you are in Yale so that you can draw upon that sum whenever you need it." She goes on to give quite detailed practical advice about expenditures and budgeting, before saying: "Of course you have used practically the $300 which Mr. J. gave you. I wish you would write and tell me just how much more you will actually need. Make a careful estimate and then let me know."[30] These letters are full of affection, and are signed "your O. mother" or "your Oberlin mother." By all indications, the love ran very deeply. Alice Williams writes: "You see I am writing to you as I would write to an [sic] own son. I do think so much of you and I do want to help you all that I can." In another letter at around the same time, she says: "Now please do not think that the little I am doing for you troubles me, it does not one little bit because I love you and I love to do it for you."[31] It is notable that Alice Williams' husband George was among those killed in Taigu in 1900.

The obvious thing to say here is that Kung's encounter with Christian missionaries during his secondary school and college years was transformative and formative to his person and character. Kung did not wish to swallow wholesale the norms and practices current in "emic" Chinese society, for instance, norms around the monetary sale of women or people. In other respects, he benefited from certain kinds of specialized knowledge, in the form of the medical knowledge that helped heal his tumor or boil(s). Kung was also the recipient of the modes of progressive or liberal education that the Oberlin missionaries were offering. This was an education he was happy to participate in, and which he continued on his own accord or agency by traveling to Oberlin, Ohio, to study at the college there—this with the emotional and practical support of his Oberlin friends. One thing to think about, H. H. Kung, is that here is a case that shows us why we should be careful *not* to make strict emic-etic divides in thinking about what ideas belong to what people. How do *ideas* or concepts belong, in an exclusive way, to *peoples?* How can *ideas* be demarcated as cultural property? People can and do change their minds or shift their conceptions about what ideas are interesting or right or appropriate to hold in relation to what event or circumstance. Such ideas may be learned from members not of a native, "emic" community.

We can conclude this discussion of Kung's incipient Christianity by revisiting Phan's observations of how multiple religious belonging comes to be in the first place: through a deep encounter with real people, who were first strangers but become friends. As Phan observes,

> By accepting the stranger as a friend, we allow his or her "otherness" to confront us radically, challenging us with stories we have never heard, questions we have never raised, beliefs we have never entertained, and practices we have never imagined. By welcoming and learning to appreciate these new religious realities, we gradually adopt them as our own because our friends have them and share them with us, and thus we begin to acquire, perhaps without being aware of it, multiple religious belonging or double religious identity.[32]

H. H. Kung became friends with the Oberlin missionaries in Shanxi Province. He loved them, and they loved him; all were transformed in that encounter. This is a transformation that occurs quietly, slowly, without dogmatic assertions—perhaps even "without being aware of it."

H. H. KUNG'S CONFUCIAN SOCIAL ETHICS

There is no denying Kung's deeply formative encounter with his Christian friends and teachers. However, we would be remiss to ignore or discount the deeply Confucian social norms of Kung's time and place—many of which Kung embraced and supported. Many detailed things can be said about how Kung supported Confucian ideas and practices, but for our purposes in claiming multiple religious belonging for Kung, just a few examples will suffice.

Figure 1. H. H. Kung (left) and Fei Chi Hao (right) during their college years. Oberlin College, 1905. Oberlin College Archives.

The first thing to say is that Kung was a proud 75th generation descendent of Confucius who took family to be a central social and political institution, a fundamental unit to the ordering of society at large. His status as a bloodline descendent of Confucius was explicitly claimed throughout his life as important to his own sense of

Figure 2. H. H. Kung posing for Eva Oakes' art class. Oberlin College, 1906. Oberlin College Archives.

identity. It was also picked up and repeated by various authors who chronicled his work. As Kung's biographer Yu Liang documents, Kung's branch of House Confucius (the Confucian genealogical bloodline) migrated to Shanxi Province during the Ming dynasty, in the late sixteenth century, where the family set up shop and conducted business affairs.[33] The Kung family practiced Confucian and Buddhist ideas in combination, as was common in this time and place, Buddhism having arrived in China in the early centuries of the common era and having become intertwined with then-indigenous Daoist and Confucian ideas in the centuries after. We will remember, as Sinologists have noted, that ordinary practitioners did not take such commitments to be incompatible. Practicing at multiple temples in the direction of multiple deities, toward different functional ends, was the norm rather than the exception.

Some examples of Kung's Confucian social ethics or Confucian sensibilities will support my claim for Kung's Confucian identity. An early example can be seen in a letter from Kung to Rowena Bird's mother after the Boxer uprising, in which Confucian familial metaphors and notions of familial duty abound. In this letter, dated 1901 from Beijing after Rowena Bird's death, in a young learner's English and with the sympathetic translation help of Luella Miner, Kung writes to Mrs. Bird:

> Often I have desired to write to you, but I could not do it, for whenever I took my pen in hand, sorrow overwhelmed me and I knew not what to write. Still I

Figure 3. Alice Moon Williams with H. H. Kung at Oberlin College, during a groundbreaking ceremony for the temple. The two had a long and warm relationship, starting when Kung was eleven years old, when Williams was a missionary in Shanxi Province. Oberlin College, October 1944. Oberlin College Archives.

> must write a little that you may know that I have not forgotten you who are on the other side. Beloved Madam, although I have not seen you with my own eyes, or spoken to you with my own lips, I look upon you as my own Mother and your image is printed on my heart . . .. I know I am not worthy to hold you as my Mother, and that I am going beyond my proper place, but my dearly loved Miss Bird when on this sorrowful, hateful world, constantly looked on me as a younger brother, so this going beyond my proper place was with her permission.[34]

Here, Kung's conceptions of the world are deeply Confucian, with duties and responsibilities attendant to various social roles and relations. Note his worry about ritual etiquette, or *li* (禮), that "I am going beyond my proper place"—when expressing concern that he might be addressing Mrs. Bird in a way that is not appropriate to their social relations vis-à-vis each other. Nevertheless, he continues onward in addressing Mrs. Bird, because perhaps this "going beyond my proper place was with *her* permission," that is, the permission of the late Rowena Bird, who loved Kung like a brother. Rowena's love would, on this creative projection of Confucian familial

concepts, transform Kung's relation vis-à-vis Mrs. Bird into that of an extended family member, whereby both Rowena and he were Mrs. Bird's children in a more and less literal fashion. Notice as well that Kung opens his very first introduction to Mrs. Bird with this metaphor: at this moment, he has not yet met Mrs. Bird! What I wish to point out here is that the familial network with its attendant roles, duties, and responsibilities is very much present as a set of ideas through which Kung spoke and acted, even as Kung is addressing a non-Confucian, the mother of a beloved Christian friend and neighbor.

There is a second example that supports the claim that Kung did not abandon his Confucian identity, even as he embraced a Christian one. Between 1928 and 1934, Kung gave institutional support to the main temple of Confucius in the city of Qufu, in Shandong Province, when Confucianism came under attack by a republican-minded political movement; that is, when pro-Confucian and anti-Confucian factions battled within the republican Guomingdang (國民黨) party. A bit of context will help us to see why Kung's actions, from his social location, are especially interesting.

In February of 1928, members of the republican-minded Guomingdang abolished the sacrificial rites and rituals of Confucianism.[35] Following this, in April of 1928, youth of the Guomingdang petitioned to revoke the title of the primary male heir of Confucius, the Duke of Yansheng or "Yanshenggong" (衍聖公).[36] This would be an inherited, successionary title, akin in the aspect of bloodline inheritance to the Anglophone "Duke of Cornwall." The Republican youth of the Guomingdang advocated for the abolition of the title and its successionary privileges; for the abolition of Confucian sacrificial rituals; and also for the removal from the Kung ancestral family of land privileges around the main Confucian temple and manor in the city of Qufu.

The broader conceptual significance of what the Guomingdang youth were advocating can be seen if we step back in time and outward in geographic scope to plot the trajectory of what we might call the "Enlightenment Revolutions." We can plot on a timeline the 1776 American Revolution, the 1789 French Revolution, and the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, among others. What these revolutions have in common is the transition from monarchic and kingship structures to presidential and parliamentary modes: A "republican" politics.[37] The republican overthrow of the dynastic Qing in 1911 in China should be considered within this lineage of revolution; indeed, H. H. Kung himself was deeply involved in this moment as a republican political operator, as will be recounted momentarily. The republican youth of the Guomingdang in the late 1920s are involved in this shift as well, and their anti-Confucian stance is to be seen in light of their progressive politics.

What is interesting about H. H. Kung in particular is that as a bloodline descendent of House Confucius, and also as a staunchly republican political operator, Kung would have been pulled in two directions. He would have been sympathetic to republican-era notions of reform, emphasizing French-revolutionary ideals of *liberté* and *égalité*, especially within the family-dynastic structure and around practices of succession and inheritance. But he would also have been interested in Confucian values, its sense of propriety, its rites and rituals, as well as the various interests concerning

the Confucian temple, land, and estate in Qufu that, after all, belonged to an extended clan.

What we see is that Kung advocated for Confucian commemorations, as well as for his clan's property interests, against factions of the Guomingdang that advocated for the abolition of Confucian rites and the removal of the Kung family's land privileges around the Confucius temple and manor.[38] In 1928, in response to anti-Confucian proposals, Kung (then minister of industry within the republican government) advocated for practices honoring Confucius to continue in modified form, including a measure that would commemorate Confucius' birthday along with his teachings. In early 1929, Kung affirmed that descendants of Confucius should be entrusted with the relics and artifacts important to Confucianism; that 40% of the land and estate around the main Confucian temple could be in support of the personal lives of descendants of Confucius, with the remaining 60% dedicated to the conservatorship of Confucian relics, temple and estate; and finally that the question regarding the abolition of the hereditary title of the Duke of Yansheng was to be left open.[39]

In short, H. H. Kung advocated keeping jurisdiction over relics, land, temple, and estate primarily within the Kung family; he supported the commemoration and honoring of Confucius; and he also left open the question of what to do with the hereditary title of the Duke of Yansheng, not responding to calls for the abolition of the hereditary title as anti-Confucian voices had advocated. The details of these judgments reveal the complexity of the shifting conceptual landscape at the time, for Kung did make these proposals with certain republican sensibilities at play; like his brother-in-law Chiang Kai Shek, Kung believed that Confucian and republican doctrines could go together. For the limited purposes of this paper, however, and its claims about Kung's multiple religious belonging, what I wish to point out is simply that Kung was clearly supportive of Confucian ideas, practices, interests, and institutions. This support for Confucian values and interests came alongside a confession of Christianity; he did not see himself as needing to renounce the one for the other.

A final set of reflections might be mentioned that support my claims for Kung's embrace of Confucian social norms. It can be seen that Kung's own family life was Confucian in temperament. Confucianism as it arose in the family-dynastic institutions of Chinese governance is a form of *idealpolitik*, insofar as it values the formation of a particular kind of moral person, a *junzi* (君子), who could participate in an extended bureaucratic apparatus of state and who could ideally remonstrate with the king when necessary, thus fulfilling the role of immanent social critique. Kung's own practices of family formation can be read as a kind of *idealpolitik* of his own time, for he chose to participate in an extended family with deep political values-commitments. The contents of these commitments might be spoken of under the umbrella of "republicanism," and pointed toward a new direction for the political landscape of twentieth-century China.

To see the contours of Kung's familial-political life, we notice that Kung's return to China from North America coincided with the revolutionary, anti-dynastic activities of Sun Yat-Sen in the years between 1907 and 1911. Kung had personally met

Sun Yat-Sen when the latter was traveling through the Cleveland area in 1905, when Kung was still a student at Oberlin.[40] Back in China, Kung participated at a local level in Shanxi Province in the revolutionary activities leading up to the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911. Indeed, his alumni report for an Oberlin catalog in 1958 (47 years after the fact) proudly states his service record as including the role of "Commander of the Peace Preservation Force of Central Shansi Area during the 1911 Revolution."[41] When the dictatorial General Yuan Shikai took over the fledgling government in 1913, the republican movement fled to Japan. Kung was a part of this political exile, serving as secretary of the Y.M.C.A. (a Christian organization) in Tokyo in 1913. Sun Yat-Sen was also in Japan at that time, with Soong Ailing serving as his English-language secretary. Kung married Soong Ailing in 1914; Sun Yat-Sen married a sister, Soong Qingling, in 1915. We can read these marriage announcements as in line with the general contours of Confucian social ethics, the ideologically aligned teaming up to form an extended political family.

This new political family returned to China after the death of Yuan Shikai in 1916 and made renewed efforts at establishing a republican government. Between 1916 and 1918, Kung helped Sun Yat Sen's political movement from Shanxi while under the auspices (cover) of employment at the Oberlin-affiliated Ming Hsien School.[42] Chiang Kai Shek, Sun's political colleague, met the third Soong sister, Soong Meiling, in 1920 and married her in 1927, after the death of Sun Yat Sen. What we should notice, again, in the formation of this political clan is its broadly Confucian social ethics: how family relations emerged out of ideological comradeship. Although these personal details may, on another ideological framing, seem to be simply private decisions, they should not be understood this way in a Confucian social milieu. Seen through the lens of Confucian social ethics, the institution of family is deeply and ineluctably a political unit, indeed the foundational building block of political economic systems and society at large.[43]

H. H. KUNG AND GIFTS OF BUDDHIST MATERIAL CULTURE

We will recall that H. H. Kung's particular branch of the Confucian family tree migrated to the Shanxi area in the Ming dynasty in the late sixteenth century, and was deeply Buddhist as well as Confucian. The intertwining of Buddhist and Confucian practices in this time and place is well-documented, with Sinologists noting the different and overlapping functional purposes with which laypeople went to various temples. It is uncontroversial to say that both Confucian and Buddhist practices resided deep in the marrow of Chinese social and ritual life by the time the Kung family came to Shanxi in the Ming dynasty.

This paper, thus far, has claimed that H. H. Kung should be thought of as an early example of multiple religious belonging, in that he embraced the ideas and practices of Christianity while also supporting the ideas and practices of Confucianism. I should like to make a further claim about Kung to suggest that his sense of multiple religious belonging extended in an integrated way to Buddhism as well as Confucianism. I take as evidence of this his advocacy or promotion of Buddhist material culture,

Figure 4. H. H. Kung walking with Soong Meiling and Chiang Kai Shek at Oberlin-in-Asia. Shanxi, ca. 1936.

which included significant gifts of two material artifacts to Oberlin College: a Buddhist temple bell, gifted by Kung to Oberlin in 1929; and his support of the raising of a replica Buddhist temple at Oberlin in the 1940s. Looking at the reception of these religiously inflected material objects in the United States reveals a discourse of incipient religious pluralism. Significantly, Kung's gifts to Oberlin College and a Western audience were not particularly well received. I'd like to posit a reason for this: that there was friction between an American "exclusivist" approach to religion and the kind of pluralist, multiple-religious-belonging approach that this paper has been arguing Kung exemplifies. In other words, holders of exclusivist or non-multiple approaches to religion may, in part, be responsible for the non-reception of Kung's gifts of Buddhist material culture in the United States.

To tell this story, we'll backtrack to Kung's relationship with his alma mater, Oberlin College. Kung's return to China after his higher education (from Oberlin in 1906 and Yale in 1907, supported, as recounted previously, by Oberlin-affiliated missionaries) involved his taking up a position at a new Christian school of the liberal arts in Shanxi, with the encouragement of then-Oberlin president Henry Churchill King. This school was named Ming Hsien, and it had an explicit and ongoing Oberlin connection. The Oberlin Shansi Memorial Association (hereafter, OSMA) was founded in 1908 in Ohio to support the work of this school, and Oberlin provided financial support for the school from its inception until 1951. Starting in 1919, star graduates of the Ming Hsien school could attend Oberlin College after graduation, and Oberlin College students and faculty showed up at Ming Hsien to teach there.[44]

Figure 5. H. H. Kung with Soong Ailing, of the informally named "Soong Dynasty" of twentieth-century republican politics. 1926. Oberlin College Archives.

By the late 1920s, around the time of the conflicts about the temple of Confucius, H. H. Kung was in a leadership position in the Republican government, having been a witness to Sun Yat-Sen's last will during the time of Sun's death in 1925.[45] The first material artifact H. H. Kung gifted Oberlin was a Buddhist temple bell in 1928–1929, when Kung was serving as minister of industry, labor, and commerce in the republican government.[46] The gift was said to date from the nineteenth century, but was likely created for the purposes of this gift in the 1920s. A main purpose for the gift of this temple bell was the building of relational rapport with Oberlin College, in a way that specifically promoted aspects of Chinese culture abroad, and that cultivated ties with Oberlin.[47]

The second material artifact we can consider is the full-size replica Buddhist temple that found its way to Oberlin College in 1943, with Kung's support. Early steps in this story began at around the same time as the gift of the temple bell, in 1929, so

Figure 6. The temple bell H. H. Kung gifted to Oberlin College in 1929, in its current resting place in the atrium of the Allen Art Museum. Photo by author.

we may think of these two gifts together. How did a full-size Buddhist temple arrive on Oberlin campus?

Let us backtrack to how this replica of a Buddhist temple came to be at all. The building in question is a full-sized replica of a Buddhist building, today called the

Wanfa Guiyi (萬法歸一 meaning: "the myriad dharmas return as one") Hall, located in Chengde (承德), China, a place called Jehol in the early twentieth century, located to the northeast of Beijing in Hebei Province.[48] The tale of this replication begins with Sven Hedin (1865–1952), a Swedish geographer, who came across the temple on his journeys across China.[49] In his narrative, Hedin documents that China's eighteenth-century emperors traveled to the favorable climes of Chengde during the summer, and there built up a Buddhist temple compound. Some of these Chengde temples were themselves replicas, including the building in question here.

The Wanfa Guiyi was a replica of the "monastic citadel" in the Dalai Lama's residence, the Potala Palace in Lhasa;[50] it was ordered built by Emperor Qianlong in 1767–1771, to celebrate the occasion of his 60th and his mother's 80th birthdays. Sven Hedin convinced Vincent Bendix, a Swedish-American industrialist, to fund the construction of a replica of this replica of the "citadel" at the Potala, to display at the 1933–1934 Chicago World Fair. And so, the Chinese architect W. H. Liang joined the project, and eighty-plus local artisans, carpenters, and workers set about the task of constructing this temple in Beijing, with local materials and some materials sourced from North America. In the spring of 1931, 28,000 temple pieces were sent in 173 crates to Chicago for assembly and display at the 1933 World Fair.[51]

How did this extravagantly conceived, industrially funded temple come from Chicago in 1933 to Oberlin College in 1943?[52] Here we can pick up on the life and actions of H. H. Kung and friends. We will see that the Buddhist temple came to Oberlin campus as a matter of institutional memory and purpose. The temple's purposes, in the minds of Oberlin trustees, were to honor China and the Christian

Figure 7. A postcard advertising the "Golden Temple of Jehol" during the 1933 Chicago World Fair. Oberlin College Archives.

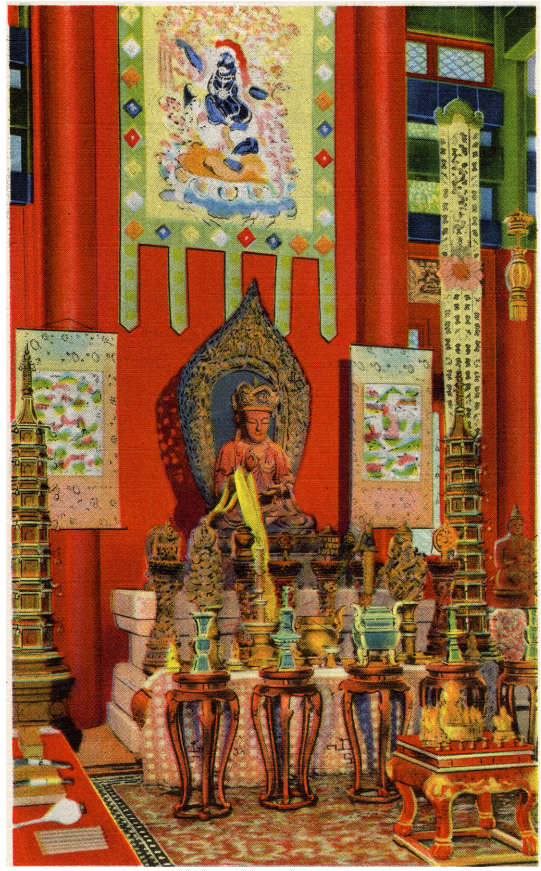

Figure 8. A postcard image of the interior of the temple. Discussion within the Oberlin Shansi Memorial Association (OSMA) in the 1940s agreed that "debased" iconography should be removed before the building was fit for presence at a Christian institution. Oberlin College Archives.

martyrs of the Boxer rebellion.[53] The deliberations leading up to the building's arrival reveal an incipient religious pluralism at Oberlin and more broadly in American society, but a variety of pluralism that differed from the multiple religious belonging approach that I've been suggesting characterizes H. H. Kung.

What follows are some details of the temple's arrival. In 1929, around the same time as the gift of the temple bell, H. H. Kung (then president of Oberlin-in-Shansi, among his many governmental duties) had the idea that there would be "no better symbol of the Oberlin-Shansi enterprise" than that of a "Chinese building" in Oberlin.[54] Then-college president Ernest Wilkins had had this idea independently.[55] By February 1929, Kung had written letters informing an Oberlin-affiliated China missionary Paul Corbin that he and his family would be willing to give "two or three

thousand dollars gold" toward the construction of a "Chinese building" in Oberlin, and would further be willing to fundraise among Chinese graduates of Oberlin College in China. These communications were followed by a visit on October 9, 1930 to Oberlin College by the Shanghai-based American architect Henry Killam Murphy (1877–1954), upon Kung's request, to assess possibilities for siting this building in Oberlin. A December 1930 presentation by Murphy to Oberlin alumni in New York resulted in great enthusiasm for the building. By June of 1931, Kung had committed ten thousand Chinese dollars to this project; a day later, OSMA submitted a request to the Board of Trustees to assign a site on campus to the planned "Shansi Building."[56]

After this moment in 1931, plans for the Shansi building languished for many years. This lull in conversation corresponded to the decade of the Great Depression.[57] The conversation came back online in the early 1940s. At this time, Dr. Louis E. Lord, on behalf of OSMA, made overtures to Vincent Bendix and the Archaeological Trust of Chicago. As a result, Bendix and the Archaeological Trust of Chicago, not knowing what else to do with their extravagant temple, made an offer of the building to Oberlin College. In a letter dated March 23, 1942, on

Figure 9. Plans for the Shansi building by the architect Henry Killam Murphy, 1930, made at H. H. Kung's request. Oberlin College Archives.

letterhead of the National Government of the Republic of China, H. H. Kung writes to Louis Lord that:

> it sounds like a dream come true when you said that Mr. Vincent Bendix thinks very favorably of giving the duplicate building of the Jehol Golden Pavilion and its contents to Oberlin. If this project can be carried out, Oberlin will not only possess a building that represents the finest example of Chinese architecture, but, with Mr. Bendix's fine collection of Chinese art objects, will also have a good start to build up the Art museum. I even think that our aim of making Oberlin one of the Centers of Oriental Studies in America will also be brought nearer by the realization of this project.[58]

Here, we can see quite clearly the long-term, institutional aims of furthering Asian Studies at Oberlin and in the United States, avidly pursued by Louis Lord, H. H. Kung, and their Oberlin friends.

In August 1941 and through July 1943, letters went out seeking opinions about bringing the Hedin/Bendix Golden Temple to Oberlin. These letters, which went to numerous and different factions, are of interest for how they reveal the then-current views about Buddhist material culture. One faction to which letters were sent was the Chinese community in the United States, in a rather admirable mode of consultative friendship, to see if there were objections on religious grounds to the installation of a Buddhist temple on Oberlin's campus. Ernest Wilkins and Louis Lord sent queries around to Chinese friends of Oberlin College to take the temperature and see if "the Chinese might feel it is inappropriate to have here."[59] The responses back were largely favorable to the idea of a temple on campus. For instance, Lin Mousheng of the Chinese News Service in New York approved, claiming that "the Chinese value the Pavilion purely from the architectural point of view. Chinese people are very tolerant in religious matters."[60] Here we can notice Lin's affirmation of the kind of pluralism I've been suggesting is true of Kung: a kind of default openness and tolerance concerning religious difference.

Such sentiments were one coalition of views. There were, of course, reservations and hesitations, even opposition, with theologically exclusivist overtones. A straightforwardly oppositional position was taken by Percy J. Ebbott, who voices his view that "the origin and development of Lamaism and Buddhism are not particularly inspirational or appealing."[61] Others voice more nuanced theological reservations. A central line of worry concerned the fittingness of a Buddhist temple at a Christian college. Dr. Allan B. Cole, Assistant Professor of History, writes to President Wilkins on July 21, 1943, addressing these concerns:

> It would certainly be advisable for the College and the Shansi Memorial Association to negotiate for the privilege of redecorating and refurnishing the interior so as to make the temple a fitting center for Christian education in China and the United States. I think this should be a prerequisite of [sic] acceptance.[62]

In this letter, Cole expresses discomfort at the thought that a Christian educational institution might be influenced by non-Christian religious iconography. Redecorations and refurnishing are "certainly" in order. Cole recommended that "the more debased forms of iconography" be removed—here referring to Buddhist iconography with sexually explicit images. Prior conversations had surfaced a number of objections about a "Lama temple as a seat of Christian activities." In response to these worries, Cole recommended that the structure be called a "Chinese temple" rather than a "Buddhist" or "Lama" temple, so as to emphasize its cultural rather than religious or metaphysical symbolism. Finally, Cole writes about the temple that "it can be emphasized that this is not the original and that Lamaistic rituals have never been practiced within its walls."[63] The idea here is that the symbolism around this structure ought to be disconnected from Buddhist ideas and rituals, in order for it to be made fit for a Christian campus. The presence of an example of *Chinese architecture* was welcome, but it was not to be thought of as "Buddhist" or religious. The point is that to be acceptable at a Christian institution, the temple's Buddhist provenance must be hidden and silenced.

These views are in line with a prior set of deliberations during a June 1943 meeting of OSMA. The conversations conducted during that meeting demonstrate a prevailing current of thought around an incipient religious pluralism. The ways that participants spoke reveal a form of pluralism that kept Christianity at the top, while opening the doors for a partial embrace of other ways and forms.

The OSMA meeting notes of June 1943 reveal a general position that Christianity is a superior, supersessionary religion to other traditions. Dr. Florence Fitch, a professor of philosophy and Biblical literature, puts the point quite clearly that, as a matter of obvious consensus, "Lamaism is a debased form of religion; there is no ground for debate on that point."[64] In other words, whatever interest there may be in Buddhism or "Lamaism," it was not for its theological claims; this was a point of obvious agreement that did not even require deliberation. Dr. Clarence Herbert Hamilton, a Chicago-trained Buddhologist and then the Professor of History and Philosophy of Religion at the Graduate School of Theology at Oberlin, explicitly appealed to a supersessionary Christianity in supporting the presence of the building.[65] As Hamilton says, there is no danger "of compromising Christian influence by utilizing a non-Christian building," and appeals to the updated theological position on pluralism prevalent at the time.

On this theological position, the Christian mission does not seek to eradicate prior forms of a tradition, but rather seeks to supersede them. That is, the so-called recent philosophy of missions of the early 1940s holds that the Christian mission should not seek the "complete displacement of cultural forms rising from old religions," but rather "their purification through contact and penetration with Christian values."[66] Fitch puts the same point slightly differently when she speaks of the missiology of the time, presenting Christianity "as the fulfillment of all that is good in the old, supplementing them with the fuller revelation of the God who has not been without a witness among any people."[67] The thought here is that Christian doctrine *fulfills* older forms. In other words, the form of religious pluralism or ecumenical

spirit prevalent at the time is that prior forms in a religious tradition are acceptable, but they should be re-described in Christian terms. Christianity supersedes or "fulfills" what came before.

This supersessionary theology of pluralism is very different from a theology of multiple religious belonging, such as Peter Phan has articulated. I believe it is also very different from the religious pluralism that H. H. Kung implicitly lived. While there were no explicit descriptions in the consulted archives about how Kung interprets the Buddhist bell and temple he gifted in religious terms, I think that this is a silence we can interpret. The key to interpreting Kung is to see him as embracing multiple, plural modes of acknowledging the good and the true. This is already evidenced by Kung's embrace of both Christianity and Confucianism, about which we have more explicit written documentation. Would Kung have agreed with Dr. Florence Fitch that Buddhism was "debased," or with Dr. Clarence Hamilton that Buddhism needed "purification" through contact with Christian values? I think this is unlikely. I say this even in the absence of a written defense, because a lack of written records can be understood as follows.

H. H. Kung was never forced to articulate a more explicit defense of Buddhism because he did not encounter hard and explicit battle lines on this front. The reason that the archives don't document a clearer response from Kung to the likes of Dr. Fitch and Dr. Hamilton is fairly straightforward: he was not in the same room with Dr. Fitch and Dr. Hamilton at the time the latter two spoke of Buddhism in critical terms. Kung was a benefactor, and not part of the decision-making process from the perspective of the recipients of the gift. Indeed, involving a benefactor in discussions about whether or not a gift ought to be received would be rather socially awkward. Thus, Kung did not see Dr. Cole's recommendations about removing so-called debased iconography. Kung did not hear Percy Ebbot say that Buddhism was "not particularly inspirational." Rather, Kung was based in Asia, very busy with various other entanglements that were more pressing to his own situation. Not occupying the procedural spaces in which he could have made an explicit, verbal defense of Buddhism, Kung therefore left no written trace in the textual record. Note the difference when compared with Kung's explicit verbal defense of Confucianism. On Confucianism-related matters, Kung did occupy an important procedural position, and he also met with a clear anti-Confucian opposition. There was an occasion to leave abundant traces in the textual record in support of Confucianism.

I believe that Catherine Bell's concept of "misrecognition" can further help us here. On Bell's account of social ritual and practice, a defining feature of social life is the way that practices are *misrecognized.* That is, in the dynamic weave and pull of social life, people act in situational, strategic ways that are full of ambiguity. Contexts of social practice (gift-exchange is singled out as a particularly significant example) are "never clear cut but full of indeterminacy, ambiguities, and equivocations."[68] Each actor has a certain view of the way social life is ordered, and each navigates social life as best they can, in furtherance of a world one *could* inhabit.[69] These various views of the social order, however, do not precisely line up. One side says one thing; the other side hears another, and "agreement" occurs with ambiguity as to what is agreed upon.

In the situation under consideration here, one can imagine Kung saying: "Here is a gift." He does not explicitly say: "This gift is to bring you closer as my ally as I navigate a tumultuous political landscape." Given knowledge of his very Christian audience, he also does not say: "This gift is for the purposes of advancing appreciation for Buddhist culture," for he is not trying to proselytize. When Oberlin representatives respond to Kung accepting his gift, Kung might explicitly hear: "Thank you! What a nice gift!" He does not hear the behind-the-scenes argument about the gift's possible religious meanings. The ritual of gift giving comes off successfully, but strategic ambiguity is woven into the texture of the event.[70] It may be, for instance, that in accepting the gift, Oberlin is not agreeing to be political allies with Kung. It would take a further event to test or surface that ambiguity. It may also be that Kung would not agree with the various aspersions cast upon Buddhism. But that, too, would require a further forcing event to surface the need for such a defense.

In any case, the burden of proof would seem to reside with those who wish to cast Kung as exclusively Christian. This is given the evidence for Kung's capacity for multiple religious belonging, as already indicated by his embrace of Confucianism along with Christianity. It is also improbable that Kung would have gifted a Buddhist bell and a Buddhist temple without a broadly positive regard for the significance of these two material objects. Even for American recipients of the gift, the objects' Buddhist significance showed through in a way that made their acceptance contentious. For the benefactor, steeped in a long family history of both Confucian and Buddhist practice, and living in a social milieu in which Buddhist artifacts abounded, the objects' Buddhist provenance would have been even more obvious.[71]

A few remarks wrap up the story of the Buddhist temple at Oberlin College. In the end, the temple did come to Oberlin College, but discussions show that American recipients of the gift approved of a "Chinese" temple, not a "Buddhist" one. The temple's acceptance at Oberlin required such a re-description, given the supersessionary theology prevalent at the time that kept Christianity on top as the one and the true. With this re-description, President Wilkin's negative views about the building's presence were countered by the overwhelmingly positive support of Florence Fitch, Clarence Hamilton, and W. M. Horton, among others, to bring the building to campus. Outside consultative voices supported the raising of the building also, including Edwin Reischauer of the Far Eastern Languages department at Harvard[72] and Langdon Warner of the "Asiatic Research Bureau" of the Fogg Museum of Art.[73] OSMA therefore moved to have the temple brought to Oberlin campus as a gift. The public announcement of intentions for the temple occurred in 1944, at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City, during a luncheon in honor of H. H. Kung. Kung subsequently pledged $75,000 to support the maintenance of the building on campus (something like $1.3 million in 2024 dollars, though such equivalencies are always suspect).[74]

The afterlife of the temple represents something of a denouement, after this climactic moment of promise. The replica temple building did come to Oberlin in 1943. There it stayed, in storage, until 1986; it was never built. In the intervening years, the title changed hands several times. Harvard University took the title in

Figure 10. H. H. Kung presenting a model of the temple during a luncheon in his honor. New York, the Waldorf Astoria, 1944. Oberlin College Archives.

1950. The First Kalmuk Buddhist Church in New Jersey, which claimed diasporic and historical affinity with the Qianlong-era building in Chengde, conducted a fund-raising drive to erect the temple in the 1960s.[75] Indiana University took ownership in 1970, under whose watch the temple's gold-and-copper shingles came to be melted down for scrap value by an enterprising local businessman. The temple eventually departed for Sweden in 1985–1986 after many decades of languishing through Ohio's winters.[76] In 2013–2014, a private individual organized the temple's

departure from Sweden for China. It was hoped that in China, the temple could find the funding to be restored and resurrected. Such plans have been delayed, corresponding with a downturn in China's construction industry, and as of 2024, the temple remains in storage in northern China.[77]

Though the temple never did come to be built on Oberlin's campus, efforts to raise the building are noteworthy. These efforts reveal a dimension of early inter-religious encounter, and the ways that people on different sides of this encounter thought about the arrival of a Buddhist material artifact onto a Christian campus. I would like to point out the difference between the incipient religious pluralism demonstrated by Oberlin trustees, one that kept a supersessionary Christianity on top, and the kind of religious pluralism demonstrated by H. H. Kung, which I have been suggesting is an early example of multiple religious belonging.

CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that H. H. Kung is an early example of what today is called multiple religious belonging. Kung was a nineteenth-century convert to Christianity, transformed by his encounter with the Oberlin Band in Shanxi and with Christian educational projects there. He was a proud Confucian, claiming bloodline descent from Confucius and supporting the practices and institutions of Confucianism, including the main Confucius temple and estate in the city of Qufu during a time of sharp anti-Confucian activity. Kung was also an enthusiastic donor of Buddhist material culture, working to cultivate cross-cultural relations with his American alma mater by gifting a Buddhist temple bell and supporting the raising of a replica Buddhist temple on campus.

H. H. Kung's example reveals how ideas and practices flow in encounters between different peoples. Close-reading his life offers an indication of one way that religious pluralism can work. An important lesson in examining Kung is that we should not be too hasty to speak of those claimed by World Christianity as *solely* or *only* Christian—as if a Christian identity washes away all the traditional ideas, forms, and practices that came before. As Peter Phan has argued, such a washing away *must not* happen. It is a whole person who lives and who acts. A whole person lives and acts according to the various ideas through which they view the world, ideas which may have multiple provenances. This is a key theoretical point I wish to make: that through this detailed historical account of H. H. Kung's Christian, Confucian, and also Buddhist story, we see that *ideas* indeed have a provenance, a natural history. These histories are deeply connected and entangled, in a way that renders a strict emic-etic divide between peoples deeply unhelpful. Kung models a way to be both, or three, or more. His values commitments are deeply held, but eschew a strictly exclusivist approach to religion that claims that only one particular tradition embodies the true way of ordering society or of practicing the good. Rather, Kung models a kind of pluralism that is both serious and multivalent.

I conclude by reflecting on the openness and multivalence of the Republican era in China, a time when, indeed, multiple sets of ideas were taken up and taken seriously

by key political actors. In the influential political family of H. H. Kung, actors took seriously not only the Confucian and Buddhist ideas and practices of traditional Chinese social life, but also republican ideas and the Christian ideas of missionary friends. Everyone in this *idealpolitik*-al family viewed the world through a kaleidoscopic set of these ideas. For instance, the three Soong sisters received a Methodist education in Macon, Georgia, in the United States, with the guidance of their Christian (Methodist) convert father.[78] Chiang Kai Shek's marriage to Soong Mei Ling required Chiang's acceptance of Christianity alongside his Buddhism; this was a family requirement (Mother Soong's requirement) for the marriage to proceed.[79] Chiang also fully continued supporting Confucian practices and institutions, finding Christianity compatible with both Confucian and republican doctrines. Finally, Sun Yat Sen was taught by an Oberlin Christian missionary in his youth in Hawai'i, and the multiple provenances of this deeply influential political philosopher deserve further study.[80] The high stakes of claiming multiple religious belonging for Kung apply as well to understanding other actors in this transformative period of connected world history, with its multiple entanglements between Asia, North America, and elsewhere.

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NOTES

1. This paper does not standardize all Romanization from Wade-Giles into *pinyin*, for the reason that English-language readers may be more familiar with the spelling of Wade-Giles in reference to some of these historically significant names and places. H. H. Kung is how his friends referred to him, and how he goes down in many English-language historical reference materials, which will be searchable under Wade-Giles and not *pinyin*. For this reason, this paper refrains from systematizing the name into X. X. Kong.
2. This paper uses the terms interreligious and interfaith interchangeably.
3. Peter Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004).
4. Ibid., xxvii.
5. Ibid., 61.
6. Ibid., emphasis mine.
7. Luella Miner, ed., *Two Heroes of Cathay: An Autobiography and a Sketch* (Fleming H. Revell, 1903), 94, 156.
8. In defending his theology of multiple religious belonging, Phan writes that "multiple religious belonging emerges as a theological problem only in religions that demand an absolute and exclusive commitment on the part of their adherents to their founders and/or faiths." That is, multiple religious belonging would never emerge as a theological position needing defense at all if one swam in waters that were more pluralistic and less absolutist or exclusivist. One might think of "exclusivist" versus "pluralist" sensibilities as a second-order or temperamental

difference that is deeply significant for how religious commitments are understood, defined, and lived. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously*, 62.

9. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously*, 62. Phan is also making normative claims, in addition to this empirical observation.

10. For instance, Stephen Teiser writes about the ghost festival in medieval China, telling us of the transformations of an Indic Buddhist text into a story of the Confucian-inflected filial piety of one Maudgalyayana (Ch: Mu-lien), who journeys to the underworld to save his mother from torment. Teiser's account of social and ritual life during the Tang Dynasty also speaks of ordinary participants in Chinese festival life making offerings in both Daoist and Buddhist temples, with no sense of exclusivist friction in doing so. Stephen Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton University Press, 1988), 16, 40–45, 99. As a second example, P. J. Ivanhoe has insisted in his scholarship and teaching that medieval flowerings of Neo-Confucianism are only legible in conversation with Buddhist and Daoist ideas. Indeed, in a revealing anecdote, Ivanhoe speaks of a conversation with a local practitioner in front of a Shinto shrine and a Buddhist temple in Japan. Upon asking whether that man was Christian, Buddhist, or Confucian, the response was that people in Japan were 75% Christian, 75% Buddhist, and 75% Confucian. As a third example, I can offer my own anecdotal observations upon a visit with family to Mount Tiantai, a historic Buddhist site, in 2017. On this trip, my uncle commented casually that although our heavily Confucian-structured family does not wear its Buddhism on shirtsleeves, Buddhist ways and sensibilities are simply "in the water"—the medium being swum in. What we can see in these several examples—given through different methodological styles, both academic and lay—is that the lines between practice traditions need not be as hard and strict as some exclusivist approaches to religion might suggest. Indeed, in Asia, multiple religious belonging does seem as a matter of tradition and sensibility to be the norm. Phan's normative claim—and my own—is that this is a good thing.

11. For a start, one might see Diana Eck's work on the Pluralism Project.

12. Yu Liang, *K'ung Hsiang-Hsi: The Biography of a Former Premier of Nationalist China* (Oberlin: Alumni Club of Oberlin Shansi Memorial College, 1957).

13. Eva Jane Price, *China Journal 1889–1900: An American Missionary Family During the Boxer Rebellion*, compiled by Virginia Phipps, Lucille Wilson, and Arlene Caruth (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989), 35. Price here is ignoring or ignorant of the long East Asian tradition of self-sacrifice for the sake of family or government, as social institutions transcending the individual self.

14. Price, *China Journal*, 79.

15. For a more comprehensive discussion of the term "heathen," see Kathryn Gin Lum's *Heathen: Religion and Race in American History* (Harvard University Press, 2022).

16. Price, *China Journal*, 132.

17. Ibid., 189.

18. Ibid., 178.

19. The British East India Company's trade in opium is an important history that predates the Oberlin missionaries, and that cannot be detailed here. The opium conflict from 1839 to 1842 and another from 1856 to 1860 led to a forced open border for opium that led to the spread and abuse of this highly addictive substance across China. These conflicts are also a part of the history of Hong Kong as a British colonial territory.

20. Liang, *K'ung Hsiang-Hsi*, 9.

21. Ibid., 11.

22. Ellsworth C. Carlson, *The Oberlin Band: The Christian Mission in Shanxi 1882–1900* (Oberlin: Oberlin Shansi Memorial Association), 116.

23. This parenthetical detail is a bit of dark humor. We should think, with Cora Diamond, that the idea of "property in human beings" is an abomination; that there is nothing else to think but that. Cora Diamond, *Reading Wittgenstein with Anscombe, Going on to Ethics* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2019), 278.

24. Alice Moon Williams in an interview with M. Swetland, November 3, 1944, Dale Johnson Box, Oberlin College Archives.

25. Rowena Bird writes in her last letter home on July 13, 1900 (eighteen days before she was killed) that "I cannot write much more now. There is so much I would like to say, but cannot, though it may be the last word from me you will ever get. Hsiang Hsi offers to send to his home any letters we may wish; and when the country is restored to peace, if it ever is, they will be sent to Tientsin . . .. Hsiang Hsi has been such a comfort to us. He has clung to us through great opposition, but his father insists on taking him away now." Bird's last words are greatly moving. She writes: "If you never see me again, remember I am not sorry I came to China. Whether I have saved anyone or not, He knows; but it has been for Him and we go to Him – Darling ones – goodbye." Quoted in E. H. Edwards, *Fire and Sword in Shansi: The Story of the Martyrdom of Foreigners and Chinese Christians* (London: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1903), 294.

26. Alice Moon Williams in an interview with M. Swetland, November 3, 1944, Dale Johnson Box, Oberlin College Archives.

27. By all accounts, Kung may have preferred to die with his friends. Luella Miner reports in a letter from Beijing to Rowena Bird's mother that "the terrible agony of being a prisoner in his father's house that last two weeks, and then hearing the mad mob when he knew they were killing those whom he loved so dearly, almost unhinged his mind." Miner reports Kung's "constant cry:" "If I could only have died with them . . .. I was not afraid to die." Miner reports his sense of having "deserted them in their extremity." Letter from Luella Miner to Mrs. Bird, May 30, 1901, Rowena Bird box, Oberlin College Archives.

28. Miner, *Two Heroes of Cathay*, 216–217.

29. Letter from Luella Miner to H. H. Kung, October 11–13, 1903, H. H. Kung Papers, "Letters Received as a Student 1/2," Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, https://digitalcollections2.hoover.org/view/ark:/54723/h3b89p, accessed June 14, 2024.

30. Letter from Alice Moon Williams to H. H. Kung, December 6, 1906, H. H. Kung Papers, "Letters Received as a Student 2/2," Hoover Institution Library and Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, https://digitalcollections2.hoover.org/view/ark:/54723/h3x316, accessed June 14, 2024.

31. Ibid.

32. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously*, 81.

33. Yu Liang puts this date at ca. 1585, during the Wanli era of the Ming dynasty. Liang, *K'ung Hsiang-Hsi*, 3.

34. Letter from H. H. Kung to Rowena Bird's mother, interpreted by Luella Miner, May 28, 1901, Rowena Bird box, Oberlin College Archives.

35. Factions within the Guomingdang went in different directions about the compatibility of republican politics with Confucianism. Some thought that Confucianism and republicanism were incompatible—this was the position taken in February 1928 by the anti-Confucian faction within the Guomingdang, which abolished rites and ceremonies honoring Confucius. This faction was led by Cai Yuanpei (also the founder of *Academia Sinica*,

currently based in Taipei). Cai, speaking with the institutional voice of the University Council of the republican government, issued an order to abolish the sacrificial spring and autumn rites of Confucius-worship on the grounds that Confucius's ideas of loyalty and respect to a governing king was "feudal" in structure and contrary to republican doctrines, which endorsed not kings but presidents. See historical commentary in Fu Haiyan and Zheng Shuang, "From Sacred to Secular: A Study of the Transformation in Spatial functions of Modern Confucian Temples," *Chinese Studies in History* 56, no. 4 (2023), 362–377. Others in the republican government were more optimistic about interpreting republican doctrines through Confucian ideas. Such was Dai Jitao's view, expressed in 1925, that Sun Yat-Sen's Three Principles for the People should be interpreted through Confucian understandings of benevolence and morality. Chiang Kai Shek, successor to Sun Yat-Sen, also thought that republicanism and Confucianism were compatible. H. H. Kung was in agreement on this point with Chiang. See 孔明 (Ming Kong), "南京国民政府初期的尊孔与反孔——以改革曲阜林庙案为中心" (Venerating and Opposing Confucius in the Early Days of the Nanjing Nationalist Government: Concerning the Case of the Reformation of the Qufu Temple and Forest), 理论月刊 (*Theory Monthly*) 10 (2020), accessed January 23, 2025, https:/www.rujiazg.com/article/19547.

36. Ming Kong, "Venerating and Opposing Confucius in the Early Days of the Nanjing Nationalist Government."

37. This paper takes it that political thinkers in Republican Era China were interested in forms of governance that shift away from the arbitrary power of monarchical structures, and that these thinkers qualify as interested to some degree in forms of republicanism as outlined in contemporary republican theory. However, this paper does not engage in the question of whether and how Republican Era thinkers fully qualify as "republican" in the language of contemporary republican theory, in the sense of seeking freedom from domination, rule of law, and popular control over public officials. In part, the historical work being undertaken here may address in a preliminary and indirect way a question posed by Republican theorist Frank Lovett: that one might wonder how "republics ever get started in the first place, for the successful founding of republican institutions would seem to presuppose the very civic virtue those institutions, once established, are supposed to produce." Frank Lovett, *The Well-Ordered Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 220. This is taken to be an understudied question in republican theory. I suggest that close reading the history of Republican Era China will give one thick response to this question—of how new ideals, norms, and institutions actually come into being.

38. The Hoover Institution's H. H. Kung archives contain detailed correspondence concerning the controversy between anti-Confucius and pro-Confucius factions of the Guomingdang about the Temple of Confucius in Qufu between 1928 and 1935. This archive includes correspondence between H. H. Kung and Kung Te-cheng (*pinyin:* Kong Decheng), then the holder of the title of the Duke of Yansheng.

39. Ming Kong, "Venerating and Opposing Confucius in the Early Days of the Nanjing Nationalist Government."

40. Liang, *K'ung Hsiang-Hsi*, 21. See also "H.H. Kung," in *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China: vol. 2*, ed. Howard L. Boorman (Columbia University Press, 1968), 263–269. The biographical entry notes that Kung's cousin was killed in fighting in the 1911 revolution. Kung himself worked under Yen Hsi Shan against the Manchu dynastic government in Shanxi.

41. "Oberlin College – 125th Anniversary Alumni Catalogue," October 1, 1958, H. H. Kung box, Oberlin College Archives.

42. Liang, *K'ung Hsiang-Hsi*, 28.

43. This is why reform-minded youth of the New Culture movement attacked the institution of the family. See Ba Jin's semi-autobiographical New Culture novel that appeared in 1931. Ba Jin, *Family*, trans. Olga Lang (Waveland Press, 1988).

44. For a comprehensive discussion of Oberlin's early representatives in Shanxi, see Chapter 5 of Mary Tarpley Campbell, "Oberlin-in-China: 1881–1951," PhD diss. (University of Virginia, 1975).

45. Liang, *K'ung Hsiang-Hsi*, 29.

46. Dates for his position as Minister of Industry, Labor, and Commerce date from 1927 to 1930; he is recorded as Minister of Industry from 1930 to 1932. "Oberlin College – 125th Anniversary Alumni Catalogue," October 1, 1958, H. H. Kung box, Oberlin College Archives.

47. The bell was likely cast in the late 1920s (ca. 1927–1928) by the bronze maker Yan Jintai (顏錦泰) in Hangzhou, for the specific purpose of being gifted to Oberlin. The text on the bell itself claims that it was cast in 1835, and H. H. Kung himself referred to the bell as a nineteenth-century temple bell. Questions remain regarding why there might have been such a discrepancy. Personal communication with Kevin Greenwood, Allen Art Museum, citing research by Yuqing Tao.

48. For more details about the Wanfa Guiyi temple, refer to Jin Xu, "Evanescent Temple, Eternal Dharma: The Wanfa Guiyi Hall in the Post-Qianlong Era of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911)," *Orientations*, 52, no. 1 (2021): 21–29.

49. Sven Hedin, *Jehol: A City of Emperors* (E. P. Dutton & Company, 1933).

50. Sven Hedin makes these claims in a preface to a pamphlet circulated during the time of the Chicago World Fair, titled: "The Chinese Lama Temple: Potala of Jehol," *A Century of Progress Exposition* (Chicago, 1932), in Oberlin College Archives. See also Cole Roskam, "Situating Chinese Architecture within a 'Century of Progress: The Chinese Pavilion, The Bendix Golden Temple, and the 1933 World Fair," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 73, no. 3 (2014): 347–371. For commentary on the (non-) importance of copies versus "originals" in relation to the temple, see Ian MacCormack, "Palaces Near and Far: How Tibet's Potala Palace almost came to Harvard," *Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies* (blog), March 17, 2017, https:/fairbank.fas.harvard.edu/research/blog/palaces-near-and-far-how-tibets-potala-palace-almost-came-to-harvard/, accessed June 18, 2024.

51. "The Chinese Lama Temple: Potala of Jehol," *A Century of Progress Exposition* (Chicago, 1932), Oberlin College Archives.

52. We may worry, here, about the socially distortionary effects of concentrated capital accumulation in individual hands. We may think that the temple has not yet found a socially appropriate role to play, aside from its time of short display during two international exhibitions in the 1930s, in part because of the very individual and idiosyncratic modes of its inception.

53. As Frederick Bohn states, the temple is "to the honor of China, of Oberlin, and the Martyrs in whose name the whole enterprise started." Letter from Frederick Bohn to H. H. Kung, June 29, 1945, Oberlin College Archives.

54. OSMA letter to the Trustees of Oberlin College, June 5, 1931, Oberlin College Archives.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. A letter from H. H. Kung to Lydia Lord Davis on February 9, 1931, expresses financial difficulties related to the depression. As he writes, "Regarding our gift for the Shansi Building in Oberlin, I shall do what I can to fulfill my promise, although for the moment,

with exchange at the ratio of almost one to five, I anticipate a lot of difficulties. Contributions may come from two sources: Graduates of Oberlin and graduates of OSMS [sic]. The latter are only struggling to make a living as time is so hard, while what the former may give will amount to very little on account of the low silver exchange." He also details some of his personal financial difficulties during this time, commenting touchingly that "I really do not know how long I can carry on like this." We will remember that Kung's family was very well-to-do, with banking-house assets in Shanxi, but that he also had a family to support at this time with, undoubtedly, certain standards of living. Oberlin College Archives.

58. Letter from H. H. Kung to Louis Lord, March 23, 1942, Oberlin College Archives.

59. Letter from Louis. E. Lord to Hu Shih, July 13, 1943, Oberlin College Archives.

60. Letter from Lin Mousheng to Louis Lord, July 16, 1943, Oberlin College Archives.

61. Letter from Percy J. Ebbott to Ernest Wilkins, July 19, 1943, Oberlin College Archives.

62. Letter from Allan Cole to Ernest Wilkins, July 21, 1943, Oberlin College Archives.

63. Letter from Allan Cole to Ernest Wilkins, July 21, 1943, Oberlin College Archives.

64. Dr. Florence Fitch had, by this point, studied philosophical theology in Germany and traveled to East and South Asia between 1936 and 1937—even interviewing Gandhi in 1937. So she is traveled, educated, and worldly wise, but still holds the conception, prevalent at the time, that Buddhism is a "debased" form of religion vis-à-vis Christianity.

65. Dr. Clarence Herbert Hamilton will be of interest to Buddhologists. He served as a missionary professor in China between 1914 and 1927, and published *Buddhism: A Religion of Infinite Compassion* (Liberal Arts Press, 1952); *Buddhism in India, Ceylon, China, and Japan: a Reading Guide* (University of Chicago Press, 1931); and a translation of Vasubandhu's *Twenty Verses* from Xuanzang's Chinese version (*The treatise in twenty stanzas on representation-only, by Vasubandhu* (American Oriental Society, 1938)).

66. OMSA Meeting Notes, June 12, 1943, Clarence Hamilton's statement, Oberlin College Archives.

67. OMSA Meeting Notes, June 12, 1943, Florence Fitch's statement, Oberlin College Archives. This view is akin to Karl Rahner's theology of Christian fulfillment.

68. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 82–83.

69. Bell's language for this is that every person has some measure of agentive social efficacy within relations of unequal, hegemonic power. A social actor imagines a world they *could* inhabit. Via a redemptive process, "people construe power relations in such a way that 1) these power relations are reproduced in various ways, 2) people have a sense of their place in some ordering of relations, and 3) they can envision the efficacy of acting within that ordering of relations." In other words, a sense of redemptive hegemony "affords the actor the sense of a sphere of action, however minimal." Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 84.

70. Many other examples can be cited regarding the strategic, situational ambiguities imbedded in gift giving. When a donor agrees to make a very large gift to a campus endowment, for instance, it is not explicitly written that: "This gift is for the admission of my son."

71. Members of Kung's chosen political family, while confessing Christianity, also experienced a deeply Buddhist formation. Kung's brother-in-law Chiang Kai Shek, for instance, professed Buddhism in his youth and supported the Republican-era Buddhist monk Taixu. For more on Taixu's interactions with Chiang and others, see Darui Long, "An Interfaith Dialogue between the Chinese Buddhist Leader Taixu and Christians," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 20 (2000): 167–189 and the introductory study to Charles Jones, *Taixu's 'On the*

Establishment of the Pure Land in the Human Realm' (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022).

72. Letter from Edwin Reischauer to Louis Lord, June 23, 1943, Oberlin College Archives. The Harvard connection is because an Oberlin alum was a major benefactor of the study of East Asia at Harvard. The Harvard-Yenching Institute was founded in 1928 with funds from the Oberlin alumnus and industrialist Charles Martin Hall, who put to industrial use a certain process for refining aluminum.

73. Letter from Langdon Warner to Louis Lord, June 10, 1943, Oberlin College Archives.

74. It is worth saying over and over again that equivalencies based on econometric projections over time are always suspect—since the technologies, norms, and institutions of a society are always in motion. We might think, for instance, that we rightly no longer find it normatively acceptable to monetize human bodies; and this must be taken into account when we compare current economic states of affairs with those in the nineteenth century. Today, we find hair-raising new ways of monetizing the bodies of others (as exemplified in the company Revivicor in Virginia, a business that raises pigs for the purpose of organ transplantation into humans).

75. In 1771, a month before the completion of the Wanfa Guiyi Hall in Chengde, the nomadic Torgot (also Kalmuk or Kalmyk) peoples returned to China from Russia, to the warm welcome of Emperor Qianlong. These were people of the Eurasian steppe, who had migrated from western Mongolia to the Volga River area in the early seventeenth century, becoming subjects of the Russian Empire in 1609 and eventually leading nomadic lifestyles on both sides of the Volga River. For more on the historical Kalmyks, see Valeriya Gazizova, "Buddhism in Contemporary Kalmykia: 'Pure' Monasticism versus Challenges of Post-Soviet Modernity," in *Buddhist Modernities: Re-inventing Tradition in the Globalizing Modern World*, ed. Hanna Havnevik, Ute Hüsken, Mark Teeuwen, Vladimir Tikhonov, Koen Wellens (Routledge, 2017), 92–93. See also discussion in Sven Hedin, "The Flight of the Torgot," in *Jehol: City of Emperors* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1933), 29–68. The New Jersey-based community is now called the Rashi Gempil Ling First Kalmuk Buddhist Temple. Its history page acknowledges that "An entire temple was available from another state [sic] we would have to disassemble it and transport the parts to our town. The cost of this though was so high that we weren't able to use this option." Rashi Gempil Ling, "History," https:/www.rashigempilling.com/?page=History, accessed June 20, 2024.

76. Max Christian Woeler, a Swedish architect, can be credited for tracking the temple down in the mid-1980s. The temple was then in a state of great disrepair, in a storage location in Oberlin. In 1982, rights to the temple had been acquired by Paul Haering of the National Waste Company of Lorain, Ohio. Haering melted the temple's gold-plated copper shingles to sell as scrap metal and relinquished rights to the temple after a lawsuit from Indiana University protesting this action. News coverage documenting the events of this time includes pieces by Leslie Farquhar, "Swedish architect continues efforts to rebuild temple in Stockholm," *Oberlin New Tribune*, January 17, 1985; and Leslie Farquhar, "Last of Temple bound for Sweden," *Oberlin New Tribune*, May 1, 1986. Oberlin College Archives.

77. Håkan Wahlquist (Keeper of the Sven Hedin Foundation in the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences), email message to author, June 18, 2024.

78. An account of the father's (Charley Soong's) conversion to Methodism in 1880, and his study of theology at Vanderbilt University and entry into the Christian mission, can be found in Michael Lestz, "The Soong Sisters and China's Revolutions, 1911–1936," in *Women, Religion, and Social Change*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Ellison Banks Findly

(SUNY Press, 1985). The Soong sisters have been widely chronicled. See Emily Hanh, *The Soong Sisters* (Garden City, Doubleday, 1942); June Cheng, *Big Sister, Little Sister, Red Sister: Three Women at the Heart of Twentieth-Century China* (Anchor, 2020); and Juanjuan Peng, "Searching the early lives of the Soong sisters in Macon, Georgia: three Chinese overseas students in the American South," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 20, no. 2 (2023): 777–792.

79. "H.H. Kung," in *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China: vol. 2*, 265. This kind of family gate-keeping was at the time fully within the accepted scope of the matriarchal role in a Confucian ethical system. What is interesting here is that the gate-keeping was for a values-commitment.

80. Campbell, "Oberlin-in-China: 1881–1951," 107. Campbell reports that "The Oberlin missionaries in particular had been very enthusiastic in the early days of the Republic about Sun Yat-Sen; for one thing, K'ung had been a Sun supporter, and for another, they were sentimental about the fact that an Oberlin graduate had been one of Sun's early Sunday School teachers in Honolulu."