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Christian Faith in Bing Xin's Early Life: Tradition and Western Values in the Early 20th Century China

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Abstract

Among Chinese writers of the 20th century, Xie Wanying 谢婉莹 (1900–1999), known with her pen name Bing Xin 冰心, has been considered by literary critics as “the writer of love” and “the philosopher of love”. Nevertheless, this label seems to have ignored an element that could let us identify important conflicts within her works, that can be attributed to her contacts and relations with people and institutions linked to the Christian faith. Therefore, in the first period of Bing Xin's literary production (1920–1930), this peculiar aspect of Western culture, the Christian belief, seems to be for her the expression of a definitely alternative and unconventional way to achieve truth in the early 20th century China.

Keywords: Bing Xin 冰心, Western culture, Christian religion, tradition, poetry

Izvleček

Xie Wanying 谢婉莹 (1900–1999), kitajsko književnica 20. stoletja, ki je znana pod psevdonimom Bing Xin 冰心, so literarni kritiki označevali kot »pesnico ljubezni« in »filozofinjo ljubezni«. Vendar ta oznaka ni upoštevala elementa, ki nam lahko omogoči vpogled v pomembne konflikte, vsebovane v njenih delih, in ki je povezan z njenimi odnosi z ljudmi in institucijami krščanske cerkve. V zgodnjem obdobju njenega literarnega ustvarjanja (1920–1930) je ta značilni vidik zahodne kulture, namreč krščanska vera, zanjo očitno predstavljal izraz nedvomno alternativnega in nekonvencionalnega iskanja resnice na Kitajskem v začetku 20. stoletja.

Ključne besede: Bing Xin 冰心, zahodna kultura, krščanska vera, tradicija, poezija

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1 Introduction

Bing Xin 冰心 (1900–1999), whose real name is Xie Wanying 谢婉莹, is one of the most important Chinese writers of the 20th century China and one of the main exponents of the Chinese women literature. With her literary activity, she covered the whole century, starting with composing poetry and going on through very different genres. Especially, her fame is strongly linked to short novels and prose for children, which represents her major literary work to which she devoted the most part of her life and which contributed to her great fame as a writer for children. Nevertheless, her first successful literary try is dated back to the beginning of 20th century and is represented by two collections of verses, *Fanxing* 繁星 (*Stars*) and *Chunshui* 春水 (*Spring Waters*), written in the form of short poems which seem to be notes of a stream of “scattered and fragmentary thoughts” (Bing Xin 1989, 88), belonging to the so-called “mini-poem” which had a great development and a strong influence on the Chinese New Poetry after the May Fourth Movement.

Her literary success and her great fame are confirmed by the words of critics, men of letters and politicians such as Hu Shi 胡适 and, years later, the premier Wen Jiabao 温家宝 who praised the artistic and human personality of Bing Xin. Hu Shi in a letter to Ms Grace Boynton, Bing Xin's English teacher at Yanjing University, states:

Most writers in *baihua* were searching for a style suitable to the new form and many of them were crude; some were vulgar. Miss Icy Heart¹ had been given a good grounding in the great Chinese poets; she had brought over into the new medium a delicacy and refinement which was at the same time fresh and direct...she carried on the traditional Chinese awareness of Nature and the use of the image in her technique, so she is at once simple and exquisite. (Boynton in Boynton 1989, 93)

while the premier Wen Jiabao used the following words to celebrate the writer after death, as the official website of the *Bing Xin Wenxueguan* 冰心文学馆 (*Bing Xin Literary Museum*) reports:

I remember a year when Bing Xin passed away. In the dark of the night I reached the Beijing Hospital to say farewell to the great woman. Her daughter gave me a notebook where I put my signature. I have always deeply admired

¹ Translation of the pen name Bing Xin, made up of two Chinese characters: *bing* (“ice” or “pure”) and *xin* (“heart”).

Bing Xin as a woman and appreciated her works so much. She had a strong personality but also a great heart full of love and capable of feeling and conveying deep emotions.²

2 The Value of *Fanxing* 繁星 and *Chunshui* 春水 in their Relation with the Christian Faith

Mao Dun 茅盾, in his article “Bingxin lun” 冰心论 (“Disussion on Bing Xin”) published on *Wenxue* 文学 (*Literature*) in 1934 elaborates a sort of accuse towards the writer, which over years has become a common and shared view on Bing Xin’s works, labelling them just as *tianzhen* 天真 (“simple and innocent”) and *hao xinchang* 好心肠 (“full of good feelings”) but devoid of social and political engagement:

Her innocence, her good feelings are certainly exquisite, but the interpretation of social life is completely absent! Maybe we think it is quite strange that during the period of the May Fourth Movement, the spread of pragmatism and scientific and positivistic thought have had no influence and left no trace on Bing Xin. [...] Among all the writers belonging to the May Fourth Movement, Bing Xin actually belongs to her own world, to herself. Her works don’t report society but just Bing Xin herself... Therefore we can say that her prose works and her long poems are much more valuable than the short poems in “Stars” and “Spring waters”. (Mao Dun in Fan Baiqun 2009, 222)

Therefore, according to Mao Dun, the reason why Bing Xin in her own works avoids any reference to social and political implications lies in values of her family and her childhood experience. He states: “Someone’s thought is determined by his/her own life experience while new thoughts coming from the outside world cannot germinate if they don’t meet an ‘appropriate soil’.” (Mao Dun in Fan Baiqun 2009, 216).

Shiyi turang 适宜土壤 (“the appropriate soil”) mentioned by Mao Dun reminds us the Parable of the Sower in Luke: 8 and allows us to explore and develop a special and interesting aspect of Bing Xin’s poetry and thought: the relation between Chinese Confucian tradition and the new values coming from the Christian West, very far from the Western pragmatic and positivistic thought that

² All the citations in English (if not further specified) have been translated by the author of this paper from the original in Chinese.

was spreading in China at the time of the May Fourth Movement. Actually, the intellectuals who started the May Fourth Movement and were the pioneers of the New Literature Movement moved from the idea that the real obstacle to the development of a new and modern culture in China was the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues in feudal ethical code. In order to reverse this old rule system, they promoted the new Western values such as independence, freedom, equality as the main values through which human rights can be respected. These new values, which intellectuals sum up in the three values coming from the French Revolution, *ziyou* 自由 (“freedom”), *pingdeng* 平等 (“equality”) and *bo'ai* 博爱 (“fraternity”), seem to be not very far from the ideals on the basis of Christian Faith (Tian Jing'ai 2004, 348–9). These particular analogies made several men of letters use words of praise towards Christian belief, such as Chen Duxiu 陈独秀 (1921) in an article entitled “Jidujiao yu zhonguoren” 基督教与中国人 (“The Christian Religion and Chinese People”) published in *Xin qingnian* 新青年 (*New Youth*), where he uses the following expression to refer to Jesus and His spirit of sacrifice and fraternity which represents the main aspect of the Democracy and Peace strongly pursued by intellectuals at the time of The May Fourth: “Jesus’ noble and great humanism, His ardent and deep feelings”.

Bing Xin herself writes:

成功的花。
人们只惊慕她现时的明艳！
然而当初她的芽儿，
浸透了奋斗的泪泉，
洒遍了牺牲的血雨。(Bing Xin 1923, 55)

Flower of the success.
People, surprised, admire, beauty.
It has now!
But originally the sprout
was soaked with tears of the fight,
sprinkled everywhere, sacrifice, blood, tears.³

³ All the verses and poems in Chinese have been translated by the author of the paper.

Mao Dun with his statement about the “appropriate soil” argues that the reason why we can not find reference and praise to the modern and scientific knowledge in Bing Xin’s works has to be found in the inappropriate soil on which the seed of these “new thoughts” has fallen, that is Bing Xin’s traditional and conservative family. He states that “the so-called appropriate soil is just one person’s life experience” and in order to describe Bing Xin’s family he adds: “Bing Xin’s family wasn’t a quite modern family. [...] Her father was an elegant man and spent a pacific and still life. Bing Xin’s mother was a well-educated, gentle and kind woman” (Mao Dun in Fan Baiqun 2009, 216). If we consider Mao Dun’s words, we can simply conclude that Bing Xin’s works are just the results and fruits of her childhood and family experience, mainly based on love, especially on three kinds of love: *mu’ai* 母爱 (“maternal love”), *ziran zhi ai* 自然之爱 (“love for Nature”) and *ertong zhi ai* 儿童之爱 (“love for children”), which are considered the realization of what A Ying 阿英 in the article “Xie Bing Xin” 谢冰心 (“Xie Bing Xin”) published in 1931 first labelled as *ai de zhexue* 爱的哲学 (“philosophy of love”) (Li Yong 李勇 2004, 303). Nevertheless, when Bing Xin for the first and the last time tries to explain her thought about love in her novel *Wu* 悟 (*Realization*), she says:

Scientists’ sterile definitions let us know just how the layer is formed, how stars revolve, how frost and dew condense, how plants bloom and give fruits. Scientists just know the hows, but poets, philosophers, religious men, children, instead, know the whys! ... Scientists give sterile definitions and quietly decline their service; at the same time, instead, poets, philosophers, religious men and children smile, put their palms together, prostrate their selves and highly praising say: “Everything is just for ‘love’!” (Bing Xin 2007b, 105)

Through these words the religious belief comes to light and lets us consider that the refusal of Western scientific thought could be not just a result of a seed fallen on an inappropriate soil, but, a consequence of a much more complex thought coming from the Christian West, according to which only the Creator, the Father God, guards the secret of the natural world:

造物者呵！

谁能追踪你的笔意呢？

百千万幅图画

每晚窗外的落日。(Bing Xin 1923, 65)

Creator!

Who can follow the trace of your feelings?

Infinite drawings,

sunsets of every dusk behind the window.

Moreover, the elaboration of this religious thought moves and develops in Bing Xin's heart and mind independently from the soil on which it has fallen. In fact, though we have just read that Bing Xin's family was a quite conservative and traditional family based on maternal love and far from the new positivistic movements, through the biography of Bing Xin by Xiao Feng 肖风 (1987, 23) we know that, though Bing Xin entered the big world of literature through the reading of the Chinese traditional stories and novels, such as *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, her parents did not make their daughter miss the new, big foreign literature novels such as Lin Shu 林纾's translations of *David Copperfield* and *The Lady of the Camellias* (Zhang Wei 张伟 1986, 19), the foreign newspapers and, even the forbidden reformist and propaganda magazines which she read together with her classmates during lessons as she herself writes:

Then, our thirst of knowledge was at its height and we greedily devoured these periodicals outside our lessons or even hid them under our textbooks, openly stealing glances at them. If we hit upon some sentence which particularly pleased us we'd note it in a few "oblique" words or phrases in the margin of our notebooks. (Bing Xin 1982, 57)

Therefore, Bing Xin's interest in the modern thought and in the new challenge of last century appears clear and deep, so that it left an important influence on her human and professional life but, among all the possible ways to follow in search for Truth and Freedom, Bing Xin consciously chooses the one she considers the only one which can lead human beings to the real and full knowledge of the world, to the Truth that makes people free. This Truth acquires the real features of the Christian Truth when she writes:

真理，

在婴儿的沉默中

不在聪明人的辩论里。(Bing Xin 1923, 43)

Truth

lies in the silence of children,
not in the dissertation of the wise man.

making a clear reference to a passage of the Gospel by Matthew 18: 1–5 when Jesus talks to his apostles: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven.”⁴

And the greatness of children and, as we can suppose, of a special child is stressed and made clearer:

万千的天使，
要起来歌颂小孩子
小孩子！
他细小的身躯里，
含着伟大的灵魂。(Bing Xin 1923, 35)

Myriads of angels
raise songs of praise to the child;
Little child!
His thin body
keeps the greatness of the spirit.

Therefore, just when intellectuals start to shout their need for change, ask loudly an emancipation from Chinese traditional culture, hoping for a modern culture capable of enlightening a whole nation (Idema and Haft 2000, 300), Bing Xin softly and closely tries to walk on a new path where the key of knowledge, the Truth, has to be found in the frailty and silence of a little child who becomes (*Fanxing* 74) *weida de shiren* 伟大的诗人 (“the great poet”), expressing at the same time the difficulty to make people realize it:

我的朋友！
真理是什么，

⁴ All the biblical passages have been taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®.

感谢你指示我；
然而我的问题，
不容人来解答。(Bing Xin 1923, 122)

My friend!
What is Truth?
I thank you because you guide me;
but my question
can't find answers in people.

Moreover, the close relation between Truth and God is stressed by an unequivocal statement by Bing Xin during the period spent at the Yanjing University: "Truth is just a character: 'love'." (Li Yong 2004, 305) If we consider what she says about God in a poem completely inspired by the Bible, entitled *Yeban* 夜半 (*Midnight*), when she writes:

上帝是爱的上帝，
宇宙是爱的宇宙。
上帝啊！我称谢你，
因你训诲我，阿们。(Bing Xin 2007b, 113)

God is God of love,
Universe is universe of love.
God! I thank you,
because you guide me, amen.

we can deduct what represents a crucial point in Bing Xin's religious faith, the identity God/Love and Love/Truth, so that it appears quite clearly that Truth is Love coming from God, so God Himself, as Bing Xin herself states in 1921 in her article "Ziyou zhenli fuwu" 自由——真理——服务 ("Freedom, Truth, Service") reported in the official website of the *Bing Xin Wenxueguan* 冰心文学馆 ("Bing Xin Literary Museum"): "耶稣基督说：'我就是道路，真理，生命。' 耶稣基督是宇宙间爱的结晶，所以他自己便是爱，便是真理。" / "Jesus says: 'I am the

way and the truth and the life.’ Jesus is the crystal of universal love, so He himself is Love, is Truth.”⁵

3 The Influence of Tradition in Bing Xin’s Doubts of Faith

The definition of Truth is, as we said above, a crucial aspect of Bing Xin’s faith and it becomes much more interesting to analyze if we take into account the strong and lasting doubts in the writer’s mind, whose presence and power she never denies, though she keeps on trusting God’s guide:

知识的海中，
神秘的礁石上，
处处闪烁着怀疑的灯光呢。
感谢你指示我，
生命的舟难行的路！（Bing Xin 1923, 77）

In the ocean of knowledge,
on the stone of mystery,
everywhere twinkles the flame of doubt.
I thank you, my guide,
who leads the boat of my life!

As we can note across the verses, doubts are constant and evident in the path to the Truth followed by Bing Xin so that sometimes they bring to light a strong tension and contradiction in her thoughts and feelings. Starting from an admission of a doubt of faith through a soft call to the individualism, as if the human being could live alone, without the love that comes from God and embraces other human beings and all the world around him/her:

空中的鸟！
何必和笼里的同伴争噪呢？
你自有你的天地。（Bing Xin 1923, 70）

⁵ Translated by the author of this paper.

Bird of the sky!

Why do you chirp in the nest with yor mates?

You have your own world.

Bing Xin' doubts become deeper and deeper when she even denies the identity God/Truth by adopting a clear relativistic view through which the Truth is seen just as a personal point of view, so that each person has his/her own truth in which he/she believes:

青年人!

信你自己罢!

只有你自己是真实的,

也只有你能创造你自己。(Bing Xin 1923, 98)

Young man!

Trust yourself!

Only you have the truth,

And only you are the creator of yourself.

This contrasting view of the Truth, that is no longer directly linked to God's Love, is stressed by identifying the religious faith not as a guide but as a real danger that, after a period of illusion, makes the human mind lost and confused:

信仰将青年人

扶上“服从”的高塔以后,

便把“思想”的梯儿撤去了。(Bing Xin 1927, 67)

After the faith has helped young people

to climb the tall tower of “obedience”,

the steps of “thought” are just removed.

Therefore, by denying the faith as support, Bing Xi eventually seems to deny God as a powerful entity which we have to trust to save ourselves, replaced by a strong individualism and a relativistic truth that appear to be the only tools with which we are enlightened to understand life:

聪明人！

在这漠漠的世界上，

只能提着“自信”的灯儿

进行在黑暗里。(Bing Xin 1927, 90)

Wise man!

In this foggy world,

just carrying the lamp of “trusting yourself”

you can walk in the darkness.

This contrast of thoughts let a few critics define the Christian belief in Bing Xin (Tian Jing'ai 2004, 349–50) as *dute* 独特 (“peculiar”), *zarou* 杂柔 (“mixed”), *banbo* 斑驳 (“motley”) and *fei danchun* 非单纯 (“not pure”), also because it is said that she never entered a church, even when she was baptized, when Bing Xin together with her English teacher, the missionary Grace M. Boynton, went to a pastor to receive the baptism (Sheng Ying 2004, 279). Actually, she was baptised on December 8th 1921 and left an evidence of this conversion in a poem entitled *Tianying* 天婴 (*The Child from Heaven*) written on Christmas after she was baptized (Boynton 1926):

(三) (3)

马槽里可能睡眠？

静听着牧者宣报天音，

他是王子，

他是劳生；

他要奋斗，

他要牺牲。

Can you sleep in a manger?

In the quiet you can hear shepherds announcing

the God's will,

He is the king,

He is the servant;
He will fight,
He will sacrifice His life.

(五) (5)

奔赴看十字架，
奔赴看荆棘冠，
想一生何曾安顿？
繁星在天，
夜色深深——
开始的负上罪担千钧。(Bing Xin 2007a, 126-7)

Hasten to see a cross,
hasten to see a crown of thorns,
Have you ever thought of a peaceful life?
Myriads of stars in the sky,
the night is deep:
thousands of sins bear down on His shoulders.

At the beginning of 1921, Bing Xin began to write some short poems, then gathered them in the collection called *Shengshi* 圣诗 (*Holy Poems*) to which “Tianying” (“I’m Child from Heaven”) and “Yeban” (“Midnight”), mentioned before, belong and where all the poems appear to be related to some passages of the Bible (especially the Old Testament) that had left deep impressions on Bing Xin’s heart and mind not only for the majestic and solemn images in them, as she briefly states in the preface to the collection: “... the original meaning is extremely broad and profound and it is impossible to avoid a great loss.” (Bing Xin 2007b, 110) Therefore, we can say that the relation with Christian religion is very far from being “not pure”, but contrasts and doubts in the expression of faith could be related to a particular inner conflict with which Bing Xin lived at the time of the May Fourth, and it never left her, between new values coming from the West and Chinese Confucian and feudal tradition:

自然呵！

请你容我只问一句话，

一句郑重的话：

“我不曾错解了你么？” (Bing Xin 1923, 44)

Nature!

I ask you to answer just a question,

a crucial question:

“Have I ever misunderstood you?”

This particular, deep and inner tie with Chinese traditional culture appears in Bing Xin so difficult to break from. Among the poems of her early collections it seems as if she wants to remind her readers, and maybe herself, that she has never forgotten her roots and that those roots are still one of the main sources through which she feeds her own human and literary life, though this special tie makes her quite confused and lost. This aspect comes to light when she writes:

微雨的山门下，

石阶湿着——

只有独立的我

和缕缕的游云，

这也是“同参密藏”么？ (Bing Xin 1927, 83)

A drizzle under the gate of the temple

wets the stone steps.

I am alone

with the clouds swimming continuously,

even this one is the “search for the hidden truth”?

Tongcan micang 同参密藏 (“The search for the hidden truth”) is an inscription made by the emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (1711–1799) on the gate of the Temple of Reclining Buddha in Beijing on whose steps Bing Xin sits and falls into meditation, gazing at flooding clouds and asking herself what is indeed the Truth. Therefore, the image of an ancient temple linked to that of the emperor is a clear

sign of a tradition that occurs with all its power and its implications also when Bing Xin addresses *Lengyanjing* 楞严经 (“Surangama Sutra”), one of most important text in Mahayana Buddhism tradition, asking that the quick and overwhelming flood of strange thoughts finally stops: “这奔涌的心潮 / 只索倩《楞严》来壅塞了。”/“This so rapid stream of thoughts/ask Surangama Sutra to stop.”⁶ (Bing Xin 1927, 139)

These verses sound like a request for help to the tradition that suddenly and surprisingly appears like the only and last hope to escape from an ocean of new and powerful thoughts and feelings that are puzzling the writer.

4 Bing Xin's Special Relation with the Christian World

The relationship between Bing Xin and the Christian faith developed during the same years of the spread of the May Fourth Movement, through deep and lasting relationships with Christian educational institutions set and run by the major Christian missionaries in China, the Jesuits, especially those coming from the American Congregational Church. In 1914, in fact, she entered the American Congregational Bridgeman Academy, during a period of great development of Christian schools in China, before the birth of several anti-Christian movements which originated from the educational ideals of the “nationalistic school” at the beginning of 20s (Wang Chen Main 1994, 4:1, 83–102).

Therefore, Bing Xin at the age of 14 suddenly found herself involved in studying Bible and Christian thought and practicing religious activities. It was the first time she heard of Jesus, his love for human beings and his parables. In her article “Wo ru le Beiman zhongzhai” 我入了贝满中斋 (“I entered the Bridgeman Institute”, 1984), she firstly describes the unfamiliar situation in which she has to live and study but then she lingers over the great hearts of her classmates (all of them Christian), who soon become good friends, and her good score at religious subjects such as the Bible study.

After graduation, in 1918 she enrolled at Peking Union College for Women, where she studied physical sciences. A year later, after the outburst of the May Fourth Movement, as a secretary for the Student's Association of the Union College, she began to publish some short propaganda pieces in the periodical

⁶ Translated by the author of this paper.

Chenbao 晨报 (*The Morning Paper*). The extent of her propaganda activities leads her to switch to the Department of Literature at Yanjing University, run by Christian Protestant missionaries and directly linked to Bridgeman Institute, where in 1923 she graduated with a B.A. in Literature. At Yanjing University she was a student of Ms Grace Boynton, a Christian missionary who taught English language and literature (Bing Xin 1989a, 85). The relationship between Bing Xin and her teacher soon developed into a friendship that lasted over thirty years and proved by some letters to her family by Ms Boynton in which she refers to Bing Xin as “my most promising student” and “my beloved little Chinese rose” (Boynton 1989, 92) and by some pages of Grace Boynton’s journals where in 1965 she wrote:

Early one evening, perhaps three months after I had begun teaching her, Icy Heart came to the tall double doors of my study... As she stood in the crack in the door, she spoke in a whisper: “Please, I need a friend, and please, don’t you laugh [at] me.” [...] Soon she came again, and this time she got up her courage to explain herself further. [...] She had been publishing verse for two years [but] she belonged to an official family...and modesty was very important to Miss Icy Heart. [...] She never appeared in public. [...] The few mixed classes already begun in Yenching were held at the Men’s College a safe distance away. There were times, however, when she needed an intermediary between herself and her public, and then I acted for her. (Boynton 1989, 94)

As we can read, the relationship with the missionary Grace Boynton seems to have developed into a real and authentic friendship, especially when in 1923, after graduation from Yanjing University, Bing Xin went to America to enrol in an M.A. program at Wellesley College. The Boynton family lived in Medford, not far from the College. So Bing Xin began a deep relationship also with Ms Boynton’s family to such an extent that the writer referred to Miss Boynton’s mother as her “second mother” and to Medford as her “second home” (Boynton 1989, 94). The friendship with this oversea Christian family became closer and closer so that Bing Xin continued to correspond with the Boyntons after she returned to China in 1926 and in 1929 she sent a copy of the wedding invitation to Ms Boynton’s aunt. Besides, we can find further proof of this deep friendship in some pages of Ms Boynton’s diary written between 1925–26 and in a photo taken on the day of Bing Xin’s marriage, June 15th 1929, where Ms Boynton and Leighton Stuart, then the President of Yanjing University, are the only foreigners. Then, the relationship between Bing Xin and her best friend Grace Boynton continued after Bing Xin’s graduation at Wellesley College when Ms Boynton started to translate into English

one of the first two collections of poems by Bing Xin, *Chunshui* 春水, becoming the first translator of Bing Xin's early works.

5 Conclusion

In 1929 Ms Boynton privately printed the translation and then decided to publish it “to bring a sample of what modern Chinese poetry had to offer to an English-speaking readership”, especially “to a gathering of fellow missionaries” (Boynton 1989, 96). So, Grace Boynton considers Bing Xin's poetry as “a sample of modern Chinese poetry”, a fruit of the May Fourth Movement both in the fragmentary style and in unconventional contents, though in a letter dated April 23, 1969, after she had been reached by a distressing rumour about the death of Bing Xin and her husband, she writes: “This was just one more tragedy brought about by the Red Guards who were intent on destroying everything connected with ‘the old culture’. Wanying [...] was a most exquisite product of traditional Chinese culture” (Boynton 1989, 97).

Nevertheless, this “product of traditional Chinese culture” is defined by her husband Wu Wenzao, during a talk to Bing Xin's father about their marriage, also reported by Charlotte Boynton (1989), as “the perfect combination of the loyalty, modesty and dignity of a Chinese lady and of the gaiety and freedom and self-confidence which she has learned from her contacts with the West”, while Zhang Wei⁷ (1986, 19), in an interview to Bing Xin refers to her style as “a unique style which combines the grace and ingenuity seen in Chinese classics with the clarity and ease of Western literature” deeply influenced, we could reasonably add, by the answers she found in the values of Christian faith which, though in a constant inner struggle, she kept trusting.

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