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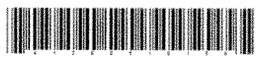
Patron Barcode: 

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China's Christian Colleges

CROSS-CULTURAL CONNECTIONS, 1900–1950

Edited by Daniel H. Bays and Ellen Widmer

STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA

TWO

American Geometries and the Architecture of Christian Campuses in China

JEFFREY W. CODY

Architects use materials and structures to create spaces that fulfill functions and satisfy clients. As architects design, they rely on formal systems—akin to languages—that provide rules, or "grammars," to assist them in meeting the myriad challenges associated with their craft. The Western classical language, derived from ancient traditions near the Mediterranean Sea, is one such system; the Chinese language of architecture, associated with bracket sets (*dougong*), which support heavy tiled roofs, is another.[1] The global history of architecture is replete with these languages, from the Islamic (which avoids human representation) to the modern of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (which sought to shun historical styles). However, the fact that these languages exist implies the need for those who experience any given work of architecture to benefit from clear translations. How did the architect's design concept become translated into particular places with a certain set of materials? How do those materials, and the forms they take on, relate to one another? How did certain functions translate into specific spaces? Ultimately, what language, or combination of languages, is one experiencing? Such translations become even more challenging—and stimulating—when one language of architecture, such as the so-called Western classical, speaks

within another cultural context, such as in China. With China's Christian colleges we confront the artifacts of that speech, initially created in architectural words by clients, contractors, and architects.

As they use tangible materials to create new spaces, architects also impart intangible meanings. Yet another translation question might be, How were past meanings translated into more contemporary uses? As one seeks to unravel the hidden meanings conveyed by the structures of China's Christian colleges, now existing in contexts that are drastically different from their original ones, one risks becoming mired in linguistic complexities. For example, during the past quarter century, the notion of a semiotics of architecture—that buildings embody cultural messages and thus can be read as if architecture were literature—has been a popular and intriguing idea among architectural scholars, but one that has yielded unclear methodologies about how, precisely, to decipher cultural meaning from architectural language. As they probe how architectural language infuses cultural meaning, some scholars emphasize the interactions among the signifier, signified, and referent. Others stress how meanings can shift over time, making semiotic analysis even more problematic.[2] Despite a lack of consensus about methodology, however, many architectural historians and critics have asked probing and stimulating questions about how to determine varying measures of significance, meanings, and values associated with architectural artifacts of cultural heritage.[3]

ASSOCIATION, ASSIMILATION, AND FOUR DESIGN STRATEGIES

One key question related to the architecture of China's Christian colleges, therefore, is, What can the language of architecture of those colleges explain that other, more conventional languages cannot? Here I suggest that the answer is that the architectural forms and spaces related to those colleges both tangibly and abstractly conveyed educational ideals espoused by clients who normally used more conventional spoken or written language. The tangible way the colleges conveyed those ideals was through either a juxtaposition or a melding of Chinese and non-Chinese architectural forms, through either assimilation or association, also known as adaptation. These paired, alliterative words were sometimes used by contemporary colonizing administrators

and idealistic philanthropists (especially in France) as they sought to integrate, fuse, and, in more political terms, envelop and control far-flung dominions that had come under European (and subsequently, North American) influence in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the historian Gwendolyn Wright lucidly explained it,

> To most observers, the underlying premises of assimilation were twofold: the cultural predominance of the European country, in its language, its laws, and even its prevailing architectural styles—the famous *mission civilisatrice*; and the military prowess of the European country, demonstrated through destruction of indigenous cities and towns, embodied in a continuing, visible military presence. In contrast, most advocates of association insisted on respect for and preservation of distinctive local cultures, even cultural differences among indigenous people, including tribal councils and historic monuments; and the realization that this respect, when combined with social services like schools and hospitals, might counter resistance far more effectively than military strength. All the same, throughout the controversies of the 19th and 20th centuries, the two policies and their advocates were often closer together, in principles and practices, than most commentators acknowledged. Both approaches were fundamentally variations on the colonial exercise of power over a subject people. . . . With different rationales, each restricted the colonized population's access to Western education.[4]

Builders and promoters of Christian colleges in China were not intending to restrict access to Western education—on the contrary, their avowed intention was to expand that access—but my analysis of the architecture of the colleges suggests that the premises of assimilation and association were also operative within the idealistic scope of Christian college sponsors and designers.

The more abstract way that educational ideals were imparted stemmed from what I call American geometries—"American" because they were promoted by American designers, but not purely American because of how the employment of those geometries ultimately related to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, during the nineteenth century the preeminent school of architecture in the Western world. The Beaux-Arts method helped architects lay out their buildings within a spatial system that made coherent sense to them. Curiously, this method, which relied on the predilection for symmetry and the creation of courtyard configurations, also resonated with Chinese clients and users of those spaces.

Yenching University in Beijing was the campus that epitomized most palpably how architectural and educational ideals coalesced during the republican period. However, to understand the architectural climax of Yenching, it is crucial to grasp its importance in the context of the other twelve Christian colleges in China, most particularly Ginling College for Women (Nanjing), Fukien Christian University (Fuzhou), and Lingnan College (Guangzhou). The American architect Henry Murphy played a key role in the design of three of these institutions—Yenching University, Ginling College for Women, and Fukien Christian University—and later in his career he also designed some structures at Lingnan. Other American architects—Perkins, Fellows & Hamilton at Nanjing University and Shantung Christian University; C. W. Stoughton and James R. Edmunds at Lingnan; John McGregor Gibb at Yenching; and E. F. Black and Paul Wiant at Fukien Christian University—also figured prominently as campus designers of Christian colleges in China. So, too, did American clients, as missionaries, educators, or benefactors, or all three of these.

To get a sense of the crucial relationship between Christian college clients and their architects, it is illuminating to review the writing of Matilda Thurston, the first president of Ginling College for Women in Nanjing, who wrote from China in 1914 about her dreams for the new campus for that college:

> I am sure we can do some good in helping to stem the tide of unthinking imitation of things Western. . . . The finest thing about the college [has been] the way we [have made] the best of what we had—the building being one illustration. We have the problem of adapting everything. Our ideal is a college as good as any American college but it must be adapted to the needs of China. . . . We are full of plans for the new buildings which we must have soon if the college is to keep on growing. It is all very well to make the best of what you have, but growing children need new clothes and all our missionary work is making new and larger demands because it is growing. . . . We are planning buildings in Chinese style—another case of adapting, of trying to keep what is good. The plan of the group for 400 students . . . outlines a cross like a great Gothic cathedral, the resident quadrangle forming the transepts and the administration or academic group forming the nave. I like the symbolism in this. Out of the Chinese buildings surrounding the courts we make a great cathedral, open to heaven, and shaping a cross.[5]

Thurston articulated here an architectural and spatial ideal—a vast collegiate cathedral—that accommodated the paramount Christian symbol of

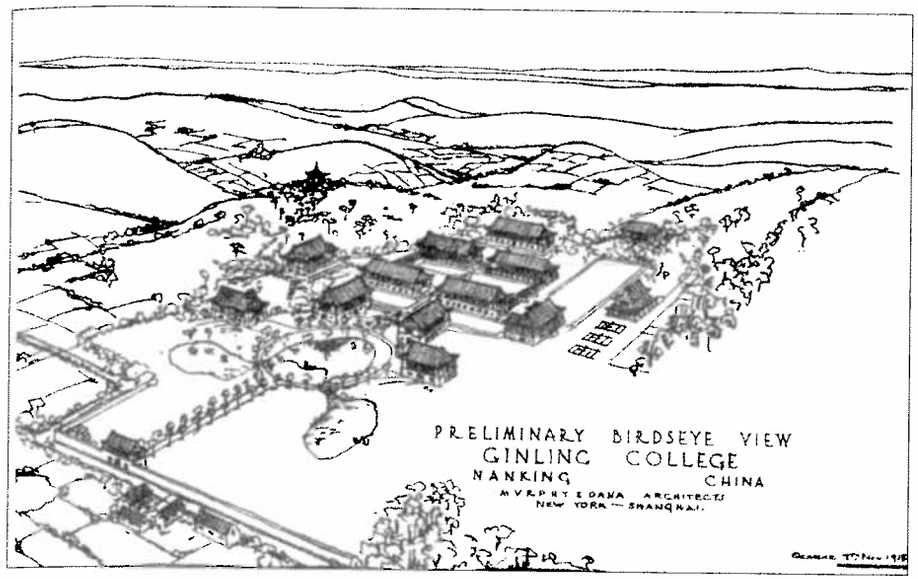

Figure 1. Ginling College, bird's-eye view, circa 1924. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

the cross within Nanjing's "buildings surrounding the courts." (See Figure 1.) By sharing her dream and reveling in the symbolism it represented, she also revealed one architectural way to solve "the problem of adapting everything": to keep what is good in form (i.e., Chinese style) but to reconfigure those forms spatially into a creation that would be "open to heaven" and would simultaneously accommodate what Thurston saw as some of the educational and spiritual needs of a post-Qing China. Her vision in 1914 related partially to pedagogy and religion, but a more architectural dimension of her vision concerned the buildings and the spaces implied by the settings of those buildings, where education would occur. Not an architect herself, she turned to Henry Murphy, a young, dynamic American architect who helped her fulfill those needs and crystallize that vision, someone who shared her ideals for adaptation.[6]

One important question related to Thurston's and Murphy's architectural challenge—indeed a challenge faced by many Christian college promoters—was how to fuse a largely American ideal for a Christian college onto a Chinese, predominantly non-Christian context. To answer that question,

clients and campus designers matched their educational ideals with architectural results by employing four interrelated strategies:

1. Clustering buildings around courtyards and on the edges of Chinese cities
2. Creating transitions from one campus space to another by using features such as covered arcades, trees, and paths
3. Employing axiality to relate individual buildings, open spaces, and members of the college community to a broader urban and spiritual context
4. Anchoring vistas by erecting relatively tall monumental structures

At their root, these four strategies were related to both Chinese and Western architectural traditions. Fundamentally, the bicultural overlapping of these strategies helped Thurston, Murphy, and others involved in the building of Christian colleges in China meet one of their architectural goals, which they often called "adaptation." Others might call this bicultural overlapping an example of architectural "association," whereby China's traditions were allowed to coexist roughly on a par with those derived from Western European university planning.

In other words, these four strategies suggest some of the spatially mediating ways that the architectural fusion of an American tertiary institution with a Chinese Christian college occurred—that is, by finding congruencies in a design sense between the traditions of Western campuses and Chinese residential, temple, garden, and palace configurations. Not all designers employed every one of the four strategies outlined above; in fact, some colleges reflected only one of the four, and in other instances the strategies for designing parts of a campus were related to factors beyond the aesthetic limits of design, such as budgets, personalities, and board politics. However, by examining the results of these four operative strategies, we might more sensitively understand the nature of place making related to China's Christian colleges and, in so doing, see how the ideals related to those colleges were made more palpable through an architecture of association. Ultimately, as time passed and their meanings shifted, the campuses of China's Christian colleges became artifacts that reflect their American as well as their Chinese context.

RECTANGLES AND TANGENTS: PLACE MAKING ON URBAN EDGES BY CREATING COURTYARDS AND TRANSITIONS

One of the most prevalent spatial aspects of China's Christian colleges was their courtyard configurations, often situated near the perimeters rather than in the heart of densely populated urban cores. The prevalence of courtyards is not surprising, given how significant such building configurations were in the Western European university tradition. Several scholars have underscored the significance of the courtyard, tracing its genesis within that tradition—dating roughly from the early thirteenth century—to two related rationales:

> the reverence for the space of the cloister within a Western monastic tradition (monasteries being located both within and outside city walls); and
>
> how a courtyard configuration, using the geometry of a square or rectangle, tended to maximize building space around that rectangle.

The historian Paul Turner suggested that one of the first quadrangles that served as a key precedent was William of Wykeham's design for New College (Figure 2) at Oxford University in 1379.[7] Turner further pointed to an important variation on the closed quadrangle—Gonville & Caius College at Cambridge University in 1579, where the space was "opened" on one side and more monumental focal points were accentuated by employing axiality. This shift, Turner asserted, "reflected new intellectual ideals" associated with the Renaissance.[8]

In the early seventeenth century, many European universities adopted and altered these quadrangular precedents. Similarly, university founders in North America—beginning with Harvard's creation in 1636—often followed this trend, but they also simultaneously departed from it. Turner maintained that one of the most important departures concerned how the quadrangle was "opened" as a landscape on the "frontier of cities" instead of being a closed space within city centers such as Oxford or Cambridge. "Beginning with Harvard, American schools favored a different spatial pattern, with separate buildings set in an open landscape. As a result, the typical American college has been extroverted and expansive, in contrast to the inward-looking English school."[9] In the nineteenth century, however,

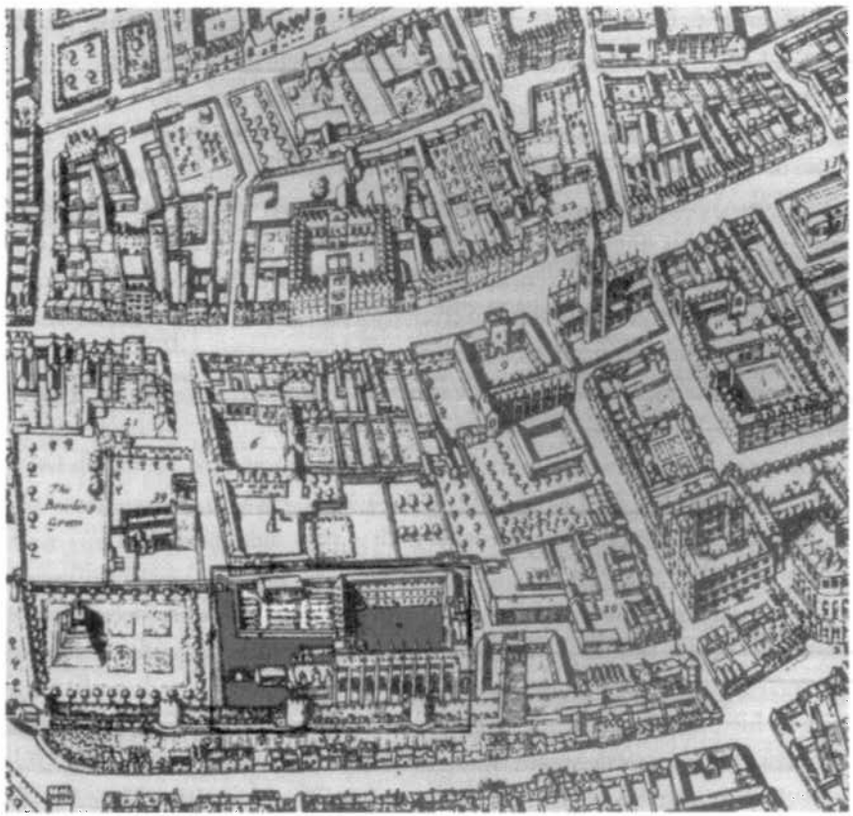

Figure 2. New College, Oxford University, as depicted in a portion of David Loggan's map of Oxford, from *Oxford Illustrata*, 1675, reproduced in Paul V. Turner, *Campus: An American Planning Tradition* (New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1984), 11.

another trend in U.S. campus planning became evident, especially in New England, where many schools (such as Vassar) "ambitiously constructed enormous single-building colleges containing administration, classrooms, residences, etc., [but] at the beginning of the 20th century most of these behemoths conveniently burned to the ground. About that same time, administrators began to understand the advantages of containing various functions in separate places."[10] Simultaneously, many of those same administrators began to incorporate ideals from the so-called City Beautiful movement, which reflected preferences for arranging important civic buildings along dominant visual axes. Therefore, by the early twentieth century a variety of

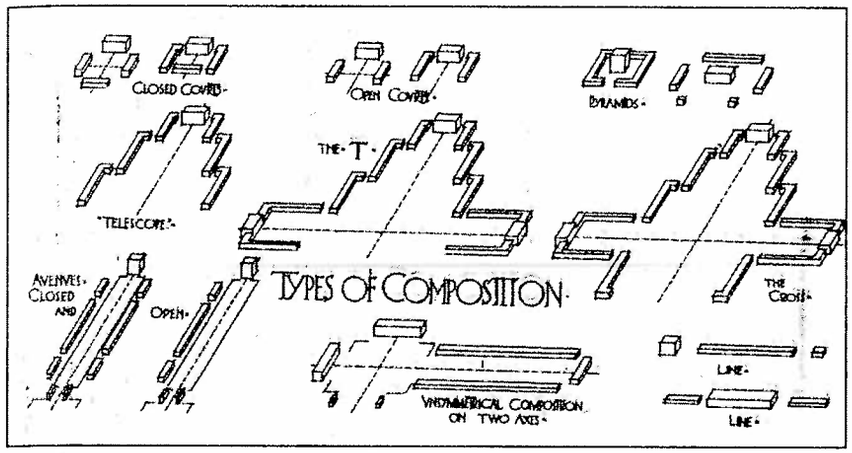

Figure 3. Alfred Morton Githen's drawings of the "Types of Composition" of U.S. campuses in the early twentieth century, in Richard Dober, *Campus Landscape* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2000), 162.

U.S. campus configurations had begun to emerge, many of them incorporating courtyards, as demonstrated graphically in Figure 3. And because, increasingly, contemporary architects in the Western tradition were being influenced by assumptions of beauty and harmony linked to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, they often applied principles of space making related to bilateral symmetry and employed ideals of form making related to geometry, hence, axes, quadrangles, triangles, circles, and variants derived from these shapes.

Many sponsors of Christian colleges in China, as they envisioned those places based on European and U.S. prototypes, assumed the importance of quadrangles and courtyards. These spatial arrangements from Western university traditions were also well suited to both adaptation and association. As several Chinese scholars have shown, courtyards were ubiquitous in Chinese spatial configurations.[11] Xu Yinong's insightful analysis of Suzhou provides particularly relevant points regarding how a Chinese building, rather than standing "alone as a self-assertive structure independent of other structures . . . was considered a part of a building compound designated for a certain social establishment, whether it be a palace, a local government office, a school, a house or a temple."[12] Xu explained that, if an individual building was "an integral element of a larger composition in which it performed its functions in harmony with other elements," then that larger composition was frequently a courtyard (*ting*, *yuan* or *tingyuan*), "the repeating unit of space" whose

measurements were closely "associated with those of the buildings adjacent to it, which in principle were arranged by repetition, to compose . . . a walled compound."[13] Xu underscored the flexibility of these configurations in Chinese traditional architecture. However, he also differentiated between European notions of how particular "building forms and types should be closely associated with social institutions (thus the church had its distinctive Christian structures, the municipal government had its town halls)," and Chinese notions of the relationship between building types and social institutions, which lacked a "formal bond" between the two.[14]

Architects who designed Christian colleges in China were undoubtedly familiar with the ubiquity and potential monumentality of Chinese courtyard configurations. Henry K. Murphy was one of those architects. On his first visit to Beijing, in 1914, Murphy "wandered spellbound for hours through . . . the Forbidden City, . . . swept off his feet by the 'sheer architectural majesty' of the site. 'This is the finest group of buildings in the world. Such stateliness and splendor are not to be found in any other group in any city and any country.' "[15] The group of Forbidden City structures—most likely the Taihe Dian, Zhonghe Dian, and Baohe Dian, structures that Nancy Steinhardt has called the "pivot of the Forbidden City"[16]—that so fascinated Murphy was erected in the Ming dynasty (ca. 1420s) with modifications that extended through the late Qing (late nineteenth century). When he was commissioned in the late 1910s to design educational structures for missionary clients, Murphy was clearly influenced by the intense sensory experience he had had in Beijing in 1914. However, simultaneously (and in ways that are not discernible from the documentation he left behind) he was also conceptualizing the New England campuses he had used as prototypes in commissions such as the Loomis School, in Windsor, Connecticut. The courtyard was the common spatial denominator in these two inspirations, even if (as Xu Yinong explained) the relationship between function and space, in a Chinese context, was not equivalent to what Murphy and other architects would have experienced in North America or Europe.

Murphy, and the clients for whom he was working, sought to adapt the imported, novel architecture from the West—thus seeking to soften China's blow of receiving new educational building types after the demise of traditional examination systems—by not appearing to be overly intrusive. They were thus associating the campus prototype from a Western tradition with Chinese prototypes such as those Murphy experienced in the Forbidden

Figure 4. Undated photograph of Shantung Christian University, Jinan. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

City, in the context of the still-evolving set of buildings and spaces that would become a post-Qing Chinese university setting (Figure 4). As one of the members of the Presbyterian board responsible for Shantung Christian University (Jinan) articulated it, "Every consideration of propriety and good taste, and due regard for natural ideals calls for the adaptation of a building to the prevailing ideas of the region in which the building is erected. . . . We ought to be careful of a style of architecture so distinctly foreign that it is stamped as alien and exotic."[17]

Murphy sometimes characterized his "adaptation of Chinese architecture" by invoking a metaphor about old wine in new bottles, and new wine in old ones:

> Old wine in new bottles . . . strikingly brings out one aspect of what we are accomplishing at Yenching University by the use of new reinforced concrete construction for buildings in the old Chinese style of architecture. But in another aspect this might be called "new wine in old bottles" for I like to think of our adaptations of Chinese architecture as furnishing an old setting for the new education offered to China by such institutions as Yenching. . . . The more deeply I get into the beauty, richness and dignity of the best of the old buildings that have come down to us from the great Chinese builders of the past, the more certain I am that it is worth all the time and trouble and

expense we are putting into our efforts to translate this wonderful art from mere archaeology into the living architecture of today, and so to preserve to the Chinese, and to the world, their splendid heritage.[18]

In that same vein of adaptation, as is clear from where Christian college sponsors often chose to situate colleges—tangentially, on the fringes of Chinese conurbations rather than spatially hemmed in by them—those sponsors wanted to be "expansive and extroverted" without being overtly ostentatious. In other words, these clients, who were hiring architects like Murphy, understood what he expressed above, that "one of the university's higher missions is to fashion a dialogue through bricks and mortar . . . with an intellectual mission in the broadest sense. . . . Buildings need to be silent teachers."[19]

One of the ways that Matilda Thurston imagined that teaching was in Ginling's physical proximity to mission churches and the new Nanjing University, and in its ideological proximity to Smith College. She, like many university founders in colonial America, envisioned being both detached from and yet engaged with the city. In discussing the site for Ginling, for example, she maintained that

> the city can be seen off to the southeast, giving the sense of being a part of the life of the great city, though removed from its distractions. . . . Possibilities of expansion are also another point. The country to the west is all very attractive open country and not likely to be built up by the pushing out of the city. . . . The distances from Methodist, Christian, and Presbyterian centers are in the proportion of 3:4:5, nearly enough equal to give no one a marked disadvantage, if students should scatter to attend different church services, or to help in the work of different missions. . . . [Furthermore] it lies near, but not too near, the new campus [Nanjing University] where church, library and laboratories will be built. . . . If we are to have the advantage of expensive equipment in laboratory and library, or of the University lectures, both popular and academic, we should not be too remote from the University.[20]

As for the Smith connection, "the plan of relating the women's colleges at home to our college is one we have talked over as something to count on in the future. It is very interesting to know that the idea is already working at home and I am particularly interested in the Smith College plan."[21] By "plan," Thurston explained that she was referring not to Smith's physical configuration but instead to paradigms for teaching English and using excellent libraries; "the books and the house to keep them in would be a big enough object to work for at the start, and one, it seems to me, admirably suited to appeal to college girls at home."[22] The drawings of Henry

Murphy and his architects, as well as photographs that document the early stages of Ginling's construction, show clearly how the architectural aspects of the college began to reflect the client's notions of tangential city connections and detachments, as well as rectilinear courtyard spaces and symmetry (Figures 5 and 6).

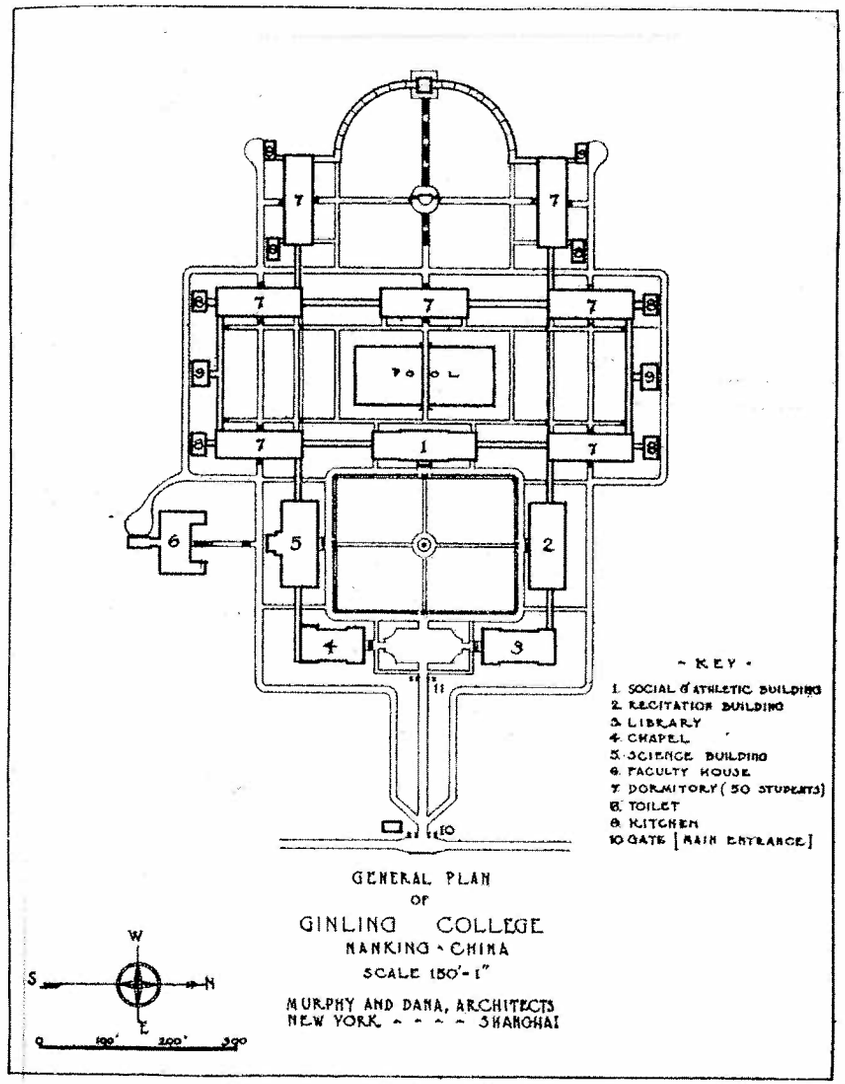

Figure 5. Plan of Ginling College for Women campus. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

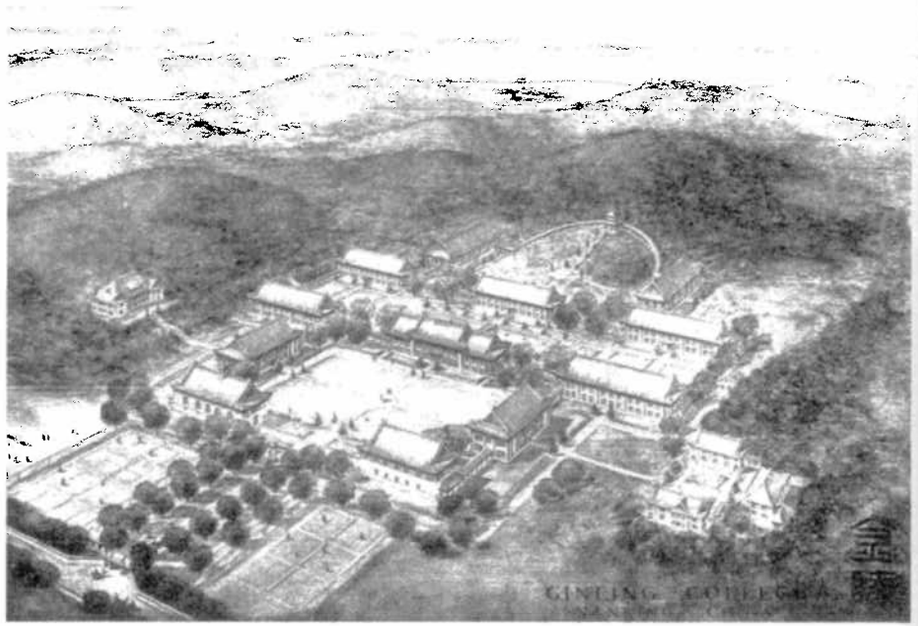

Figure 6. Bird's-eye view of Ginling College for Women. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

Photographs and drawings also demonstrate the importance of creating transitional places between one courtyard and another, or between one building and another. These spaces were sometimes reminiscent of Chinese gardens—presenting opportunities for reflection and visual surprise—and at other times resonant with covered walkways—such as those at the University of Virginia between Thomas Jefferson's famous pavilions, which would have been familiar to all Christian college designers (Figures 7 and 8). In other words, in this case the traditional Chinese garden became a spatially associative partner of early U.S. university settings.[23]

Murphy drew upon substantial experience when he experimented with courtyard configurations and transitional place making at Ginling College for Women. At the Loomis Institute in Windsor, Connecticut, as well as at the College of New Rochelle in New York, Murphy and his New York firm had already invoked a broad palette of styles for buildings and a diverse series of quadrangles for their placement.[24] In China, Murphy was already working on the Yale-in-China campus at Changsha when Thurston brought him into

Figure 7. Undated photo of Ginling students near a covered walkway. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

the Ginling commission. Furthermore, as Murphy and his team were sketching their ideas for the new Ginling campus, they were both inspired and influenced by what was occurring nearby at Nanjing University, where Perkins, Fellows & Hamilton's "series of ascending courts from a public road at the bottom of the north hill"[25] were already being built by the time Thurston, Murphy, and others were envisioning Ginling. The highest of those "courts" was the culminating space framed by five buildings (accentuated by a tower on the central administration building, discussed later in this chapter), where Sage Chapel faced the library,[26] and two science buildings faced each other just above the chapel and library (Figures 9 and 10). However, as was often the case with building projects in China of this magnitude—especially those based on missionary donations—sometimes budgetary realities collided with aesthetic or architectural ideals, or both. For instance, in 1917 the clients' Chicago-based architects felt compelled to eliminate at least one of the university's secondary courtyard spaces, devoted to dormitories, because of anticipated cash shortfalls.[27]

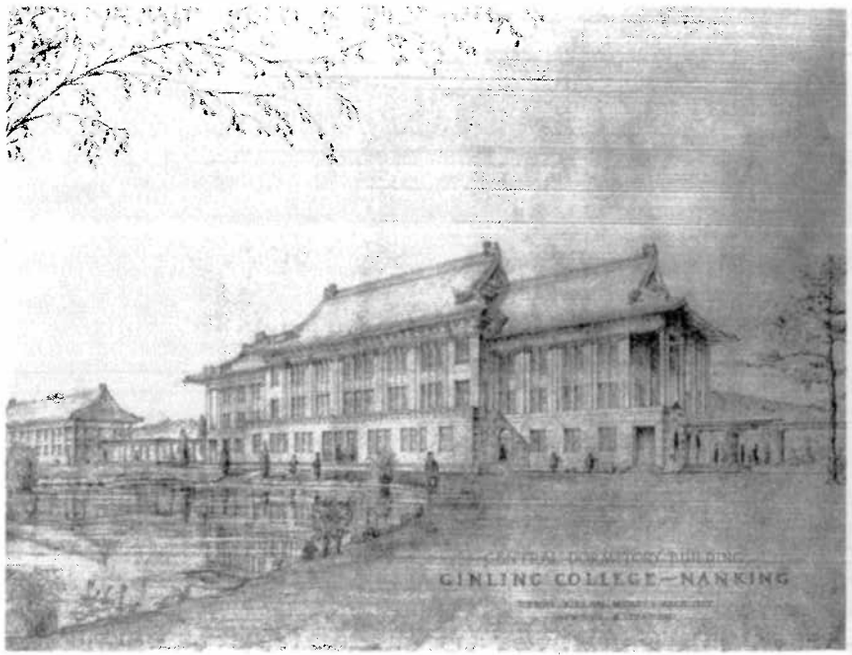

Figure 8. Drawing by Henry Murphy of a Ginling dormitory. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

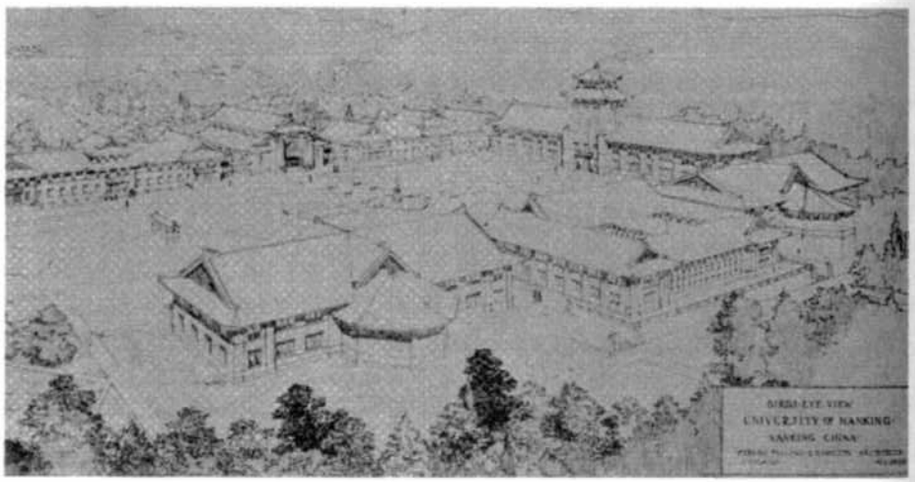

Figure 9. Plan of Nanjing University by Perkins, Fellows, and Hamilton. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

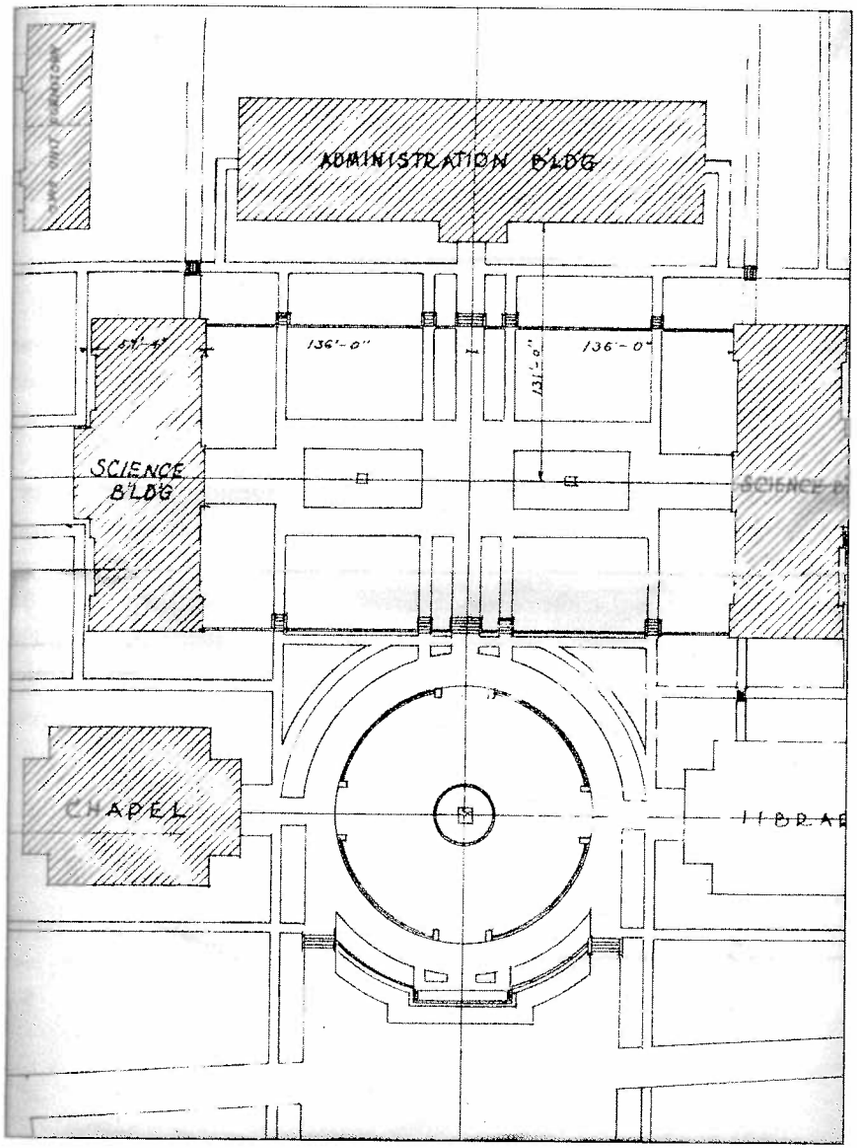

Figure 10. Detail of Nanjing University plan, showing chapel and nearby buildings. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

YENCHING UNIVERSITY: BUILDING UPON OTHER CHRISTIAN COLLEGE PRECEDENTS

Yenching University's design brought into unity at least two of the projects upon which Henry Murphy had been working since he opened his Shanghai office in 1918: Ginling College for Women and Fukien Christian University (FCU). The axiality and courtyard configurations of the Ginling project have been noted, but Murphy's FCU scheme was distinctive primarily because of its centripetal-centrifugal plan, unique among the Christian colleges (Figure 11).

FCU's hilltop and hilly site near the Min River (and, once again, well outside the city walls of nearby Fuzhou) did not lend itself easily to a long series of courtyards arranged on an axis. Instead, FCU's architects—Harry Hussey initially, but also the in-house Paul Wiant of the Fukien Construction Bureau, and finally Henry Murphy—were challenged to arrange buildings sensibly using the geometry of the circle. Murphy chose to place the tall chapel (itself configured as a circle-derived Greek cross crowned by an octagonal tower at the crossing) at the center of the campus's plan, with classroom and administrative buildings clustering around the central space. Beyond them were two open courtyards comprising mostly dormitories. Other circle-derived spaces—an open-air theater and a series of buildings configured

Figure 11. Undated photo of Fukien Christian University, overlooking Min River. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

around a subsidiary circle—were located beside these courtyards. Finally, an axial space of more dormitories and classrooms was detached from the campus's core. The geometry of the circle, however, did not meet with universal approval by FCU's in-house architects, who were troubled that "the chapel in the center will impede the view . . . [and that] such a large building will seem out of place in the very center of things."[28] In the end, however, the architects of the Fukien Construction Bureau concurred with Murphy, especially when they were given authority to make on-site changes within reasonable limits.

The issue of precedent—and architects building upon it—is clearly evident in how FCU and Ginling College for Women filtered into the Yenching University plan. Two other key plans that predated Yenching (and that did not significantly involve Henry Murphy) also figured in Yenching's axial configuration with vertical focal points: Nanjing University and Lingnan College (Canton Christian College). At Lingnan, where campus buildings had been arranged since the earliest years of the twentieth century on the perimeter of the city's busy center, increasingly there were attempts to give coherence to the campus by employing an axial arrangement. Drawings from around 1920 (Figures 12 and 13) show how preexisting buildings were envisioned to be placed in conformity to the axis, and how a tall building would help terminate the axis that would begin by the edge of the Pearl River. Courtyards would then be arranged on either side of that spinal axis.

The axiality of the Nanjing University plan, as well as the choice to place the water tower of that campus within the tall central wing of the main administration building on axis with the campus entrance (Figures 9 and 10), was also a noteworthy precedent for the Yenching plan. Perkins, Fellows & Hamilton were here applying what they knew about City Beautiful ideals concerning vertical focus and symmetry to the challenge of the adaptation of Chinese architecture. In so doing, they provided Murphy with two more precedents, one for his Yenching tower and the second for how he might arrange the buildings within his brief, both at Ginling College for Women and at Yenching University.

Early decision making about the location and configuration of Yenching (in 1916 known as Peking) University also reflected three of the concerns mentioned previously concerning Ginling, Nanjing, Lingnan, and Fukien:

its spatial dynamics within the preexisting, but changing Chinese city

its courtyard configurations

how monetary issues would impact the built form

Figure 12. Lingnan College, bird's-eye view. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

In 1917, as plans for Ginling College and Nanjing University were proceeding, Peking University trustees also planned for expansion, but they began to express concern about whether to locate the new university within or beyond the walled city of Beijing. After meeting with the new university's initial architect, Harry Hussey,[29] James Barton of Peking University's Property Committee reported that

> many educational institutions of this character are being built, both by the Government and by private organizations, outside of the walls of the old

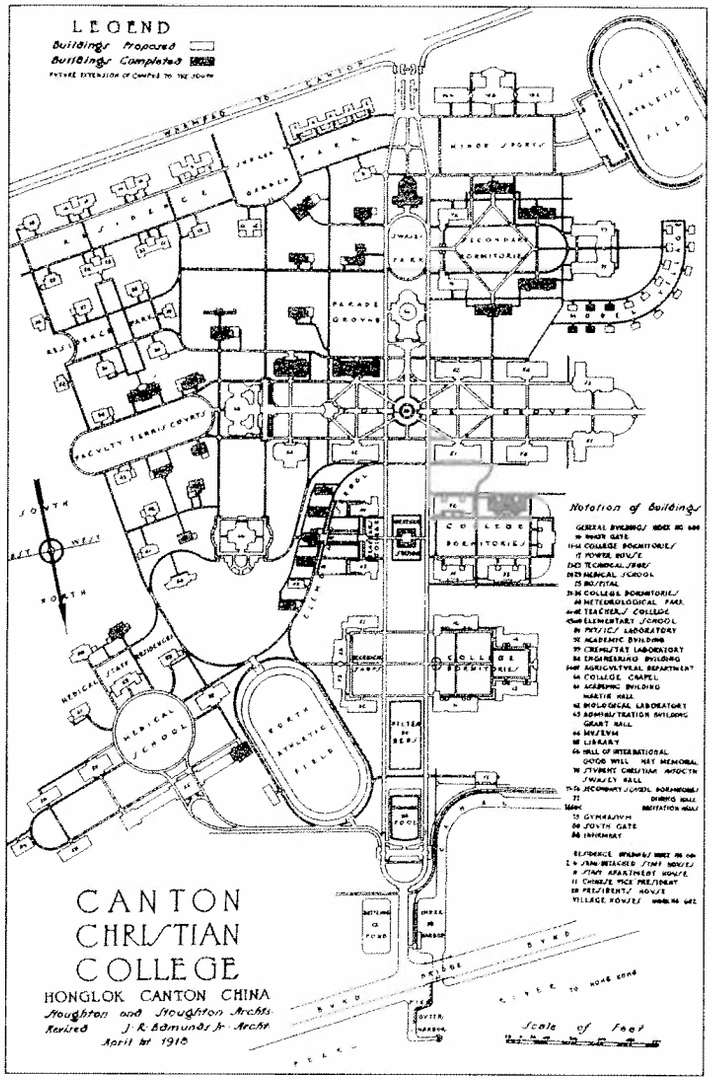

Figure 13. Canton Christian College (Lingnan) plan. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

Chinese cities, and from an architectural and real estate standpoint such a location would have advantages. The committee [knows] that the purchase of 100 acres or so of land outside the city can unquestionably be made for a fraction of the cost of the present contemplated site [in the southeast corner of the city].[30]

However, the university's president, Rev. H. H. Lowry, disagreed. He asserted that the land within the city, whose purchase had been negotiated carefully with President Yuan Shih-k'ai and his interior minister, Chu Ch'i-chien was much more compelling.

> [If the school is strategically located inside the city wall, students will have] the advantage of access to lectures, concerts, and the intellectual and social life of a great city. This advantage will become more evident as the city enters more fully upon modern conditions. The great hospitals, libraries and museums, together with the Parliament and other Government organizations are within the city. The Peking University is a Christian institution and, to fulfill its mission to the community, it is necessary that it should have opportunity to make its influence felt on the civic life, the great moral reforms and all that will uphold the highest ideals of citizenship. From all these inspirational and educational advantages, the students would be practically cut off if outside the city wall.[31]

Arguments for and against purchasing an extramural site continued until late September 1917, when the university's site commission met with Ambassador Paul Reinsch at the American Legation. Members were swayed both by Roger Greene's report about his meeting with Chu Ch'i-chien, who favored relocating west of the city walls, and by Reinsch's similar opinion. Rev. J. C. Garritt articulated his concern that the new university should "be put where it could lead," expand, and "become a Harvard or an Oxford," and not become "too strictly a missionary institution under mission control, [which would lead it] to be a nonentity."[32] Finally, the commission's consensus was to relocate west of the city's walls, to the series of former gentry gardens near Yuanming Yuan.

"A history of the garden cluster on the Yenching site can be traced back as early as Mi Wanzhong's (1570–1628) Shao Yuan on this site in the Ming Dynasty. However, it was not until Qianlong's era (1736–1795) that the site gained worldwide fame and importance as an adjunct of the famous imperial Yuanming Yuan, or the old Summer Palace."[33] Yenching's commission to utilize this site for the new campus was in keeping with its concern for adaptation; however, in making such a choice, the commission raised intriguing questions of interpretation, as one scholar has recently noted:

> Applying the seemingly self-sufficient concept "Chinese garden" to the Yenching campus plan, one may find three levels of interpretation pertain. First, in a physical sense, there is a completed campus which is reminiscent of a Chinese garden. . . . The place most "recognisable" as a Chinese garden is the vicinity around the Weiming Hu (Nameless Lake), which is based on the biggest lake left by old gardens on the site. In this area, an irregular layout of "Chinese-style" buildings, zigzagging footpaths, artificial hills, Chinese rockeries, a stone boat and some stone monuments left from old gardens and a pagoda used both for water supply and as landmark of the University all suggest the "Chineseness" of the campus plan. Meanwhile, on the rest of the campus, buildings are arranged along the east-west axis or north-south axis . . . in a rigid symmetry. . . . Second, the site . . . was a neglected Ming-Qing garden cluster. . . . Furthermore, as the biggest university built by Western churches in modern China, the Yenching campus imbued the Chinese garden, formerly a *private* site, with a *public* dimension [italics in the original]. Consequently, a vision of the "campus [as a] garden" (*xiao yuan*) developed from the Yenching model. This is the third interpretive level of "garden," which changes the historical trajectory of traditional Chinese gardens to a great extent.[34]

Therefore, on this site of "contested meanings," in 1919, the university's architects, chief among them Henry Murphy—who had replaced his rival, Harry Hussey—began imagining new kinds of courtyard spaces that would meld the vision of the new university with the heritage of both Yuanming Yuan and the Forbidden City itself.[35] At that time Murphy expressed what he saw as the crucial relationship shared by new architecture, tradition, and the national capital: "There is general agreement that it is especially desirable, in Peking, the capital, to preserve the splendid heritage of Chinese Architecture. It has been decided to have the new buildings for Peking University in an adaption [*sic*] of the native style, as exemplified in the beautiful buildings within the 'Forbidden City.' "[36]

Both clients and architects in Nanjing and Beijing were learning a lesson that many contemporary campus designers in the United States were continually learning, that implementing a campus plan was often "a battle between picturesque placemaking and the provision of rationally designed buildings."[37] In China, where the architectural benchmarks for both picturesqueness and rationality were not equivalent to what college designers experienced in the United States, such a "battle" was even more culturally loaded. One gets a sense of this complexity by examining the place making of the Christian colleges related to axiality and erecting visually prominent, tall structures.

PLANE AND SOLID FOCAL POINTS AT YENCHING: PLACE MAKING BY CREATING AXES AND BUILDING TALL STRUCTURES

Yenching University's development in the 1920s is a significant example of how axiality and monumentality were key aesthetic paradigms for the university's sponsors and designers. However, for at least fifteen years preceding what occurred at Yenching, similar assumptions were at play at other Christian college campuses concerning what might be termed plane and solid focal points, that is, the creation of axes as an application of plane geometry and the erection of distinctively tall monuments as an application of solid geometry. The utilization of geometry in this way was in keeping with Beaux-Arts approaches to architectural and civic design. The evolution of Yenching's plan demonstrates the flexibility of this geometry in the context of an adaptive and associative design, although that adaptation did not come without some sacrifice of the site's more "Chinese garden" topography for the sake of what Murphy argued, which was the need to respect his adapted architecture's "orderly grouping," one of the five characteristics he thought most noteworthy in Chinese architecture.[38]

In December 1919 Murphy conferred in Beijing with several Yenching administrators to map out the initial, phased strategies for the university's development. The "General Plan" resulting from those discussions reflects the importance of adaptation (or association) as the aesthetic guidepost for the university, and axiality combined with courtyards (and, to a lesser extent, covered arcades for transitions and circulation) as the key determinants of its spatial disposition.

> As an adaptation of Chinese architecture is to be used for the individual buildings, it is very desirable that the general plan should also be Chinese in its main characteristics. . . . This idea . . . with a series of rectangular courtyards has now been approved in principle by the university authorities, both at New York and Peking. Main entrance at East end of main axis through centre of the property. Formal avenue of Approach opening into the main Academic Quadrangle. Secondary Academic Quadrangles adjoining the main Quad, on the North and South. Dormitory group, continuing on main axis, arranged in small quads. . . . Covered ways, joining all the buildings in a continuous circulation.[39]

Between 1920 and 1926 Murphy and his assistants, along with Yenching's administrators, experimented with at least four different plans (Figures 14–16).

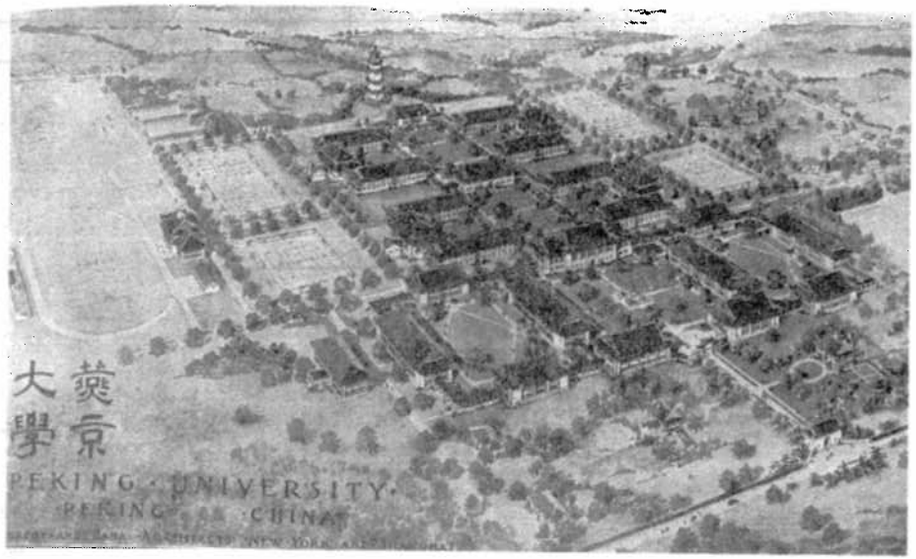

Figure 14. Yenching University, bird's-eye view, 1920. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

Despite their variation, each plan reflected allegiance to the spatial principles of axiality and quadrangular building arrangements. In 1920 the layout was roughly reminiscent of the one conceived for Ginling College for Girls, which Matilda Thurston had imagined as a cathedralesque set of spaces consisting of a nave, transept, and apse (Figure 1). For Yenching, Murphy imagined a tree-lined path on axis with the principal entrance, which would lead east into a main quadrangle anchored by the library and administration building, beyond which were two open, facing quads that would form a long, east-west, cruciform space. Beyond this first pair of open quadrangles, a similar space was shown on axis, and, beyond that, terminating the axis was a tall, pagoda-shaped water tower.[40] In the 1920 plan, the lake existing on the site was assumed to be filled in, and the reclaimed land would hold the second set of open quadrangles.

By 1922, however, Murphy had significantly modified the plan (Figure 15). He left the lake intact and proposed that the water tower–pagoda be placed on an island that was situated on axis with the university's main entrance. The chapel, which in the 1920 plan was one of the side buildings near that entrance, in the 1922 plan was placed on axis with, and behind, the library and administration building. Men's dormitories arranged in open courtyards were

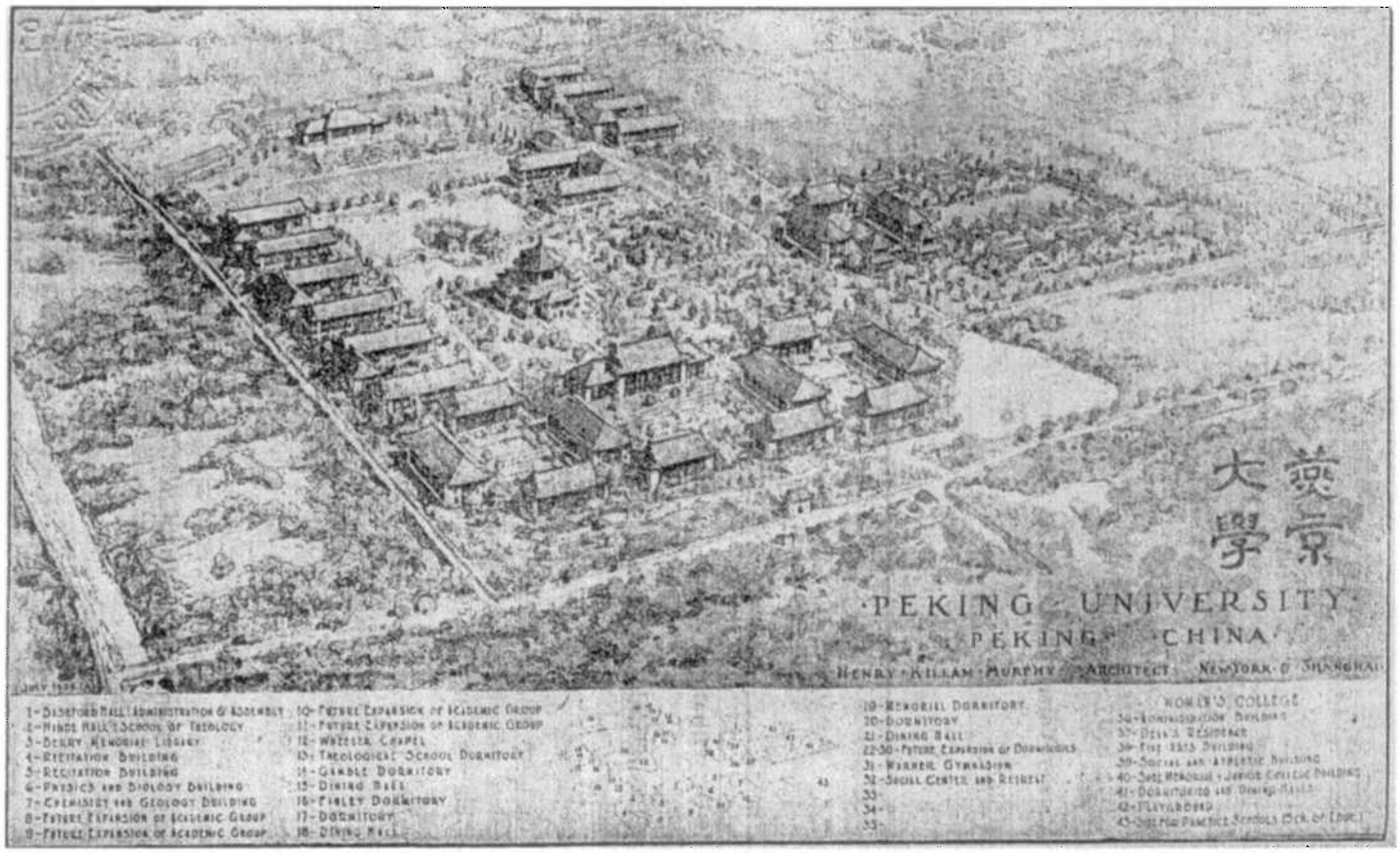

Figure 15. Yenching University, bird's-eye view, 1922. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

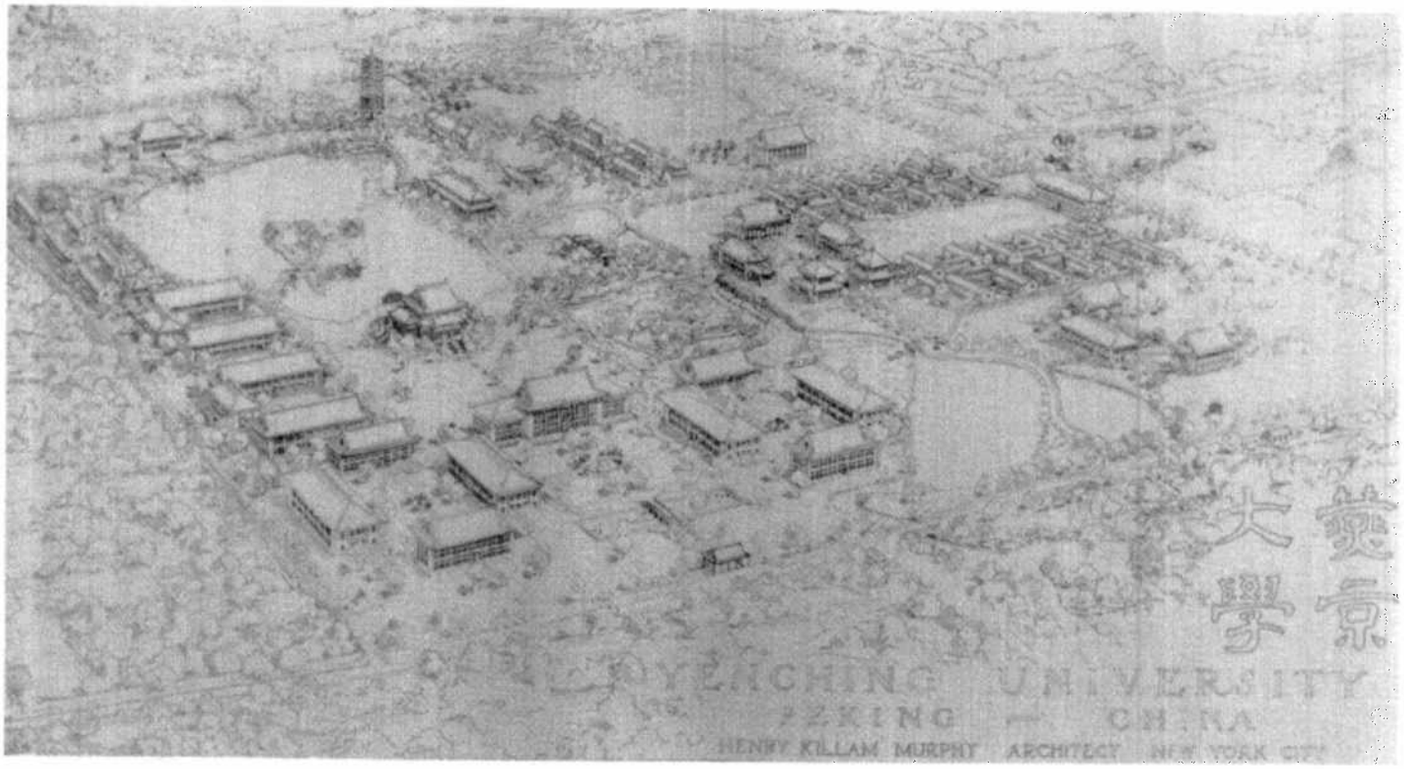

Figure 16. Yenching University, bird's-eye view, 1926. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

Figure 17. Warner Gymnasium and Water Tower, Peking (Yenching) University. Special Collections, Yale University Divinity School Library.

placed north of the chapel and the island. Curiously, by 1922, Murphy's bird's-eye view of the campus plan did not show the pagoda, although the axial and quadrangular nature of the plan was dominant (Figure 15). In the 1926 plan, the pagoda had reappeared, albeit off axis (Figure 16). Yenching's character as a so-called union university of several missions was one of its significant trademarks. Its architectural "union" is also evident in how clients sanctioned the adaptation of Ming pagoda traditions with Beaux-Arts predilections for vertical focal points (Figure 17). In contrast to Buddhist architecture, traditional Chinese courtyard architecture did not emphasize the vertical. This is true even of large-scale compositions such as the Forbidden City.

CONCLUSION

This brief analysis of selected features of China's Christian colleges suggests that tangible, built form has a bearing on intangible, educational ideals. How should we make sense of those connections? How should we read more clearly, in other words, the Christian colleges' semiology?[41] I suggest that one way is to scrutinize the architectural dynamics of the Christian colleges with an eye to two significant contexts. One of those was the

drive for adaptation in contemporary Chinese architecture (most notably exemplified by Murphy, but also seen in many of his contemporaries), which sought to adapt Chinese architectural traditions to more up-to-date needs, one of which was associated with schools in a radically changing China. As I have explained here, the word "association" also connoted an architectural approach similar to what Murphy, Thurston, and others were calling "adaptation." Rather than assimilating China's Christian colleges into an overarching Christian educational enterprise of similarly configured campuses, the architects and their clients were trying to adapt forms and spaces, and simultaneously associate them with prototypes in either Europe or North America.

The second context related to how the architectural dynamics of the Christian colleges were associated with the dominant, contemporary architectural paradigm—the Beaux-Arts—which fundamentally utilized mathematical principles related to symmetry and geometry in the creation of architectural form and space. The congruency of those contexts suggests that it was fortuitous for Christian college designers that they were functioning within such rich architectural traditions: the Beaux-Arts from France (via the United States) and indigenous Chinese building traditions, each reflecting a keen understanding of mathematics.

The adaptation of architecture was largely occurring in either its ornamental or its stylistic terms, whereby architects sometimes appropriated hipped, tiled roofs and sweeping, overhanging eaves because of their formal intensity and popular appeal (at least among missionary and a selection of other groups, although not universally). I suggest that the issue of adaptation runs more deeply than the skin of buildings' facades; one should understand the concept of adaptation within the larger spatial contexts of how buildings were configured in the landscape, and of how buildings functioned.[42] The examples I have briefly described and analyzed, in other words, are tips of a much larger iceberg.

How should we penetrate that iceberg? One way is to try to relate some of these architectural dynamics of adaptation to approaches also suggested by by the words "assimilation and" "association." In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, an assimilative approach to architectural design was one that sought to strike similarities between a prototypical design of a more powerful country (or culture) and a new design of a less powerful country that was being influenced—socially, economically, politically, or otherwise—by the more powerful nation. Conversely, an associative or adaptive approach

was one that juxtaposed indigenous architectural traditions with the traditions of a more powerful country, so that the former was associated with, rather than subjugated by, the latter. In the case of the Chinese Christian colleges, we find both approaches coexisting. Therefore, in order to understand these approaches, it is imperative to consider the broader cultural, religious, and pedagogical contexts in which designers were operating.[43]

I conclude, therefore, with a call to examine both the microscopic and macroscopic realities concerning the built form of the Christian colleges in China. One useful barometer of those realities is embedded in what I call the geometries of the campus itself, as a tangible artifact that, perhaps surprisingly, has been spared widespread demolition despite so many changes to China's architectural fabric in the past century. On five campuses I have focused on four elements related to those geometries: courtyards, transitions, axes, and tall structures. Other potential issues related to adaptation, assimilation, or association that are worthy of further study are a consideration (or ignorance) of feng shui; an avoidance (or downplaying) of China's diverse, vernacular architectural traditions; and structural modifications related to the exporting of American architecture.[44] The international context of missionary college design is another fertile territory that is worth exploring in further detail. For example, roughly contemporaneous with the construction of China's Christian colleges was a proliferation of missionary college campuses in southern India: St. Xavier's and Women's Christian College in Chennai (Madras); the Christian Medical College in Vellore; and St. Joseph's College in Trichy (Tamil Nadu). Similarly, in the early twentieth century, many Christian colleges were also being designed in Japan, in Korea, and throughout Africa.[45] Architectural analyses of these complexes, matched with what has been discovered thus far related to the China case, would help probe the depths of that "iceberg" even further. I have suggested that the American context related to the Christian colleges is embedded both in the buildings and campus spaces, and in a broader cultural sweep that reaches to France (because of Beaux-Arts architectural principles), Greece (because of Euclidean geometry), Rome (because of so many prototypical examples of Christian spaces there), and myriad other places. Ultimately, I suggest that one of the messages of the Christian colleges—to adapt—was, in Marshall McLuhan's famous mantra, in the medium itself.[46] Both the medium *and* the message merit further scrutiny.

THREE

Science, Religion, and the Classics in Christian Higher Education to 1920

RYAN DUNCH

The Christian colleges that are the subject of this volume came into their own during China's Republican era (1911–49), and particularly after 1920. During that era they comprised a small but significant segment of higher education in China, accounting for around 15 percent of total college enrollments.[1] They were also a significant foil for Chinese nationalism, beginning with the protest movement of the 1920s against the foreign missionary influence in Chinese education. Consequently, much of the literature has looked back on the mission schools of earlier decades as the precursors of the colleges as they emerged after 1920. This chapter aims rather to trace the emergence of the colleges *forward* over the formative decades between about 1880 and 1920, decades in which the changes in the international and Chinese contexts, and in Chinese education in particular, were nothing short of staggering in their scope and implications.

The questions behind the chapter are fundamental ones: What did Protestant missionary educators think a modern, Christian, and Chinese education should consist of and why, and how did this concept change? The chief sources are the published and unpublished curricula of various mission colleges and records of debates among missionaries over educational