

RESEARCH ARTICLE

From Leuven to Beiping: European Educational Networks and the Founding of the National Beiping Higher Engineering School

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Abstract

Benefiting from his overseas study of engineering technology in Europe and long-term teaching experience at Fu Jen Catholic University in Beiping, Chen Guangxi grew into a leading scientific and technological expert in Beiping after August 1945. He was firstly appreciated by Shen Jianshi, a returnee from Japanese science universities, and later trusted by Zhu Jiahua, Minister of Education who also studied in Europe. Recommended jointly by the two scholars, Chen Guangxi established the National Beiping Higher Engineering School in merely five months on the basis of the North China Higher Industrial School founded during the Japanese occupation of Beiping, and served as its president. Former teachers and graduates of Fu Jen Catholic University made crucial contributions to the school's founding. After 1952, Fu Jen Catholic University disappeared as an independent institution in mainland China. However, its faculty, students and educational concepts endured for decades in various Beijing universities via the restructuring and distribution of its academic specialties. The People's Republic of China required Fu Jen's scientific and educational legacy to be separated from religious affiliations, and such contributions have been fully recognized. Fundamentally, this recognition mirrors the modern Chinese admiration for Western modern scientific achievements and science and technology education systems.

Key Words: Chen Guangxi; Shen Jianshi; Fu Jen Catholic University; National Peiping Advanced Industrial Vocational School; European Educational Networks

I The general historical background and Chen Guangxi's key role in the Founding of the National Beiping Higher Engineering School

Professor Chen Guangxi (1903–1992) was a distinguished expert in computer science in China. In 1920, he went to France to pursue further education, where he studied for more than one year at the Agricultural Machinery Specialty of the University of Toulouse, a prestigious university in southern France, and obtained the degree of Agricultural Engineer. Subsequently, he continued his studies in Belgium and graduated in 1930 from the renowned Catholic University of Leuven (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), earning two degrees: Mining Engineer and Mechanical Engineer. Chen Guangxi returned to China in 1930 and initially taught at several private universities and secondary schools in Shanghai and Beijing. Starting in 1932, he joined the newly founded Fu Jen Catholic University in Beijing, and became a Professor in the Department of Mathematics in 1938, a position he held until the spring of 1946. During that period, he participated in the founding of the National Peiping Advanced Industrial Vocational School and served as its first president. In 1957, at the invitation of Li Chang (1914–2010), President of Harbin Institute of Technology, Professor Chen Guangxi moved his entire family from Beijing to Harbin. He then worked at Harbin Institute of Technology for a long time until his death in 1992.

Chen Guangxi obtained the opportunity to independently establish an engineering university primarily owing to the recommendation of Professor Shen Jianshi, his colleague at Fu Jen Catholic University. This inference is grounded on a telegram in which Shen Jianshi (1887–1947) recommended Chen Guangxi to Zhu Jiahua, (1893–1963) Minister of Education, for the position of university president. Among the existing archival materials concerning the founding of the National Beiping Advanced Industrial Vocational School, the earliest surviving document is a correspondence dated February 12, 1946, sent by Shen Jianshi to Zhu Jiahua, then Minister of Education of the Nationalist Government. The third clause of this letter explicitly refers to the takeover and restructuring of the industrial school originally established by the Japanese, and puts forward the recommendation of Chen Guangxi as president:

(3) The former Japanese-run Beiping Higher Industrial School shall be reorganized into a vocational industrial school per ministerial order. Lu Yuanren informed me that you, Lord Liu, instructed to recommend a candidate with a mechanical engineering background. After careful investigation, Chen Guangxi, a graduate engineer from the University of Leuven, Belgium, is deemed the most suitable candidate. I intend to consult his willingness and forward the recommendation via Lu Yuanren, and hereby inform you in advance. A detailed

curriculum vitae of Mr. Chen will be submitted separately, and I would appreciate your preliminary endorsement. Please also promptly advise Lu Yuanren's official position in the Ministry. (Ministry of Education, Republic of China ,1946)

In the telegram, "Lord Liu" is an honorific title for Zhu Jiahua. The correspondence records that Zhu Jiahua entrusted Shen Jianshi to recommend a scholar with a mechanical engineering background to lead the newly founded school. Shen subsequently recommended Chen Guangxi, noting his overseas education at the University of Leuven in Belgium and his qualification as a professional engineer.

II. Shen Jianshi's Understanding of the Japanese-Founded North China Higher Industrial School During His Tenure at Fu Jen Catholic University

Although Mr. Shen Jianshi was forced to remain in Beiping, he consistently refused to serve in cultural institutions controlled by the Japanese puppet regime. Instead, he took advantage of the special position of Fu Jen Catholic University, which as a church university was still able to operate independently in the early stages of the War of Resistance, to secretly organize the "Yan Society" and engage in underground anti-Japanese propaganda activities. According to materials from this period compiled by the editor of the Chronological Biography of Shen Jianshi, he was thoroughly familiar with the situation of various higher education institutions in Beiping during the occupation. The North China Higher Industrial School, founded by the Japanese invaders, was established in 1938. Its main campus was located at the Shuncheng Prince's Mansion at Beigouyan inside Fuchengmen (now the site of the CPPCC Auditorium), which was no more than eight li from Beijing Fu Jen Catholic University where Shen Jianshi had long served, and could be reached on foot within an hour. Although the teachers and students of this industrial school were all Japanese and it was not open to Chinese people, Shen Jianshi may still have been able to learn about the basic situation of the school through introductions by some scholar friends. An important set of corroborating evidence comes from Qian Xuanton's diary entries recording figures and events surrounding the interactions between the Qian and Shen families. As a fellow disciple of Zhang Taiyan, Qian Xuanton similarly remained in Beiping after the fall of Beiping due to reasons such as his long-standing illness and family burdens, and the Condorcet School was one of his main places of activity. In early 1938, Qian Xuanton had interactions with the Japanese scholar Lin Shengkui, who taught at the Dalian Industrial College:

(January 4, 1938) Tuesday. Morning, continued organizing Quan's books. Afternoon, went to Condorcet. At three o'clock, went to the dictionary office, met Wang and the Japanese Mr. Lin Shengkui. Mr. Lin is a teacher at the Dalian Industrial College; he gave me candy, discussed national pronunciation standards, and brought out an album asking me to write in it. Returned home at five o'clock; very cold. (Qian,2014,p.1305)

From this record, it appears that Qian Xuanton's conversation with this Japanese scholar was quite lengthy (at least over an hour). Although the content of their discussion was not explicitly recorded, the fact that they could discuss professional academic issues such as "national pronunciation standards" suggests that they had some common topics of conversation. The "Dalian Industrial College" here is suspected to refer to the "South Manchuria Industrial College" that operated during the Japanese occupation of Dalian. This college began operations as early as 1911 under the auspices of the South Manchuria Railway Company (Mantetsu), the Japanese colonial invasion agency in China. In 1922, it was renamed to the aforementioned name. After the victory in the War of Resistance, in March 1946, the college was received by the Nationalist Government and renamed "Dalian Industrial College," which later became part of the Dalian Institute of Technology and today's Dalian University of Technology. Whether this Japanese scholar's activities in Beiping were related to the founding of the North China Higher Industrial School in 1938 currently lacks direct documentary evidence. However, it can be inferred from the above account in Qian Xuanton's diary that Qian already knew of Japanese scholars teaching at an industrial school coming to Beiping to conduct activities, and may have revealed this news to his close friend Shen Jianshi through daily gatherings and interactions.

Qian Xuanton and Shen Jianshi maintained quite close interactions in Beiping after the occupation. This

was due firstly to their aforementioned relationship as fellow disciples under the same master, and secondly because both had deep connections with the Condorcet School. According to the 1938 records in Qian Xuantong's Diary, he met with Shen Jianshi four times after May. However, a more direct connection came from Shen Lingyang, who then taught at the Condorcet School and later served as its principal. Shen Lingyang was the eldest son of Shen Yinmo. For a period, he met Qian Xuantong almost every day. For example, in Qian's diary entries from January 2 to 6, 1938, there is almost a daily record of "went to Condorcet, met Li, Shen, Chen".

(Qian, 2014, pp. 1304-1305) Comparing this with Qian's later diary entries on gatherings where he recorded the full names of participants, it can be deduced that the Li here refers to Li Zhaoyi, Shen refers to Shen Lingyang, and Chen refers to Chen Binghua—all three were teaching at the Condorcet School at that time.

Within the Shen family, Shen Lingyang would have addressed Shen Jianshi as "Third Uncle." Since his father Shen Yinmo had already moved to Shanghai at that time (and after the Japanese occupation of Shanghai in 1938, he fled to Chongqing to avoid the conflict), and his eldest uncle Shen Shiyuan had also gone to serve in the Zhejiang Provincial Department of Education before the fall of Beiping (Shen C.Q. 2017, p105), the only senior member of the family remaining in Beiping was Shen Jianshi. According to Mr. Shen Changqing, the grandson of Shen Yinmo, citing the recollections of Qian Bingxing, Qian Xuantong's son, Shen Jianshi was one of the founders of the Condorcet School. (Shen C.Q. 2017, p249) Therefore, information about Japanese people coming to Beiping to establish an industrial school circulating among the teaching and administrative staff of the Condorcet School may have attracted considerable attention. Although Shen Jianshi at that time "did not inquire about anything related to foreign affairs," he could still have learned about the situation regarding Japan's establishment of industrial education institutions in Beiping and its implementation of cultural aggression by asking his nephew Shen Lingyang, who within the family was equally patriotic and opposed to the Japanese (Shen C.Q. 2017, p259).

As for whether Chen Guangxi, who taught in the Mathematics Department of Fu Jen Catholic University throughout the period from the fall of Beiping to its liberation, understood the basic situation of the North China Higher Industrial School, it is currently difficult to find direct evidence from the recollections of his students and relatives. However, according to the recollections of Lin Zhiyun, Chen Guangxi's grandniece: when Chen Guangxi returned from studying in Europe, he brought back a lathe, which he cherished greatly. However, on July 29, 1937, when Beiping fell and before the Japanese invading army entered the city, he worried that this lathe would be requisitioned by the Japanese army to repair weapons and used to kill Chinese compatriots, so he painfully dismantled and destroyed it himself. (Wang F.P. 2011, p46) Based on this experience, it can be roughly inferred: at that time, even if Chen Guangxi learned through channels such as casual conversations with colleagues at Fu Jen Catholic University that there was a higher industrial school in Beiping run by Japanese people, he would not have actively approached the teachers or students of that school. Rather, he would have been more likely to maintain his consistent patriotic original intention and proactively contact the patriotic anti-Japanese underground organization led by Shen Jianshi. The following section attempts to analyze the historical process through which Mr. Chen and Mr. Shen moved from acquaintance to mutual understanding, and finally joined hands to establish the National Higher Engineering School, combining relevant historical materials.

III. The Early Relationship Between Shen Jianshi and Zhu Jiahua, and Shen's Recommendation of Chen Guangxi as President of the Higher Engineering School

To trace why Mr. Shen Jianshi would recommend Chen Guangxi to serve as the first president of the National Beiping Higher Engineering School, the first consideration should be their colleague relationship at Fu Jen Catholic University. According to the brief biography of Chen Guangxi in the "Distinguished Teachers" section of the History of Beijing Fu Jen Catholic University, Chen Guangxi served as an associate professor at Fu Jen Catholic University starting from 1932 (Fu Jen Catholic University Alumni Association of Beijing¹ Comp. 2005, p329), and was promoted to professor in 1938. Meanwhile, in the "List of Faculty and Staff of Private Beiping Fu Jen Catholic University in the 35th Year of the Republic of China (1946)" table reproduced in

¹ This is the full name of the alumni organization; I would like to use FJCUAAB as its abbreviation in following paragraphs.

the same book, Chen Guangxi's date of arrival at the university is recorded as September of the 22nd Year of the Republic of China (1933)(FJCUAAB Comp.2005,p78), while in the same table, Shen Jianshi's date of arrival is recorded as "February of the 16th Year"—this counts Shen Jianshi's participation in the promotion of the establishment of Fu Jen Catholic University with Chen Yuan(1880—1971) and others in 1927 and his service as a member of the university's board of trustees as the starting point of his teaching career at the school. The Chronological Biography of Shen Jianshi compiled by Li Qianming also cites the History of Beijing Fu Jen Catholic University and determines Shen Jianshi's time teaching at Fu Jen as 1927(Li Q.M. 2022, pp244-245). From this, it can be inferred that Shen and Chen had at least ten years of working together at Fu Jen Catholic University (during which Shen Jianshi fled Beiping for Chongqing in early December 1942 to avoid arrest by the Japanese invaders and did not return to Beiping until late September 1945). In September 1935, when Chen Guangxi was an associate professor at Fu Jen Catholic University, Shen Jianshi was already a well-known figure in Beiping's higher education and cultural and artistic circles, frequently interacting with academic and cultural figures serving in institutions such as Peking University, the Palace Museum, and the Condorcet School, many of whom were scholars originally from Zhejiang. Since Chen Guangxi was a relatively young junior scholar at that time and did not have the habit of keeping a diary, before the compilation and publication of relatively detailed materials such as the "Chronological Biography of Chen Guangxi," the author can only make several possible conjectures about the network of personal relationships and intermediary channels through which he and Mr. Shen Jianshi became acquainted, based on clues provided by currently limited literature.

The first is the colleague relationship among Shen Jianshi, Li Jiashi, and Chen Guangxi at Fu Jen. According to the July 1941 edition of the Fu Jen Catholic University Annual published by Beiping Fu Jen Catholic University, Mr. Shen Jianshi appears on page 31 as "Dean of the College of Arts," Chen Guangxi appears on page 45 as a professor in the Mathematics Department, while the German professor Li Jiashi(Richards), who could have served as the "organizational intermediary" between Shen and Chen, served as head of the Mathematics Department and appears on page 42.(Fu Jen Catholic University Yearbook Press Eds.1941,p42) In the 1942 edition of the Fu Jen Catholic University Annual, Shen Jianshi, Li Shijia (that is, Li Jiashi—after 1942, the annual used the Chinese name "Li Shijia," but many relevant historical photographs still caption him as "Li Jiashi"), and Chen Guangxi appear on pages 26, 35, and 46 respectively. However, due to changes in the names of university institutions, the department where Li Shijia and Chen Guangxi served was renamed the "Department of Mathematics and Physics." Five years later, in the 1946 edition of the Fu Jen Catholic University Quarterly, the aforementioned three individuals appear on pages 10, 11, and 13 respectively;(Fu Jen Catholic University Eds.1946, p13) Shen Jianshi remained Dean of the College of Arts, while Li Shijia's identity was still marked as "Head of the Department of Mathematics and Physics," and Chen Guangxi was a professor in the Mathematics Group. According to the curriculum setup and management system of the Mathematics Department of Fu Jen Catholic University at that time, Chen Guangxi taught required courses including elementary calculus, advanced calculus, and theoretical mechanics for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors at Fu Jen, as well as elective courses such as infinite series. Li Shijia, who served as department head for a long time starting from 1939, should have been relatively familiar with Chen Guangxi's teaching work and performance as a teacher in his department (in the historical photograph of "Mathematics Department Faculty" from Fu Jen Catholic University, the person to the right of Li Shijia is Chen Guangxi).(FJCUAAB Comp.2005,pp178--180) Both Mr. Shen Jianshi and Mr. Li Shijia were members of the Board of Trustees of Fu Jen Catholic University(FJCUAAB Comp.2007,p12), and they had the opportunity to get to know each other during routine board meetings. They may have learned about Chen Guangxi's background and teaching situation through the university's "daily interaction circle among middle-level leadership."

The second is the interaction among Chinese scholars in Beiping outside of work relationships, especially those from the Jiangzhe region. Mr. Shen Jianshi's ancestral home was Huzhou, Zhejiang, and Professor Chen Guangxi's ancestral home was Shangyu, Zhejiang. Although they belonged to western Zhejiang and eastern Zhejiang respectively and their disciplines were different, both fell within the traditional "Jiangzhe cultural sphere." Mr. Shen Jianshi became famous early and had extensive interactions. Just between October 1933 and February 1934 (at which time Chen Guangxi had been teaching in the Mathematics Department at Fu Jen for just over a year), Yang Shuda, Qian Xuantong, Zhou Zuoren, Gu Jiegang and others mentioned scholar gatherings multiple times in their diaries. In addition to Mr. Shen Jianshi and the four diary keepers, the scholars who frequently appeared at these gatherings also included Ma Yuzao, Ma Heng, Liu Bannong, Shen Yinmo, Yu Pingbo, Xu Senyu, Xu Yaochen, Jiang Menglin, Wei Jiangong, and others. The ancestral origins of these

scholars were mostly distributed in the traditional "core area of Jiangzhe literati" in northern Zhejiang and southern Jiangsu. Regarding the matter of Chen Guangxi, a promising young scholar from Zhejiang who had returned from studying in Europe, taking up a position at Fu Jen Catholic University, Shen Jianshi should have already heard about it through colleague relationships at the university, or learned about it through organizations such as the Zhejiang Fellow Countrymen's Association in Beiping.

According to alumni recollections in *The Higher Engineering School Enters New China* compiled by the Alumni Association of the National Higher Engineering School: the National Beiping Advanced Industrial Vocational School had a very strong faculty, and teachers with teaching experience at Fu Jen Catholic University or who had received their education there accounted for a very large proportion:

Among the 60 faculty and staff members, there were 7 who had graduated from foreign universities and had taught in domestic universities; 24 who had graduated from domestic universities or research institutes and had taught in universities; 10 who had graduated from domestic universities and had served as high school teachers; and 6 who had graduated from specialized schools or possessed specialized technical skills. Faculty members held full-time academic positions, and many had engaged in production and technical work, possessing practical experience. Among them, President Chen Guangxi also served as head of the Mechanical Engineering Department; he graduated from "Yale University in France" and the University of Leuven (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) in Belgium. Dean of Academic Affairs Fei Xinming graduated from Fu Jen Catholic University. Dean of Student Affairs Hao Deyuan graduated from Fu Jen Catholic University. Director of General Affairs Bao Letong graduated from the Law and Business College of National Beiping University. Dang Tingmei served as head of the Electrical Engineering Department; he graduated from the Institut des Arts et Métiers de Pierrard in Virton, Belgium², graduated from the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Nancy, France, and was a professor at Peiyang University. Wang Geng served as head of the Mining and Metallurgy Department; he graduated from the Department of Physics, College of Science at Fu Jen Catholic University and graduated from the Mining Department of the College of Engineering at the Imperial University of Japan. (Alumni Association of National Beiping Higher Engineering School Eds.2013, p12)

From the above introduction, it can be seen that in the composition of the school management at the time of the National Higher Engineering School's founding, teachers and students from Fu Jen Catholic University occupied an extremely high proportion. One of the important reasons for this was that Mr. Shen Jianshi had served as Dean of the College of Arts at Fu Jen Catholic University during the early to middle period of the War of Resistance, and had widely contacted patriotic teachers from various departments and colleges of Fu Jen Catholic University to form the secret cultural and educational underground anti-Japanese organization "Yan Society" (later renamed "North China Cultural and Educational Association").

In the early period after victory in the War of Resistance, the process by which various departments of the Nationalist Government received cultural and educational institutions in cities formerly occupied by the Japanese puppet regime did not proceed smoothly. Specifically, regarding the reception of Japanese puppet regime agencies, cultural and educational institutions, and industrial and commercial enterprises in Beiping, conflicts of interest often arose among various departments. Mr. Shen Jianshi played an important coordinating role in this process, and a group of new industrial schools, including the National Beiping Higher Engineering School, were established and opened for classes within just six months. Mr. Shen's multifaceted efforts and crucial contributions were indispensable to this achievement. Regarding the specific circumstances in this process, in addition to the firsthand recollections of Higher Engineering School alumni such as Sun Qiding and Tao Ranru, scholars such as the aforementioned Li Qianming have already conducted preliminary collation and research. This paper intends to focus on the two issues of the selection of the president and the sources of key teachers, examining how Mr. Shen Jianshi carefully deliberated, actively made contacts, and ultimately realized this educational feat of establishing the Higher Engineering School.

² (originally transcribed as "Wei X Dun" in the Chinese source, likely a misreading of "Virton" [维尔通], whose pronunciation closely resembles "Weierdun" [维尔敦] in northern Chinese dialects)

IV. The Important Role of Zhu Jiahua's European Study Experience in the Founding of the National Beiping Higher Engineering School

When Shen Jianshi proposed to Zhu Jiahua in February 1946 to receive and reorganize the Japanese North China Higher Industrial School, the domestic cultural and educational situation had not yet completely stabilized. Although half a year had passed since victory in the War of Resistance, the universities in Beiping and Tianjin that had moved inland to Shaanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou and other regions to avoid the devastation of culture by the Japanese invaders had not all resumed operations and reopened. Many well-known scholars also remained in the rear areas and had not returned to Beiping. Some scholars, because they had actively supported the Chinese Communist Party's propositions on the War of Resistance and published speeches criticizing the Kuomintang's dictatorship, were viewed with suspicion or even detained and harmed by the authorities (such as Li Gongpu and Wen Yiduo). At a time when recommending someone to serve as president of the Beiping Higher Engineering School, it was necessary to consider not only the person's professional and technical capabilities, but also whether they could gain recognition from the middle and upper levels of various departments and agencies of the Nationalist Government. At this point, it was necessary to consider another identity of Chen Guangxi: as a Zhejiang-born scholar who had studied engineering science in Europe and resided in Beijing during the middle period of the Republic of China. He had experience in studying engineering technology practical disciplines in Europe for a long period, and during the War of Resistance against Japan he maintained national integrity and refused to serve the Japanese invaders and the puppet regime. Scholars who met these several conditions could potentially gain the support of Zhu Jiahua, who had recently become Minister of Education.

Zhu Jiahua's own experience studying geological science in Germany and Switzerland played an important foundational role for his later service as Minister of Education and his guidance in the creation of new universities. This official, who obtained a doctoral degree in Germany, believed that China urgently needed to establish a number of universities that would help with domestic industrial reconstruction and economic development after the victory in the War of Resistance against Japan. Because he is very familiar with engineering education in Europe in the first half of the 20th century, he knows that Chinese scholars who obtain a degree in mechanical engineering from European universities may have the ability to manage an emerging higher technical institution. Therefore, it can also be said that Professor Chen Guangxi received ten years of mechanical engineering education in Europe, and after returning to China, he taught for a long time at a university with European management involvement, which made it easier for him to gain the trust of the top officials of the Ministry of Education at that time.

V. New China Needed European Science, Not Its Religion: The Dissolution and Transformation of Fu Jen Catholic University after 1952 and Its Implications

Only six years after the "National Beiping Advanced Industrial Vocational School" was founded, Fu Jen Catholic University, which served as an important "parent body" for this emerging engineering school, began to face the severe challenge of survival and adaptation to a new environment. After 1952, Fu Jen Catholic University no longer existed as a whole in mainland China, but its teachers, students, and educational concepts continued to exist for several decades in multiple universities in Beijing through the "restructuring and distribution of its academic specialties." New China needed a "Fu Jen science education legacy" that had removed its religious background, and Fu Jen Catholic University's contributions in this regard have been fully recognized. In fact, this reflects the admiration for modern Western scientific achievements and science and technology education systems among Chinese people since modern times. In contrast, higher education management officials in New China had little interest in, and were even quite wary of, European religion. At that time, Karl Marx's famous dictum that "religion is the opium of the people" had already been translated into Chinese, and "opium" had brought painful and humiliating suffering to modern China.

Since the higher education of the new China no longer needed the religious education component provided by the church universities of the old society, the Fu Jen Catholic University as a whole could hardly continue to exist and could only be reorganized and recombined. The natural science departments and colleges that still had value were integrated into other socialist universities. After 1952, the official government did not prevent alumni

of Fu Jen Catholic University from continuing to organize various liaison activities. Many former teachers of Fu Jen Catholic University who were transferred to teach at other universities still had a relatively strong sense of belonging to Fu Jen Catholic University. This has prompted them to guide their daily teaching and scientific research with relatively high academic standards, believing that only in this way can they restore the reputation and status of Fu Jen Catholic University as one of the "Four Great Universities" in Peiping in the past. In this sense, the concept of scientific education in modern Europe and some educational training systems still played a positive role in the construction of the new China. Church universities in the old system no longer exist, but their ghost has lingered for decades in those newly established technical universities.

It was not until China reopened its doors to the world after the reform and opening-up those debates over religious ideology gradually subsided, and those universities that inherited part of the spiritual legacy of church universities once again traced their history of scientific education back to their initial connections with modern European scientific education. This historical situation easily reminds people of the evolving relationship between religion and science in Europe. In fact, the Church once held considerable influence over European universities, but later, with the spread of scientific knowledge and the rise of humanism, more and more young students preferred to believe in a world explained by natural science. From the perspective of world history, the influence of the church on universities gradually waned, and religion came to be seen merely as a special cultural and spiritual heritage rather than the core of university ideals. The secularization of Chinese universities after 1952 is therefore quite normal; it is merely a Chinese version of the story of global modern higher education.

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