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Watchman Nee in the Eyes of Wang Mingdao

YING FUK-TSANG

Xing Fuzeng.

Abstract

Wang Mingdao and Ni Tosheng (Watchman Nee) are famous figures in Chinese Christianity in the twentieth century. They, together with Yang Shaotang, were depicted by Leslie T. Lyall, missionary of Chi na Inland Mission, as “might man” of the Chinese church. Many scholarly studies have been done on Wang and Nee. However, the relationship between the two has long been neglected. This paper aims to investigate their relationship from the perspective of Wang, which also helps us shed a new light on some important issues in the development of Chinese Christianity at the time.

Both Wang Mingdao and Watchman Nee were famous figures in the history of Chinese churches in the twentieth century. Lai Enrong, a missionary of the Inland Mission, once described Wang Mingdao, Watchman Nee and Yang Shaotang as “giants”. At present, there have been a lot of researches on Wang and Ni, but the relationship between the two has been neglected by scholars. The purpose of this article is to focus on Wang Mingdao, discuss the communication and relationship between Wang and Ni, and get a glimpse of the issues worthy of attention behind the development of Chinese Christian history in the 20th century.

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I. Introduction

If God allows, I hope to write an article "The Watchman Nee I Know", which will be a blow to many believers... ỳyWang Mingdao

Because I am too old now and have not enough energy, otherwise I will definitely write a book called "The Watchman Nee I Know". ỳyWang Mingdao

The first of the above two passages of Wang Mingdao's speech is recorded in his posthumous manuscript in his later years. 1 The second paragraph is Zhang Yuming quoting a sentence Wang Mingdao said to him in his memoirs. 2 Both passages are in the 1980s. The "Watchman Nee I Know" that Wang Mingdao hoped to write was not completed in the end, but he expressed this wish in several conversations and even in his posthumous manuscript. This unfinished article faintly reveals an unusual friendship and relationship between Wang Mingdao and Watchman Nee.

Both Wang Mingdao and Watchman Nee were famous figures in the history of Chinese churches in the twentieth century. Leslie T. Lyall, a missionary of the Inland Mission, once described Wang Mingdao, Watchman Nee and Yang Shaotang as "giants" in his classic history book "The Three Giants of the Chinese Church". He noted that the three "all bear witness to the Lord under the pressures of state and religious life...but each of them has a special character and contributes in a different way". 3 At present, there have been a lot of researches on Wang and Ni. 4 However, the relationship between the two has always been neglected by scholars.

1 The author sorted out the posthumous manuscripts of Wang Mingdao in his later years, and refer to Xing Fu's supplementary work: "The Last Confessions of Wang Mingdao" (Hong Kong: Jidao, 2013). For an introduction to this group of posthumous manuscripts, see Introduction, 3-40. However, the posthumous manuscript of Watchman Nee mentioned on this page was not included in the book due to various reasons.

2 Zhang Yuming: "The Age of Blood and Tears" (Taipei: Universal Light, 1999), 365.

3 Leslie T. Lyall: "The Three Giants of the Chinese Church", translated by Zhang Linhumei and others (Taipei: Olive, 1984), 87. The original book, *Three of China's Might Men*, was published by OMF in 1973. 4 With regard to Wang Mingdao's research, many research results have been accumulated over the years. Chinese and foreign scholars' research on Wang Mingdao mainly follows the two directions of theology and history. The former sorts out the characteristics of his theological thought, such as Wu Liming: "Christianity and Chinese Social Change" (Hong Kong: Christian Literature, 1981), 158-163; Lin Ronghong: "Wang Mingdao and the Church in China" (Hong Kong: China Academy of Theology, 1982). Richard R. Cook, "Fundamentalism and Modern Culture in Republican China: The Popular Language of Wang Ming-

The purpose of this article is to focus on Wang Mingdao and discuss the communication and relationship between Wang and Ni. arrive

What kind of Watchman Nee did Wang Mingdao know? Why did he want to write about Watchman Nee? Behind the appearance of this seemingly personal relationship, how can we get a glimpse of the issues worthy of attention behind the development of Chinese Christian history in the 20th century? The main reference material for the full text is Wang Mingdao's diary.⁵ There are two sources of evidence, one is the "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary" published by Hong Kong Lingshi Publishing House in 1997,⁶ and the other is an excerpt from the original manuscript of "Wang Mingdao's Diary".⁷ divide

In addition to the diary, the author also referred to a recording of a conversation by Wang Mingdao in his later years⁸ and its legacy.

dao, 1900–1991." (PhD dissertation, University of Iowa, 2003), 107–114. The latter discusses the impact of his life and deeds on the development of Chinese Christianity, especially the situation in the 1950s that attracted the most attention. This includes Xing Fuzeng: "Wang Mingdao and the Chinese Christian Mission in North China-A Case Study of the Resistance and Cooperation of Church Personnel in Occupied Areas", Shou Shi: "Conflict and Integration-A Collection of Studies on the History of Christianity in Modern China" (Taipei: Universal Light, 2006), 103–174; Liang Jialin: "They Are For Faith - Beijing Christian Student Association and Chinese Christian Evangelistic Association" (Hong Kong: Center for Christianity and Chinese Culture Studies, Jiandao Theological Seminary, 2001), 103-131; Xing Fuzeng: "Counter-revolution" in the Revolutionary Era yThe Case of the Christian "Wang Mingdao Counter-Revolutionary Clique" , Journal of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica 67 (March 2010): 97–147. Thomas A.

Harvey, *Acquainted with Grief: Wang Mingdao's Stand for the Persecuted Church in China* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002), chap. 4; Carsten T. Vala, "Failing to Contain Religion: The Emergence of a Protestant Movement in Contemporary China," (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2008), chap. 3.

As for Watchman Nee, looking at the existing research, it is clear that there is a tendency to focus more on his theological thoughts than his life. Even when dealing with his theology, he also has the disadvantage of being static and completely ignoring the development and evolution of Nee's theological thoughts. For example, Lin Ronghong: "Spiritual Theology: A Study of Watchman Nee's Thought" (Hong Kong: China Academy of Theology, 1985). In recent years, Liang Jialin has been actively involved in the research of Nee's family, and has written many papers successively, which provide us with a more comprehensive perspective on Ni's theology and greatly supplement the shortcomings of Lin's works. These include: "Watchman Nee's Honor and Disgrace" (Hong Kong: Jiandao Theological Seminary, 2003); "Watchman Nee's Early Life and Thoughts" (Hong Kong: Qiaoxin, 2005). For the study of Ni's later years, see Xing Fuzeng: "Anti-Emperor. patriotic. The Spiritual Man : A Study of Watchman Nee and the Christian Meeting House" (Hong Kong: Christian Chinese Religious Culture Research Institute, 2005); and Wu Xiuliang: "Break the Shell and Fly: Watchman Nee's Imprisonment and Transformation" (Boston: Bison River, 2004).

⁵ From 1915, Wang Mingdao had the habit of writing a diary until he was arrested on August 5, 1955, one volume per year, totaling 41 volumes. Wang recorded important events that happened every day in his diary. Although only a few words, it is still an indispensable historical material for understanding his views on people and things, as well as his inner feelings. The entire set of diaries was taken by the police when Wang Mingdao was arrested, and was later returned, but the 1954 volume was missing.

⁶ "Selected Works" selects works from 1920 in accordance with the principle of "detailing the present and omitting the past" (that is, there are fewer selections in the early years and more collections in the later period). Diaries from 1955 to 1955, but only a very small proportion of the total number of publishers.

⁷ The Christianity and Chinese Culture Research Center of Hong Kong Jiandao Theological Seminary had obtained the consent of Mr. Wang Tianduo, the son of Wang Mingdao, to copy the complete set of diaries. When the author was teaching at Jiandao Theological Seminary, he participated in the sorting work. During the research on Wang Mingdao and Watchman Nee, the content was extracted. With the approval of the Center for Christianity and Chinese Culture, Jiandao Theological Seminary, I would like to thank you for citing the relevant diary excerpts.

⁸ In March 2002, the author obtained a box of Wang Mingdao's speech recordings from a co-worker in charge of the church in Beijing. From

2. Wang Mingdao, Watchman Nee, and The Emmanuel News

Before discussing the relationship between Wang Mingdao and Watchman Nee, it is necessary to explain the relationship between Wang and the Nanjing "Lingguang Newspaper" community.

"Lingguang Newspaper" was a church publication run by Jia Yuming, then president of Jinling Women's Theological Seminary in Nanjing, and was first published in 1921. In the notice of the founding of the publication, it is stated: "This newspaper is dedicated to preserving the truth, improving spiritual virtues, contacting comrades in the spiritual world, and promoting spiritual workers' abilities." 9 Its purpose is to

Four:

(1) Correctly analyze the fundamental principles of the Old and New Testaments concerning people's beliefs;

(2) In order to unite (Chinese and Western) Christians with the same faith, work together to spread the ten

Christ on the cross redeems sinners;

(3) Gather the testimonies of the spiritual calendar of Christian spiritual workers so that believers can gain something spiritually

Law;

(4) Unite the spiritual power of the prayers of most Christians, assist spiritual workers, and

Establish a solid foundation for this newspaper. 10

In addition to Jia, there are Gao Shizhu, Li Yuanru, Jiao Weizhen and so on. It can be said that "Lingguang Newspaper" was the earliest and very important publication in the Chinese spiritual circle in the 1920s. It gradually developed with Jia Yuming as the center, and then expanded to other spiritualists.

According to the content of the conversation, the time was about two years after Wang Mingdao was released and returned to Shanghai in 1980 (that is, around 1982). The main reason is that several believers asked Wang Mingdao some questions, and Wang answered them. The recording is 49 minutes long and covers five aspects: Wang Mingdao's views on his "swearing" style of preaching; Wang Mingdao's discussion on Watchman Nee and the problems at the meeting place; Wang talked about his relationship with the Three-Self Movement, his second arrest and release the king's views on head covering, kissing and foot-washing; the king's views on seeking God's will. Refer to Luo Ruifeng, Xing Fuzeng, and Xing Fuzeng's notes: "Wang Mingdao Talks about People and Events in the Chinese Church— A Conversation in the 1980s", "Research on the History of Christianity in Modern China" 8 (2008/2009): 80–91. 9 "Revelation One", "Aura" 1 (1921): Announcement page. 10 "Introduction", Emmanuel 1 (1921): 1.

groups. The protagonists of this article, Wang Mingdao and Watchman Nee, both successively had relationships with the "Lingguang Newspaper" community.

Wang Mingdao in the early 1920s was actually quite conceited. He once said: "At that time, it seemed that among the believers in China, no one loved the Lord more ardently and understood the truth better than me." But in 1923, after he began to subscribe to the "Lingguang Newspaper" published in Nanjing,

"It was only when I realized that there were other saints who ardently loved the Lord in China, that my previously narrow mind began to expand."¹¹ The "saints" that Wang refers to from "Ling Guang Bao" should refer to Jia Yuming, Li Yuanru and others.

For Wang Mingdao, a young preacher who aspires to serve, the "Lingguang Newspaper" community plays an important role in his spiritual growth. He was able to get out of the narrow spiritual world of self-centeredness because of the Spiritual Light. And the members of the Lingguang community, whether they are his elders or slightly older than him (such as Li Yuanru, born in 1894, six years older than Wang), had already established a certain service platform in the Chinese church at that time. This is undoubtedly a very attractive "sacred place" for the king who is still exploring the direction of his service.

We can see that since 1924, Wang Mingdao embarked on a pilgrimage step by step. he First, the idea of visiting Nanjing was born, "to have some spiritual fellowship with the saints there". In 1925, Wang Mingdao contributed to the "Lingguang Newspaper" and corresponded with several people in charge of the "Lingguang Newspaper". On 12 May, Wang decided to go south, and arrived in Ning on 28 May, where he stayed for fourteen days. During this period, I had many conversations with Jia Yuming, Gao Shizhu, Li Yuanru, etc., and gave a speech at Jinling Women's Theological Seminary.

It is worth noting that during Wang Mingdao's visit to Ningxia, he attended a gathering convened by a group of spiritualists. At the meeting, Jia Yuming and Dora Yu made speeches successively, "telling the degeneration of the modern church's faith", and it was decided to establish the Bible Society". Everyone elected Jia as chairman and Wang as secretary. 13 Zha attended the meeting at that time, all seniority was higher than Wang, and 14 Wang was promoted as

11 Wang Mingdao: "Fifty Years" (Hong Kong: Morning Star, 1985), 85–86. This book was originally published by Beijing in 1950

Published by Spirit Food Season Publishing House.

12 Wang Mingdao: "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", January 2, 1925. Wang Mingdao: "The Sound of Great Joy", "Five

Ten Years", 86. 13 Wang Mingdao:

"Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", June 2, 1925. 14 The participants included Dora Yu, Jia Yuming, Gao Shizhuo,

etc. Pastor Gao Shizhuo was at least 30 years older than Wang, and Pastor Gao invited him to Nanjing for a seminar. Dora Yu was already a well-known female missionary at home and abroad at that time.

Secretary, it can be seen that he is appreciated by everyone. However, the king and the people had serious disagreements over whether the "Trinity" should be included in the creed. According to his strict principles of Biblicism, Wang believed that the Trinity did not have sufficient biblical basis, so he did not accept it. Because of Wang's insistence, "people have been disturbing for a long time for this", but he could not be persuaded, "It's quite difficult." 15 As a result, the issue of the creed was temporarily put on hold, and it was discussed again on June 3, but failed. On June 4th, Wang went to see Jia Yuming. Jia forwarded Pastor Gao Shizhuo's letter of criticism to Wang because of the Trinity incident. The letter denounced Wang as "believing in Jesus is only for perfect people" and said, "I dare not please understand the sermon again." . Wang deeply felt that "this kind of misunderstanding is very big, and it will greatly hinder the future work, so I can't stay here anymore." He specially went to see Pastor Gao to "tell the truth about his belief in Jesus and his aspirations", and got his "understanding". 16

Later, Wang wrote in "Fifty Years": "Because I refused to be a little perfunctory and vague, and I must express my beliefs very sincerely, I was misunderstood and attacked by an elderly believer, which caused other believers to misunderstand me. It was a severe blow to my heart." 17 According to Chen Fuzhong, this "elderly believer" is Dora Yu, 18 and the "other believers" are Jia Yuming, Li Yuanru, etc. The attack on Wang Mingdao at that time meant that Wang was a "propagandist of the new school". 19 After this incident, Wang Mingdao's manuscripts submitted to *Lingguang Daily* were all returned. The relationship between Wang Mingdao's founding of "Spiritual Food Quarterly" in 1927 and this matter should not be completely ignored. 20

The elder Wang Mingdao was twenty years old and was the first doctor of theology in China. See Lin Qiuxiang, Zhang Guanying: "The Wounded Warrior —The First Century of Wang Mingdao" (Taipei: Olive Culture, 2006), 122.

15 Wang Mingdao: "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", June 2, 1925.

16 Ibid., 4 June 1925.

17 Wang Mingdao: "Fifty Years", 86. 18 Yu is

a famous preacher in the twentieth century. Regarding her life and ministry, see Wu Xiuliang: *Dora Yu-Twenty Heralds of Church Revival in China in the 20th Century* (Boston: Bison Rivers, 2000).

More than 19 years later, Wang Mingdao met Dora Yu again in Shanghai. He bowed to Dora Yu as a junior. *Warriors*, 123. 20 Chen Fuzhong: *Biography of Li Yuanru* (Hong Kong: Christian, 2005), 81. Believe because the king opposed the trinity

body, was criticized by Dora Yu as a "new school".

Just after the Trinity incident, Wang Mingdao decided to write to Watchman Nee on June 5, "expressing his desire for a meeting" and told Li Yuanru "how to inform Watchman Nee's brother Yixi for a meeting". twenty one

3. Wang and Ni Hui for the first time (1925)

The friendship between Wang and Ni

Looking into the relationship between Wang and Ni, Wang Mingdao played the active role from the beginning. The first time Wang Mingdao knew about Watchman Nee was when he read an article by Ni when he was reading *The Fuxing Daily*.²² Wang appreciated Ni's article very much. He first sent a letter to Watchman Nee on March 2, 1924, and he corresponded 15 times between 1924 and 1925.²³ *"Fuxing Daily"* was founded by Watchman Nee in Fuzhou in 1923. It is an indeterminate mimeograph publication, and it is given free of charge to those who request it. At that time, Ni was still studying at Trinity College in Fuzhou, and began to rent the Twelve Rows in Fuzhou Cangqian Mountain to hold meetings.

Since Wang Mingdao was born in 1900 and Watchman Nee was born in 1903, Wang wrote in his diary Ni is referred to as "Brother Watchman":

This morning, I received the eighth volume of "Fuxing Daily" sent by Brother Tuo Sheng. I read about Yi's work in various districts, and learned that Yi will go to Ningxia to assist "Ling Guang Bao". This made me feel infinite joy and pain. For those who are happy, brother Sheng received great grace from God and did more works of God; for those who are sad, I have received so much grace and many missions, but my spirituality has been greatly regressed day by day, and my work has been wasted by snakes. Not much achievement. Stimulated by this, one prays in staggering steps, and the more one prays, the more one feels one's suffering. ... Brother Sheng was called by God to Nan Province, where he shined brightly, and Yu was also blessed by God

²¹ Wang Mingdao: *Selected Diaries of Wang Mingdao*, June 5, 1925.

²² "When I was 23 years old, I read two articles written by Watchman Nee, published in Fuzhou", Luo Ruifeng, Xing Fuzeng: "Wang Mingdao Talks about People and Things in the Chinese Church", 81.

²³ See "Wang Mingdao's Diary", lists of letters sent and received in 1924 and 1925. In addition, Wang Mingdao: "Selected Diaries of Wang Mingdao": "Written a letter to Watchman Ni at seven o'clock, describing the working conditions in De and Cang, a long letter" (September 23, 1924); The beginning and the end of the call, the hardships of childhood, and the trials of today are a long book in three pages" (November 27, 1924).

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En caller also. It is also like that all the silver received is dug up and buried. If you are unfaithful and unrighteous, what face do you still have to face the god who called you. twenty four

It is stated in the diary that Ni will go to Ningxia to assist the "Ling Guang Bao". In July 1924, because of conflicts with Wang Zai and other workers, Ni left Fuzhou and went to Nanjing to work as an assistant to the "Lingguang Newspaper", assisting Jia and Li Yuanru (later Li was influenced by Ni and started the business of breaking bread in Nanjing in the future. reunion).

In fact, at this time, Ni had already made his mark in the Christian literary world. In addition to the "Lingguang Newspaper", he successively published articles in "True Light"²⁵, "Bible Newspaper"²⁶, "Xinghua Newspaper"²⁷ and other church publications. No wonder Wang Mingdao has such deep appreciation for the Ni family. Although the Ni family is younger than Wang, Wang regards Ni as a role model.

1924 was also the time when Wang Mingdao began to engage in writing work. In "Fifty Years Come" said: "There were four kinds published in that year: including "A Very Important Thing", "Voice in an Evil World", "Christians and Idols", "The Cross of Christ"... This is the beginning of writing work. "²⁸ Before 1924, Wang Mingdao mainly used preaching as the focus of his service. His devotion to writing work was certainly related to his inspiration through the testimonies of people in the "Lingguang Newspaper". Achievements, especially the influence he established in various Christian publications, also brought a certain impetus to Wang Mingdao.

In May 1925, Wang Mingdao met Li Yuanru in Nanjing, during which time he talked about "Watchman Nee's beliefs and conduct as a man." ²⁹ On June 5, after Wang Mingdao was criticized by his spiritual elders for his previous insistence on opposing the Trinity, it can be said that he fell into an unprecedented low level of faith.

24 Wang Mingdao: "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", October 9, 1924.

25 For example, Watchman Nee: "The Inspiration of the Bible", "True Light" 23.6 (1924): 23-30; "Reading a few sentences of Guo Jichuan Jun's "I doubt that every word and sentence of the Bible is inspired by God", " True Light 23.6 (1924): 39-52.

26 For example, Watchman Nee: "The Four Gospels", "Bible News" 59 (1923): 65-69; "Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" y, "Bible News" 60 (1923): 44-67; "Seeking a Higher Life and Work", "Bible News" 63 (1924): 52-55; 64 (1924): 52-55; 65 (1924): 41-46; 67 (1924): 42-47.

27 Watchman Nee: "A few words about the division of Jinling theology", "Xing Hua" 21.22 (1924): 9-10.

28 Wang Mingdao: "Fifty Years", 67; "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", 1924, 31.

29 Wang Mingdao: "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", May 30, 1924.

Valley. At this moment, he decided to write to Ni, expressing his strong desire to have an interview with him.³⁰ The author believes that Wang Mingdao really wants to meet this "brother watchman" who is slightly younger than him but stronger than him in spiritual life and service at this time, and hopes to seek spirituality from Ni. help on . At that time, Wang hoped to ask Ni to meet in Hangzhou.³¹ However, this meeting did not work out. On June 8, he expressed his admiration for Watchman Nee in his diary:

Reading "Aura" in June, Brother Tuo Sheng's "Death with the Lord" and Brother Wang Zai's "Morning Watch" made me feel infinite regret and self-blame, and I felt that obstacles piled up in front of me, eagerly seeking spiritual revival. Although father? I urgently need revival, and I must still seek revival, earnestly seek revival, until the great revival is achieved.³²

Meeting Watchman Nee, in the bottom of Wang Mingdao's heart, may not be the key to his pursuit of great revival.

The first meeting in Fuzhou

After staying in Nanjing for 14 days, Wang Mingdao then went to Jiaxing and Hangzhou. On August 14, he went from Jiaxing to Shanghai, planning to go to Fuzhou again, "to see a brother whom he had not seen for a long time."³³ This brother is Watchman Nee's voice. However, he did not expect that he would fall ill in Shanghai, so he returned to the believer's home in Hangzhou to recuperate. After recovering from his illness, he returned to Shanghai to continue his new pilgrimage to Fuzhou. On August 15, 1925, Wang Mingdao took the Ningxing ship from Shanghai to Fuzhou, stayed in Luoxing Tower for four days on the 17th, stayed in Fuzhou for one day, and returned to Shanghai on the 22nd.

He wrote in his diary on August 18:

Running around here and there, hoping to get a little comfort and instruction from others, but knowing that it is useless and useless, I get a lot of disappointment and distress. I am enlightened, I am enlightened. Bend your knees before the Father's throne, and listen to His teaching and comfort, What an easy thing to do, Rich teaching and comfort

³⁰ Ibid., 5 June 1924.

³¹ Ibid., 6 June 1924.

³² Ibid., 8 June 1925.

³³ Wang Mingdao: "Fifty Years", 87-88.

All the comfort comes from it, but why do you rely on trees for fish? Understand! You can go back. 34

Undoubtedly, Wang went to Ning with high expectations, but unexpectedly experienced great trials and disappointments. At this time, he realized that only the heavenly Father could give him comfort, but the author believes that he also had very high expectations, hoping that Watchman Nee could also give him comfort and instruction.

"Selected Diaries of Wang Mingdao" records the first meeting between Ni and Wang on August 18.

Affection:

Very tired, I woke up at nine o'clock, washed up, prayed a little, and met with the voice of the watchman, and the chat was very pleasant, and I expressed my mutual admiration for meeting each other. Later, Yi used what he had heard about Yu to see the news, and answered the views of heaven and hell and how people get here after death. The Isu's view of the underworld. After lunch, I had a brief calendar of my call with Ishu, and I made a diagram after Yishu rested. At about four o'clock, they talked again. I talked about the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and talked about several things. Small talk after dinner. 35

August 19:

Talking with Brother Tuo Sheng today, Yi persuaded Yu to make a detailed exploration of various key issues. I thought about it over and over again. If I am wrong, it can be changed in this way; if I am correct, I should also have a clear understanding. The ambiguity of today cannot last long. I deeply hope that I will ask my father to give me opportunities and intelligence in the future. After returning to Beijing, you should concentrate on exploring and studying the Bible in order to understand it more deeply. If our Lord does not come soon, I hope that he will come out of the city of today's Huihui soon, and have a clear knowledge of the holy way.

Laziness, laziness, how many failures have been suffered because of laziness, and how many regrets have been caused. I earnestly ask the Father to give me strength, so that I can diligently pray and read the scriptures in the future, and learn the lessons that should be learned. I hope to pursue further studies in the holy way, and I can diligently do all the work my father has given me. Don't let the gold be buried in the ground for a long time. It is also responsible for paying the account. Father, give strength to revive. 36

³⁴ Wang Mingdao: "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", August 18, 1925.

³⁵ Ditto.

³⁶ Ibid., 19 August 1925.

In the afternoon of the same day, Wang followed Ni and Lu Zhongxin to the provincial capital by ferry, during which they "discussed the issues of March 1st and eternal punishment". In the city of Fuzhou, Wang "talked about the history of Yu Meng'en's examination" with them, and "helped the younger brother to proofread the manuscript" in the printing office.

On August 20, Wang, Ni and Lu climbed the mountain. Attending the meeting in the evening, first, Watchman Nee gave a sermon, and then gave the lecture to Wang, who translated in Hokkien. On August 21, Wang proofread the manuscript for Ni. From August 22nd to 24th, Wang and Ni went to Shanghai by ship together, and then bid farewell. On August 25, Wang visited Ni Weiyu twice. On August 26, Wang revisited Ni and "discussed Trinity eternal punishment and other issues." Ni shared the Apocalypse with Wang. On August 28, Wang left Shanghai. 37 September 14

He returned to Beijing on the 1st, ending his three-month foreign visit. 38

This is the first time Wang and Ni have met. From the diary quoted above, it can be seen that Wang was warmly received by Ni Po in Fuzhou, and the two also had close fellowship. The two seem to have noticed that they have different views on certain issues. But the two sides still showed mutual appreciation. It is worth noting that the difference between Wang and Ni is not due to Ni's unique understanding of the church line. When Ni was in Nanjing, Li Yuanru did not accept his views on the truth of the church at first. 39 However, this view, in fact, has quite consistent similarities with Wang Mingdao. Gai Wang Mingdao also broke away from the London Association and became self-reliant. Even when Wang wrote to Zhang Yijing in 1929, he even claimed that "he left the Association after that, so today he does not belong to any association, and he has never been hired by any association." The gifts and missions I have received, absolutely do not allow servants to be in any guild to do work under the command of others." 40 From Wang Mingdao's use of the word "guild", he was obviously influenced by the Ni family. On the issue of leaving the guild, the two people's views were at least superficially consistent.

At the same time, Wang Mingdao's trip to Fuzhou clearly showed that Watchman Nee was playing the role of a spiritual teacher. From the above two diaries, it can be seen that the conversation between the two on August 17 and 18 was basically

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20-28 August 1925.

³⁸ Wang Mingdao: "Fifty Years", 88.

³⁹ "Although I told Ms. Li about the truth of the church; however, her attitude was very rigid and she did not accept anything." "A Narration of the Past", the original issue of "Lecture Records" 33 (1932), now quoted from "Three Reference Materials on the History of the Church in Shanghai" (Shanghai: Christian Assembly Office, 1951), 28. 40 "Mr. Wang Mingdao's letter from Qingdao", "True Light" 28.11 (1929): 89.

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In the above, it was Watchman Nee who asked Wang Mingdao about religious issues, and Ni Xiangwang who taught and exhorted Wang Mingdao.

Watchman Nee still played an extremely important role in Wang Mingdao's mind. Wang said in his diary on April 22, 1926: "Reading this issue of "The Christian" published by brother Watchman Nee, I am ashamed that although I have received rich gifts and opportunities, I have done nothing. How should I encourage myself in the future." 41 Check the "Christian Daily" is a regular publication founded by Watchman Nee in Fuzhou in 1925. The publication, replacing the discontinued "The Renaissance", is published by the Gospel Book Room located in Luoxing Tower.

However, in the 1980s, Wang Mingdao recalled this meeting in a conversation, But he said: "I just went to Fuzhou by ship and stayed at his place for four days. I was very affectionate in his house for a day or two, but then I found that he was very cold to me. I don't understand. Why is this, I love him with all my heart and want to have fellowship with him, but he is very indifferent to me, I am very disappointed, and I will go back." 42 In addition, in his unpublished posthumous manuscript, he said:

"In August 1925, I lived in Baiyatan on the opposite bank of Luoxing Tower in Fuzhou for four days. I already saw that Ni was a very well-established young man, but I didn't expect him to be so accomplished. Big business." 43 Why did Wang Mingdao become so negative when he later recalled this meeting?

Relationships in the 1940s and 1930s

The Second Meeting of Wang and Ni: Shanghai (1930)

According to Wang Mingdao's recollection in the 1980s, he visited Watchman Nee again in Shanghai in the spring of 1926. 44 Zha Wang Mingdao's trip to Shanghai was carried out from January 26 to February 8, 1926, and he preached in St. Paul's Church and Tian'an Church for a total of ten days. On February 23, I will go to Shanghai again, at the invitation of Hubei Church, since

41 Wang Mingdao: "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", April 22, 1926.

42 Luo Ruifeng, Xing Fuzeng: "Wang Mingdao Talks about People and Things in the Chinese Church", 82.

43 "Wang Mingdao's Unpublished Posthumous Manuscript", copy manuscript. yy is unrecognizable content.

44 Luo Ruifeng, Xing Fuzeng: "Wang Mingdao Talks about People and Things in the Chinese Church", 82.

On the 24th, he preached in the chapel of the Meihua Library for 17 days, and returned to Hangzhou on March 13th. 45

According to Wang Yi, the meeting was not pleasant:

In the spring of the second year [author's note: 1926], I went to Wendeli on Hardoon Road to see him. He called a maid, and I only talked a few words, and the maid said: "Sir, please go away, Mr. Ni is not in good health, so he can't talk to people much", but he didn't stay. She is a maid, and she said sir, please go, I had no choice but to go, this is an eviction order, and I haven't seen him for thirteen years. 46

However, the 1926 diary did not see any account of this meeting. There are two possibilities for this. One is that Wang did not record this meeting, and the other is that the year is wrong. The second meeting between them was not in the spring of 1926. I think the latter is more likely. Because in his unpublished posthumous manuscript, he also said that this meeting took place in June 1929 . 47 In fact, another circumstantial evidence proving that Wang misremembered the meeting time is that he mentioned that the two met at Wendeli, Hardong Road, Shanghai. However, it was only in January 1928 that Watchman Nee began to rent a house at No. 30 Wendeli, Lane 240, Hardong Road for gatherings. 48 Therefore, the second meeting of Wang Ni must have been after 1928.

From Wang Mingdao's diary, it can be seen that the two met in 1930, 1932 and 1933. In other words, "I haven't seen him for the next thirteen years" is also inaccurate. The author believes that Wang Yishu's second meeting with Wang Ni took place on March 3, 1930. According to Wang

Diary, the situation that day is as follows:

I went to Wendeli on Hardong Road to interview Ni Tuosheng. I first met Zhang Guangrong and then went to the bedroom of Watchman Sheng's younger brother. Wen Yi has been bedridden for almost a month now. Pray with Tan and give silver. In the future, brother Sheng will hold his hand and ask the two of them what opinions they have, and I will state what I have in mind. Yi Ze said that those who love the Lord cannot be one.

45 See Wang Mingdao: "Fifty Years", 88–89.

46 Luo Ruifeng, Xing Fuzeng: "Wang Mingdao Talks about People and Things in the Chinese Church", 82.

47 "Wang Mingdao's Unpublished Posthumous Manuscript", copy manuscript. In the manuscript, he said that during this meeting, he said to Ni: "If you continue to do this, I am afraid that one day you will hate yourself and kill yourself."

48 Chen Fuzhong: "The Voice of Watchman Nee" (Hong Kong: Christians, 2004), 28. Ren Zhongxiang: "Shanghai Christian Gathering" A Brief History of the Meeting House" (Shanghai: Two Christian Associations, 1996), 3.

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It is a serious problem, except for unbelievers and criminals, all believers should be united. So far, all the doubts in my heart will be explained, and it will be very fast. Talk about half an hour out. 49

It can be seen from this passage that the issue of the unity of the church was the focus of the conversation between the two.

Before the meeting, Wang had doubts about Ni's position on the line of the church. So, what is the difference between the two?

In the "The Christian" from 1925 to 1927, Charney published a series of notes on the Book of Revelation - "Meditation on the Book of Revelation", expounding his early views on the church. According to Liang Jialin's research, Ni's view of the church in "Meditation on Revelation" is that he believes that the existing church system is mixed with too many human factors, which involves six mistakes: (1) sect names; (2) different Organization; (3) pastor-government system; (4) one-man organization of believers' gatherings; (5) ordination; (6) secularization of the church. In response to the above-mentioned fallacies, Ni proposed the local church from the principles of restorationism, and called on believers to "leave the denomination" and not "leave the church." 50 At that time, many believers in Pingyang, Fuding, Zhejiang, northern Jiangsu, and Shandong read Ni's article in "The Christian" and left the denomination one after another. They began to break bread at home and live the life of the church. 51

At this time, Ni's church line has attracted more church people's attention. Ni Second in 1926

The first time he went to Nanjing, Pastor Cheng Jigui and others invited him to meditate there to recuperate his illness (lung disease). During this period, he also accepted Jia Yuming's invitation to work in "Ling Guang Bao". At this time, Li Yuanru, who had originally opposed him, also accepted Ni's position, so he once offered to resign from the editorial position of "Ling Guang Bao", but Jia Yuming did not accept it. 52 Affected by the Northern Expedition in 1927, Nanjing was occupied by the revolutionary army, and Lingguang Newspaper was affected and stopped publishing. Li Yuanru went to Shanghai from Ningxia (the Gospel Study Room also moved to Shanghai), and participated in the Shanghai Bread-breaking meeting that began at the end of 1926. The 53 Gospel Study Room is edited and edited by Li Yuanru, and continues to publish occasional periodicals such as "Renaissance", "Christian", and "Lecture Records", which are distributed to various places. In February 1928, Watchman Nee gave a speech at Wendeli meeting place

49 Wang Mingdao: "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", March 3, 1930.

50 Liang Jialin: "Watchman Nee's Early Views on the Church", his book: "The Life and Thoughts of Watchman Nee's Early Years", 144-186.

51 Zhang Xikang: "The Memoirs of Zhang Xikang - A Review of the Local Church in Shanghai Over the Past Sixty Years" (Hong Kong: Guangrong, 2012), 20.

52 Chen Fuzhong: Biography of Li Yuanru, 90.

53 Ibid., 91.

Held a special Bible study meeting and invited 20 to 30 pastors from the Inland Missions, Self-Reliance Churches, and Presbyterian Churches in northern Jiangsu to come to Shanghai to participate. The central message of Nee's speech was "God's eternal purpose" and "Christ's victory". The session lasted about ten days. After the meeting, these pastors returned to various places, and led the believers to break away from the original denominational associations and set up separate meeting places. In the same year, Ni's "Spiritual Man" was published. 54 At this time, the number of people at the Shanghai meeting place gradually increased, and by 1930 it had reached more than a hundred people, many of whom had left the original "guilds" and "denominational sects". By 1931, more than 400 people were gathered at the party. 55

Wang obviously had "doubts" about Ni's teachings, especially the issue of unity, but Ni confessed to Wang: "Yi Ze said that those who love the Lord cannot be united is a serious problem, except for unbelievers and criminals. After saying that all believers should be one", Wang then "explained all the doubts in his heart". It is true that Ni's "unity" actually has a local church-like tendency towards unity, but since Wang Mingdao doesn't know much, he accepts Ni's explanation and clears up his doubts. In fact, in the early 1930s, although Nee's church-line teachings attracted some attention, the overall relationship between them and the Spiritualists was still relatively harmonious. 56

In July 1932, Watchman Nee visited Peiping, and the two met briefly. 57

Wang and Ni relationship

Beginning in the 1930s, Wang Mingdao began to express more concern about the idea of "small groups" breaking away from sects. Wang Mingdao's diary mentioned this point many times, and I would like to extract the following:

At lunchtime, Watchman Nee and Wang Dengming were there to talk after the meal. At 2:30, I returned to the room for a rest. At 3:30, I intended to go to the small group bread-breaking meeting, but because no one was with me, I stopped. (April 2, 1933)

54 Ren Zhongxiang: "A Brief History of Shanghai Christian Meeting Places", 3-4.

55 Zhang Xikang: "The Memoirs of Zhang Xikang", 28.

56 For example, the Mission Magazine, edited by Chen Chonggui in the early 1930s, still published articles by Ni, such as "The Blessings You Can Enjoy Now," Mission Magazine 5.5 (September 1932): 9-13.

57 Wang Mingdao: "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", July 24, 1932.

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At half past four, Mr. Davis came to talk. Isu recently asked for my opinion because of Ni Jun's preaching, a special phenomenon occurred in the school. Answer it. We talked until half past five. (April 6, 1933)

Went to Baoxing Road to visit Ms. Wang Subo, and learned that a small group meeting was also set up in Yiyi's office. Later, I went to No. 79 Hepingfang to interview Ms. Huang Yuetang for a talk. I learned that the church here was very disturbed by the division of the small group. (March 5, 1934)

Mr. Zhao Shiguang talked for about an hour, and Yi invited Yu to give a lecture in Shouzhen Hall. Allow it. Yi also asked me to write an article against the teachings of the sect. I have not yet received this mission. (August 23, 1934)

At two o'clock, I visited Huang Youganjun and his wife and talked with them. Yi and others accepted Ni Jun's special lessons very deeply, and advocated breaking away from sects. (August 27, 1934)

From the above diary passages, it can be seen that Wang Mingdao has continued to use the term "small group" to describe the church established by Watchman Nee. According to the origin of "Xiaoqun", according to Ren Zhongxiang, the name "Xiaoqun" was actually used by Ni. According to Luke 12:32, Jesus called the disciples "you little flock", he called the gatherings in various places "little flock meetings", and named his collection of poems "Little Flocks". 58 Zhang Xikang, another co-worker at the meeting place in Shanghai, recalled that around Around 1931, a reporter from Shanghai's "Guangwen Bao" went to Wendeli Church to interview the brothers from Britain, the United States, and Australia. At that time, the reporter saw that there was no hall name outside the meeting hall, and seeing the word "Xiaoqun" in "Xiaoqun Poetry" used by the church, they called it "Xiaoqun School". Since then, other church members have continued to use the "little flock" name. 59 However, Ren pointed out that Watchman Nee later thought that the name "little group" was not suitable for the name of the church. He used "gathering in the name of the Lord" or "a church in a certain place" in the content, and called it "Christian assembly place" externally. 60

In fact, Luan Hongbin (also known as Luan Philip), a co-worker in Wang Mingdao's Christian synagogue, left under the influence of Nee's proposition. Luan is from the Northeast. He used to attend the Beijing Christian Synagogue and was baptized by Wang. But later became a co-worker at the Hangzhou Christian Assembly. In September 1934, while Wang was preaching in Shanghai, he learned that his father-in-law had died of illness in Hangzhou, so he went to Hangzhou for the funeral.

58 Ren Zhongxiang: "A Brief History of Shanghai Christian Meeting Places", 4.

59 Zhang Xikang: "The Memoirs of Zhang Xikang", 61.

60 Ren Zhongxiang: "A Brief History of Shanghai Christian Meeting Places", 4.

During the period, he had the opportunity to reunite with Luan Hongbin for a private talk. Luan once talked to Wang about women's preaching, women's enlightenment, and breaking away from sects. During the conversation, he expressed the hope that "the workers chosen by the Chinese digital gods can cooperate." The implication seemed to be to promote the cooperation between Wang and Ni, but Wang declined, and stated the reasons for not being able to cooperate. During the conversation, Wang also mentioned "the achievements of sects".⁶¹

In addition, Yan Jiale of the Christian meeting place in Beijing turned out to be in the Christian meeting hall Baptized.

In January 1935, Watchman Nee's name came to Wang Mingdao's attention again. But this time it involves Ni's marriage turmoil. Liang Jialin has discussed this incident in detail, so I won't repeat it here.⁶² In short, Ni married Zhang Pinhui on October 19, 1934, but in December 1934 Zhang's aunt, Zhang Meizhen, published notices opposing Ni's marriage in Shanghai's famous Shenbao and Xinxin. A serious blow to Ni's reputation. Later, the Zhang family also published an announcement to refute Zhang Meizhen's statement.⁶³ Due to Ni's status in the church world, the story was widely circulated in the church world, and naturally it also reached Wang Mingdao's ears. Some believers asked the king for advice on this matter.⁶⁴ When Wang read the Zhang family's refutation leaflet against Zhang Meizhen, Wang thought that "the verbal abuse is extremely inappropriate, and this kind of behavior is really ignorant." But he fully understands that "Watchman Nee's work will be greatly affected by the marriage." Between the words of 65, there is a hint of worry about Nee.

After the publication of "Rethinking Work"

Watchman Nee published "Rethinking Work" in 1938, which mentioned how preachers went to work and established churches in various places, especially the teaching of "one city, one church". This is Watchman Nee teaching

61 Wang Mingdao: *Selected Diaries of Wang Mingdao*, September 16, 1934.

62 Liang Jialin: "Watchman Nee's Marriage", *Watchman Nee's Early Life and Thoughts*, 194–261.

63 Witness Lee: *Watchman Nee: The Seer of Divine Revelation in Today's Age* (Taipei: Taiwan Gospel Book Room, 1996), 97–98. Witness Lee: *History and Revelation*, Volume 1 (Taipei: Taiwan Gospel Book Room, 2001), 86.

64 "At about ten o'clock, Mrs. Lin came to talk. She asked some advice about Watchman Nee and Zhang Pinhui, and she answered in the afternoon." Wang Ming said: *Wang Ming Dao Diary*, January 9, 1935.

65 Wang Mingdao: *Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary*, January 10, 1935.

According to Chen Zhongdao, "Rethinking Work" has three main contents: (1) sects are a kind of evil and degenerate organizations; (2) Churches are established according to locality; (3) The current church has departed from the principles of the Bible and is going back to the apostolic age to serve in local churches without denominations. It was this ecclesiology that Ni's followers propagated. Affected by it, many believers left their original churches and denominations. 67

Influenced by local churches, in the 1930s Beijing also established a Christian meeting place. Wang Mingdao's Christian synagogue was also affected. In addition to the above mention of Luan Philip leaving the synagogue, Wang also recorded in his diary that after a co-worker Yang Runmin (in charge of the Tianqiao Mission) read Ni's works ("The Life of the Meeting" and "The Open Door"), The idea of leaving the synagogue arises:

Runmin come to talk with you. Yisu intends to go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Street Party to work, but he does not want to give up the work of the overpass. After talking about it in detail, I realized that because of reading "Congregation Life" and "Open Door", I was afraid of working in an illegal church; I would be punished if I saw the Lord in the future. Talk to him to clear up doubts . 68

It can be seen that the local church movement has not only impacted the so-called "guilds" and "denominationalists", but even many churches with spiritual backgrounds have been implicated. Even the Christian synagogue presided over by Wang Mingdao was not spared. In the 1940s, Wang Mingdao became more and more dissatisfied with Ni's church line.

66 Lin Ronghong pointed out that this is the "Road of Antioch", which is different from the "Road of Jerusalem" in the late 1940s. His book : "Spiritual Theology-A Study of Watchman Nee's Thought" (Hong Kong: China Academy of Theology, 1985), 229–257.

67 Chen Zhongdao: My Uncle Watchman Nee (Hong Kong: Xuandao Book Company, 1970), 26–27.

68 Wang Mingdao: "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", March 2, 1938.

Contradictions in the 1950s and 1940s

demolition church

In a conversation in the 1980s, Wang Mingdao mentioned the details of another meeting he had with Ni in 1939:

By 1939, I had heard a lot about him, especially that he was tearing down churches everywhere and pulling people into their groups. I went to see him. As soon as I met him, I said, "I haven't seen you for more than ten years. How are you doing?" He saw that my purpose of coming was to reproach him, so I brought up some things that his followers had done. I Ask him, he is not angry, he does not argue, with a smile, lick my ear, say what you say and I will listen. I became anxious later, and I said, "Do you know what your disciple is doing?" He really had no choice but to say this sentence, he said: "I didn't tell them to do this". I said, "I still want you to ask him to do this, the reason you are talking about is to ask them to do this." I also continued to ask him many things, but he didn't say a word. Later the woman came and told him, "Sir, the meal is ready." He wanted to eat, so of course I left, holding my hat and saying, "I'm leaving." He said that sentence, I think his sentence is a lie, because he has been very impatient for more than an hour, and hopes that you will leave quickly. He said: "You can eat here", "Excellent, I will eat here". This is the meal. I also told him during the meal, and we also said after the meal that after the meal, this is no longer a conversation, but an attitude of judging him. I think he is guilty, he is two years younger than me, I am older than him, so I am more qualified to blame him. He still didn't speak, didn't argue, and just listened with his ears, which was really self-restraining. In the end, we talked for two and a half to three hours, and he never said a word. I think he is very sick and hopeless. I just quit, and that was the third time I saw him, the three times I've seen him in my life.

Regarding the details of this Wang Ni meeting, the author checked Wang's whereabouts in 1939, and it can be seen that he did have a trip to Shanghai in 1939. Wang Mingdao was invited by the Baptist Church of Hong Kong to go to Hong Kong for a communion. He arrived in Shanghai on June 15, departed for Hong Kong on June 20, and arrived in Hong Kong on June 22. July

Leaving Hong Kong on the 30th, heading north on the steamer Coolidge, arriving in Shanghai on the 1st of August, and leaving Shanghai on the 3rd. Arrived in Shanghai again on October 16. From 17 to 24, he preached for eight days in various churches in Shanghai. Then he preached at China Theological Seminary and Shanghai Bible School. He left Shanghai and returned to Beijing on December 9. 69 However, the author found no records about his meeting with Ni from Wang Mingdao's diary about the date of his stay in Shanghai. There are two possibilities for this. One is that Wang did not record this meeting, and the other is that the year is wrong. They did not meet in 1939. On this point, further research is still to be done.

Although the date of this Wang Ni meeting is still to be investigated, as far as its content is concerned, it can be seen that Wang Mingdao already has strong dissatisfaction with Ni. He referred to "what you did as a disciple", which is believed to be related to the accusation that believers at the meeting place were accused of "stealing sheep" from other churches. And Wang went to see Ni because of the problem of "he is tearing down people's churches everywhere and pulling people into their groups". This was also the criticism of the local church line by many denominations and churches at that time.

Ni Pai's Poison

Undoubtedly, entering the 1940s, Wang Mingdao became increasingly dissatisfied with Ni's church line. This can be seen from his records in his diary, which can be roughly divided into (1) criticism of the line of the meeting place; (2) contact with believers affected by the line of the meeting place; The body is added by the author):

(1) Criticism of the meeting place route

Guo Bu made an appointment to talk, but he didn't have much to say. After half an hour, Yixun gave his opinion on Ni Jun, and replied that Ni Jun was a lesson from others, which I couldn't agree with.	March 19, 1941
Li Jun had many negative comments on Watchman Nee's work.	April 17, 1941
At 10 o'clock, I returned after noon. The church staff here had a public banquet, and then talked with Zang Antang. I was very sorry to hear about the deeds of the Ni faction workers here.	May 13, 1941

At the end of the meeting, Zhu Xiangzuo reported that Zhao Jun came from Huang County to preach in Ma Daren Hutong, and I gave a brief account of the demolition of the Baptist Church by Ni Shiren in Huang County.	July 6, 1941
Then talk about the work of Watchman Nee. Talking about the importance of love and the previous relationship between Yu and Yi, I was misunderstood by Yi several times, but thinking about the love of the Lord, I dare not leave. Yi also persuaded Yujin that he acted like a bureaucrat, evaded responsibility, and used his wrists. I replied that it was 6:15, and Trent returned. ...Returning, Yuan Ru, Gao Zhang Xizhi, Wang Qian Rusong, and Chen Shanli talk about having a cup for dinner, and then talk about the prejudice of the Ni faction...	November 4, 1941
I read several passages in "A Gathering Life" to explain Watchman Nee's teachings. December 3, 1941 70	
The old Mr. Tian Pinfang came and talked about the big failure encountered in the meeting place, and it was a long time to meet and regret.	August 1, 1942 71
Hongbin came to say that the work of the meeting place in Shanghai was completely bankrupt, that Watchman Ni had been abandoned by everyone, and that Li Yuanru burned the sermon manuscripts and left Shenyang for the Soviet Union. After listening to this news, I was terrified. Those who were shocked did not realize that this was the case, and those who were afraid feared that if they were not careful, they would fail and fall to this point.	January 14, 1943
At about ten o'clock, I visited Hongbin to talk about the matter of Jing Huai, and the affairs of the Xinjing gathering. Later, I talked about the matter of Watchman Ni. It is not easy to know people from the very beginning!	January 20, 1943
Later, I talked with Yi and his wife Binghe about Watchman Nee's dishonesty and the economic affairs of Yi and others working today.	April 5, 1943
Advising people not to ignore ordinary truths, teaching and persuading people to work hard to study the scriptures, and finally urging people not to listen to divisive words, because a group of people at the meeting place in the alley of Madam Master used despicable methods to lure people and warn the saints.	May 9, 1943 72
I tell you that Ni Xun is poisonous	June 23, 1943
Zhiyi admitted to criticizing Watchman Nee out of temper last year, and asked for opinions on Kuanjie's work	January 20, 1944

70 Wang Mingdao: "Selected Works of Wang Mingdao's Diary", December 3, 1941.

⁷¹ Ibid., 1 August 1942.

⁷² Ibid., 9 May 1943.

<p>Since Zihua heard that brother Tang once said that the faith of the meeting place is the closest to Yi, but Yi cannot join the group, and the attitude that Yi and others are not human beings cannot agree...</p>	<p>June 6, 1944 73</p>
<p>Brother Shao Tang came back at 9:00, and from 9:15 to 11:45, we talked about Watchman Nee's lessons from Merger and his work and group. If I called Watchman Nee a dishonest person, Yi's teaching might be useful. Brother Shao Tang also had doubts about this, and he also had some bad impressions from what he saw elsewhere.</p>	<p>June 16, 1944</p>
<p>At 10:40, Brother Shao Tang came to talk, and then after lunch, the main point was still to talk about the teachings and actions of the meeting place... Brother Shao Tang said that several people at the meeting place in Jinan invited Iraq to dinner, saying that Yi was preaching in the Sanhedrin In order to "give food to the prodigal son", it is harmful but not beneficial, and it talks about why I have not seen the truth so far after working for many years.</p>	<p>July 13, 1944</p>
<p>Brother Shaotang had dinner here, and then talked about all aspects of the Ni faction until ten minutes past eleven. If the two have the same doubts about the Ni Pai, there are several things: (1) Yi and others cover up the shortcomings and sins of Yi and other leaders; (2) The image of Yi and other leaders is getting worse, Life is mean. Brother Shaotang said that the Ni faction believers in Qingdao actually said that all the wealth of the world is in the hands of Satan, and believers should try their best to seize it so that they can enjoy it.</p>	<p>August 23, 1944</p>
<p>Today, when we talk about the issue of being called and evangelizing, Watchman Nee and those who left the sect are right and wrong.</p>	<p>September 2, 1944</p>
<p>Hong Daolai talked about the teachings of the Ni school, saying that it should be studied in detail, if it is true, it should be followed, and if it is not, it should be opposed.</p>	<p>October 13, 1944</p>
<p>Ke Chen said that the broad street church criticized and attacked the church here as a failure. But you should keep your mouth shut and not say what they are wrong, only to be superior to them. It is not allowed to attack the behavior of individuals, but their wrong teachings and methods must be opposed.</p>	<p>November 4, 1944 74</p>
<p>Bo Heng came to talk, and after lunch, he talked about Ni Pai's poisonous yeast.</p>	<p>November 20, 1944</p>
<p>Yu and Yushu talked about the mistakes of the Ni school.</p>	<p>March 5, 1945</p>
<p>At ten o'clock, Bo Heng came to talk about the mistakes of the Ni faction, but Yi Jin did not go to the party of this faction. I say that the most dangerous point of this sect is that it rejects other churches and regards itself as the only church, and strictly keeps everything secret to the outside world, and it also teaches that there is no personal freedom.</p>	<p>March 6, 1945</p>

⁷³ Ibid., 6 June 1944.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 4 November 1944.

Ping Zhixin had a long talk, talking about the failure of Watchman Nee, and Yi also said that some workers in the country have fallen down today, and there is an extreme shortage of workers, and the work will be greatly expanded today. I agree.	March 27, 1946
I will preach in the inland, and the hall is very crowded. The preaching lasted at about twelve o'clock. After meeting Chen Chonggui and his wife, after a brief talk, I went to a Chinese and Western restaurant in Shangqing Temple for a lunch talk with Shen Sizhuang and his wife. Knowing how Mr. Shen went astray and became a believer in the Lord, and the blow he suffered because of looking up to someone—Watchman Nee, he knew how terrible Mr. Ni was.	May 19, 1946
After lunch, I talked with Xi Huan about Watchman Nee and the dangers of the Yisuo Church. September 17, 1947	

(2) Contact with believers affected by the route of the meeting place

After the meal, I talked with Cuixi for a while, and Yi thought was still deeply influenced by Watchman Nee's lessons, so I corrected it.	March 17, 1941
Wang Yunsheng talked with Luan Hongbin, and Chen Jiabao also came. Wang Yunsheng asked why the believers in Mr. Ma's alley refused to go to other places for gatherings. He read several passages from "Life of Gathering" to explain the mistakes of Watchman Nee. At 10:15, the three resigned go.	December 3, 1941 75
He came to preach at breakfast, saying that he had joined Broad Street and did not want to come back.	October 8, 1944 76
Wang Xuandao came to speak and decided to join the Broad Street meeting.	October 11, 1944 77

(3) Christian fellow workers

Brother Runmin came to talk. I told you that because Yi had contacted the Kuan Street Meeting Office to join the office, for the sake of all parties, Yi must be temporarily suspended from work.	August 5, 1944 78
At around 9 o'clock, we went to Luan Feili's place at No. 4, Xicha, Nianjiang Temple, Haidian, and talked for two hours, and then told us about the shortcomings of the meeting place.	August 18, 1944

⁷⁵ Ibid., 3 December 1941.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 8 October 1944.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 11 October 1944.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 5 August 1944.

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From the above quotations, it can be seen that after the 1940s, Wang Mingdao had considerable reservations about Watchman Nee himself and his church line. He summarized it with "Ni Pai", and made "failure", "dangerous", "mistakes", "terrible", "evil comments", "lessons",

Negative comments such as "poisonous yeast", "poisonous", "shortcomings", "dishonesty" and "dishonesty" can be seen in the bad relationship between Wang Ni. Regarding Ni's personal issues, it mainly involved Ni's suspension from work in 1942 due to the incident at the Biochemical Pharmaceutical Factory. 79

synagogue? meeting place?

In 1949, when Wang Mingdao recalled the establishment of the Christian synagogue, he mentioned Watchman Nee's criticism of the name of the synagogue and Wang's rebuttal:

In the spring of 1933, Wang Mingdao borrowed the house of the Social Hall of Longfu Temple for gatherings. 1933 4 Monthly change to rent a house at No. 23, Qianchaomian Hutong A, which can accommodate about 200 people. Due to the development needs of the church, Wang Mingdao began to conceive of building a church. In 1934, he began to donate money for the building of the church. In the spring of 1936, he decided to purchase No. 42, Shijia Hutong. At that time, he also planned to file a case with the government. He thought that the church should have an official name. After many days of deliberation and prayer, he chose "The Christian Tabernacle" (The Christian Tabernacle). He pointed out in "Fifty Years" that there was a book that believed that "synagogues" were places where Jews met, and places where Christians met should not use "synagogues", otherwise they would be misunderstood to have a relationship with Judaism. He said: "The author of that book Those who advocate the use of "Christian meeting place"". 80 The "author" that Wang Mingdao refers to is Watchman Nee. In his book "The Orthodoxy of the Church" published in the 1940s, Nee said:

The Lord said a very important word here: "In fact, they are not Jews, but members of the Synagogue of Satan." The word "ÿ" is not church, but Synagoge in Greek, and it should be translated as "synagogue" in Chinese. This character is especially related to Judaism, just like the word "temple" is related to Buddhism, the word "Guan" is related to Taoism, and the word "temple" is related to Islam. have a brother

79 The turmoil of the biochemical pharmaceutical factory can be found in Witness Lee: "History and Revelation", I: 110–120. Another Witness Lee: "Ni Watchmen—Seers of Divine Revelation in Our Age, 98–99. 80 Wang Mingdao: "Fifty Years", 131.

He said that we should not call the meeting place a church hall, but a Christian synagogue. If so, if a Jew passes by this place, he will have a big misunderstanding, because "synagogue" is a proper term for Judaism. How can you say there are Christian synagogues without bringing in Judaism? The Lord said, this is a synagogue of Satan. The Jews mentioned here by the Lord refer to the Jews in Christianity, because they have brought in all the "synagogues". In order for God to be gracious to us, we must be completely free from the Jewish stuff. 81

Responding to Ni's criticism, Wang argued that synagogues:

It is a Chinese term that is easy to understand, especially not saying that only Jews can use it exclusively. Why is it not available to Christians? If the use of "synagogue" means having a relationship with Judaism, then some departments in China's military and political institutions often use the word "chu" and call it "Christian meeting place", isn't it afraid of having a relationship with military and political institutions? What's more, we don't just call it "synagogue", but "Christian synagogue"?

It must be pointed out that "synagogue" and "meeting place" are apparently a matter of names, but in fact, from Ni's perspective, this is a matter of truth and a matter of the line of the church. Ni later made a further analysis on this in 1951: he divided the "unity" of the church into four paths: (1) the unity of the Roman Catholic Church; (2) the "spiritual" unity; (3)) the local unity of the church; (iv) the unity of churchism. Obviously, Ni's church way is "local unity", which he believes is completely in line with the teaching of the Bible. In contrast, Wang Mingdao, in his eyes, is only "spiritual unity" or "ecclesiastical unity". Nee pointed out that "'spiritual' fellowship is not really spiritual fellowship" because it still "preserves denominational fellowship." "We cannot admit that denominations are wrong and at the same time defend denominations." 82 In addition, Ni also agrees that the churches in the Bible "are governed by themselves one by one", but this kind of "congregational" church does not pronounce the word "local". "There may be as many churches in one place, and each church is in its own

81 Watchman Nee: "The Orthodoxy of the Church" (Taipei: Taiwan Gospel Book Room, 1955), 23–24.

82 Watchman Nee: "The Unity of the Church", Open Doors 24 (April 15, 1951), Watchman Nee Collection", Volume 2, Volume 10 (Taipei: Taiwan Gospel Book Room, 1992), 96–97.

They are one in themselves, but independent of each other," which completely violates the biblical truth of "one place, one church." 83 To put it bluntly, Wang Mingdao's Christian synagogues are nothing more than "spiritual" and "congregational" unity, and only Christian meeting places (local churches) are the unity that truly conforms to the truth of the Bible. .

6. Summary

Around 1982, some believers asked Wang Mingdao about how to evaluate Watchman Nee, whether he judged people, etc.

The king's answer at that time was:

For example, there is a liar who has lied to several people. Should we declare him a liar? It should be announced, explaining the name of so-and-so and how he deceived others, so that others will not be deceived by him again. If you are a liar, the Chinese say that they hide evil and promote good. There are some things that are right and some things that are wrong. If a person commits a crime by chance, we don't need to publicize it for him, hoping that he will repent. If a person commits all kinds of crimes, always commits crimes, and always harms others, we declare his sin and his name. If God allows, maybe one day I will mention something about Watchman Nee. 84

Wang Mingdao's recollections in his later years all made negative comments on Ni. This article attempts to turn back the time and sort out the relationship between Wang Mingdao and Watchman Nee and its evolution from the 1920s to the 1940s. It can be summarized as follows:

First, the relationship between Wang and Ni is mainly viewed from the perspective of Wang Mingdao, that is, "Watchman Nee that Wang Mingdao knew". Due to data limitations, Ni has not left any comment on Wang Mingdao or any response to Wang's criticism, so it is impossible to examine the relationship between the two from Ni's perspective. Wang's criticism of Ni , and could not respond from Ni's standpoint.

83 Watchman Nee: "The Unity of the Church", 127-130.

84 Luo Ruifeng, Xing Fuzeng: "Wang Mingdao Talks about People and Things in the Chinese Church", 81.

Second, from the 1920s to the 1940s, Wang's understanding of Ni basically changed from admiration and taking Ni as an example, and then gradually evolved into a negative evaluation of Ni and his church line. The key point is that Ni's church view (line) and its practice aroused Wang's doubts and anxiety more and more. At the same time, in the early 1940s, Wang learned of some personal problems of Mrs. Nee, which I believe also had an impact.

Third, in fact, in the 1950s, until Wang Mingdao was arrested in 1955, Wang also had strong dissatisfaction and criticism of Ni's attitude after the founding of New China and the contingency strategies he led the meeting place. This aspect has been discussed in detail by the author, so I will not repeat it here. 86

Fourth, as mentioned above, Wang Mingdao also recounted the content of several important talks between the two in his interviews and posthumous manuscripts in the 1980s. However, comparing Wang's diary at that time, it can be seen that his expression in the 1980s is obviously different from the situation presented in the original diary. Relationships in the twenties and thirties. This is what we should pay attention to when we read Wang's evaluation of Ni in the 1980s.

Throughout Wang Mingdao's life, he rarely wrote articles criticizing Yuedan for individual Chinese church figures, except for Watchman Nee, who was Song Shangjie. After Song passed away in 1944, Wang specially wrote "Mr. Song Shangjie Passed Away" and published it in "Spiritual Food Quarterly". The article mentioned Song's strengths and weaknesses. 87 Wang did not deny that at first he had a great "dislike" towards Song and "had some bad impressions", but later, when he got to know Song better, he completely changed his view. However, he still pointed out that Song's shortcomings are "too self-willed" and "clumsy in dealing with the world". On the whole, however, Wang still greatly admired Song Shangjie:

He has some great strengths, the first of which is his honesty and integrity, without hypocrisy. He will not intrigue with others, and he will especially not deceive others. As he sees in his heart, so he speaks with his mouth. Whatever is in him will come out from outside. He will never be perfunctory, nor will he follow the feelings. This is where he hurts people, and this is where he wins people. This is also the reason why I love him the most. ...others are

85 Xing Fuzeng: "The "Counter-revolution" in the Revolutionary Era", 97-147.

86 Xing Fuzeng: "Anti-Emperor. patriotic. The Spiritual Man.

87 Wang Mingdao: "Mr. Song Shangjie has passed away", "Spiritual Food Quarterly" 71 (September 1944): 19-26.

Among God's workers, some shortcomings are several times or dozens of times worse than His shortcomings, but others cannot see them; because those people can cover up and cover up. He showed what he had. Many people criticize him for this, but I love him for this. I don't love his shortcomings, what I love is his sincerity, of course those shortcomings are bad and should be corrected...

Mr. Song also has one of his greatest strengths, which is his bravery. He has the bravery of the prophets of old. He is a warrior who attacks evil. He fearlessly condemns evil in society and evil in the church. He has no regard for other people's attacks and opposition... 88

Wang's love and hatred for Song reflect his criteria for praise and criticism of Yuedan—honesty, integrity, and bravery. Although this is the foundation of Christian personality, it does not lose the essence of Chinese tradition. In his posthumous manuscript, Wang claimed to be a "faithful disciple of Confucius", and said: "Among the four disciplines of Confucius, virtue ranks first, speech comes second, political affairs come second, and literature comes last." 89 visible, "Virtue" is still an extremely important outline in the life of Christians, and it has both faith and ethical meanings. In fact, this might not be Wang's portrayal and requirements for himself, and it also helps us understand the scale behind his evaluation of Watchman Nee. Ni is the same as Song, although he also "doesn't worry about other people's attacks and opposition", but Wang's impression of Ni has changed from excellent to bad. Although it involves differences in the church's line, it is difficult to conceal the Confucian gentleman's feelings that Wang Mingdao can't get rid of in his heart.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 22–24.

⁸⁹ Wang Mingdao: "The Last Confession of Wang Mingdao", 150, 220.