The aim of this paper is to understand what Protestant mission meant to China through studying how missionary discourses and enterprises were rejected or accepted by Chinese society from mid-19th century to 1910s.

In the first part, which is composed of two chapters, anti-missionary incidents, so called “missionary cases,” are studied. The Tianjin-Beijing treaty ratified in 1860 after the Arrow war, which provided missionaries with rights to travel over inland China, to be protected from the danger (for Chinese converts not to be molested on the ground of Christian beliefs) and to purchase lands and properties (only in French treaty), missionaries publicly started entering inland far from treaty ports, sometimes purchasing lands for building their houses and chapels. In response to a start of inland evangelization protected by the treaty between China and western powers, “missionary cases” broke out throughout China, which often led to diplomatic problems.

In the first chapter “Missionaries and Unequal Treaties,” it is discussed how protestant missionaries were involved into concluding those treaties, especially inserting privileged clauses for Christian missions into them. It has been repeated again and again as a symbol of tied connection
between imperialism and Christian missions that missionaries engaged in their work under the protection of unequal treaties. However, although some missionaries were surely involved in realizing privileged rights, not only British government but also US government was not positive to inserting the right for inland mission travel. The image that imperial powers invaded into China making use of Christian missions is never fit for this case. It can be rather said that missionaries whose nationalities should be in heaven were actually dependent on their nation power. It was their natural right for them to get rid of obstacles to fulfilling their mission to save heathens using diplomatic privileges.

In the second chapter, the Yangzhou incident in 1868 is taken up as a case study. There are three points which make this incident noteworthy. First, this Yangzhou incident is the first and one of the most serious missionary cases which developed to a diplomatic issue between China and Britain, and was solved by British “Gunboat Diplomacy.” Second, The British missionaries, Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission’s members, the victims of this incident, were attacked by Chinese people led by some intellectuals before they fully settled in to start his work. Those Chinese got furious at the news that little children died in a Catholic-run orphanage toward which they had had very bad feeling. At the news, they rushed to Taylor’s house instead of near Catholic Church. The reason of Chinese attack can not be that he pushed through his residence in Yangzhou, which has long been sometimes pointed out. Third, this incident had heavy influence on British diplomatic policy and its attitude to missionaries.

This chapter, at the beginning, discussing mission methods and its character of China Inland Mission that Hudson Taylor founded, focusing on the typical anti-Christian pamphlets which must have influenced those who attacked Taylor and his colleagues, and then concludes that there laid growing anxiety that their traditional social order was about to be threatened to extinction by the Catholic relief system on the bottom of Chinese anti-Christian (anti-Catholic orphanage) feeling. Next, following the process of Yangzhou incident, a detailed explanation is made that the way of
solving this case determined by the British diplomatic representatives in China was once criticized by the Foreign Office, but it was missionaries in China who were exposed to fierce criticisms by British society, which made them to refrain from inland mission work as well as inland residence. This process shows us that the relationship between imperialism and Christianity should be studied from many varied angles.

The second part focuses on another side of reaction to Christianity, “acceptance”, taking up two dimensions of it, Taiping religion and Christian education.

In the third chapter, “Christian missions and Taiping Heavenly Kingdom,” discusses how Taiping movement got in touch with Christianity and how those Taipings accepted Christian doctrines, pointing out that Taipings encountered with Christianity through two channels. One of them is that their leader Hong Xiuquan studied Christianity for several months in 1847 under the guidance of Issachar Roberts, an American missionary, and the other is that Taipings had close contacts with “Chinese Union (会),” an evangelization society founded by Karl Gutzlaff. Furthermore it is argued besides Christian impact on Tailings, Taipings’ impact on missions should be reevaluated as a part of history of Christian missions in China, because this movement might be linked with today’s Hakka church.

The forth chapter, dealing with Christian education from late Qing to the beginning of Republic of China, examines missionaries’ attempt to encourage Chinese to “accept” Christianity by education. When the new education was introduced after the Boxer was suppressed, they thought it possible to take part in modernization of China through Christian education, which they expected would bring Christianization of China. They requested Chinese Government to recognize and register Christian schools, but failed it. Although consequently Christian schools could develop their original education without being interfered by the government, they still kept thinking it is necessary for Christian schools to be registered by the government and to be recognized as educational institutes, which could give them opportunities to take part in building a modern nation. It was for this reason
that they elaborated to have Christian colleges inter denominationally united.

The original aim of Christian education gradually changed from “training evangelists” to “educating patriotic Christian intellectuals whose calling is to serve the state.” Missionary educators tried to sweep away foreignness of Christian schools, introducing the teaching of Confucius as an ideal ethic which they insisted was not inconsistent with Christianity. The Confucius ethic, however, could only complement Christianity. Their belief in the absolute superiority of Christianity over Confucianism was closely related with the diplomatically superior position of Christian schools.

After the Republic of China was founded, missionary educators, having governmental recognition and registration of Christian schools in view, carefully observing educational policies of Chinese Government, made great efforts to expand Christian schools, especially universities. As a result, Christian education once appeared very successful. But during 1920’s it became severely criticized by the Anti-Christian Movement and the Restore Educational Rights Movement. Governmental registration, which missionary educators had long wanted, was realized with its foreign missionary initiatives totally limited in late 1920’s.

This chapter finally pointed out that there laid a firm belief in Christian Universalism, which brought out “civilizing missions,” on the background that their endeavor to make Christian schools contributive to a nation of China ended in failure from a viewpoint of Christian missions.

It can be said through this dissertation the relationship between protestant missions and states (imperial state and empire state) is inquired. This relationship on one hand induced serious attacks against missionaries, and on the other hand was used to promote Christian educations in China. This issue has to be studied from a wider perspective of Christianity and East Asia, which covers comparative studies of modern history of Christian missions in China, Japan and Korea.