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XXXIII

# The Chinese Rites Controversy

Its History  
and Meaning

Edited by  
D. E. Mungello





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**MONUMENTA SERICA MONOGRAPH SERIES**

**XXXIII**

**Sankt Augustin**

**Editor: ROMAN MALEK, S.V.D.**

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Jointly published by  
Institut Monumenta Serica, Sankt Augustin,  
and  
The Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History, San Francisco

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Routledge

## Sumptibus Societatis Verbi Divini

First published 1994 by Steyler Verlag

Published 2018 by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

### **Die Deutsche Bibliothek - CIP-Einheitsaufnahme**

The Chinese rites controversy : its history and meaning/  
Jointly publ. by Institut Monumenta Serica, Sankt Augustin,  
and The Ricci Institute for Chinese Western Cultural History,  
San Francisco. Ed. by D.E. Mungello. - Nettetal : Steyler  
Verl., 1994

(Monumenta Serica Monograph Series ; 33)

ISBN 3-8050-0348-X

NE: Mungello, David E. [Hrsg.]; Institut Monumenta Serica <Sankt  
Augustin> ; GT

Editorial consultation: ROMAN MALEK, S.V.D. and BARBARA HOSTER

(Institut Monumenta Serica)

Copyright: Institut Monumenta Serica,  
Arnold-Janssen-Str. 20, D-53754 Sankt Augustin  
and The Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History,  
San Francisco

Set by: XIAOXIN WU, The Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History,  
San Francisco

ISSN 0179-261X

ISBN 13: 978-3-8050-0348-3 (hbk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003580577

# Contents

- VII Foreword  
EDWARD J. MALATESTA, S.J.

## I. Introduction

- 3 An Introduction to the Chinese Rites Controversy  
D.E. MUNGELLO
- 15 Claims and Counter-Claims:  
The Kangxi Emperor and the Europeans (1661-1722)  
JONATHAN D. SPENCE

## II. Chinese Views of the Rites Controversy

- 31 Jesuit Accommodation and the Chinese Cultural Imperative  
ERIK ZÜRCHER
- 65 Chinese Literati and the Rites Controversy  
LIN JINSHUI
- 83 Chinese Views of Rites and the Rites Controversy,  
18th-20th Centuries  
JOHN DRAGON YOUNG

## III. The Dominicans and the Figurists

- 111 From Manila to Fuan:  
Asian Contexts of Dominican Mission Policy  
JOHN E. WILLS, JR.
- 129 Joseph Prémare and the Name of God in China  
KNUD LUNDBAEK

## IV. The Theological and Political Controversy

- 149 Charles Maigrot's Role in the Chinese Rites Controversy  
CLAUDIA VON COLLANI

## VI CONTENTS

- 185 Eliminating Misunderstandings: Antoine de Beauvillier (1657-1708) and His *Eclaircissements sur les controverses de la Chine*  
JOHN W. WITEK, S.J.
- 211 A Fatal Clash of Wills: The Condemnation of the Chinese Rites by the Papal Legate Carlo Tommaso Maillard de Tournon  
EDWARD J. MALATESTA, S.J.

### V. The Past, Present and Future of the Rites Controversy

- 249 Towards a History of the Chinese Rites Controversy  
PAUL RULE
- 267 The Catholic Church in China Today: A New Rites Controversy?  
RICHARD MADSEN

### VI. Commentaries

- 281 The Suppression of the Chinese Rites:  
A Suggestion of Some Factors  
MICHAEL J. BUCKLEY, S.J.
- 287 The Crossing of Cultural Bridges  
DONALD W. TREADGOLD
- 291 Reflections on the Chinese Rites Controversy  
WM. THEODORE DE BARY
- 305 LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS
- 309 INDEX WITH GLOSSARY

### Illustrations

- Page 184: The Nanking *Regula* of Maillard de Tournon dated 25 January 1707 and promulgated on 7 February.
- Page 246: Document signifying obedience to Maillard de Tournon's *Regula* and asking his permission for himself and the Jesuits whose names are listed to remain permanently in China and to ask the Emperor for the residence permit. Dated 6 February 1707 and signed by José Monteyro, Vice Provincial of China. ARSI, *JapSin* 170, f°48r.

## FOREWORD

Several decades ago, the highest superior of the Jesuit Order assigned Francis A. Rouleau, S.J., a distinguished historian of the Jesuit China Mission, to investigate the unpublished archival sources pertaining to the Chinese Rites Controversy. Because discussion and publication about this topic which agitated the Church for three hundred years had been forbidden from 1710 on, no member of the Order had produced a significant representation of the Jesuit position. Adversaries of that position, however, continued their criticisms. A positive papal decision in 1939 concerning the Chinese Rites created a new climate and it was hoped that the Jesuit missionaries of old would at last have a suitable defender among their descendants.

Father Rouleau brought to his assignment extensive knowledge of Western languages, uncommon dedication in examining thousands of pages of dusty archival manuscripts, an admiration for Chinese Christians and the Jesuit missionaries who served them, and, most importantly, a keen judgment in evaluating evidence and arguments on both sides of the controversy. Father Rouleau produced two important monographs on the subject, in addition to studies on other aspects of Jesuit China Mission history which had also claimed his attention.

For the last seventeen months of Father Rouleau's life, I had the privilege of serving as his assistant. I had met him in 1946 when I was a high school sophomore with the dream of serving in the China Mission someday. Never did I think that 36 years later I would temporarily put aside the teaching of biblical spirituality to engage in historical research. With the help of his niece, Sister Mary Celeste Rouleau, R.S.M., I spent a good part of those precious seventeen months arranging and indexing the documentation on the Chinese Rites Controversy that Father Rouleau had so painstakingly acquired. After his death in 1984, the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History was created at the University of San Francisco to carry on his research and to promote the dialogue between Chinese culture and Christian faith.

As I gradually became more familiar with the many dimensions past and present of this dialogue, I realized the contemporary importance of the Chinese Rites Controversy. The issues involved in the controversy were indeed a major influence in the historical interaction between China and Christianity. Similar issues are still present today in the continuing encounter between Christian faith and the cultures of every people.

Father Rouleau's research on the Chinese Rites Controversy focussed on the Jesuit missionaries' defense of their position in favor of the Rites, a defense they repeatedly but unsuccessfully represented to the Holy See, while they attempted the impossible task of mediating between the Kangxi emperor and the papal legate to China, Carlo Tommaso Maillard de Tournon (1668-1710). As I continued my own study of the abundant documentation, I realized that to compose in a satisfactory way the extensive monograph Father Rouleau had planned, it was necessary to situate his scholarship in the context of that done by other sinologists and to solicit their help in treating various aspects of the controversy which were beyond the competence of any one person.

And so there emerged the idea of an international symposium on the Chinese Rites Controversy which for the first time would bring the issue to discussion in a public, academic forum. Both Chinese and Western scholars were invited to participate. Previously unknown documents would be analyzed. Specialists in the history of Chinese and Western thought would assist us to situate the controversy in the intellectual contexts of China and Europe. Diverse views along the spectrum of opinions would be voiced. One result of the symposium is the present volume.

All of the papers presented at the symposium are included in this volume, except for one. D.E. Mungello's paper "A Late 17th-Century Justification of Chinese Ancestral Rites by the Christian Scholar Zhang Xingyao" has been omitted from this collection because its contents were incorporated into his book *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou* (Honolulu, 1994).

It was not the intention of the organizers or of the participants to produce an exhaustive discussion or definitive resolution of this complex controversy. Rather, we wished to take a fresh look at the issues involved, in a contemporary context, with newly available documentation. We believe that this has been achieved and we trust that further research will result in additional knowledge about the past and its implications for the present.

It is a pleasure to express my personal gratitude and that of the symposium participants to the following persons without whose generous

cooperation the symposium would not have been possible. John P. Schlegel, S.J., President of the University of San Francisco, John W. Clark, S.J., Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Stanley Nel, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Barbara Bundy, Executive Director of the Center for the Pacific Rim provided support and encouragement from beginning to end. The distinguished scholars who accepted our invitation to serve as speakers, commenters, and chairpersons guaranteed the high scholarly quality of this event. The staff persons of the Center for the Pacific Rim and the Ricci Institute generously attended to many details in the preparation and holding of the symposium. We are especially grateful to Lisa Chu Mui, Krysten Elbers, and Winnifred Hsu for secretarial services; to Mark Mir for bibliographical assistance and for arranging an exhibit of materials pertaining to the Rites Controversy; to Xiaoxin Wu for producing the symposium program. Mary Ann Noble and the staff of the Lone Mountain Conference Center supervised the hospitality extended. Albert Chan, S.J., allowed us to consult his unpublished annotated catalogue of Chinese materials in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus. As a result, we discovered materials hitherto unused in discussions about the Chinese Rites. Viktor Gramatowski, S.J. and Joseph De Cock, S.J., Archivists of the Jesuit Archives in Rome, facilitated our consultation of documents and authorized the citation and reproduction of those which figure in this book. Alfred Abati served as international courier to deliver safely copies of important manuscripts.

For the production of the present volume we wish to thank Xiaoxin Wu who patiently computerized the entire text; Roman Malek, S.V.D., Director of Institut Monumenta Serica and of China-Zentrum in Sankt Augustin for including this work in the Monumenta Serica Monograph Series; the staff of the Institute Monumenta Serica for their competent attention to all details of the publishing process.

But most of all, I wish to express my deepest appreciation and the esteem of all the participants for D.E. Mungello, colleague and friend of many years. From the initial discussion of holding an international symposium on the Chinese Rites Controversy to the last period of the final proofs of the symposium proceedings, he oversaw every step of the long and sometimes tedious process. His insistence on the highest standards of scholarship in choosing the topics and speakers, in arranging the schedule, and in editing the papers guaranteed a level of quality which, I dare hope, has made an important contribution to the study of Sino-Western cultural history. It is also my hope that the Ricci Institute, which begins its second decade of existence, may be

X EDWARD J. MALATESTA

able, aided by the international community of scholars and institutions, to sponsor other symposia of similar quality.

EDWARD J. MALATESTA, S.J.  
Director, Ricci Institute  
University of San Francisco

**I.**

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## **Introduction**



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## **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHINESE RITES CONTROVERSY**

by  
D.E. MUNGELLO

In 1692 when the Kangxi Emperor issued the Edict of Toleration for Christianity, the glory and hope surrounding that ruling were already being undermined by the Chinese Rites and Term Controversy (abbreviated hereafter as “Rites Controversy”). On its most general level, the Rites Controversy posed the question of whether it is necessary to change a culture in order to adopt a foreign religion. Specifically, it asked whether the Chinese who adopted Christianity also had to adopt Western culture.

The Chinese names for God as well as the rituals used to honor ancestors and Confucius were at the core of this bitter 17th-century debate. On one side of this controversy stood accommodative Jesuits who argued that the indigenous Chinese terminology for God did not taint the Christian God with pagan associations. While there was some difference of opinion among the Jesuits on the question of terminology, they were nearly unanimous in arguing that most Chinese rites to ancestors were not idolatrous. They believed that the rites to ancestors had an essentially social and moral significance which did not violate the monotheistic nature of the Christian God. Certain, though not all, rites to Confucius were allowed by the Jesuits on the grounds that they were more civil than religious in nature.

In opposition to the Jesuit position stood a large array of groups including the Franciscan, Dominican and Augustinian orders as well as secular priests, such as the Missions Étrangères de Paris, and many with a Jansenist viewpoint. They argued that the native Chinese terminology for God and the Chinese rites to ancestors and Confucius did violate the teachings of Christianity. Intermingled on both sides with the higher motives of sincerity, good intentions and spiritual commitment were the baser attitudes of jealousy, vindictiveness and European chauvinism. Impelled by powerful cultural and political forces arrayed against the Jesuits, the papacy ruled against

accommodation. An extensive investigation by the Holy Office led to the decree of 1704 which was followed in 1707 by the Nanjing Decree of the papal legate de Tourmon. The 1704 ruling served as the basis of the Papal decrees of 1715 and 1742 which banned the Chinese Rites and prohibited further debate.

With debate largely silenced, many felt that the matter was resolved. It was not. Two centuries later, with the receding of European superiority and the ascendancy of Japan as a world power, Rome was forced to reconsider the matter in the context of allowing East Asian converts to observe Shinto rites. Consequently, in 1939 the Papacy reversed itself on the Rites question and showed that it was willing to listen to the official pronouncements of the Japanese and Manchukuo governments which claimed that the Shinto rites were civil rather than religious and to be swayed by the political pressures on native Catholics to practice these rites. These events have been described in *The Chinese Rites Controversy: From Its Beginning to Modern Times* by Fr. G. Minamiki.

Ironically, these same two conditions had been present in 1700 when the Kangxi Emperor confirmed the Jesuit accommodationist view in an edict which asserted that the Chinese rites to Confucius and to ancestors were civil and social rather than religious. In 1700 the pressures on Chinese Christians to participate in these rites had been at least as strong as the pressures on East Asian Christians in the 1930s to participate in the Shinto rites. Whereas in the 20th century, Rome was willing to accept official statements from the Japanese and Manchukuo governments about the meaning of native rites, in the 18th century Rome had rejected the Kangxi Emperor's rescript as an interference by a civil authority in a strictly religious matter. One could attribute Rome's change in ruling to a tempering between 1700 and 1939 of Counter-Reformation militancy and to a better historical understanding of ethnic adaptation to Christianity. Moreover, changes in East Asian cultures through modernization as well as the contemporary political realities of Europe's decline and Japan's ascent also contributed.

It is far easier to recount the historical events of the Chinese Rites Controversy than to interpret their significance. Viewed from one perspective, interpretations of the Rites Controversy can be placed on a spectrum between two extremes. One extreme regards the Rites Controversy as a watershed in the early modern history of Sino-Western cultural relations while the other extreme views the Controversy as a purely European affair which can be easily omitted when attempting to understand the history of Christianity in

China from a Chinese perspective. However, there are other interpretations and new directions in research which do not easily fit into the above spectrum of views. We hope to use the occasion of this Symposium to consider the entire range of interpretations of the Rites Controversy and to provide a forum for evaluating its significance in Sino-Western history. In order to better frame the inquiry, a synopsis of recent interpretations of the Rites Controversy follows.

In 1966 the French scholar R. Étienne published a popular work entitled *Les Jésuites en Chine (1552-1773), la querelle des Rites* in which he saw the Rites Controversy as inseparable from the broader issues of European imperialism and European treatment of China as culturally inferior. From Mr. Étienne's viewpoint, the culmination of the Rites Controversy was not the papal rulings of *Ex illa die* (1715) and *Ex quo singulari* (1742) which ruled conclusively against the Chinese rites, but rather *Dominus ac Redemptor* (1773) in which Pope Clement XIV dissolved the Society of Jesus. Mr. Étienne saw the predominating forces of Europe as opposed not only to the Jesuits' interpretation of the Chinese rites, but to the entire approach of the Jesuits which treated Chinese civilization on a more equal footing with Europe. Mr. Étienne accepted the formulation by most Jesuits of what he called "the fundamental issue: either Rome will accept the Chinese rites without reservation or it will be necessary to lose China" (p. 289; my translation from the French). Rome did not accept the Chinese rites and it lost China, and Étienne speaks of Macartney's mission to the court of the Qianlong Emperor as substituting the point of view of merchants for the point of view of the Jesuits.

D. W. Treadgold's *The West in Russia and China* (1973) has stimulated some intense debate among historians, including an exchange in the *Journal of Asian Studies* in 1974 and 1977. Mr. Treadgold sees the Rites Controversy and the rulings of Rome against the Jesuits as a watershed in Sino-Western cultural relations which destroyed the hopes of a syncretism of "purified Confucianism with Western learning and Roman Catholic Christianity" (p. 31). In his view, the Rites Controversy rulings of Rome not only destroyed the Jesuit mission, but also stifled "the influence of Western thought on China for a crucial century afterward" (p. 14). The Rites Controversy had both religious and cultural dimensions which stemmed from the Jesuits' training and from the grounding of their missionary enterprise in intellectual roots in order to appeal to the Confucian literati. Mr. Treadgold believes that Ricci's attempt to found a Sino-Christian civilization depended not on a clear ruling by an emperor, so much as on the ability of the Jesuits

themselves to continue to work in the cultural field and to earn the respect of the literati. In short, Sino-Christian civilization would succeed “only if the literati regarded it as a responsible alternative” (p. 31). Unlike the Jesuits, Mr. Treadgold claims that their opponents did not understand this and, as a result, did grievous damage to the Jesuits’ mission.

Not all mission historians have viewed the ruling *Ex quo singulari* (1742) as negative in its effect upon the history of Christianity in China. The late Father A. S. Rosso has articulated a Franciscan viewpoint which seems quite close to the 17th-18th-century viewpoint of the Jesuits’ opponents. In his *Apostolic Legations to China of the Eighteenth Century* (1948), Fr. Rosso sees this papal bull of 1742 as having a corrective influence to the degree of having “preserved Christianity” in China (p. 229). Fr. Rosso clearly defined the crux of the issue for many missionaries: “Christianity necessarily found itself either accommodating itself to Chinese thought and life to the extent of losing its essential traits, or carrying on a struggle aimed at an evolution of the Chinese system” (p. 224). While many mendicant missionaries would have accepted this interpretation, probably many Jesuits would not have. Even more telling of the divide between the mendicant and Jesuit approach was Fr. Rosso’s statement: “... to convert a man, one had to change him and not change oneself by excessive accommodation” (p. 228).

For those who wish to understand how the Rites Controversy could have generated such hostility, the book *Generation of Giants* (1962) by the Jesuit Father G. Dunne is very revealing. Fr. Dunne has himself been a controversial figure in his defence of moral causes throughout his life, including his youthful struggle against racial segregation in St. Louis. Fr. Dunne embraces a “middle road” between the extremes of relativism and intolerance in holding that Christian revelation is unique, but it does not exclude aspects of truth lying beyond its pale (p. 368).

Fr. Dunne’s analysis of the Chinese Rites Controversy reflects the view of a practical theologian whose aim is to solve problems in the mission field rather than in the theological disputes of the academy. This leads him to explain the Rites Controversy as an example of what happened when “a problem essentially practical in character became the subject of a speculative controversy bristling with uncertainties” (p. 287). When the issue of the Chinese Rites was transformed from a practical problem into a speculative matter, then a resolution became, in Fr. Dunne’s mind, impossible. As a result, Fr. Dunne’s justification of the Jesuits’ position on the Chinese Rites is that the Jesuits forbade Christian literati to participate in solemn ceremonies that

were clearly superstitious, such as those to Confucius. On the other hand, they allowed their converts to take part in most solemn rites to ancestors, with exceptions for rites like burning paper money, on the grounds that the appearance of superstition was not so strong. This is justified on the grounds that the rites had been secularized and emptied of their religious significance to the point of becoming civil ceremonies.

Fr. Dunne's outlook is probably very close to the views held by 17th-century Jesuits in China who attempted to deal with the Chinese Rites. And this is perhaps one reason why his book has generated such a strong response from certain members of other religious orders, as in the case of the review by the Dominican Father B. Biermann who wrote: "Certainly mistakes were made by the opponents of the Jesuits, but the men whom [the Jesuits] opposed were in general not pig-headed idiots and evil jealous people, as one could conclude from the details provided by Dunne, but sincere opponents who chose not to follow them out of genuine grounds of conscience..." (p. 296; my translation from German).

The Rites Controversy had generated a variety of controversial interpretations, including a conspiracy theory involving Propaganda Fide. In the mid-17th century Propaganda retreated from its earlier strong stand in favor of accommodation in the China mission and this produced a change in both Propaganda policies and personnel. On the basis of discoveries in archival materials currently held at a Catholic seminary near Aberdeen, Scotland, Mr. M. Hay in his book *Failure in the Far East* (1956) claims that the work of Ricci and other Jesuits in China was ruined by a Jansenist conspiracy. Specifically, during the last half of the 17th century, a Propaganda archivist named William Leslie supplied the predominantly Jansenist Missions Étrangères de Paris with copies of confidential documents dealing with the China mission. Entrusted by Propaganda with the task of reconstructing the missions of East Asia, the Missions Étrangères became obsessed with the destruction of the Jesuits' mission. According to Mr. Hay, Leslie provided the Missions Étrangères with the secret documents which enabled them to achieve this destruction in the context of the Rites Controversy.

Recent sinological scholarship on the 16th-18th-century encounter of Christianity with China has given greater emphasis to the Chinese side of this encounter. These works have given less attention to the Rites Controversy because, when viewed from the Chinese perspective, the Controversy appears to be a primarily European affair. For example, Mr. J. Gernet's widely-read *Chine et christianisme* (1982) contains scarcely a reference to the Rites

Controversy. The unstated implication is that the Controversy has been a much over-emphasized event in the history of Christianity in China. And yet one can find 17th-century Chinese manuscripts written by Christian literati on Rites Controversy issues in the archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome (Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Japonica-Sinica). The neglect of these documents by scholars shows that the Chinese side of this controversy has not been fully explored. Moreover, the anger and frustration that the Kangxi Emperor felt when the first news of Pope Clement XI's *Ex illa die* arrived in China is surely an important and significant turning point in the history of Sino-Western relations. The Emperor's refusal to accept the papal decree took the form of diplomatic one-upmanship. This was graphically symbolized by the famous "Red Manifesto" (*Hong piao* 紅票) of October 31st 1716 which was printed in authoritative vermilion ink in three languages (Latin, Chinese and Manchu) and sent off in multiple copies to Europe. In effect, the emperor declared that he would recognize only those documents from Rome which were delivered by his envoy to Europe, Fr. Provana.

J. D. Young's study of the Jesuit mission in China up to the time of the Kangxi Emperor sees the Rites Controversy as peripheral to the main cause of the failure of the first encounter between Christianity and Confucianism. In his view, it was neither the Rites Controversy nor the foreign origin of Christianity that caused the failure of this first encounter, but rather Christianity's ethical and metaphysical incompatibility with the Confucian tradition. But unlike the Rites Controversy critics of the Jesuit methods in China, Mr. Young sees the failure of this encounter as clear proof that Ricci and the other Jesuits did not compromise the essentials of their faith.

P.A. Rule's recent book *K'ung-tzu or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism* (1986) is critical of the major anti-Jesuit figures in the Rites Controversy, such as Navarrete, Maigrot and the latter's modern defender, Fr. Rosso, whose work Mr. Rule refers to as a narrative drawn from a "pastiche of sources" (p. 138) rather than a complete record. Fr. Longobardo has always been a key figure in the Rites Controversy and Mr. Rule has examined his important manuscript *Reposta breve sobre las Controversias* (whose original manuscript lies in the Propaganda archives in Rome). Mr. Rule argues that Longobardo misinterpreted both Confucianism and the comments made in personal discussion with him by important literati converts like Yang Tingyun and Xu Guangqi. Moreover, he believes that Longobardo's differences with other Jesuits have been exaggerated. These differences were, in fact, limited to the terminology used for God and the Neo-

Confucian interpretation of the Classics, and did not extend to differing with other Jesuits over the rites to ancestors and Confucius. Moreover, Mr. Rule argues that Longobardo's treatise as well as most other documents written by Jesuits on the Rites Controversy were all intended for private circulation among other Jesuits and were not written for public dissemination. It was Navarrete who exploited the situation when he received a copy of the *Riposta breve* from Caballero and published the work, giving the impression that Longobardo's differences with other Jesuits extended beyond the terms question to far broader areas. Mr. Rule saves some of his harshest criticism for Navarrete whose objectivity and credibility he questions.

But even Navarrete has his defenders, the most articulate of whom is J. S. Cummins. Mr. Cummins has published several works on Navarrete, including a study of Navarrete's famous 17th-century work on the history, politics, morality and religion of the Chinese empire called the *Tratados* (1676). In addition, he has published a long article entitled "Two Missionary Methods in China: Mendicants and Jesuits." This article is a much-needed attempt to explain the position of the Franciscan and Dominican missionaries in China and deals with the very different approaches of the mendicants to missionary work. By referring to outstanding students of Chinese culture among the mendicants, such as Juan Cobo, O.P., and A. Caballero, O.F.M., Mr. Cummins attempts to give greater legitimacy to the mendicant approach in China. He echoes Fr. Rosso's views in two ways: first, in justifying the mendicants' fears that accommodation could slide into an undesirable syncretism and, secondly, in arguing that the rulings of Rome did not harm the conversion of China to Christianity.

More recently, Mr. Cummins has incorporated the results of a nearly lifetime study of Navarrete into a carefully documented book entitled *A Question of Rites; Friar Domingo Navarrete and the Jesuits in China*. In this work, Mr. Cummins attempts to rescue the friars from the rank of stereotyped villains by examining the Chinese Rites Controversy from the friars' point of view and trying to make their actions understandable. In this he is successful, except in dealing with the Jesuits' preeminence as the leading proto-Sinologists in 17th-century Europe and, conversely, Navarrete's lesser understanding of China.

A contemporary defense of the Dominican position on the Chinese Rites is found in the article "The Chinese Rites Controversy: Dominican Viewpoint" by F. Villarroel, O.P. Fr. Villarroel emphasizes that the Controversy began as a well-meaning dispute over the methods used for

evangelizing China by two missionary groups—the Jesuits based in China and the friars (Dominicans and Franciscans) based in the Philippines. He places particular emphasis upon two points: first, that the internal differences among the Jesuit missionaries were greater than has been generally portrayed and, secondly, that the Dominicans who first arrived in China on the coast of Fujian province were more familiar with the Chinese language and culture than has been acknowledged. Fr. Villarroel states that they had acquired a “fairly good knowledge of the Chinese language, people, religion and culture” (p. 23) by working in the Parian district of Manila which was populated by Chinese from Fujian who spoke the Fujianese dialect.

Much of his article is devoted to accounts of disputes between Jesuit and friar missionaries in which he shares Mr. Cummins’ view that the Rites Controversy was more of a conflict between religious orders than a conflict of cultures. This argument leads Fr. Villarroel to accept Navarrete’s questionable conclusion that “the problem of rites could not be settled in China, but had to be decided in Rome by papal declaration” (p. 40). This viewpoint triumphed, at least temporarily, in the papal rulings of 1715 and 1742. It is revealing that Fr. Villarroel does not view Rome’s ruling of 1939 as a reversal of a previous erroneous decision so much as an updating or accommodation to a new situation in China. He explains that in the years between 1742 and 1939, the rites to ancestors and Confucius had lost their earlier pagan significance and become rites of mere civil significance (pp. 53-54) which were in their evolved form allowable. This interpretation is, of course, radically different from that held by most Jesuits and this disparity helps to account for the intensity of debate that the Rites Controversy continues to generate.

The Rites Controversy was responsible for stifling one of the most creative movements among Jesuit missionaries of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Figurists, such as Bouvet, Foucquet and Prémare, regarded the Chinese Classics not as historical works requiring a literal interpretation, but as works requiring a figurative and allegorical interpretation in order to reveal the symbols of prophetic allusion to the future Christian Messiah. In his intellectual biography of Foucquet, J.W. Witek describes Foucquet as attempting to present his Figurism as an alternative view to the two opposing views in the Rites Controversy. Instead of seeing the Chinese Classics as profane literature filled with atheism and idolatrous rites (as Maigrot and others in opposition to the Jesuits did) or of seeing the Classics as containing the principles of natural theology (as Ricci and most Jesuits did), Foucquet and other Figurists interpreted the Chinese Classics as sacred writings

containing the mysteries of Christianity in prophetic form (p. 332). Foucquet even sought to reexamine the terms question from a Figurist point of view. None of this happened because Foucquet was recalled from China for disobedience and was frustrated in explaining his Figurist philosophy in Rome. As Fr. Witek points out, the silence imposed on the publication of Figurist views and on discussing these views with the Chinese emperor was not aimed at silencing the Figurists so much as at averting any further discussion of sensitive Rites Controversy issues (p. 334).

The extent to which the prohibition on the discussion of Figurist ideas has caused the results of Figurist research to lie unread in archives for nearly three centuries has only recently become clear. Only with recent research by C. von Collani have we begun to appreciate the depth of Bouvet's knowledge of the Chinese classical literature and to begin treating him as a serious scholar rather than a mere eccentric. Ms. von Collani's intellectual biography of Bouvet (1985) and her more recent article on Bouvet's Chinese treatise, (*Gujin jing Tian jian; Tianxue benyi* 古今敬天鑒; 天學本義) (An examination of the ancient and modern [Chinese] worship of Heaven; The essentials of the Heavenly Learning), begin to reveal contacts and relationships between Bouvet and Chinese scholarship which had been suppressed by the Rites Controversy ban on discussion of such ideas.

The late F. A. Rouleau devoted a lifetime of research to the Rites Controversy and regarded it as one of the "most momentous" struggles in the history of Christianity (col. 610). His expertise enabled him to summarize the dominant view of the Catholic Church upon the subject in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967). In 1962 Fr. Rouleau had published a long article which focused in considerable detail on the first imperial audience of the papal legate Maillard de Tournon with the Kangxi Emperor on December 31st 1705. This study deals with the political nature of the relationship between the papacy and the Chinese monarch and the echoes for today are considerable. Fr. Rouleau revised and expanded this article in his last years and the revision awaits publication; however, one doubts that there was any change in his feeling that this Papal Legation was "one of the crucial turning points in the modern history of the China Church" (p. 264).

In his recent article "The Catholic Church in China," R. Madsen makes a sociological analysis of the historical evolution of the relationship between Catholic teachings and Chinese traditional practices. Mr. Madsen argues that certain Rites Controversy issues of the 17th century have been resolved, including the tension between Catholic doctrinal purity and Chinese

filial obligations of sons to fathers, wives to husbands, youth to elders, and extended families to their ancestors (pp. 108-109). This conflict was resolved by gradually redefining what it meant to be a Chinese Catholic. Instead of involving assent to abstract doctrines, the meaning of being a Catholic became popularly defined in terms of maintaining bonds to family and ancestors. As a result, in many Catholic villages in China today, the villagers' ties to Catholicism are viewed as part of the heritage of their ancestors, rather than a foreign teaching. Catholicism, although foreign in origin (like Buddhism), is now perceived by these Chinese as being in harmony with the familial obligations of mainstream traditional Chinese culture (p. 116).

The 1710 papal prohibition on further debate on the Rites Controversy has caused an accumulation of a vast amount of unresearched material in Chinese, French, Italian, Latin, Manchu, Portuguese and Spanish. A comprehensive survey of the Controversy by Fr. J. Brucker, written prior to Rome's reversal in 1939, appears in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* (1910). A useful attempt to separate the question of names for God from the question surrounding rites to Confucius and ancestors is found in Fr. H. Bernard-Maître's *Un dossier bibliographique de la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (1949). The Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History at the Center for the Pacific Rim, University of San Francisco holds in its archives not only the extensive collection of European-language documents on the Controversy belonging to Fr. Rouleau, but has recently acquired additional Rites Controversy materials from Sotheby's in the auction of November 22nd, 1988. A list of these acquisitions is available to interested scholars. As a repository of Rites Controversy materials and in its capacity as a sponsor of scholarly research in Sino-Western cultural history, the Ricci Institute sponsored an international symposium on the "Significance of the Chinese Rites Controversy in Sino-Western History" on October 16-18th 1992 in San Francisco. On the occasion of this Symposium, the Ricci Institute made available English translation of many Rites Controversy documents in a work entitled *100 Roman Documents Concerning the Chinese Rites Controversy (1645-1941)* translated by Fr. D.F. St. Sure and edited by Mr. R.R. Noll. The papers presented at the Symposium have been revised and are published in this volume.

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**CLAIMS AND COUNTER-CLAIMS:  
THE KANGXI EMPEROR AND THE EUROPEANS (1661-1722)**

by

JONATHAN D. SPENCE

Transcribed from the taped speech by EDWARD J. MALATESTA, S.J.

This is, to me, a very exciting occasion. Since I started my thesis work on problems related to the Kangxi emperor, I little imagined that one day I would be here addressing so many people who know so much more about the topic than I do. This only shows that scholarship does at times race backwards in some complex ways. The Chinese Rites Controversy is the hardest topic I have ever tried to tackle in a public lecture. I truly believe that, and so we will deal with it as we can. The occasion for this symposium is the 300th anniversary of the Edict of Toleration of Christianity which was granted by the Kangxi emperor in 1692. We are here to celebrate the possibility of agreement between China and the Catholic faith in a way. But in the full context of the Chinese Rites Controversy, 1692 and that Edict of Toleration represent just a moment, a fleeting moment which remains perhaps a kind of ideal to be striven towards, but an ideal that was immediately surrounded with controversy and constant disappointment, claims and counter-claims.

I will attempt to talk at and through one of the most absorbing groups of scholarly papers I have ever seen at a conference, and I have been to many conferences. The papers are not particularly long, a wonderful tribute to the skill and power of persuasion of Father Malatesta and Professor Mungello. The papers are complex; each of them is different and between them they raise a bewildering array of issues. I want to talk at them and through them, trying to acknowledge their strong points in order to provide those who might be participating later, with a taste of what is to come.

The Rites Controversy is almost impossible to date. In the introduction to the symposium theme written by Professor Mungello, we are told that the Controversy began in the 1630s. Yet the problem goes back to the earliest presence of the Catholic missionaries in China and perhaps, in some way, to Catholic fathers in Goa, India, and perhaps even beyond that to

difficulties in Europe in the early days of the Counter Reformation. The problem is how much one should adapt to other cultures and other civilizations while still holding on to the core of one's own faith.

From the first moment I went to China as a student, the one Chinese name of a Westerner that I found recognized by everyone was Li Madou, Matteo Ricci. To say I was interested in Li Madou evoked smiles and nods all over China. This Italian Jesuit, who went to China in 1583, has a kind of special resonance in the hearts of the Chinese even now in the 1990s, a remarkable tribute to one particular missionary. The same man, Matteo Ricci, after many struggles and much prayer, made with his colleagues decisions which affected the whole way he was to accomplish his mission, and which influenced the entire subsequent history of Christianity in China.

The Chinese Rites Controversy is a difficult topic, which has claimed the attention of so many in the past. Why is this topic still so absorbing? Why are so many of you here tonight? Why have these assembled scholars done so much work on a subject that in some ways is highly arcane, complex and elusive? What is going on here? In my remarks, which I entitle "Claims and Counter-claims", I want to limit my discussion primarily to the period of the Kangxi emperor who ruled from 1661-1722, an astonishing 61-year reign, the second longest in the history of Chinese emperors. I will attempt to introduce six categories which should figure in an attempt to give an overview of this period of the Rites Controversy: the problem of evidence, the emperor's character, the emperor's mediators, the intelligence system of China, Chinese in Europe, and finally, shifting focus in another direction, I would like to close with a few thoughts concerning the Protestant missionaries in the 19th century to give us a wider, ecumenical sense of the issues involved.

Let us start with the problem of evidence. When I was reading through the papers, taking notes and trying to keep track of this extraordinarily complex event with its claims and counter-claims, I realized that I was interested after all this time in the topic of the Rites in China, because the story is a universal one. I think it is a story of how people believe, not necessarily what or when, but how we come to believe something. As we pursue our way towards that, we must ask what constitutes evidence or what constitutes adequate faith. I believe that those involved in the Rites Controversy were in fact absorbed with this problem of how we believe something and to get at that, they had to go into the whole idea of what is evidence. They pursued those problems in a way that has great resonance for us even now. The question of evidence is relevant to us as students, or scholars, as voters coming to an election. For example, I have never seen an

election like the upcoming one where it is so difficult to know what to believe, how to believe it, and how to assemble evidence, when so many things seem to be going wrong in government. Evidence is a universal problem outside the Church in many areas.

In this period, 300 years ago, those involved in trying to decide on the Rites in China were struggling with four overlapping areas as they approached this problem of evidence. First of all, they were trying to decide what were the valid texts from a whole range of different cultures. Then they were striving to determine what constituted classics within those texts that had a certain sanctity or sublimity to them. They were attempting accurately to describe practices either that they themselves followed or practices that other people were defining. They were acting as witnesses and trying to describe what they actually saw. So they were engaged with normative texts, sacred texts, observation of practice and personal witness. They were endeavoring to draw all these together. And they were doing all this not just in a pragmatic way, such as someone today might do field research on a particular problem in social studies. They were doing it in the realm of religions that were in themselves hard to define and hard to assess.

To give you just a brief background to the complexity of the problem, it was only a few years after Matteo Ricci had gone to China in 1583, that he was trying to explain Christianity in terms that he thought would be acceptable to the Chinese. He realized somewhat to his alarm that the way he was presenting the doctrine struck some people as similar either to the Jewish faith or to the Muslim faith. Ricci struggled to decide how to solve this problem of simplifying the presentation of a doctrine, without losing control of its central and definable core. He often wrote to friends about this matter and so his letters are particularly rich in regard to the problem. Thus Ricci introduced us to the problem of interpretation and translation as part of this package of what constitutes evidence. How are we to present ourselves in another culture?

This question leads to the issue of language, something that the papers of the symposium discuss. Charles Maigrot, who is presented by many as the churchman who was the villain in the drama, adopted a very strong position against accommodation between the Catholic Church and Chinese religion, Confucianism, and the veneration of ancestors. Like most of the scholars who dealt with the Rites Controversy, Maigrot wondered how you could translate the terms correctly. Obviously, the people involved had enormously different levels of linguistic skill, but the emperor himself determined that Maigrot's Chinese was totally inadequate to discuss the texts that he claimed to be interpreting and rejecting. Perhaps we have moved too swiftly over this

problem of language and knowledge of language in accepting the condemnation of Maigrot. I know it is constantly a desire of historians to revise things and Maigrot does seem a very stubborn and annoying person. He was dismissed by the Kangxi emperor, particularly because his Chinese was so bad that he seemed incapable of understanding the texts. On one occasion the emperor said Maigrot could not even understand the character *ding* which has only two strokes. If in fact this man had spent quite a long time in China and had two Chinese language teachers with whom he had worked for years, was it really true that he could not even understand the character *ding*?

Were things perhaps a bit more complicated? For example, how do we decide if someone else's Chinese is not very good? Two days ago, I had the honor of meeting at Yale a famous scholar from the People's Republic of China. I walked into the room and I said, "*Ni hao?*" (How are you?) He said, "How good your Chinese is, how wonderful, where did you study?" For the next five minutes, I could relax completely; there was no chance of saying anything, while in a mixture of Chinese and English he praised me, wondering how long I had been studying the language, and so on, leaving me quite pink with pride at my linguistic accomplishment. Now the same gentleman could have written home immediately saying, "I have just seen a celebrated Yale professor. He knows two words of Chinese *ni* and *hao* and he doesn't even get the tones right on those." Perceptions are a delicate matter, so should we decide that everyone is accurate when recording perceptions?

Let us consider Kangxi himself. Kangxi in the transcripts of his personal papers, some of which I have seen, made a lot of mistakes in Chinese. But there are two big differences in condemning Maigrot's Chinese and condemning the Kangxi emperor's Chinese. If you condemned Maigrot's Chinese, you could make him a laughing stock. If you condemned Kangxi's Chinese, you got killed. This does set the scene somewhat. There were many discussions of Kangxi being helped by others. The mistakes he made in writing radicals, the components of a character, were sometimes such as to be able to make him the laughing stock of his country, if anyone had chosen to do so. When I was a graduate student, as much in awe of Kangxi as I am now, I found a mistake which he made in writing to an official. He intended to tell the official that he must keep everything secret. The character for 'secret' is pronounced *mi*. But instead of writing that character, Kangxi wrote another one, also pronounced *mi*, but which means 'honey'. What must the official have thought being told that he was to keep everything 'honey, honey'?

In other examples, recently photocopied from the Chinese archives, you can see the angry red squiggles formed by the imperial brush that only the

emperor could use, as he tried to remember the correct form of quite a basic bureaucratic word.

Nobody worried about that because Emperor Kangxi was the man he was. So let us be a bit more compassionate when we try to decide what levels of language people had. Matteo Ricci wrote a lot in Chinese and it's fascinating to go through it, but Ricci was an extraordinarily interesting and sympathetic person in many ways and he had wonderful Chinese helpers. If those Chinese helpers were with him much of the time, they would have caught his mistakes and corrected them. We know one of the great triumphs of Ricci was truly sublime. He translated the Greek geometry of Euclid into Chinese working out the mathematical notations to go with it, presenting Greek, and thus Western geometry to the Chinese people in an edition which was published in 1604. From a letter to a friend, we actually know that the way Ricci translated Euclid was to spend a whole morning every day for almost a year with one of China's finest scholars, Xu Guangqi, who had succeeded in obtaining China's highest literary degree. These two men would meet in the morning and would pace up and down, going through the text again and again with Ricci working out the meaning in current or *baihua* Chinese and Mr. Xu writing down the correct classical forms. We call this the triumph of Matteo Ricci; it is also a triumph of friendship and cooperation. I wonder how often we know which scholars were helping each other.

In one of the papers for this symposium, Father John Witek, S.J. has written a wonderful account of a man called Beauvillier. Beauvillier was a Jesuit living in China who attempted to put the difficulty of interpreting China into a European context. In a work which he wrote while in China, Beauvillier said "Look how hard it would be, and how harshly we would judge, if a Chinese tried to look at European philosophical problems and then subsume them back into his own language after meeting, for instance, ten scholars of the Sorbonne, each with a different point of view about the most abstruse and complex philosophical difficulties, which have absorbed European men of letters during several centuries." That observation of Beauvillier is very salutary for a group such as our own here, as we attempt to use a comparativist critique to sharpen our views.

Montesquieu did something rather similar in his famous *Persian Letters*, when he used an outside fictionalized scholar to define the country that he is criticizing. In eighteenth century Britain the famous poet and playwright Goldsmith did the same in a book entitled *Citizen of the World*. This was becoming a technique globally at the same time that the Jesuits were beginning to think it through. Allied to this problem of evidence, translation,

language and comparativism, is that of how to evaluate various Chinese interpretations of China's classical texts. How do we go about deciding which of these interpretations should be presented to our foreign host countries? In this case, the papacy had to scrutinize with enormous care the materials being sent back to it from China.

As a summary of this problem of evidence, I suggest five words which occurred to me from reading the papers of this symposium: incomprehension, reductionism, deceit, compatibility, and complementarity. Three of these are discussed in detail in the extraordinary paper by Professor Zürcher. By the five words I mean that everytime someone tried to present evidence of what the Rites were about, there was the problem, first, of total misunderstanding (incomprehension). Second, there was the possibility of one's pushing things rather one's own way, which in many cases was actual deceit. Third, there was the problem of eliminating certain levels of interpretation so as not to offend anyone (reductionism). In a way that was a manner of making your Catholicism simpler with the result that it got muddled up with Confucianism, Islam or Judaism. Fourth, there is compatibility, which is rather different, when various things are hidden in order to make one's beliefs resemble those of the Chinese; this was very widely done by some of the people we are studying. Fifthly, complementarity occurs when one claims that one's own doctrine fills in the gaps which are in the other school of thought, but then basically leaves both doctrines unchanged. These five issues are central to what we are talking about and central to how one deals with rites.

Let us look now at the Kangxi emperor's character. Several of the Symposium scholars write in their papers of certain aspects of the Rites Controversy as if they caused disaster or ruin. Attention is called to certain individuals or certain moments of this saga. That seems to me a difficult kind of approach to take because we are dealing with so many factors at so many times. If I had to come down with one simple statement that would subsume this whole Rites Controversy in this long period of time of the 17th and early 18th centuries, I would say we had the Rites Controversy we did because the Kangxi emperor cared about the issues. He worried about them; if he had not, the problem could have been pushed away and would not have achieved the enormous weight that it did in both Europe and China. Why did Kangxi care? This question induces us to look at the emperor's character.

One of the things that amazes me as I look all through the Rites Controversy is how dramatically it brings back personality into history. People really matter in the story, people were private and opinionated and proud and individualistic. I think Kangxi is central to this story by his nature. Which

aspects of his nature were so important here? Surely his roving, probing, eclectic mind. He prided himself on being able to pick up other people's ideas and making something out of them, of keeping a flexible and exploratory spirit.

Then he was proud. He was, after all, the Son of Heaven, emperor of the largest nation on earth. He was proud of his Manchu heritage. His grandfather had conquered Manchuria and his father had begun the conquest of Ming China. He was also quick tempered. A few of the scholars mention that, but perhaps we do not make enough of this trait. With his pride went a real irritability. Kangxi could flare up and it was very difficult get him to calm down again, as Maigrot, de Tournon, Mezzabarba and many others in this story found out.

Finally, we must not forget one rather simple fact: he was aging and getting sick and tired as the controversy wore on. Kangxi was a strong young man, who probably obtained the throne because he had survived an attack of smallpox. But he had grave health problems in his 50s. By the time of the famous de Tournon embassy in 1705 and 1706, when so much came to the boil, Kangxi was not only in great physical pain; he felt deeply betrayed and wounded by his own son whom he had raised to be the next emperor of China. He had found him to be a vicious and unreliable young man. He finally had to reject this son whom he had promoted, with enormous fanfare, to be Heir Apparent. So the man dealing with the key missionary decisions is feeling his age, all the more acutely because he prided himself on his vigor. He is feeling the tragedy of a father who has lost belief in his own children.

And—something I explored in my own book on Kangxi—there was the emperor's loss of memory. We all worry about our memory getting weaker as we grow older, but we can rely on filing systems, etc. as a backup. Something fundamental to Kangxi's character was his belief that he could carry the secrets of the nation in his head. Kangxi had developed a private notation system for dealing with his key officials in the provinces but kept no record outside his own skull. The reason for this was that he did not trust all the people to keep top confidential information secret. As a result, he would read reports and send them back to their authors without having copies made. But by the time he was in his 50s he began to wonder what exactly he had said by way of reply to many memorials. There was no way he could admit this difficulty without admitting weakness.

Along with this central problem of aging goes another difficulty in the imperial character of this austere and powerful figure, something which the papers do not give much attention to: the problem of friendship between the

Chinese and the Westerners, a question all the more delicate when it regards the emperor and mere mortals. Matteo Ricci had written his first, well-received book in China on friendship. The idea that friendship binds us together was very much in the Jesuit mindset of the time. Kangxi was capable of being a friend to some of the missionaries, e.g. with Verbiest, and probably with Pereira. He was a friend to some of his officials, e.g. Cao Yin, or a powerful Manchu official, Mingzhu. The way that the emperor reaches out comes from ordinary human emotions trusting certain people, liking certain people more than others. Why did Kangxi bother to go through all this, and why did he make the Rites Controversy such a huge thing? Because he cared, because he cared about it and about some of the people involved at a personal level. He was willing "to go to bat" at great emotional cost to himself.

I found a fascinating thing looking through some of the documents recently transcribed from the archives in China. Kangxi followed the arrival of every ship down in Canton and Macao through secret reports. He got special reports about when these ships were coming in, from which country, who were on board, whether they were Chinese or foreigners, what their skills were. In some of these cases, when he was waiting for the arrival of a particular person, for example Provana, his Jesuit envoy to Rome, Kangxi was really checking the shipping registries saying "I want to know when this person comes back." Tragically, Provana came back in a coffin, having died en route, just before his return to China. This emotional commitment to getting this kind of information touched me very much while reading these formal state documents.

In short, Kangxi could have dismissed this whole question of the Rites Controversy as nonsense, and we would not be here today. Or he could have simply acted very decisively on one side or the other. He had the power to do that. He could have simply expelled one body of churchmen. Instead, he agonized, argued, cajoled, engaged himself actively in the matter while complaining about his poor health and physical pain.

The third area to think about would be those I call the mediators. Kangxi was not here acting alone, as one Manchu with Chinese education dealing with a lot of Catholic priests of various religious communities such as the Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians and the Missions Etrangères, as well as the Jesuits. He was also looking at a whole range of problems that other people were bringing to his attention. He slowly accumulated an entire staff to help him understand these matters. I think one of the future areas of research in the Rites Controversy would be to examine more carefully just who these mediators were, and how Kangxi was getting information from

various Chinese and Manchus. Something that we might loosely call Christian politics was at the center of Kangxi's reign from the moment he came to the throne as a boy in 1661. The first group of famous Jesuit missionaries had been imprisoned and were still in prison when Kangxi ascended the throne. Kangxi resolved to free them from jail, and we still do not exactly understand why. We are not sure what was going on here except that Christianity and politics and his sense of power went together in the 1660s. We know somewhat that he used a special group of Chinese to be the companions of any missionaries or other Catholics who came into China. These were agents from the Imperial Household—the *Neiwufu* (Inner Affairs Bureau) of the palace. In the Ming Dynasty, this had largely been controlled by eunuchs, the castrated males who oversaw the women's courts in the palace. Kangxi used *baoyi* (bond-servants) who were loyal to him to accompany these missionaries. We know the names of some of these people who appear occasionally during the Rites Controversy. Some of them are crucial; almost every conversation that the Catholics had was with people like Zhao Chang, Henkama, or Li Bingzhong whose names come up again and again. These were experts on Christianity, but they were also bonded into the political system of the emperor.

In addition to the mediators used to assist the emperor in interpreting was Kangxi's eldest son Yinti, the one called the *Regulus* in some of the European texts. Again and again the missionaries complain that they cannot get to the emperor without going through his eldest son. Now this son was a young man who has not been very much studied. He was highly complicated because Kangxi had many children and they fought a great deal. This man had been passed over in the naming of the Heir Apparent who would one day run the country. He was thus already humiliated before he was assigned the task of controlling the missionaries on their various levels. To learn more about the sons of Kangxi and the way they coordinated the handling of the whole question of the Rites, as well as to look at the Manchu household organization, would surely be fruitful for us as scholars and researchers of the Rites Controversy.

We also need to know much more about the Chinese scholars who are involved. Some of the papers, like those of Professor Lin Jinshui, Professor Zürcher and Professor Mungello have begun to make good progress in this regard by looking at Chinese intellectuals and historians and the ways that they tried to interpret the various decisions. But there is another whole group of senior Chinese Neo-Confucian scholars, for example, Zhang Boxing and Zhang Pengge who were at the highest levels of the bureaucracy. They

themselves had complex conflicts with Christians and they were reporting in their own confidential memos. These too were part of the story.

As is shown in the paper by Dr. von Collani, even the language teachers of the people involved in the Rites Controversy could at intervals be summoned to the court to be investigated and perhaps to act as informants and mediators. How can we be sure that language teachers were not reporting back quite often? We may be a little too confident in not thinking of them. They may have been appointed, not freely chosen, precisely with a view to keeping a close watch over the foreigners. There was a whole battery of teachers, messengers, servants, assistants, clerks, etc. mediating between the emperor and his problematic Christians who were struggling in his domain.

The fourth area to keep in mind is what I call "the intelligence system." There was a complicated and sophisticated group of intelligence officers operating in China. The Chinese state was a highly centralized and extremely efficient one. Let us as an example take the case of the Mezzabarba legation in 1720. This was the last in a series of papal attempts to deal directly with the emperor and to solve the difficult problem of exactly what position was the Church to take after analyzing the issue. If we look at the Mezzabarba legation, we discover a whole background on the kinds of information that was reaching the emperor through the intelligence system. We can tell from the documents that have survived that there was a listening post in Guangzhou (Canton), but it did not operate in isolation. This listening post was connected through several personnel with Macao where the Portuguese controlled the colony, but where Chinese bureaucrats of a senior rank were also ensconced. The Governor General of the Canton Region of Guangxi and Guangdong kept in constant touch to see what was going on. He reported almost around the clock in the terms of that system to his emperor in faraway Peking. The man most concerned with this was Yang Lin, whom we meet in many documents of this period which have been preserved. He leads us to what Professor Rule calls a chain of command, something that needs to be studied carefully. This chain of command is different from the mediators. It was the way of going up towards the emperor and involved soldiers, junior officers, and lieutenants who boarded the ships which came into the harbor in order to interview the foreigners who had recently arrived. They chatted with Chinese along the docks. They were watchful for anything that might interest their emperor. It is partly due to this system of observers that the emperor was personally involved in learning whether those whom he had sent to Rome to appeal to the pope had returned safely or not. We can work out from these reports the exact dates on which information reached the emperor. We can chart day by day

when certain pieces of information came into this intelligence system and reached Kangxi long before other people knew they had been obtained. One example: Mezzabara, the papal legate appeared in 1720 and in that same summer Kangxi learned that Provana, the man he had sent to the Pope, was dead. There has been much discussion over something called the Red Manifesto, a carefully prepared document dated 1716 and sent to the papacy. The text had been printed by Kangxi in Latin, Manchu, and Chinese. Kangxi told people in 1720 that he did not know about the details concerning the Red Manifesto and its being sent to the pope. This is somewhat amazing because in the early summer of 1718 the same intelligence system reports that Provana has in fact been summoned by the Pope because the Red Manifesto had been received. How this news got back to China so fast, I don't know. But it is astonishing that Kangxi knew what had taken place in Rome so soon after the fact. Inside China itself, the intelligence operators the emperor was dealing with were given permission to race their messages to him by special riders changing horses all the way so that a message from Canton could reach Peking in less than two weeks and, occasionally, in ten days. So here was the emperor keeping up blow by blow. We can tell from this intelligence system how Kangxi learned about what was happening in this one fateful year of 1720. We know that he learned that Provana, the favorite missionary he had sent to the pope, had died about two weeks before he learned the name of two of the emissaries of the papal legate. Another month after that the legate himself was put into the system and moved up to Peking. As a result Kangxi was able to prepare for the reception of the legate by unravelling all this background of counter-intelligence and deceit that was swirling around Mezzabarba.

The fifth and sixth categories are the Chinese in Europe and the 19th century Protestant missionaries. The Chinese who went to Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries present a fascinating topic. Between the 1660s when the first Chinese reached Europe and the 1770s when the numbers began to grow, it is possible to chart nearly all the Chinese who reached Europe and to find out a lot about them. The more I studied the papers that are going to be presented in the next couple of days, the more I realized that many more Chinese than I had previously understood were involved in this Rites Controversy. The missionaries who were travelling back and forth between China and Europe, often with Chinese assistants, were key people in the Controversy. John Hu and Arcadio Huang travelled with missionaries very active in the debates before they settled in Europe. Much careful research is necessary to unravel the history of the Chinese in Europe. Arcadio Huang, for example, decided not to enter the priesthood. Instead, he wound up living in

Paris around 1710 where he married a young French woman and became the first bibliographer of the French king's Chinese library. Arcadio had come from China with Artus de Lionne, a missionary who was crucial in the process of informing the Pope about what was happening. De Lionne had a very polemical, anti-Jesuit position. Surely the young Chinese who was with him for so many years must have picked up aspects of this. It seems possible that Arcadio decided against entering the priesthood at least partially in light of the Rites Controversy, since he left Rome just about the same time Maigrot arrived there. He was interviewed at length by Montesquieu, as we learned from a discovery by a British scholar in 1947. We thus find out that the composition of one of the world's most famous books about political economy and theory, *The Spirit of the Laws*, was overlapping with the author's discussions with a Chinese about problems of Chinese religion. As a result of reading the papers of this symposium, I would like to reflect again on what Montesquieu was doing and how the Rites Controversy influenced Europe's philosophical life.

I would like to conclude by advancing to the 19th century and thinking about problems of the Protestant missionaries as they became the dominant bearers of this new, revised version of God's Word from about 1810 until the middle of the century when the Catholics once again became strong. I will not attempt to unravel the mysteries of the Protestant missionary endeavor, a huge and difficult topic. But it should not be isolated from the Rites Controversy. The kind of grand synthesis about which some of the scholars here present are already dreaming would have to look ahead and, as it were, sideways and take into account the Protestant missions in China. An example: a young Chinese who founded the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in 1850. The man was called Hong Xiuquan and because of his anti-Manchu nationalist stance, influenced the thinking of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. He also became an object of attention of the People's Republic under Mao Zedong because the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom that he established had in certain ways the look of a socialist state. Hong Xiuquan formed an army in the 1850s and seized the city of Nanking in 1853 which he declared a Heavenly Kingdom, indeed the new Jerusalem on earth, and he ruled it until 1864.

In the formation of this Kingdom, Hong Xiuquan is building on a whole lot of aspects that, in fact, have considerable resonance with the story the Rites Controversy is trying to unravel. One of them is the problem of God's name. How do you translate the name of God into Chinese? When going into another language and culture how do you choose words that suggest wisdom or power with the nuances you wish to convey, while remaining