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# From Pagan Virtues to The Salvation of Non-Christians: Father Wang Changzhi's Contribution to Chinese Christianity

LU JIN

## *Abstract*

This article proposes to assess the contribution of Wang Changzhi, S. J. (Joseph Wang Tch'ang-Tche 王昌祉, 1899–1960), one of the most important Chinese Catholic thinkers before Vatican II, by examining his foundational works published in French in the 1930s: his two dissertations, one on Wang Yangming's moral philosophy (*La philosophie morale de Wang Yang-ming*, 1936), and the other on Augustine and pagan virtues (*Saint Augustin et les vertus des païens*, 1938). By reading them in light of one another while situating them in the global Catholic context in which they were created, I intend to show how, by systematically delving into the thorny problem of the salvation of non-Christians, Wang participated significantly in the theological movements that ultimately culminated in Vatican II.

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LU Jin 魯進 is professor of French in the Department of Political Science, Economics, and World Languages and Cultures, Purdue University Northwest.

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As Christianity spread to lands where immense populations and countless generations had never heard of the Gospel, from the Greco-Roman World to the continent of America and China, the question of the salvation of pagans (non-Christians) had preoccupied missionaries and writers, as well as converts and seekers alike, especially with regard to virtuous pagans.<sup>1</sup> In China, the Christian literati friends of Giulio Aleni, as recorded in the seventeenth-century diary, *Kouduo richao* 口鐸日抄 (*Diary of Oral Admonitions*), wondered about the fate of the virtuous Chinese sages, but never received “the clear-cut answers they were longing for.”<sup>2</sup> Jean Lefevre remembered that while in Shanghai (1949–1952), the young Chinese Jesuits told him that they had difficulty accepting the idea that all people, unless they explicitly believe in Jesus, would be condemned to hell, because it runs against the idea of a just and merciful God.<sup>3</sup> This question, which became a major preoccupation in progressive Catholic circles in the decades leading up to Vatican II,<sup>4</sup> was only to be officially settled, at least for Roman Catholics, at the Council, especially in the documents *Lumen Gentium*, *Ad Gentes* and *Nostra Aetate*. When assessing the historical significance of Vatican II (1962–1965), John O’Malley has observed that “of all the changes in attitude that the Council seemed to permit or promote, few were more profound in their implications than that there was ‘salvation outside the church,’ even outside Christianity.”<sup>5</sup> Karl Rahner, likewise, has counted “optimism concerning salvation” among the “most noteworthy results of the Second Vatican Council.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a historical overview of Catholic positions on the problem of salvation from St. Justin Martyr to post-Vatican II papal teachings, see Francis A. Sullivan, S.J., *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992). John Marenbon tackles the issues about pagan virtue, knowledge of God and salvation from a European philosophical perspective, *Pagan and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Erik Zürcher, int. trans. ann., *Kouduo richao. Li Jiubiao’s Diary of Oral Admonitions. A Late Ming Christian Journal*, vol. 1 (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica / Brescia: Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana, 2007), 231.

<sup>3</sup> Thierry Meynard, *Jean Lefevre, jésuite et sinologue* (Paris: Cerf, 2007), 123.

<sup>4</sup> Yves M.-J. Congar, “Au sujet du salut des non-catholiques,” *Revue des sciences religieuses* 32, no. 1 (1958): 53–65.

<sup>5</sup> John O’Malley, “Development, Reforms, and Two Great Reformations: Towards a Historical Assessment of Vatican II,” *Theological Studies* 44 (1983): 373–406, 394.

<sup>6</sup> Karl Rahner, “Observations on the Problem of the ‘Anonymous Christian,’” in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 14 (London: Longman & Todd, 1979), 280–98, 284.

Pondering on the width and depth of the changes brought about by the Council, Maureen Sullivan contends that “the seeds of what would flourish at the council”<sup>7</sup> were sowed long before 1962. One of the “sowers of seeds” who contributed to the theological paradigm shifts during the decades that preceded Vatican II but who has not yet received sufficient critical attention was the Chinese Jesuit Father, Wang Changzhi (Joseph Tch’ang-Tche Wang 王昌祉, 1899–1960). Although hardly known among present-day Christians in the West, Wang was one of China’s most important Catholic thinkers before Vatican II. Henri de Lubac, a prominent Vatican II theologian and fellow Jesuit at Fourvière, considered him a “real genius” with remarkable “achievements in theology.”<sup>8</sup> A year after his death, a memorial collection of essays in remembrance of his achievements was published in Taiwan, with contributions from Cardinal Paul Bin Yu 于斌, Cardinal Thomas Gengxing Tian 田耕莘, Society of Jesus Far East Provincial José Onato, and Bishop Thomas Huiqing Niu 牛會卿, among others, as well as many of Wang’s former Jesuit students.<sup>9</sup> This recognition is a rare honor for a Chinese Jesuit theologian, writer and educator who had never held any position of authority within the Catholic leadership hierarchy. He was saluted as “China’s Saint Thomas” and, in the eyes of Bishop Joseph Tien-siang Cheng 鄭天祥, was not only “a giant in the Chinese Catholic cultural circles,” but also “a saint and a sage.”<sup>10</sup> The collection offers valuable information about Wang’s life and achievements, but a serious study engaging the entirety of his works in French and Chinese remains lacking to this day.<sup>11</sup>

The present article proposes to assess Wang Changzhi’s contribution by examining his foundational works published in French in the 1930s,

<sup>7</sup> Maureen Sullivan, *The Road to Vatican II: Key Changes in Theology* (New York: Paulist Press), 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Jin Luxian, *The Memoirs of Jin Luxian, Volume One: Learning and Relearning, 1916–1982*, trans. William Hanbury-Tenison (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 57–58.

<sup>9</sup> John S. C. Cheng, S.J., ed., *Wang Changzhi shenfu jinian wenji* 王昌祉神父紀念文集 [Remembrances and Appreciations of Fr. Wang Ch’ang-Chih] (Taizhong: Guangqi Press, 1961). The contributors are mostly clergy, many of them Jesuits, from different parts of the world, with a few lay persons such as the writer Su Xuelin. They knew him mainly during the years he spent in the Philippines, and a few met him back in China or Hong Kong.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 14. All translations from French and Chinese in the present article are mine.

<sup>11</sup> Cheng deals with Wang Changzhi’s writings in Chinese: John Wai-leung Cheng (Zheng Weiliang 鄭維亮), “Wang Changzhi lun Shilin zhexue yu Tianzhujiao sixiang de bendi hua” 王昌祉論士林哲學與天主教思想的本地化 [Wang Chang-zhi on the Inculturation of Scholastic and Catholic Thoughts], *Zhexue yu wenhua* 哲學與文化 [Philosophy and Culture] 37, no. 11 (2010): 107–24.

which have never been studied by scholars of Chinese Christianity: his two dissertations, one on Wang Yangming's moral philosophy (*La philosophie morale de Wang Yang-ming*, 1936), and the other on Augustine and pagan virtues (*Saint Augustin et les vertus des païens*, 1938).<sup>12</sup> By reading them in light of one another while situating them in the global Catholic context in which they were created, I intend to show how, by systematically delving into the thorny problem of the salvation of non-Christians, Wang participated significantly in the theological movements that ultimately culminated in Vatican II and its broadening of the concept of salvation. Those two books provide a key to understanding his subsequent works.

In the first book, he analyzed the ideas of a Chinese philosopher who sought moral perfection; in the second, he attempted to prove, from a theological standpoint, that some non-Christians are truly virtuous and may be saved. In the case of Wang Yangming 王陽明, Wang Changzhi sought to interpret Chinese wisdom traditions in ways that affirmed and resonated with Christianity, presenting thus a Chinese philosopher who searched for and practiced true virtues. By studying Augustine in the context of the theological debates of his time, Wang intended to prove that the Doctor of Grace, despite some of his harshest statements, does not oblige us to refuse to all pagans the possibility of true virtues or any hope for salvation. Michael Moriarty has argued that the ways in which authors assess the gap between pagan wisdom and Christian teaching can have a profound impact on the Christian message they develop.<sup>13</sup> It is in light of Wang's position on pagan virtues and the salvation of non-Christians that we can fully understand his work on Yangming, the philosopher of *liangzhi* 良知 (knowledge of the good) who died in 1529, more than half a century before Matteo Ricci was to reach China. Jules Lebreton, in his preface to Wang's book on Saint Augustine, summarized with perspicacity the central concern that unifies those two works:

Faithful interpreter of Catholic teaching, he demonstrates the indispensable role of the visible Church, but at the same time, he recognizes

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<sup>12</sup> This article takes into account Wang's subsequent writings which inform our analysis. A detailed examination of those works is, however, beyond the scope of this article, but will be included in my book (in progress).

<sup>13</sup> Michael Moriarty, *Disguised Vices: Theories of Virtue in Early Modern French Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6–7.

with filial piety the sincerity and the impact of the efforts attempted by the sages of Ancient China towards moral perfection.<sup>14</sup>

Addressing Father Wang's contribution to Chinese Christianity requires the awareness that we cannot rigidly separate Chinese and worldwide Christianity, as Wang's publications in French, conceived during his long years in France, were anchored in the Jesuit circle which was seeking to renew and update Catholic theology for the concerns of modern times, a movement that produced, among others, eminent Vatican II theologians such as Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou. At the same time, his writings reveal an ardent desire for the evangelization of his fellow Chinese people as well as his attentiveness to their present needs. Having lived in China (1899–1927 and 1939–1949), France (1927–1937) and the Philippines (1949–1960) while publishing his works in both French and Chinese (the latter appeared mainly in Taiwan), Wang embodied the historical fact that Chinese theology transcends linguistic and geographical boundaries.

Wang Changzi was born on April 2, 1899 in Sijing, Jiangsu Province, to one of the town's oldest Catholic families.<sup>15</sup> After receiving a traditional Chinese education at home, he spent his formative years in Shanghai's Zikawei (Xujiahui). When he finished his studies in St. Ignatius College in 1918, he decided to enter the Major Seminary. He began his Jesuit training in 1921 at the Zikawei Novitiate. From 1924 to 1927, he taught Chinese literature at St. Ignatius School. His years in France spanned a decade, from 1927 to 1937, when France was becoming the "undisputed centre of theological reflection in the period associated with *ressourcement* (1930–50)."<sup>16</sup> After almost half a century in exile, the Jesuit Theologate of the province of Lyon and Paris had returned to Fourvière in 1926 and became a center of effervescent theological explorations. It was there that Wang studied theology between 1929 and 1933, having conducted his philosophical training in Jersey. Father

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<sup>14</sup> *Saint Augustin et les vertus des païens* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1938), vii. References to this work will be followed by page numbers in parentheses.

<sup>15</sup> Biographical information about Wang Changzhi is based on the necrology (in French) published in the Provincia Extremi-Orientis *Province News* 3 (1961): 10–14, a two-page chronology (in English), and a seven-page typed memorial essay in French by George Germain, S.J., who had known Wang Changzhi since 1923 and studied at Fourvière with him. I thank Father Elias Cerezo, S.J., of Jesuit Archives in Taiwan for providing those documents. All translations are mine.

<sup>16</sup> Michael A. Conway, "Maurice Blondel and *Ressourcement*," in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology*, ed. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 66.

George Germain, who was a scholastic at Fourvière during the same period of time, remembered him as a serious and profound student who, passionately devoted to theological studies, formed lasting friendships with Gaston Fessard and Henri de Lubac. Upon knowing that de Lubac was sanctioned by the Society of Jesus and Pope Pius XII issued the encyclical *Humani generis* which was widely believed to have condemned de Lubac and the theological renewal movement, Wang wrote a letter to his friend on August 24, 1950, affirming his support for him as well as for the “cause of the sacred science.”<sup>17</sup>

Theologically, Wang was thus connected to those that Bruno de Solages called “progressistes,”<sup>18</sup> or Etienne Fouilloux named the *tiers parti* (third party).<sup>19</sup> The terms indicate those who, on the one hand, defended Catholic doctrine against modernist criticisms deemed too radical and, on the other hand, engaged in dialogue with contemporary thoughts against rigid orthodoxy. Two groups, according to Fouilloux, constituted the main branches of the third party which formed a common front, despite the divergence of their respective intellectual sources: the Thomists, especially the Dominicans at Le Saulchoir, with Marie-Dominique Chenu and Yves Congar as the most notable, and the Jesuits at Fourvière.<sup>20</sup> The first group used Aquinas and his early commentators to oppose the later Roman schools of scholasticism; the second group went back to the Church Fathers to oppose neo-Thomist exclusivism, which meant privileging a mystic theology drawing upon the living experience of the early Christian communities over Thomist rationalist tendency.<sup>21</sup> Both groups turned to the Christian sources before the conflicts with Protestantism, liberalism and modernism hardened the Catholic tradition. The intellectual justification of the “third-party” reformists was a theology based on Christianity’s foundational sources, which minimized the role of the authority and its conceptual tool, a scholastic Thomism. They rejected the label “nouvelle théologie,” a term launched by the movement’s most notable adversary, Reginald

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<sup>17</sup> I thank Marie-Gabrielle Lemaire, director of the Centre d’Archives et d’Etudes Cardinal Henri de Lubac, for providing a copy of this excerpt.

<sup>18</sup> Bruno de Solages, “La crise moderniste et les études ecclésiastiques,” *Revue apologétique* 51 (1930): 5–30, at 18.

<sup>19</sup> Etienne Fouilloux, *Une Eglise en quête de liberté. La pensée catholique française entre modernisme et Vatican II (1914–1962)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1998), 99.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>21</sup> Henri de Lubac blamed what he termed “a kind of so-called ‘Thomist’ dictatorship” which attempted to “stifle any effort toward freer thought.” Henri de Lubac, *At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances That Occasioned His Writings*, trans. Anne Elizabeth Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 47.

Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.<sup>22</sup> It was eventually from the Saulchoir and Fourvière that some of the major texts of Vatican II emerged.

The Jesuit's role in theological renewal can also be traced to the journal which represented the Society's most important scientific response to the modernist challenge, *Recherches de science religieuse* founded in 1910 by Léonce de Grandmaison and Jules Lebreton, two theologians that Henri de Lubac considered "the best of masters."<sup>23</sup> Although Grandmaison died in June 1927, before Wang's arrival in France, he left an indelible mark on the Society of Jesus, as de Lubac credited him for one of his most successful efforts in adapting and updating the Church's traditional doctrine and teaching, during the time he taught at Fourvière, Canterbury and Ore Place between 1899 and 1908. Upon his death in 1927, Grandmaison was succeeded, as editor-in-chief, by the co-founder of the journal Jules Lebreton, Professor of History of Christian Origins at the Institut Catholique de Paris since 1905, who was, in turn, succeeded by Henri de Lubac in 1946. It was during the tenure of Jules Lebreton that the journal published an article by Wang Changzhi.<sup>24</sup> From Fourvière to Paris, Wang belonged to an emerging network of Catholic thinkers whose ideas paved the way to the theological renewal at Vatican II. It is in this context that we should analyze his two books in French.

#### I. THE VIRTUES OF NON-CHRISTIANS: YANGMING'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND IGNATIAN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

*Wang Yangming's Moral Philosophy*<sup>25</sup> is divided into an introduction, eight chapters and a conclusion. The introduction stated the general objective of the book: by the term "moral philosophy," Wang concerned himself, not with myriad particular duties, or a system of abstract ideas, but with the "unique and universal duty," "the moral activity that realizes

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>24</sup> "Autour de la 'Sagesse chinoise' et de la 'philosophie chrétienne,'" [On "Chinese Wisdom" and "Christian Philosophy"] *Recherches de science religieuse* [Researches in Religious Science] 26, no. 3 (June 1936): 357–63.

<sup>25</sup> *La philosophie morale de Wang Yang-Ming* [Wang Yangming's Moral Philosophy] (Paris: Geuthner, 1936). References to this work will be followed by page numbers in parentheses.

the human spiritual finality,” which is “the search for our moral perfection.”<sup>25</sup> This search unites Chinese thinkers and the great philosophers of all time, of whom Wang lists Plato, Pascal, Spinoza, and Kant, as well as Augustine and Aquinas.

The foreword of his book on Augustine reveals the reason why Wang devoted his effort on Chinese moral philosophy. He stated that his objective was one day to present Christianity to his country in a way adapted to what is most elevated, profound and closest to truth in Chinese culture, following the example of seventeenth-century missionaries. Since the greatest Chinese thinkers had always focused their ultimate effort on the fundamental question of morality, it was therefore in moral life that Christianity would find its best points of contact with the Chinese soul.

Of all the Chinese moral philosophers, why did Wang Changzhi choose to study Yangming? Several reasons are enumerated in the introduction: unique among Chinese thinkers, Yangming was a writer, government official and military leader; his thinking had a great influence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and he was relatively unknown in Europe. Those reasons would have been enough, but, in addition, I contend that in Yangming, Wang Changzhi also found a Chinese philosopher whose ideas affirmed and resonated with Christianity, especially Ignatian spirituality. At the time he was working on Yangming’s philosophy, Wang was immersed in Ignatian spiritual practices, and later in his life, shortly before his death, he also wrote *A Commentary of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola* in Chinese.<sup>26</sup> What Wang said below about Yangming can be applied, almost word by word, to Ignatius of Loyola:

Wang Yangming’s philosophy is essentially a lived experience. His entire life preaches, illustrates, explains and confirms his doctrine. With Yangming, we are not in presence of impersonal and abstract ideas. On the contrary we witness the life of a thought that matures little by little within the master and that he communicates to his disciples so that they relive it themselves (15).

Wang consistently presented Yangming’s moral philosophy as a lived experience. Likewise, Ignatius did not write his *Spiritual Exercises* all at once, but rather by “observing in his soul any movement that appeared

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<sup>26</sup> *Shencao Quanshi: A Commentary on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, With the Text of the Spiritual Exercises Translated into Chinese* (Taichung: Guangqi Press, 1960). Hereafter *Shencao*.

to him worth noting down.”<sup>27</sup> Wang called Yangming a “director of conscience” (34), and his pedagogical method “spiritual direction” (35), terms with a strong Catholic religious connotation. In Jesuit spirituality, great emphasis is placed on having a spiritual director. Ignatius himself was a spiritual director and wrote letters of directions as Yangming did. The *Spiritual Exercises* contain a great abundance of rules on how to be a spiritual director. Julia Ching has noted the spiritual dimension in Yangming’s thought, as “Wang Yang-ming’s philosophy was at the same time ethics and metaphysics as well as mystical insight.”<sup>28</sup> He tried to be useful to people he met through his public duties or other circumstances. Wang saw in Yangming a spiritual director who, having sought and achieved moral perfection, aimed to guide his disciples in their own path. The word “perfection” appeared numerous times in his book on Yangming. Hervé Coathalem indicated that the Catholic Church, through all the Popes from Pius IX to John XXIII, viewed the Ignatian Exercises as wisdom capable of guiding the souls of all conditions on the paths to perfection, and perfection, together with election (the Ignatian term for decision), constituted the double aims of the *Exercises*.<sup>29</sup>

Chapter one deals with the social and intellectual context in which Yangming lived. Wang placed Yangming’s moral philosophy in the context of the broad cultural environment of his time and in relation to the *Lixue* 理學 (Doctrine of Principle) that he continued, modified, and perfected (15–16). Yangming’s teaching was primarily oral and linked to the circumstances of his life in a turbulent and dangerous political environment under two deeply flawed emperors. His doctrine, his life, his knowledge and his action converged. Wang highlighted the fact that Yangming never took a concubine as was customary in old China, even though his wife did not bear any children. He married again only after her death, when he was already fifty-four years old.

Chapter two sets out to establish the immanence of moral norm, *Tianli* 天理 (Heavenly principle) within our heart, against those who insisted on the search of moral truth external to us and enshrined in ancient books. Likewise, Ignatius owed the most important of his spiritual insights not to a great many books, but to direct revelation of the Holy

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<sup>27</sup> Leonce de Grandmaison, “Les Exercices de Saint Ignace,” in *Recherches de science religieuse* 10 (1920): 391–408, at 394.

<sup>28</sup> Julia Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom: The Way of Wang Yang-Ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), xv.

<sup>29</sup> Hervé Coathalem, *Commentaire du livre des exercices* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1965), 30, 62.

Spirit and his spiritual experience illuminated and nourished by the life of Christ.<sup>30</sup> Julia Ching has observed that Yangming developed his doctrine during his exile, when he found himself in the midst of people who had never heard of Yao and Shun 堯舜, similar to the missionaries who encountered a non-Christian population who had never heard of the Gospel. If, as Zhu Xi 朱熹 believed, the road to reaching sagehood “lies in moral cultivation and the intellectual pursuit of moral knowledge,”<sup>31</sup> those people, and their ancestors, would have been excluded from such a possibility. Yangming found this to be contrary to the teaching of Mencius, who assured that every man can be a sage. Yangming’s view was therefore shaped by his encounter with China’s minority tribes and he chose to believe in the possibility of all to acquire perfection, even those who are the least endowed with natural qualities or equipped with bookish knowledge, as long as they can realize their *liangzhi*. Similarly, Congar observed that the difference between the Jansenists and the Jesuits was the ignorance of the knowledge of a non-Christian humanity.<sup>32</sup>

Wang devoted the entire chapter three to elucidate the notion of *liangzhi*. Literally, it means “good knowledge,” and originated from Mencius who defined it as “what men know without having learned it.” It becomes a key concept in Yangming’s moral philosophy as it illuminates the immanence of Heavenly principle in our hearts while avoiding the ambiguity of the term *xin* (heart). *Liangzhi* is both the act and principle of moral intuition, capable of naturally distinguishing good and evil and guiding our moral acts. However, Wang insisted that Yangming’s thinking went through different stages of development as recorded by his disciples. Although he discovered the immanence of the moral norm during his exile (1508–1509), he did not make *liangzhi* his own key concept until 1521, eight years before his death. The belated discovery of the idea was due to the fact that it “was not the result of pure speculation, but a long lived experience.” (64) Likewise, more than twenty years passed from the time Ignatius started to record his notes about his spiritual practices in 1521 to the completion of the *Exercises* in 1548. Wang used remarkably similar words to describe the experiences of Yangming, who “feels his way” (63), and Ignatius who “groped his way forward” 摸索前進 (14). *Liangzhi* is also identified with *Tianli* (Heavenly principle),

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<sup>30</sup> Grandmison mentions *Vita Christi* by Ludolphe de Saxe when he was at Loyola, *Imitation of Jesus Christ* by Juan Gersen (1516), at Manresa, and of course, the Gospel. Also, the *Fleur des saints* (also called *The Golden Legends*) by Jacques de Voragine. “Les Exercices de Saint Ignace,” 394.

<sup>31</sup> Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom*, 44.

<sup>32</sup> Congar, “Au sujet du salut des non-catholiques,” 63.

*Dao* 道 (the Way), or *Tian* 天 (Heaven) itself (73), making it not only immanent but also transcendent, as Julia Ching has explained: “the meaning of *liang-chih* extends beyond the realm of cultivation into that of the luminous, the term and goal of the entire method and process” and “its discovery signifies the fulfillment of a quest for the absolute.”<sup>33</sup>

Chapter four explains why “realization of *liangzhi*,” which combines the expression *zhi* from *zhizhi* 致知 (realization of knowledge) in *Daxue* 大學 (The Great Learning) and the expression *liangzhi* from Mencius, is a better formulation of Yangming’s idea than the earlier “unity of knowledge and action.” Since what Yangming had in mind was none other than moral knowledge, adding the word *liang* (good) to *zhi* (knowledge) clarified his intention. The “realization of *liangzhi*” represented Yangming’s intention, which was to make it a moral requirement in practice against those who separate theory and action.

It is in chapter five, which focuses on the concrete ways to realize *liangzhi*, that Wang offered an interpretation of Yangming’s methods of spiritual practice that profoundly resonate with those of Ignatius of Loyola. Yangming considered selfishness to be the source of imperfections, the only obstacle to the realization of *liangzhi* (103). The elimination of selfish desires, therefore, constitutes the first step in Yangming’s practice of the realization of *liangzhi*. It requires a vigorous process bearing strong similarities to Ignatian spiritual exercises, which devote the entire first week of full retreat to the purification of soul. Yangming’s idea of virtue necessarily excluded and explicitly condemned selfishness. He would have agreed with Augustine that virtuous acts motivated by pride are fake virtues, as he considered pride the supreme evil and humility the foundation of all virtues (106). The process of *examen*, or examination of conscience, is indispensable for eliminating disordered desires, and it is closely associated with Ignatian spirituality which, as David Fleming has summarized, “is a reflective spirituality.”<sup>34</sup> Wang used the term *examen* frequently in this chapter as a way to discover selfish desires in order to combat them constantly. While Coathalem made broad references to those who practiced *examen* before and outside of Christianity, Wang specified that “all the Ancient Sages of our country understood the importance of self-examination. 曾子 Zengzi’s adage that ‘I examine myself three times a day’ was even more similar to Ignatian particular examination of conscience.”<sup>35</sup> Wang

<sup>33</sup> Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom*, 47.

<sup>34</sup> David Fleming, *Like the Lightning: The Dynamics of the Ignatian Exercises* (Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2004), 51.

<sup>35</sup> Shencao, 110.

thus established self-examination as an explicit link between Chinese and Christian spiritual practices. As in Ignatian spirituality, an *examen* practitioner needs to have strong will in practicing virtues and working for perfection. It needs to be practiced in both *recueillement*—a time of silence, meditation, solitude,—and concrete situations of everyday life. It is a personal and lived experience, as Yangming illustrated in a metaphor: in order to know the taste of bitter melon, we have to eat it. Instead of constructing a rigid doctrine or speculating on imaginary cases, Yangming based his teaching on concrete facts with adaptation to the specific needs of his disciples to help them achieve moral improvement. Rather than using abstract and preconceived notions to measure the morality of a specific act, Yangming let each person use his or her own *liangzhi*, which is *Tianli*, the Heavenly principle, to evaluate if it is good or bad in each concrete case. He adapted his teaching to his listener, adjusted the dosage of his “medicine” based on varied circumstances, and emphasized perfecting oneself through the practices of everyday life. Similarly, an important approach of Ignatian spirituality is to provide individual guidance and adapt the practice to the level of spiritual attainment, concrete situations in life, and specific spiritual needs of the practitioner.<sup>36</sup> Maureen Sullivan argued that a major paradigm shift that led to Vatican II theology was the change of methodology from deductive to inductive that “focuses on the human person as a source of truth in the theological process.”<sup>37</sup> It is not surprising that Wang, belonging to the network of Jesuit theologians who were to play a major role in Vatican II, would favor a Chinese moral philosopher who privileged the inductive method.

The last three chapters concentrate on the nature or principle of *liangzhi*, or *liangzhi-in-itself* 良知本體 (*liangzhi benti*). Since Yangming—eminently practical, rarely dwelled on such a speculative question, what is known comes mainly from his responses to the questions posed by his disciples. Wang argued that when Yangming used the existing categories of *dong* 動 (movement) and *jing* 靜 (rest, calmness), *yifa* 已發 (in action) and *weifa* 未發 (before action), *yong* 用 (substance) and *ti* 體 (function), his explanations were not always clear enough. As a result, his disciples disagreed on how to realize *liangzhi*. For example, Nie Pao 聶豹 focused exclusively on the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 27–29. Father Jean Lefeuve also stated that “Ignatian spirituality allows to discern from concrete life new calls and new decisions we need to make.” *Jean Lefeuve Jésuite et sinologue*, Entretiens recueillis et arrangés par Thierry Meynard (Paris: Cerf, 2007), 43.

<sup>37</sup> Sullivan, *The Road to Vatican II*, 13.

cultivation of *liangzhi*-in-itself through silence rather than its activity, while Qian Dehong 錢德洪 insisted on the realization of *liangzhi* through activities in everyday life and rejected silent meditation. Wang argued that it was Luo Hongxian 羅洪先 who, after years of trial and error, most faithfully grasped Yangming's thought on the unity of principle and activity, and praised him for the merit of drawing attention to the "activities of the heart" (155), because one needs to eradicate the roots of selfish desires before they appear and cloud hearts with the attraction of external objects. Ignatian spirituality accords special attention to *motions*, or the movements of the heart, which the retreatants need to discern during their spiritual exercises. The term *discern*, which occupies an important place in Ignatian spirituality, was used by Wang numerous times in discussing the activities of *liangzhi*: to discern is to distinguish between good and evil, true and false, the heart's good movements and bad ones, the authentic voice of our conscience and selfish desires, and, thereby, to weed out the secret selfishness that disguises itself and mixes with our good thoughts when it is almost imperceptible. Silent retreat is a necessary but temporary procedure in normal life, as true silence should coexist with the most tumultuous activities instead of becoming an escape from them. Yangming's position on the relationship between meditation and action, as interpreted by Wang, is consistent with the spirituality of Jesuits, who are expected to be men of both contemplation and action.

In conclusion, Wang highlighted some weaknesses of Yangming's moral philosophy. First, the latter neglected moral truths that can be learnt from our social milieu, especially old books, which are collections of intuitions by others, and the accumulation of lived experiences by those who have realized *liangzhi* better than we. Those lived experiences constitute a treasure of *liangzhi* common to humanity from where the *liangzhi* of each individual can draw its nourishment (191). Yangming himself benefited from the teaching of the old sages, received his enlightenment at Longchang while reading a passage from the *Daxue* and constructed his doctrine using ancient expressions. The neglect of those ancient moral truths caused his own disciples to betray the thought of their master. Wang's assessment is consistent with the way in which Catholic theology values Christian tradition as lived by generations of believers. Furthermore, some of the terms Yangming used remain imprecise: what is the *Tianli*, Heavenly principle? One possibility, which made it a purely ideal perfection, was ruled out due to Yangming's realism. "Would it then be the existing supreme Perfection, the Absolute Moral Good, God himself if we were to express ourselves with the word of Occidental philosophy?" (193). Would *liangzhi* be the manifestation of

Heavenly principle? Then how can this manifestation be realized? Finally, Wang also challenged the identification between heart and *liangzhi* in order to preserve human free will, arguing that “despite all the synthetic affirmation of Wang Yangming, *liangzhi* remains different from our heart, from the ‘I’ that realize it or not, and that bears the responsibility and consequences.” (193) Those theoretic weaknesses, which Wang attributed to Yangming’s premature death, did not take away the solidity of his practical philosophy, which was constructed and completed, “not in the realms of abstract speculations, but in the intuition of our conscience, and the activity of our spiritual life.” (194) Even though Yangming did not, in theory, bridge the gulf between “Heavenly principle” and the heart, he was able to realize his own *liangzhi* through his concrete activities. Over and over, Wang explained the gaps in Yangming’s doctrine by his untimely death: There were seven or eight years between he formulated the idea of *liangzhi* in 1521 and his death in 1529. Ignatius had more than twenty years to work on his *Spiritual Exercises*...

While it may surprise some that Wang would offer an Ignatian interpretation of a Chinese philosopher, Thierry Meynard has examined how seventeenth-century Jesuit translators of the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (Doctrine of the Mean), by adopting the vocabulary and concepts of Ignatian spirituality, revealed similarities between the two traditions.<sup>38</sup> By studying Yangming, Wang expanded seventeenth and eighteenth century Jesuit engagement with Chinese cultural resources to include Neo-Confucianism which had been dismissed by Ricci and fellow Jesuits of his time; by presenting a Chinese moral philosopher whose ideas deeply resonate with Ignatian spirituality, he demonstrated the spiritual resources of Chinese moral philosophy to a Western public and prepared the ground for the argument that some non-Christians have true virtues and might thus be saved.

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<sup>38</sup> Thierry Meyard, “Reading the Confucian Classics from the Perspective of Western Spirituality: The Jesuit Translation of the *Zhongyong*,” *Journal of Comparative Scripture* 2 (2013): 61–90.

## II. AUGUSTINE AND THE SALVATION OF NON-CHRISTIANS

From a Christian theological perspective, to establish that Yangming or any persons who did not hear the Gospel may have been truly virtuous, it is necessary to address Augustine's position. *Saint Augustin et les vertus des païens*, published in 1938, two years after *La philosophie morale de Wang Yangming*, directly addressed the question of the salvation of non-Christians.<sup>39</sup> From the beginning, Wang distinguished two different meanings of *pagan*: while Augustine's *paganus* in the context of his debate with the Pelagians denotes an infidel, an idolater who worshiped false gods, the word could also be used to indicate non-Christians who, in old times, did not know about the prophetic revelation of Israel, or those who had lived in subsequent eras but did not hear the Gospel. Ancient Chinese were pagans in the latter sense, but not infidels or idolaters.

At the time Wang wrote this book, the salvation of non-Christians remained a vexing issue within the Catholic Church. When Father Gaston Fessard was invited to give a talk on the topic to the Association of Catholic Universities of the Poitiers region, he was unsure what would be the right position to take and wrote to Father de Lubac on May 11, 1933 for advice.<sup>40</sup> Wang's book shared a kindred spirit with one of Henri de Lubac's most important work, *Surnaturel* (1946). Wang specifically referred to de Lubac's early article on the history of the word *surnaturel*, and the articles on Baius and Jansenius,<sup>41</sup> the very ones that, according to de Lubac, appeared unchanged in the book *Surnaturel* and drew the "thunderbolts"<sup>42</sup> upon him—the condemnation from Rome that resulted in his removal from Fourvière.<sup>43</sup> More important than those explicit references was a central preoccupation they shared. Etienne Gilson thus summarized the substance of *Surnaturel*, which is "the mystery

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<sup>39</sup> Wang Changzhi made extensive references to Louis Capéran's book, *Le problème du salut des infidèles* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1912, 1st ed.; Toulouse: Grand Séminaire, 1934) while stating that Capéran's central focus is not virtues.

<sup>40</sup> Centre d'Archives et d'Etudes Cardinal Henri de Lubac, CAECHL 69691.

<sup>41</sup> "Remarques sur l'histoire du mot 'surnaturel,'" *Nouvelle revue théologique* 61 (1934): 225–49 and 350–70; "Deux Augustiniens fourvoyés: Baius et Jansénius," *Recherches de sciences religieuses* (1931): 421–43 and 513–40.

<sup>42</sup> Lubac, *At the Service of the Church*, 36.

<sup>43</sup> Shortly after the publication of *Humani generis* (1950), three of de Lubac's books are banned from sales and circulation: *Corpus mysticum* (1944), *De la connaissance de Dieu* (1945), and *Surnaturel* (1946). *Ibid.*, 74.

of man's supernatural vocation and the economy of revelation, of redemption, and, in short, of salvation."<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, although de Lubac's *Corpus mysticum* (1944) had not yet been published, Wang made extensive use of Augustine's doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ along the same line of thinking as de Lubac.<sup>45</sup>

The book is divided into five chapters. Each chapter ends with its own conclusion, and a final conclusion. Chapter one seeks to elucidate what constitutes true virtue. Wang argued that for Augustine, there was no true virtue disconnected from man's final end (*fin dernière*), a term that he reiterated numerous times to mean the supreme finality which is God himself. Although Wang did not specifically link it to de Lubac, the final end of man constituted a central idea of the latter's book *Surnaturel* in opposition to the belated idea of pure nature.<sup>46</sup>

Chapter 2 deals with false virtues, which include "mendacious virtues" and "disappointing virtues." Although Augustine mentioned the latter subcategory only occasionally, Wang pointed out that it was an underlying idea present everywhere and fit well in Augustine's thinking. While "mendacious virtues" are materially good acts motivated by the agent's will to a bad end, such as selfish desires ranging from sensuality to vanity or pride, "disappointing virtues" are acts limited to a particular good without being consciously directed to either supreme good or to a bad end. Wang believed that critics tended to exaggerate Augustine's harshness and overlook myriad subtle gradations in his analysis: false virtues contained certain objective goodness in their material results, compared to acts which are evil both in terms of intention and result. Wang was careful to warn that while it is easy to distinguish between true and false virtues in principle, the discernment in concrete cases remains difficult as it concerns other people's intention, which we should never rush to suspect. He ended by alluding to the case of an implicit faith in Christ:

It is the absence of a theory of implicit faith in Christ that prevented him [Augustine] from considering the case when a person, completely

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<sup>44</sup> Gilson's article was originally published in *La Croix* (1965) and attached as part of the Appendices in Lubac, *At the Service of the Church*, 398–401, at 399.

<sup>45</sup> Henri de Lubac's *Corpus Mysticum* was nearly finished before the end of 1938, the year Wang Changzhi's book was published. *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Juby's review published in *Etudes* 251 (1946): 265–68, attached in Lubac, *At the Service of the Church*, 204.

devoted himself to the supreme moral good, gives himself to God under the work of Spirit, and believes implicitly in Christ, the unique Mediator (63).

Chapter three argues that faith in Christ is the indispensable condition for salvation and therefore for the acquisition of true virtues. Wang, however, specifically included the righteous ancients in the Mystical Body of Christ. Affirming that some non-Christians knew God, Wang refrained from discussing whether such knowledge is natural or supernatural, as Augustine did not ask such a question (68). It was in this context that Wang referred to the article on *supernaturel* by de Lubac. Based on the belated appearance of the term in Catholic doctrine, de Lubac rejected dualism, which separates nature and grace, and contended that they should be unified in a conjunction without confusion. Joseph A. Komonchak explained the reason why de Lubac's idea was so controversial at the time: "Many readers, and not only in Rome, could not see how de Lubac's repudiation of the hypothesis of 'pure nature' did not compromise the gratuity of the supernatural order."<sup>47</sup> De Lubac, however, anticipated such an objection as early as in 1932, in a letter addressed to Maurice Blondel, which he considered a "sort of sketch of what would later become [his] book *Supernaturel* (1946),"<sup>48</sup> with the argument that "it is because he wants to grant it a supernatural end that God creates human nature."<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Wang argued that "there is but one economy of salvation," (86) refuting the division of human salvation history into three separate stages: first, pure nature guided by reason alone, followed by corrupted nature ruled by law, and finally Christ descended to save humanity. As for the example of Cornelius, Wang rejected the interpretation that there might be a "natural faith" preparing him to "merit" "supernatural faith" (98), and emphasized that during the time before he met Peter, his good works had already been approved by God and he had already had an implicit faith in Christ, an idea lacking in Augustine and developed by Thomas Aquinas. The Gentile Cornelius before his encounter with Peter represents all the virtuous pagans who live after Christ's time and have not yet heard the Gospel message. In a language remarkably similar to *Lumen Gentium* 16, Wang insisted on not excluding from salvation those who "without any fault of [their] own" (95) have not heard the Gospel.

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<sup>47</sup> Joseph A. Komonchak, "Humani Generis and Nouvelle Théologie," in *Ressourcement*, 138–56, at 147.

<sup>48</sup> Lubac, *At the Service of the Church*, 183.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

In Chapter four, Wang situated Augustine's harsh condemnation of pagan virtues in the historical context that gave rise to the controversy. This approach was consistent with the long-held position by Jesuit theologians such as Luis de Molina.<sup>50</sup> Wang carefully separated Augustine's thought from that of his mistaken (*fourvoyés*) disciples, Baius and Jansenius who, interpreting Augustine's supple and concrete terminology with rigid and abstract definitions about human nature, insisted that all pagans were infidels doomed to hell, and Protestants such as Luther and Calvin, who deemed the fallen nature of man fundamentally and irremediably corrupt, went beyond even the letter of Augustine by absolutely condemning all works by the fallen nature. Wang's usage of the term "fourvoyé" (3) seems to have been borrowed from de Lubac's articles on Baius and Jansenius.<sup>51</sup> In response to the Palegians who used the virtues of the pagans as an excuse to deny the necessity of Christian faith, Augustine, who did not consider the possibility of implicit faith in Christ, responded that lack of faith indicates lack of virtue. Wang insisted that if such a statement might be true in principle, its application to concrete cases remained arbitrary because one can neither limit God's action nor judge the secret conscience of others.

The question of pagan virtues, or the salvation of non-Christians, ultimately comes down to whether non-Christians can, in all times and in all places, have implicit faith in Christ through grace, based on Augustine's own principle and spirit. It is in this larger perspective that Wang examined the problem in his fifth chapter. Wang argued that there was no doubt Augustine recognized the existence of righteous people living outside of Israel in ancient times, such as Job. Since Augustine required explicit faith for salvation, such a faith implied an explicit revelation, made possible by the dispersion of the Jews, or God's direct revelation. Wang asserted that the principles that allowed Augustine to be convinced of the existence of righteous people before the Incarnation should have also made him conclude the same thing about the pagans who did not know about the Gospels after the Incarnation, and his understanding of faith as eminently spiritual should have allowed him to accept the theory of implicit faith. Wang further distinguished two types of teachings of Christ: teachings by temporal facts from the visible Church, through his life, words and acts, which serve to establish the Gospel preaching

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<sup>50</sup> By situating Augustine's writings about Pagan virtue in the historical context of controversy with the Pelagians, Molina suggests that those writings "should be read with a close eye to context, and that his particular statements should not be taken as absolutes." Moriarty, *Disguised Vices*, 105.

<sup>51</sup> "Deux Augustiniens fourvoyés: Baius et Jansénius," in *Recherches de sciences religieuses* (1931): 421–43 and 513–40.

and to teach the ideal of Christian perfection and allow people to fully develop all spiritual resources of human soul; teachings by Christ our interior Master from the Mystical Body of Christ, beyond the limitation of time and space, which illuminates the soul, gives it true wisdom and lets it contemplate divine mysteries and eternal truths. Normally it would be ideal to receive both types of teachings, and to belong both to the visible Church and the Mystical Body of Christ, unless prevented by circumstances, in which cases the second type, which leads to implicit faith in Christ, should be “necessary and sufficient for a pagan to be saved” (163). Some pagans can therefore have true virtues, through implicit faith in Christ allowed by God’s grace, as “any pagans who are truly virtuous live in Christ’s grace and faith without knowing it clearly, and they are true Christian without bearing the name” (182). This statement clearly anticipated Karl Rahner’s “anonymous Christians,”<sup>52</sup> an idea that even de Lubac was not ready to accept.<sup>53</sup>

Furthermore, pagan people as groups should naturally find their place in God’s general economy of salvation, which includes both the visible Church, constituted in time and developed in space, and the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church of the chosen which transcends time, space and specific cultural practices. Wang believed it is important to at least concede the existence of some truly virtuous pagans, allowed by God’s Providence, with the duty to contribute to the spiritual progress of their people in order to “prepare humanity to one day receive Christ’s visit” (180). Such a task is similar to what Vatican II would term as “a preparation for the Gospel” (*Ad Gentes* 3), and the “collective” point of view on salvation is largely in agreement with de Lubac, for whom “those who act rightly according to conscience search for God *together* in a community.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Karl Rahner, “Anonymous Christians,” *Theological Investigations*, 6: 390–98.

<sup>53</sup> Ilaria Morali, “The Travail of Ideas in the Three Centuries Preceding Vatican II (1650–1964),” in *Catholic Engagement with World Religions*, ed. Karl J. Becker and Ilaria Morali (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 115.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

## CONCLUSION

Wang's view on the salvation of non-Christian was thus in line with the Catholic theological renewal movement in France leading up to the Vatican II, while bringing into focus the concrete case of Yangming's moral philosophy in a spirit of encounter between Christianity and Chinese culture. By reinterpreting Yangming's moral philosophy in light of Ignatian spiritual practice, Wang was the first Christian scholar to have discovered spiritual resources in Yangming's philosophy that resonate with Christianity. Such a specific example was then supported by his meticulous clarification of a historically thorny point in Augustine's theology, the question of pagan virtues, based on the hermeneutical method that in our interpretation of the works of past theologians and saints, we need to separate their teachings from the "preoccupations of their time or the particularities of their culture" (187). This theological work provides a foundation for inculturation work, because if there were absolutely no way for non-Christians to have any true virtue and no chance for salvation, there would not be any spiritual value in non-Christian cultures, and therefore inculturation would be practically unnecessary and even theologically unacceptable. Such is still the position of many theologically conservative Chinese Protestants. In regard to the relationship between Christianity and Chinese culture, Chloë Starr has indicated that some of the most severe disagreement existed, not between Chinese and missionaries, but "were internal to Chinese Christians," between the more fundamentalist believers such as Wang Mingdao, "for whom Christ was most definitely against culture," and the liberal intellectuals discussed in her book, such as Zhao Zichen, Wu Leichuan and Ding Guangxun, who "saw Chinese culture, and Chinese society, as the ground of their work."<sup>55</sup> Large number of Chinese Protestants, however, belong to unregistered churches that support Wang Mingdao's position and condemn the ideas of Zhao Zichen, Wu Leichuan and Ding Guangxun. As Alexander Chow has indicated, "the vast majority of Chinese churches of this time, both government-sanctioned and unregistered, maintain fundamentalist or evangelical theological dispositions,"<sup>56</sup> and many of them

<sup>55</sup> Chloë Starr, *Chinese Theology: Text and Context* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 56.

<sup>56</sup> Alexander Chow, *Theosis, Sino-Christian Theology and the Second Chinese Enlightenment* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 104. See also Daniel Bays, "Chinese Protestant Christianity Today," *The China Quarterly* 174 (June 2003): 494.

have adopted a fundamentalist attitude towards Chinese spiritual traditions. In such a context, while Wang Changzhi's pre-Vatican II inculturation work may not have gone as far as post-Vatican II theological developments, it can still contribute to shaping China's evolving religious landscape by providing insights not only to Catholics, but also to Protestants with an ecumenical spirit as well as people of other spiritual persuasions.

When Father Wang was in France (1927–1937), he visited twice Lu Zhengxiang (Dom Lou Tseng-tsiang, Pierre Célestin, 1871–1949), the legendary Republican era Foreign Minister and briefly Prime Minister who became a Benedictine monk (1927) and a priest (1935) in Saint Andries Abbey in Belgium, and the titular abbot of the Abbey of St Peter in Ghent (1946). Lu Zhengxiang's presence had made the Saint Andries Abbey a spiritual center for Chinese Catholics, many of whom paid him visit there, including Wu Jingxiong, Jin Luxian, and Stanislaus Luo Kuang. Each time Wang stayed for a few days, "talking at great length with Abbot Lu about China's apostolate work in the future."<sup>57</sup> His two books published in France laid a solid foundation for his subsequent works. "Le mysticisme de Tchoag-Tse" (Zhuangzi's Mysticism),<sup>58</sup> which had a considerable influence on Bishop Jin Luxian,<sup>59</sup> and 諸子的我見 (*Zhuzi de wojian, Some Chinese Philosophers as I Understand Them*)<sup>60</sup> continue the type of inculturation work that we have examined in his book on Wang Yangming, while 天主教教義檢討 (*Tianzhujiao jiaoyi jiantao, The Examination of Catholic Doctrine*) provides further clarifications on the question of the salvation of non-Christians.<sup>61</sup> Wang Changzhi believed that theology should progress with time, because "spiritual reality is rich, profound, mysterious, and divine" (187). This sensitivity to historical and cultural context is consistent with the spirit that shaped the changes fostered by the Second Vatican Council. His ultimate goal was to make Christianity a living faith among different people and nations. Christianity, being rooted in the specific cultures that it encountered in the course of its long history, nevertheless should transcend them. A precursor of Vatican II theology, Wang was proposing, to

<sup>57</sup> Wang Changzhi *shenfu jinian wenji*, 135.

<sup>58</sup> In *Bulletin de l'Université Aurore*, series 3, tome 2, no. 3 (1941).

<sup>59</sup> See Jin Luxian's doctoral dissertation, *La révélation de l'Unité du Père et du Fils dans l'Evangile de Saint Jean*, trans. in Chinese in *Jin Luxian wenji* 金魯賢文集 [Collections of Jin Luxian's Writings] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2007), esp. 633–44. I have examined the French original conserved in the Pontifical Gregorian University in June 2018.

<sup>60</sup> Taichung: Guangqi Press, 1961.

<sup>61</sup> Taichung: Guangqi Press, vol. 1, 1954; vol. 2, 1956; vol. 3, 1958.

borrow from Joseph A. Komonchak, “a new *intellectus fidei* with the philosophical resources of other cultures”<sup>62</sup> which became available for theology after the Council. Wang’s theology serves as a useful lesson to those who attempt to examine the relationship between Christianity and Chinese culture: it does not take a static, rigid and narrow view of Christianity, which is historically dynamic and pluralistic and, at the same time, interprets Chinese culture creatively and critically, with a hermeneutic approach that preserves its fluidity and openness.<sup>63</sup> This is precisely the model that Benoit Vermander proposes:

[to] consider the interpretation of revelation authorized by the Magisterium over the course of history as *wisdom discourse* that, as such, canalizes and revives the sapiential interpretations particular to the cultures encountered and times crossed by the Gospel message.<sup>64</sup>

Such is the working condition of an authentic inculturation between Christianity and Chinese culture, which makes Chinese Christianity a part of world Christianity.

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<sup>62</sup> Joseph A. Komonchak, “Humani Generis and Nouvelle Théologie,” in *Ressourcement*, 156.

<sup>63</sup> From the perspective of an ecumenical Chinese Protestant theology, Lai Pan-chiu has observed that many studies comparing Christianity and Chinese culture “tend to assume a static view of Chinese culture” (219), while highlighting Vincent de Lérins’s definition of Christian tradition as “the consensus of the faithful of all generations and all places, rather than the fixed doctrinal formula or the Bible” (233). See “Chinese Culture and the Development of Chinese Christian Theology,” *Studies in World Christianity* 7, no. 2 (2001): 219–40.

<sup>64</sup> Benoît Vermander, “Sagesse et révélation. Réflexion théologique à partir de la Chine,” *Revue théologique de Louvain* 42 (2011): 73.