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Item Type	Article
Authors	Lee, Archie Chi Chung
Publisher	Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture, Chung Chi College
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-11-02 05:26:38
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/166165

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Ching Feng, n.s., **4.1** (2003) 1–27

Cross-textual Reading Strategy: A Study of Late Ming and Early Qing Chinese Christian Writings*

ARCHIE C. C. LEE

1. INTRODUCTION: CROSS-TEXTUAL READING

The field of the study of Christianity in China has been developing rapidly in the past two decades, especially in the area of Catholic missions of the 17th–18th centuries. Scholars have done some intensive research on the Jesuits and their contributions in terms of promoting cultural exchanges between East and West. While it has been noted that comparatively little attention was paid to the Chinese converts and their responses in the past, this is now being rectified by the publication of several scholarly works[1] and the appearance of several collections of

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* The research of this paper has been made possible by the provision of the Earmarked Grant of the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong, 2001–2003.

[1] Besides a few articles by Erik Zürcher, Nicolas Standaert and Adrian Dudink to be referred to below, Jacques Gernet's *China and the Christian Impact: A Con-*

Chinese manuscripts and archival documents.[2] Besides showing a greater interest in the history of the Chinese Rites Controversy in past scholarship, researchers in the field were normally preoccupied with the way the early Jesuit missionaries adapted themselves to the Chinese cultural context and how the Christian faith was to be accommodated. As the policy of accommodation characterized the mission strategy advocated by Matteo Ricci and his colleagues, scholars therefore usually attempted to look at the success or failure of the Catholic endeavour accordingly. Only recently have they critically assessed Chi-

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flict of Cultures (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) which puts forward a challenging but controversial theory on cultural encounter must be mentioned. The three books by D. E. Mungello, *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994); *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999); and *The Spirit and the Flesh in Shandong, 1650–1785* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001) can be cited as examples. Recent contribution by Li Tiangang 李天綱 has added a new dimension to the understanding of the Chinese side of the history of Jesuit Missions in China through the reading of Chinese documents written by Chinese converts, *Zhongguo liyi zhi zheng: lishi, wenxian he yiyi* 中國禮儀之爭：歷史、文獻和意義 [The Chinese Rites Controversy: History, Documents and Meaning] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1998). For a good introduction by Nicolas Standaert on Christianity in China, see *Catholic Historical Review* 83 (October 1997): 569–613.

[2] The most recent collections include *Ming mo Qing chu Yesuhui sixiang wenxian huibian* 明末清初耶穌會思想文獻匯編 [An Expository Collection of the Christian Philosophical Works between the End of the Ming Dynasty and the Beginning of the Qing Dynasty in China] (hereafter referred to as *An Expository Collection*), edited by Andrew Chung with Lou Yulie as consultant (Beijing: Institute of Religious Studies, Peking University, 2000), which makes available from the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana 23 volumes of work by Jesuits, 21 volumes by Chinese Christians and 12 apologetical works; *Yesuhui Luoma Dang'an'guan Ming-Qing tianzhujiao wenxian* 耶穌會羅馬檔案館明清天主教文獻 [Chinese Christian Texts from the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus] (the short form *Chinese Christian Texts* will be used in this paper), edited by Nicolas Standaert and Adrian Dudink (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute, 2002), which brings together 98 books (excluding duplicate copies) in 12 bound volumes from the Jesuit Archives in Rome. Albert Chan's long awaited index is finally published, *Chinese Books and Documents in the Jesuit Archives in Rome, A Descriptive Catalogue: Japonica–Sinica I–IV* (referred to below in short as *Chinese Books Catalogue*) (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2002). I spent ten days consulting books in the Jesuit Archives in June, 2002 and in the footnotes of this article "Jesuit Archives: Note" refers to the notes I took while consulting the manuscripts at the Archives in June, 2002.

nese Christian history from the point of view of the natives. Nicolas Standaert sums up this unbalanced phenomenon in the following words:

> Until the beginning of the 1960s, the main question that held the attention of historians was the question of the presentation: what did the missionaries, especially the Jesuits, do to introduce and proclaim Christianity in China? The Western perspective was central to this research. History was analyzed in terms of means and effect: how effective were the missionaries, and what means did they use? The historian was interested in a series of considerations such as: the overall success of the missionaries; their ways to lead the Chinese to Christianity; their efforts to reach the Emperor; their contribution to the field of science; the extent of the influence of Western art, etc. This research focused on the activities of the missionaries.[3]

The European outlook is clearly seen and it still continues to characterize this approach to the Jesuit presentation. The Chinese converts, however, were not much concerned with mere accommodation. The shift in focus from presentation to reception has been noted: how did the Chinese react towards the missionaries? Standaert distinguishes between the positive reception or acceptance, and the negative reception or rejection. This new perspective must be hermeneutically appreciated as it has directed scholars' attention to Chinese sources.[4] Yet it is inevitable for Standaert to display a certain Western viewpoint in his basic approach given his geographical orientation and social location:

> That something can be learned from the way other cultures accepted or rejected European culture is indeed a new development in historiogra-

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[3] Nicolas Standaert, SJ, "Inculturation and Catholic-Chinese Relations in Late Ming and Early Qing," in Bernard Hung-Kay Luk, ed., *Contacts Between Cultures*, vol. 4, *East Asia: History and Social Sciences* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 328.

[4] Examples of the new approach can be cited to include Jacques Gernet's work, *China and the Christian Impact*, and Nicolas Standaert's doctoral dissertation, *Yang Tingyun, Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China: His Life and Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988).

phy, and it is enforced by the fact that the Western World is presently in search of new ways to enter into dialogue with other cultures.[5]

To Chinese Christians, making sense of the Christian message vis-à-vis the Chinese cultural traditions was an existential and a hermeneutical question. They had to engage themselves with foreign Christian texts as well as native Chinese Classics in order to seek out possible points of fusion or distinctive contribution of the two texts. The inner conflicts and the outer social pressures experienced by early Chinese converts, many of them being official-scholars[6] versed in the Chinese textual and canonical traditions, have not received the proper attention due to them. How would they reinterpret the Confucian tradition in the context of the "canon" they had newly acquired? What reading strategy and hermeneutic process were adopted in order to resolve the inner conflicts and the authoritative textual claims on allegiance? The issues of the two "canons" are intensified when both texts are claiming orthodoxy and demanding exclusivity. The question of canonicity and authority is definitely the entangling problem of identity as being Chinese Christians in the midst of the cultural-religious environment of a closed traditional Chinese society.

Accepting Christianity was not an easy decision for many of the Chinese literati, though quite a few of them were in fact converted. Targeting the literati class was the priority of the Jesuit mission, a policy initiated by Matteo Ricci. Chinese official-scholars were nurtured in the intellectual tradition of Confucianism[7] and they studied the prescribed text for the civil examinations that would open up a career in

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[5] Standaert, "Inculturation and Catholic-Chinese Relations in Late Ming and Early Ching," 330.

[6] We do not have adequate information and documents handed down to us about the commoners. Assessment is based on the writings of those official-scholars which survived.

[7] Though issues have been raised on the entangling problem of Confucius and Confucianism by Paul A. Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986) and Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization* (Durham, N.C. and London: Duke University Press, 1997). The terms Confucius and Confucianism will continue to be used in this article. For a review of Jensen's book, see Nicolas Standaert, "The Jesuits Did not Manufacture Confucianism," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 16 (1999): 115–32.

public service. Becoming Christians meant a deliberate resolution to take on a new canonical tradition representing the Christian world. The symbolic act to signify this entrance into a new textual community is to receive a copy of the texts (*shoujing* 受經).[8]

The two texts met at the conjunction of religious conversion experienced by these Chinese Christians. The way of reading and interpreting the two canons, the Chinese Classics and the Christian Bible and how they creatively interacted or congenially integrated one into the other, are hermeneutical issues that deserve attention. This paper aims to propose a way of comprehending the effort of the early Chinese Christians in their struggle through moving between the two texts, the two worlds and the two traditions. "Accommodation" certainly is not the right term to sum up the whole process. "Inculturation" from the perspective of the local context is perhaps more appropriate when it is defined in contrast to the former in the following statement:

> Accommodation concerns the adaptation of language and external elements, such as liturgical music and dress; but the evangelical message itself is considered as invariable. In contrast, inculturation brings about "new creation" realized through the contribution of the local culture.[9]

It is even more precise if we depict the complex process of interpretation and reinterpretation by means of a cross-textual reading strategy, which entails reading one text in terms of a second text and making "crossings" from one over to the other with a view to grasping the broader meanings of the two texts. It is expected that through such an effort creative integration or enriched transformation of the two would be achieved.[10]

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[8] Nicholas Standaert outlines the issue in the context of the new converts having to continue to read the Confucian text for examination even though they had gone through the opening ceremony of receiving the Christian text. See "The Bible in Early Seventeenth-century China," in Irene Eber, Sze-kar Wan and Knut Walf, eds., *The Bible in Modern China: The Literary and Intellectual Impact* (Sankt Augustin, Ger.: Institut Monumenta Serica, 1999), 46 n. 46.

[9] Standaert, "Inculturation and Catholic-Chinese Relations in Late Ming and Early Qing," 331.

[10] The method has been expounded with examples in a number of articles written by the present author; see Archie C. C. Lee, "The Chinese Creation Myth of Nu Kua and the Biblical Narrative in Gen 1–11," *Biblical Interpretation* 2 (1994):

The present paper will examine five Chinese Christians in the 17th–18th-century China who are relatively lesser known figures[11] but nevertheless influential. They earnestly do theology by reading the Chinese Classics (Text A) in parallel with the Christian texts (Text B). In interpreting Text A in the light of Text B and *vice versa*, they engage themselves in a hermeneutical task of making sense of the two "canons."

2. YAN MO'S READING OF *GUSHU* 古書 AND *GUJING* 古經

The first scholar is Yan Mo 嚴謨 whose Christian name is Paulus (Chinese: *Baolu* 保祿), a native of Zhangzhou 漳州. He was an Annual Tribute Student (*suigongsheng* 歲貢生) of Longxi District in 1709.[12] In

312–24; "Death and the Perception of the Divine in Qohelet and Zhuang Zi," *Ching Feng* 38, no. 1 (1995): 69–81; "Exile and Return in the Perspective of 1997," in Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, eds., *Reading from This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 97–108; "Cross-textual Hermeneutics on Gospel and Culture," *Asia Journal of Theology* 10 (1996): 38–48; "Syncretism from the Perspectives of Chinese Religion and Biblical Tradition," *Ching Feng* 39, no. 1 (1996): 1–24; "Feminist Critique of the Bible and Female Principle in Culture," *Asia Journal of Theology* 10 (1996): 240–52; "The Recitation of the Past: A Cross-textual Reading of Ps. 78 and the Odes," *Ching Feng* 38, no. 3 (1996): 173–200.

[11] The so-called "Three Pillars" of the Chinese Catholic Church have been largely studied and their writings have been made available by Wu Xiangxiang 吳相湘, ed., *Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian* 天主教東傳文獻 [Documents on the Spread of Catholicism to the East] (Taipei 1965); *Xu bian* 續編 [Second Collection] (Taipei, 1966); *San bian* 三編 [Third Collection] (Taipei, 1972). Fang Hao 方豪, *Zhongguo tianzhujiao renwuzhuan* 中國天主教人物傳 [Biographies of Famous Chinese Catholics] (Hong Kong: Gongjiao zhenli xuehui, 1967). The most recent studies on Xu Guangqi are edited by Catherine Jami, Peter Engelfriet, and Gregory Blue, *Statecraft and Intellectual Renewal in Late Ming China: The Cross-cultural Synthesis of Xu Guangqi (1562–1633)* (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: E. J. Brill, 2001).

[12] Annual Tribute Student was a designation given to nominees of a local Confucian School for advanced study at the dynastic Capital with the prospective of becoming a civil servant of the empire. For an introduction to the background of Yan Mo, including his writings, see Nicolas Standaert, SJ, *The Fascinating*

order to properly understand the writings of Yan Mo, we must bear in mind the conflict between the Jesuits and the Dominicans on the debate over terms and the issues of the Chinese Rites. The Jesuits in China basically followed the missionary strategy of Matteo Ricci who advocated accommodation to the upper class literati Chinese with "a cautious but positive attitude to Confucianism" and granted "permissions for Chinese converts to continue to perform public and private Confucian rites."[13] Under this policy the Chinese state cult and the tradition of Confucianism were represented very much as secular in nature, thus undermining their religious significance.[14] On the other hand, they expounded and upheld the monotheistic orientation of the ancient Chinese Classics so as to establish an entry point into the Chinese cultural world.

After Ricci's death in 1610, internal disagreements and dissatisfactions with the missionary approach in China intensified, especially with Jesuits from Japan and the arrival of the Dominicans in 1631 and the Franciscans in 1633.[15] The issues of terms and rites involved the debate over the adoption of the true concepts of Confucius incorporated in the Classics against the acceptance of Confucianism in the Song 宋 interpretation, with Zhu Xi 朱熹 being the most prominent figure. The Jesuits were in favour of the ancient understandings and rejected the more recent Song positions.[16]

In Yan Mo's writings we can discern his devotion to the Classics for defending Chinese rites and the meaning of ancestral worship. He also

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God (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1995), 9–21. This book has been translated into Chinese: *Keqin de Tianzhu* 可親的天主 (Taipei: Guangqi chubanshe, 1998). English renderings of *Ditian kao* 帝天考 in this paper are Standaert's.

[13] Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius*, 74.

[14] See the discussion of David Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1985), 44–73.

[15] For detailed discussion see Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius*, ch. 2, pp. 70–123.

[16] Ku Wei-ying 古偉瀛, "Ming mo Qing chu Yesuhuishi dui Zhongguo jingdian de quanshi ji qi yanbian" 明末清初耶穌會士對中國經典的詮釋及其演變 [Jesuit Interpretations of the Chinese Classics during the Late Ming and Early Qing], *Taida lishi xuebao* 台大歷史學報 25 (2000): 85–117.

believed in locating the original intention of the Classics.[17] In *Cunpu pian* 存璞篇 [To Preserve the Unpolished] and *Shi shu biancuo jie* 詩書辨錯解 [Discussing Misinterpretations of the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of Documents*] he expressed his rejection of the Song interpretation of the Classics, especially its understanding of the concepts of *Shangdi* 上帝, *Tian* 天 and *miao* 廟. At the end of *Ditian kao* 帝天考 [Investigation into the Lord and Heaven], which was presumably written in the 1680s,[18] Yan Mo referred to the plain meaning of the original text and the incorrect understanding of the later interpreters:

> As for the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of Documents*, the original text is clear but there are a few paragraphs which do not sufficiently catch the original meaning because of the erroneous interpretation by Later Confucians.[19]

Yan Mo closely identified himself with the classical traditions, especially those of the *Shijing* (*Book of Odes*) and the *Shujing* (*Book of Documents*). Ninety percent of the lists of 65 quotations on *Tian* and *Shangdi* are from the *Shijing* (40%) and the *Shujing* (50%).[20] He offered his explanation for his confidence in the authenticity of the *Shijing,* the *Shujing* and the *Four Books*; these books are "reliable" (*ke ping* 可憑). According to him, the *Yijing* 易經 (*Book of Changes*) is too abstract as it only discusses symbols (*yuxiang* 語象) and *Chunqiu* 春秋

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[17] There are 10 items mainly on ancestral rites in the Jesuit Archives which are all collected in *Chinese Christian Texts,* 11:1–243. Standaert, *The Fascinating God,* 18–21.

[18] Standaert, *The Fascinating God*, 25–26. Fang Hao, who puts together the second collection of the *Documents on the Spread of Catholicism in the East* (*Tianzhujiao dongchuan wenxian xubian* 天主教東傳文獻續編), assumes that *Ditian kao* 帝天考 is an earlier document as he thinks that Yan Mo was a Late Ming personality. *Ditian kao* is found in vol. I, the *Collection* (Taipei, 1966–67), 49–92. On the title, versions, date, arrangement of the text and identification of the seven names mentioned in document, see discussion of Standaert, *The Fascinating God*, 23–32. It is also found in *An Expository Collection,* vol. 38 under the title *Tiandi kao* 天帝考, a manuscript in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

[19] Translation is taken from Standaert, *The Fascinating God*, 58–59.

[20] The rest of the quotations are from the Confucian Four Books: 2 from the *Analects,* 3 from *Mencius* and 1 from *Doctrine of the Mean.*

(*The Spring and Autumn Annals*) records only human affairs of the late Zhou. The *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*) was excluded from his discussion because of its Qin and Han date.[21] Mo is therefore seen as a scholar of the ancient books of China, believing in their truthfulness (*wue* 無訛).

Yan Mo both affirmed the antiquity of the Classics and assumed the validity of the ancient interpretation. He preferred the Han understanding to the contemporary Song commentaries. He further drew parallels between the Ancient Books (*gushu* 古書) of China and the Ancient Scripture (*gujing* 古經) of Christianity. The Classics contain the truth about *Shangdi,* not only comparable to, but similar to that confessed by the Christian faith. Yan accepted as true that "the ancient Chinese expression, *Shangdi*, is precisely [the same as] the Western expression *Tianzhu*" (*guzhong zhi cheng Shangdi, ji taixi zhi cheng Tianzhu ye* 古中之稱上帝，即太西之稱天主也). This confession is not new at all; it is a position commonly held by the Jesuits and similar to the one taken by the contemporary Christian communities in China then. Both the ancient texts are affirmed and their ancient interpretations are ascribed to with authority over against the recent Song approach, a policy first advocated by Ricci and his colleagues.[22] Behind all of these claims is a contest involving socio-cultural backgrounds and political power, both influencing the positioning of the Jesuits and the Chinese Christians. It is of great interest to investigate the dynamics between different intellectual communities and social groups at the national as well as local level that form the context of this complex issue in the Late Ming and Early Qing period.

In reading the Christian Scriptures with the Chinese Classics, Yan Mo noticed that the concept of the Trinity (*sanweiyiti* 三位一體) and the notion of creation are not mentioned in the Classics. He tried to explains this fact by first underlining the mysteries of the Trinity,

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[21] The *Book of Rites* is the basic text for the Rites Controversy. Yan Mo and Matthias Xia, whom we will study below, were preoccupied with the reading of the *Liji.*

[22] See Eric Zürcher, "Jesuit Accommodation and the Chinese Cultural Imperative," in D. E. Mungello, ed., *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning* (Nettetal, Ger.: Steyler Verlag, 1994), 31–64, and Gianni Criveller, *Preaching Christ in Late Ming China, The Jesuits' Presentation of Christ from Matteo Ricci to Giulio Aleni* (Taipei: Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies, 1997), 33–75.

which "completely surpasses human nature" (*jichao renxing* 極超人性). Unless revelation (*moshi* 默示) is given by *Tianzhu*, one does not comprehend and dares not to talk about it. He then defended the silence of the Classics by referring to the unattainable mysteries and incomprehensibility (*wanwan bu ke ji* 萬萬不可及) of revelation in the Ancient Scriptures (*gujing* 古經).[23] He praised the ancient Chinese sages in their appropriateness (*gai qi dang ye* 蓋其當也) and prudence (*gai qi shen ye* 蓋其慎也) in "not mentioning and discussing the subject of the Trinity and the moment of creation of heaven and earth" (*bu yan mou shi zao tian di* 不言某時造天地). However, he understood the notion of creation in the Chinese way of "heaven giving birth to the multitude of people" (*tian sheng zheng min, tian sheng ren* 天生烝民，天生人). The difference is that in the Classics the particular event and form of creation in using clay for the human body and putting a "soul" (*linghun* 靈魂) in it is not being recorded. The notion of "*Shangdi* giving birth to human beings and endowing them with a nature has been known" (*ran yi yi zhi Shangdi sheng ren xi xing yi* 然亦已知上帝生人錫性矣).[24] Yan accepted the order of creation of heaven (*tian* 天), earth (*di* 地), the spirits (*shen* 神), human beings (*ren* 人) and things (*wu* 物) which was current among Chinese Christians of the time. The creation of gods and spirits is of particular interest in the monotheistic context of Christianity. This assertion has its root in the Chinese religious mentality.[25]

With reference to the anthropomorphic images of God in the Sodom story in Genesis (chs. 18–19) as well as the Father-Son terminology in Psalms (2:7), Yan raised the issues of the human form and the hierarchical order of God. This portrayal is contrary to the pre-existent and

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[23] Standaert, *The Fascinating God*, 54.

[24] The notion of *Tian* or *Shangdi* giving birth to heaven, earth, gods, people and myriad things is a prominent one expressed in numerous writings of Chinese Christians, e.g. Han Lin 韓霖, *Duo shu* 鐸書 (ed. Chen Yuan 陳垣, 1919); there are two copies of this edition in Chung Chi College Library, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

[25] The existence of gods is also found in the Hebrew tradition incorporated in the Christian Bible, e.g. Exod 20:3; Josh 24; Ps 29:83. The ancient Near East (West Asia) to which the Bible owes some of its understanding of creation has myths of cosmogony. See Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of Gods, Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990). The present author has worked on this theme in another article on Han Lin, which is forthcoming.

omnipresent God who is without beginning and end. The presentation of the images of the three persons of the Trinity in Western paintings also induced people to doubt that God is omniscient, omnipresent and imageless.[26] These challenges put forward to the Christian text bear witness to Yan's openness, which does not presuppose the absolute authority of the Christian text over the Classics.

It is interesting to see how Yan Mo, though giving some revelatory authority to the Bible, reaffirmed the superiority of the Chinese Classics when it came to the simplicity of expression. "Now, fortunately in our Classics there are no such misleading expressions" (*wu jingshu zhong wu yi yu yisi* 吾經書中無一語疑似). Is that not the great advantage of the prudent and simple language of the ancient times?" Here Yan affirmed the profound mystery of life that the revelatory text of the Bible attempts to uncover, but he also maintained the incomprehensibility of the mystery and in turn seems to undermine the revelatory authority of the Bible. It must be noted that eventually Yan upheld the validity of the Chinese Classics by way of their silence on the very mystery of the reality of life. Both texts must be assumed to be valid and having some contribution to make before they can be mutually enlightened and enriched.

3. QIU SHENG AND XIA DACHANG ON GOD'S ENLIGHTENING HUMAN MIND

Qiu Sheng 丘晟, another scholar from Fujian whose family, for reasons unknown to us, moved to Chengshou, Jiangsu,[27] affirmed the Chinese contribution to the understanding of the natural/human nature (*benxing* 本性) in his epistle to the Jesuit priests, *Min zhong Jiangle Xian Qiu xiansheng zhi zhuwei shenfu shu* 閩中將樂縣丘先生致諸位神父書.[28] He asserted the revelatory process of *Tianzhu*, who opened the hearts and

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[26] 人將謂天主非無始者。三位有大小先後，天主有所不知，有所不在。且非無形矣。

[27] For a biography of Qiu Sheng, see Li Tiangang, *Zhongguo liyi zhi zheng*, 229–32 (see above, n. 1).

[28] *Chinese Christian Texts,* 10:165–75.

minds of the Chinese sages, Confucius being the greatest of all, to the understanding and fulfilment of human nature; "all that was written and said by Confucius agrees with the Religion of Heaven" (*qi suo yan wu bu yu tianjiao xiang fu* 其所言無不與天教相符). The Sages were, therefore, enlightened and made ready for entering the supernatural (*chaoxing* 超性) dimension of the Catholic faith. In this order of reality the natural is, for the Chinese, the necessary foundation on which any knowledge of the divine can be established. Qiu Sheng used the metaphor of building houses, which requires before the building proceeds clearance of the site. The Chinese sages had done this significant but indispensable task by making the site ready, without which the missionaries as builders could simply do nothing. Another metaphor was that of a local guide (*bendi xiangdao* 本地鄉導),[29] who is familiar enough with the cultural environment to provide guidance for a foreign explorer. In this respect, "Confucius had completed a great task for the Lord of Heaven" (*gai Kongzi zhi da you gong yu Tianzhu* 蓋孔子之大有功於天主). There is no heresy in Confucius and, without him, Chinese people would have already become barbarians, indistinct from animals, even before the arrival of the Catholic religion; "any existing heresies are either from other scriptures or the misinterpretations of Song scholars" (*ta jing zhi suo yan, yu Song ru zhi wujie* 他經之所言，與宋儒之誤解).[30]

Qiu Sheng has shown a great pride in his own tradition, but he was neither arrogant nor self-complacent. He pointed out that on both sides of these traditions there are people who are "cavalier and self-important" (*ziao zida* 自傲自大). Some missionaries were scornful of the Chinese civilization, whereas many Chinese were self-deceptively contented with only their own texts. Ricci in particular was praised for his hard and painful work which produced a twofold breakthrough in establishing the religion: his acquiring knowledge of Chinese Classics (*hou zhi Zhongguo shuyi* 後知中國書義) and his acquaintance with well-known official-scholars (*bian jiao mingren dashi* 遍交名人達士).[31]

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[29] Jesuit Archives Note, Jap–Sin I (38/43) 40/3, folio 3a; *Chinese Christian Texts*, 10:169.

[30] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I (38/42) 40/3, folio 2a.

[31] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I (38/42) 40/3, folio 1a; *Chinese Christian Texts*, 10:165.

He accused some contemporary missionaries of only "upholding their own understandings" (*duo you zi shi ji shuo* 多有自是己說) and "intending to change China into a western mode" (*yu bian zhongtu er wei xiyang* 欲變中土而為西洋).[32]

Following this train of thought he therefore argued that it would be very wrong of the missionaries to undermine the Chinese Classics. He further stressed the importance for them to know and be versed in the Chinese texts before they could begin to do any missionary work. The rhetoric and content of the texts would carry the Christian faith and bring it home to the mentality of the Chinese scholars. Given the intellectual and cultural contexts of the target audience addressed by the Catholic missions of the time, this was definitely an appropriate approach. Chinese scholars had no way to understand and tune into the textuality of the Christian gospel without first textualizing the gospel in "Chinese literary expressions" (*Zhongguo zhi wenci* 中國之文詞).[33]

He admittedly confessed that through his experience with missionaries he not only found them trustworthy, but more importantly, because of their understanding of the mystery of reality, their minute elaborations of natural and heavenly matters had not been heard of among Chinese scholars.[34] Scholars and intellectuals of the Qin and Han periods "had presumed that all the meanings and principles of the earth are there in their books" (*zi yi wei tianxia zhi yili jin yu ci yi* 自以為天下之義理盡於此矣). Yet from his interaction with these Western scholars it was discovered that the Chinese views had been "confined to their own territory" (*ju yu cheng nei* 局於城內) and "lacked the knowledge of the vast universe" (*wu kuangguan yuzhou zhi shi ye* 無曠觀宇宙之識也).

Qiu Sheng therefore found himself in the situation of having a sense of urgency not only to introduce Western learning and the Catholic faith, but also to attune the Chinese mentality to this new mode of understanding reality. He enthusiastically called for the need to contextualize and adapt, even taking the trouble to write a book to help spread the Catholic teachings. He surmised that the Western missionaries "either had failed to comprehend the Chinese mentality, or because of

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[32] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I (38/42) 40/3, folio 16; *Chinese Christian Texts*, 10:166.

[33] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I (38/42) 40/3, folio 5a.

[34] 及從泰西諸君子遊見其於性天之微，真參闔奧盡有為閩洛諸儒之所未能盡窺者。

their Western philosophy, had made it hard for the Chinese mind to grasp it."[35] Qiu's effort was consequently an attempt to read the Christian text in the context of the Chinese canonical tradition.

The book Qiu composed entitled *Shuwen bian* 述聞編 [Narrating What Is Heard] "was written in order to expel all the doubts and suspicions of Chinese persons" (*shu jiang Zhongguo zhi yituan, zhu yi dapo* 書將中國之疑團，逐一打破). He admitted that its content was "drawn from conversations regularly heard from his father and Western missionaries" (*pingri zhi suo wen yu xian junzi yu Taixi zhu junzi zhe* 平日之所聞於先君子與泰西諸君子者). In it there are sixteen chapters on "various aspects of Chinese religious beliefs and practices. He intended to impart Christian teachings to his fellow scholars" (*yuelue shu duan, yi gao zhi tianxia zhi xianren junzi* 約略數端，以告之天下之賢人君子).[36] In *Shuwen bian* Qiu put forward his theological position about God's revelatory work in Confucius and that he could teach on God's behalf.[37] He advocated an attitude of openness and supported an open-ended text. Only with these assumptions could he accommodate the Confucian scriptures and facilitate the confluence of a second text from without.

There was another scholar by the name of Matthias Xia who wrote about Chinese rites and sacrifices in eight manuscripts now preserved in the Jesuit Archives in Rome.[38] Albert Chan outlines Matthias Xia's ideas in *Jili paozhi* 祭禮泡製 [On Sacrifices and Rites] and points out that Xia embodied a Christian outlook. "The thorny problem of the Chinese Rites had already cropped up. The author spoke both as a Chi-

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[35] *Chinese Books Catalogue*, 49

[36] The manuscript of Qiu's book was copied by Chinese brush and is now kept in the Jesuit Archives at the Vatican. Though he presented it to the missionaries with the aim that it would be printed without changes, as far as we could tell the missionaries had not fulfilled his wish. The reason why he wanted the missionaries to help was that no good wood carver had been found in his locality.

[37] *Chinese Christian Texts,* 10:285: 天主固常默啟其長，便其所以代天垂訓者.

[38] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I 39/1, 39/2, 39/3, 39/4, 39/5, 40/10a, 135, 156. Standaert and Dudink collected them together in vol. 10 of *Chinese Christian Texts*, pp. 1–144.

nese and as a Christian and tried to cover the natural as well as the supernatural plane."[39]

The theme of the two different aspects of reality, "the natural and the supernatural law" (*benxing zhi li, chaoxing zhi gui* 本性之禮、超性之規), was pertinent to Matthias Xia whose Chinese name is Xia Dachang 夏大常.[40] He relied on a basic understanding of Song studies to develop his thought on the one nature for all humanity and God's revelation in China. In expounding the meaning of rituals based on Chen Hao's 陳澔 (1261–1341) *Liji*, he asserted that "the sage-kings of China too were also enlightened by the Lord of Heaven" (*Zhongguo shengwang, yi meng Tianzhu kaiqi qi xin* 中國聖王，亦蒙天主開啟其心).[41] To Xia, "the Chinese books" (*Zhongguo zhi shuji* 中國之書籍) were essential to the proper comprehension of "the nature and disposition of China" (*Zhongguo benxing zhi qing* 中國本性之情). "Propagating the principles of the supernatural" (*chanyang chaoxing zhi li* 闡揚超性之理) must begin by reading, grasping and quoting widely from Chinese Classics.[42]

Xia adopted an enormously significant and affirming attitude toward the Chinese canon. He believed that God works in the minds of the "people influenced by foreign teachings" (*waijiao zhi ren* 外教之人) in the so-called "lands with foreign teachings" (*waijiao zhi di* 外教之地) to enlighten them with the "incarnational mystery" (*jiangsheng yuezhi* 降生粵旨). An interesting example is cited from the New Testament (Matt 2:1–6) to illustrate his point on divine revelation. The Pharisees are accused of being ignorant of the birth of Jesus because they had neglected the study of the ancient scriptures, while "the three kings [from Persia (*Baierxiya* 百爾西亞)] had quietly consulted books of other religions" (*san wang jing du waijiao zhi shu* 三王靜讀外教之書)

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[39] *Chinese Books Catalogue*, 42.

[40] Li Tiangang identifies Xia's Chinese name, which was unknown to Albert Chan when he did the Catalogue, *Chinese Books Catalogue*, 39. See Li, *Zhongguo liyi zhi zheng*, 165, 229.

[41] Jesuit Archives, *Jili paozhi* 祭禮泡製, Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I 39/4 folio 5b; *Chinese Christian Texts*, 10:907.

[42] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I 39/4, folios 8a–9a. Albert Chan rightly spots the importance of this manuscript by translating quite extensively Xia's comments into English, *Chinese Books Catalogue*, 42–43.

and come to the knowledge of the birth of Jesus. Xia deduced from this a theological statement that the Lord of Heaven is "omnipresent" (*wu-suobuzai* 無所不在) and confidently raised a question in favour of Chinese scriptures: "How do we know that Chinese books do not have anything that agrees with the principle of the supernatural?" (*an zhi Zhongguo shuji ning wu neng he chaoxing zhi li zhe* 安知中國書籍寧無能合超性之理者).[43]

4. TRANSCENDING EAST-WEST IN ZHU ZONGYUAN'S WRITINGS

Another Chinese Christian scholar who openly admitted the insufficiency of Confucianism in dealing with life and death is Zhu Zongyuan 朱宗元 (1609–60).[44] He stated that "for many years he had consulted and investigated into the three religions and the hundred schools" (*san-jiao baijia, canwu you nian* 三教百家，參悟有年) to look for the solution to life and death. It was only through "reading books of the Catholic teaching" (*ji du tianxue zhu shu* 及覩天學諸書) that he could rejoice and jump up to proclaim that "That's the way! That's the way!" (*dao zai shi, dao zai shi* 道在是，道在是).[45] He was baptized by Manual Dias, Jr. in Hangzhou and was recognized as a Confucian scholar with a *juren* 舉人 degree.[46]

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[43] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I 39/4, folio 10b; *Chinese Christian Texts*, 10:100. Albert Chan's translation assumes that the three kings "studied books other than the Jewish religion" (p. 43). The original seems to convey that they, being from a non-Jewish religion (*waijiao zhi ren* 外教之人), studied books of an other religion (*waijiao zhi shu* 外教之書), i.e., the Jewish Scriptures. On p. 39 there is a misprint when reference is made to Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I (38/42) 40/10a; the "a" is mistaken as "2."

[44] Dominic Sachsenmaier's doctoral dissertation of Freiburg University (published as *Die Aufnahme europäischer Inhalte in die chinesische Kultur durch Zhu Zongyuan (ca. 1616–1660)* [Sankt Augustin, Ger.: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2001]) was not available to the present author when writing this paper.

[45] Zhu Zongyuan, "Preface," *Zhengshi lueshuo* 拯世略說 [Brief Discussion on Salvation], Jesuit Archives Notes.

[46] *Chinese Books Catalogue*, 193.

Though he admitted that the writings of Confucianism are superior to those of other religions, he found out that "on the ultimate question of life and death, ordinary Confucian scholars only took note of the problems but did not pursue further discussions" (*zong zhi sheng si yi shi, suru cun er bu lun* 總之生死一事，俗儒存而不論); Buddhism and Daoism "do discuss it, but the outcome is indefinite" (*lun er bu que* 論而不確), "intangible and lacking proofs" (*miaozhan wuju* 渺湛無據).

In the preface to *Zhengjiu lueshuo* 拯救略說 [Brief Discussion on Salvation], Zhu expressed his deep concern for the preservation of the human spirit (*yi dian lingming* 一點靈明) which is above the "myriad things" (*wanwu* 萬物). He lamented that the soul/spirit should go into destruction together with other things. In the Catholic religion he claimed to have found an eternal resting place for it, a belief which gave him great peace of mind (*ci yi ke tairan zian zhe* 此以可泰然自安者).[47]

Zhu presented Catholicism as a religion that is complete and comprehensive in its teachings. He appreciated greatly the teaching on Jesus' incarnation, which is expounded in the New Canon (i.e. the New Testament).[48] He contrasted the teaching of Confucianism with this "new religion" (*xinjiao* 新教) and pointed to the role of the Teaching of Heaven (*tianxue* 天學) not only in "supplementing Confucianism, but also functioning as a ladder that helps to raise it to a higher stage" (*zuo wu ru zhi bu ji, wei tari shangsheng zhi jieti ye* 佐吾儒之不及，為他日上升之階梯也).

Zhu concluded that "Confucian scholars did know that the Lord of Heaven is in command of heaven and earth, but did not know that the Lord of Heaven became incarnate and had vicariously redeemed human beings. They knew the August and Mysterious True Lord, but did not know the wondrous nature of the Trinity."[49]

Zhu wrote another book *Dake wen* 答客問 [Answering the Guest's Questions] in 1631 when he was 23 years old. It is framed in the form of a guest raising questions to Zhu, who then expounds on the issues

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[47] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I, 145a, folio 1b.

[48] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I, 145a, folio 8b.

[49] 蓋儒者知宰制乾坤之天主，而不知降世代救之天主，知皇點萬萬之真宰，而不知位三體一之妙性。

involved. In this work the basic correspondence of Christianity with Chinese Confucian teaching is affirmed. Zhu rejected the complementarity of the three traditional Chinese religions (*sanjiao* 三教) which are at opposing poles, whose difference "is like water and fire, or like the opposition of the east and the west" (*you shui-huo dong-xi zhi bu xiang yi ye* 猶水火、東西之不相一也).[50]

What is of great significance is Zhu's position on the central theme of Confucian writings. From reading the books of Confucius, Zhu concluded that Confucius did not intend us to worship him (*qi yu ren zunbai ji zai* 豈欲人尊拜己哉), but to invite us to "render reverence and service to the Lord of Heaven" (*zunfeng Tianzhu* 尊奉天主).[51] For those who "assumed the position of the sufficiency of the *Dao* of Confucius" (*xing Kongzi zhi dao zu yi* 行孔子之道足矣) "not only do they not know the Lord of Heaven, they do not really understand Confucius" (*fei wei bu zhi Tianzhu, bing bu zhi Kongzi zhe ye* 非惟不知天主，並不知孔子者也). They become "both sinners against the Lord in Heaven and against Confucius as well" (*fei te Tiandi zhi zuiren, shi Kongzi zhi zuiren ye* 非特天帝之罪人，實孔子之罪人也).[52] In responding to the question why it is necessary to follow the Teaching of Heaven in addition to observing the admonition of Confucius, Zhu further emphasized the deliberate silence or scarcity of words of Confucius expressed about the ultimate issues of life, death, gods and spirits.[53] It is exactly here that the Teaching of Heaven goes into great details (*du tianxue xiang zhi* 獨天學詳之). Zhu went on to assert his reading strategy related to these two texts. The Teaching of Heaven became the key to unlock what had been there in the Chinese Classics. The Confucian scholars, being deprived of the enlightenment of the Teaching of Heaven, could not really understand the gist of their own books. No matter how diligently they studied them, they remained entangled in great ambiguities and confusion.

From Zhu's perspective, "contemporary scholars could only do their study in perplexity. Only after they have received the teaching of

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[50] Zhu Zongyuan, *Dake wen* 答客問 [Answering the Guest's Questions], in *An Expository Collection*, 31:25.

[51] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I, 145a, folio 6a.

[52] *An Expository Collection*, 31:32.

[53] 生死、鬼神之故，實有吾儒未及明言者。

Heaven will every sentence in the Six Classics and the Four Books finds its anchorage. Shallow Confucians simply have not yet comprehended it."[54] With this understanding of the proper relationship between the two texts, Zhu further developed his theological positions on many different doctrinal themes. We would need another article to analyze Zhu's ideas in these areas. What suffices here is to point out what his Christian attitude was toward the deceased Chinese ancestors who had been deprived of the opportunity to enter the Catholic faith, because it had only come to China 50 years before his own time.

Zhu put forward the idea of there being three categories or stages of the Teaching of Heaven: (1) the teaching about the human nature (*xingjiao* 性教); (2) the teaching of scriptures (*shujiao* 書教); and (3) the teaching about the incarnation (*shenjiao* 身教). *Xingjiao* and *shujiao* are consistently referred to by the same terms, but there are different terms for the last stage. The third is called at different times "the teaching of love" (*aijiao* 愛教) or "the teaching of grace" (*enjiao* 恩教).[55]

"The teaching about human nature is with everyone at birth and so it is already sufficient to lead those who endeavour to fulfil human nature … could ascend to heaven" (*xingjiao yu sheng jie ju, neng jin qi xing ... ke sheng tian* 性教與生偕具，能盡其性……可升天). The scriptural teaching refers to the revelation given to Moses and the inscription of the Torah in the Hebrew Scriptures. Incarnational religion is the final stage when God takes on human form in the person of Jesus

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[54] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I, 146a, folio 47b; *An Expository Collection*, 31:33: 況今人讀書，往往渾帳過去。一領天教，而後知我六經四書中句句皆有著落，句句皆有欛柄，淺儒誠未得其解也.

[55] N. Standaert, "The Bible in Early Seventeenth-century China," in *The Bible in Modern China*, 44. Another Chinese Christian by the name Liu Ning 劉凝 refers to this train of thought in the first essay "Yuan ben lun" 原本論 [On the Origin of the Universe] in his *Juesi lu* 覺斯錄 [Record on Enlightenment]. He entitled the third stage as "the Religion of Grace" (*chongjiao* 寵教). In his argument with Buddhist monks he upheld the divine plan of incarnation as a great grace to assist humanity in fulfilling its human nature and entering the gate of repentance and goodness. See Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I, 165.d; *Chinese Books Catalogue,* 218–20; *Chinese Christian Texts*, 9:529–90; *An Expository Collection*, vol. 33. Xia has similar understanding of Catholic teaching on the their categories in his *Xing shuo* 性說 [Discourse on Human Nature]; *Chinese Christian Texts*, 10:1–16. This volume has 8 writings by Xia.

Christ in order to impart the "mysterious salvation." Although there are supposedly "multifaceted remedial measures to patch up" (*yi bu guo duoyuan bujiu* 亦不過多元補救), the priority of the salvation made possible through Jesus Christ is affirmed. The Chinese Christians who are "fortunate enough to hear the teaching about the incarnation will find it easier to fulfil their human nature" (*wuren xing ling shenjiao, ze jinxing geng dang yiyi* 吾人幸聆身教，則盡性更當易易).

This theological understanding is not completely in agreement with traditional orthodox Catholicism. The Christological function of the incarnation does not take up such an absolute position in Zhu's belief system. However, this must be comprehended in context. In retrospect, this reading strategy accommodates the two texts and facilitates the encounter of the two cultures. Any contextual theological endeavour must establish an approach to relate the local culture to the Christian culture brought in by missionaries in a creative way. This is especially true in the case of a long literary culture with rich hermeneutical traditions like the cases of China and India.

This first step in late Ming and early Qing China to open up to a foreign culture was to overcome the deep-rooted cultural bias expressed in the mentality of a categorical "distinction between China and barbarian" (*hua-yi zhi bie* 華夷之別).[56] The Preface of Zhu's book written by Lin Wenying 林文英 of Fujian in 1697 invites the reader to appreciate Zhu's writing without dismissing it because it contains Western ideas. Lin was certainly aware of the possible reaction against Zhu's position to put Confucian culture in the framework of Christianity.

> The readers, therefore, need not think unjustly that this book deals with learning from the West, rather they should realize that it tries to integrate with the Six Classics to constitute a religion we Confucians should embrace. Since this religion is a practical one, its doctrine agrees with ours and [even] its mental attitude, in general, is the same as ours.
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> 讀是編者不必岐之為西學，取其六經而合之為吾儒之教。教固可行，道可一，而風亦可同也。[57]

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[56] Zhu dealt with this issue in sections 77–78, *An Expository Collection*, 31:101–5.

[57] Adapted translation from Albert Chan, *Chinese Books Catalogue*, 193.

From this general outline in Lin's preface we can see Zhu's approach in affirming the correspondence between Confucian ideas and the Roman Catholic Christian religion. The emphasis on similarity intends to set a positive mood for Confucians who would further explore the contribution of Christianity in complementing the insufficiencies (*buzu* 不足) of Confucian teaching in dealing with death and the future.

In the context of the intellectual atmosphere and cultural world of the time it is understandable that once the differentiation and discrimination between being Chinese and being barbarian (*hua-yi zhi bian* 華夷之辨) are set up, the issue of learning from the West tends to convey a negative emotional response. Chinese Catholic Christians, therefore, time and again tried to dispel this attitude by affirming, on the one hand, the value of Chinese books but, on the other hand, the necessity of the Christian texts. There is much in Christianity that is agreeable (*he* 合) and can be harmonized (*rong* 融) with Chinese teachings.

In his *Huoyi lun* 豁疑論 [Discourse on Resolving Doubts] Zhu affirmed the position that the Lord of Heaven in the West is the same as *Shangdi* 上帝 in China. Though the ancient Chinese sages did not know of the story of the Lord's creation, they did render worship and service to *Tianzhu* 天主. From the Chinese Classics and commentaries (*jing zhuan zhi zai* 經傳之載) it is well attested that there is the Lord in Heaven.[58] The commentaries of late Confucian scholars have misinterpreted this "indigenous teaching of Heaven" (*benlai suo ziyou zhi tianxue* 本來所自有之天學) and changed it into metaphysical terms of the "Great Ultimate and the Two Primary Forces" (*taiji liangyi* 太極兩儀).[59]

Zhu admitted that the doctrines of creation, trinity, incarnation, resurrection, judgment and life after death are missing in more recent Chinese texts, which are often corrupted and contaminated by heretical ideas. As a consequence, the Catholic religion can contribute to "expelling Buddhism and complementing Confucianism" (*pifo buru* 闢佛補儒).[60]

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[58] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I, 166c, folio 1b.

[59] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I, 166c, folios 2a–4a.

[60] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I, 166c, folios 5a–7a.

5. PRINCIPLES IN CROSS-TEXTUAL READING STRATEGY

In responding to a treatise arguing against the practice of Chinese rites, *Bian ji* 辯祭 [Dispute on Sacrifice], written by the Dominican, Francisco Varo (Wan Jiguo 萬濟國, 1627–87), shortly after his return to Fuan from Guangzhou in 1672,[61] Yan Mo put forward his counter-argument to defend the ancient Chinese rites. He made distinctions between the original meaning and practice of the rites of ancestral veneration and some contemporary rites, which have been contaminated by superstitious religious practices. He entitles his treatise *Bian ji* 辨祭 [Distinguishing between Sacrifices] and underlined in small print under the title that the use of the character *bian* 辨, meaning "to distinguish," is different from Varo's original *bian* 辯, meaning "to dispute."[62] Though Yan endorsed the enthusiasm and good intention of Varo, he was deeply concerned about misunderstandings and misconceptions in the whole debate resulting from a superficial reading based on the association of terms.[63] His approach is therefore to make a distinction about what sacrifice means.[64] This work quotes from the *Liji* 禮記, the *Shijing* 詩經 and various other Chinese books to dispute against a lit-

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[61] All missionaries in China were expelled to Canton as a result of the "calendar crisis" in 1665 until Emperor Kangxi lifted the ban six years later. Eric Zürcher, "Li Jiugong and His 'Meditations' (*Shen Si Lu*)" (paper presented at "Encounter and Dialogue: An International Symposium on Cross-cultural Exchanges between China and the West in the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties," Beijing, October 14–17, 2001), 90. Zürcher has referred to Varo's work by the title, *Dispute on Sacrifice* (*Bian ji* 辯祭), instead of simply *Distinguishing between Sacrifices* (*Bian ji* 辨祭). The latter is a work written by Yan Mo in response to the former, its major concern being to distinguish between different sacrifices.

[62] *Chinese Books Catalogue*, 52: 此辨字別也，非原辯字駁也.

[63] *Chinese Books Catalogue*, 52: 徒牽引近似之語以相辯駁.

[64] *Chinese Books Catalogue*, 52: 愚謂欲辯祭先當辨祭. The two manuscripts of *Bian ji* 辨祭 in the Jesuit Archives are now published in *Chinese Christian Texts*, 11:37–46 (earlier version) and 11:47–59 (later version). The earlier version, besides having differences on the use of words, has an endnote of five lines to give an explanation for the writing of *Investigating into Doubts* (*Kaoyi* 考疑); Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I [38/42] 40/6b; *Chinese Christian Texts*, 11:217–34.

eral understanding of the actual participation of ancestors in sacrificial food and the supplication for prosperity from deceased ancestors.

At the end of his *Bian ji* 辨祭, Yan Mo expounded on the proper reading of the Chinese Classics, especially Chinese poetic expressions, which should not be taken at the superficial and literal levels. He advocated an approach of metaphorical reading, assuming that in general the *Shijing* is poetical literature, which is different from a narrative text. A narrator makes direct statements in describing events, while a poet praises with compliments and extols in high-flown language which may very likely be hyperbolic. Parables and metaphors are mostly adopted, using words to point beyond the literal meanings, hoping that an attentive adept reader (*shanhui zhe* 善會者) can grasp the meaning. Yan Mo also made room for some expandable and "stretchable" words used in the poems. In the interpretation and understanding of poetry, therefore, "words and the sentences where they appear should not be read rigidly and fixedly" (*shi zhong zhi ziju, bu de ju, zhi ding ye* 詩中之字句，不得拘、執定也).

There was also an added dimension recognized by Yan Mo of the distance in time separating contemporary Confucian scholars from antiquity, so that their interpretations "may not agree with those of the ancients" (*wei bi yi, yu guren xianghe zhe hu* 未必一，與古人相合者乎).[65] Yan cited in support of his reading strategy the famous lines of Mencius (Mengzi) that a sentence (*yiju* 一句) must not be impaired by a single word (*yizi* 一字), and the whole meaning of a text (*quanyi* 全意) by a single sentence. The one who really grasps what is written is to have his/her meaning corresponding to the intention of the poet.[66]

Another Chinese Christian, Li Jiugong 李九功 criticized the contemporary literati in their "three shortcomings" (*sanbi* 三弊). In reading, they are usually "drowning in literalism" (*ni yu wenci* 溺於文辭), "bound up by ancient commentaries" (*qian yu guxun* 牽於古訓) and "deluded by heresy" (*huo yu yiduan* 惑於異端). If these three weak-

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[65] Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I [38/42] 40/4b, folios 14b–15a; *Chinese Christian Texts*, 11:232–33.

[66] 不以文 [一字] 害辭 [一句]，不以辭害意 [全意] 以意 [我之意] 逆 [迎也] 志 [詩之志], 是為得之. Yan writes the phrases "一字", "一句", "全意", "我之意" and "詩之意" in small characters under Mengzi's text.

nesses are overcome, they can "return to the way of the sages" (*gui yu shengren zhi dao* 歸於聖人之道).

The emphasis on the entire meaning and the whole context of the Classics is therefore also the position of Li Jiugong.[67] Promoting the general belief that "the same mind and principle are exhibited in both the East and the West" (*donghai xihai, xinli xiangtong* 東海西海，心理相同),[68] Li observed that "there was a great affinity between the Christian faith and Confucianism, for there are many correspondences in their books" (*jin tianjiao zhe mo ru ru, gu qi shu zhi xianghe zhe duo* 近天教者莫如儒，故其書之相合者多). Like other contemporary Chinese Catholics, he criticized and condemned Buddhism and Daoism. In order to spread Christianity in China, he also recommended "uplifting what is right in the Catholic faith, but not assuming too lightly that something is wrong in the Confucian books" (*dang faming tianjiao zhi shi, bing wu qing ni rushu zhi fei* 當發明天教之是，並勿輕擬儒書之非).

He explained the possible deficiencies in the Chinese Classics by reference to the famous burning of books during the Qin dynasty, to the appearance of pseudepigrapha in later ages and to the deliberate associational interpretation of Han Confucianism.[69] From the positive side, reading should take into consideration the literary characteristics of Chinese writings, especially their flexibility in the use of Chinese words (*yong zi shen huo* 用字甚活) and therefore the whole literary context must be read in order to grasp the meaning.[70] Li therefore advised that readers "be attentive to the aim of the Confucian Classics" (*shan hui rushu zhi zhi* 善會儒書之旨) and urged them to find numerous correspondences between the two texts in order to promote the

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[67] For a discussion of Li Jiugong and his brother Li Jiubiao, see Li Tiangang, *Zhongguo liyi zhi zheng*, 225–28. There are two English articles on these two brothers respectively, Erik Zürcher, "Li Jiugong and His 'Meditation' (*Shen Si Lu*)" (see n. 61); Adrian Dudink, "Giulio Aleni and Li Jiubiao," in Tiziana Lipello and Roman Malek, eds., *"Scholars from the West": Giulio Aleni S.J. (1582–1649) and the Dialogue between Christianity and China* (Sankt Augustin, Ger.: Monumenta Serica Institute, 1997), 129–200.

[68] Li Jiugong, *Lisu mingbian* 禮俗明辨 [Clear Distinctions on Rites and Customs], Jesuit Archives, Jap–Sin I (38/42) 42/2a; *Chinese Christian Texts*, 9:21–50.

[69] *Chinese Christian Texts*, 9:46–47: 蓋中土經書之傳，自秦焰之後，不惟缺略，亦有偽訛雜出者……亦不無漢儒附合.

[70] *Chinese Christian Texts*, 9:47: 通上下文細看，方得其意，非可以分截執滯求者.

Catholic faith. For those teachings "which were evidently contrary to the commandments of the Lord, readers would have to avoid them" (*ruoguo wei xian bei zhujie, zi dang shi yi zhi bi* 若果為顯悖主誡，自當示以知避).[71]

6. THE MEANING OF CROSS-TEXTUAL READINGS IN CHINESE CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

Modern hermeneutics has shifted the focus in the reading process from what is "in the text" and "what is behind the text" to the reader who is "in front of the text."[72] It contributes, with its critical spirit, to the raising of our consciousness to the important role of the interpreters, their construction of social reality and the complicated reading process. The reverse direction of inquiry has, therefore, begun to set in and exercise its impact. The social location of the interpreters, their pre-understanding and existential positioning have an undeniable potentiality in radically shaping the hermeneutical process of receiving as well as reviewing the original context of the text. As a result, the production of meaning of a text is now understood in the interaction of the reader and the text concerned. The reader in the reading process is constantly negotiating with the text. This approach becomes much more complicated in the context of a multiplicity of texts, as in the case of the Ming dynasty Chinese Christians mentioned above. This negotiation in the reading process involves the meeting and interaction of texts from more than one major tradition.

The dynamics of the hermeneutical process has played itself out at the point when the two canons, the Chinese and the Christian, met at the historical crossroads of the encounter of the "Christian West" and

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[71] *Chinese Christian Texts*, 9:47–48: 則其相合之多者，正可取之以羽翼天教.

[72] For similar attempts in the biblical field, see the Bible and Cultural Collective, *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 20–69 and David J. A. Clines, *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

the "Confucian East."[73] The above discussion sets out to take up the hermeneutical effort of the Chinese Christians who, having acquired the new Christian canon, are challenged to embrace the two textual traditions in their possession. The process is definitely an exciting venture, albeit a painful one at times, involving both acculturation and inculturation.[74] Cross-textual reading is the hermeneutics that can be adopted to examine the process of engendering meaning in the Chinese Christian writings.

The Chinese Christian scholars engaged themselves diligently and existentially in addressing the issue of identity by a reading strategy that allowed the cross-textual dynamic process of either integrating the two texts or subjecting one text to the interpretation of the other. The cross-fertilization is obvious and seems to be quite conscious. Cross-textual interpretation serves as an effective tool to hold the two canons together in a meaningful way. What has been achieved is a new tradition in Chinese culture, which can be identified as being different from traditional Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, but which exists alongside these intellectual and spiritual traditions. For lack of a better term, it can be called, following the suggestion of Erik Zürcher, "Confucian Monotheism."[75]

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[73] These are relative terms with historical references and ideological implications. Their meaning depends on contexts and is subject to different constructions. The recent book by Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism* (see above, n. 7), attempts to grapple with the issue.

[74] These two terms are used by Nicolas Standaert to signify the two poles of cultural encounter and exchanges. Acculturation is used for "the assimilation of traditional culture into modern cultures viewed as essentially Western in character" and inculturation is applied to the scenario when "the local culture dominates and gives a new form of expression to elements of the foreign culture." "Inculturation and Catholic-Chinese Relations in Late Ming and Early Qing," 332.

[75] Erik Zürcher, "Jesuit Accommodation and the Chinese Cultural Imperative," 50 (see n. 22). For an investigation into this aspect of Chinese Christianity in the intellectual history of Modern China, see Zhang Xiaolin's 張曉林 doctoral dissertation entitled "Wenhua hudong yu quanshi: *Tianzhu shiyi* yu Ming mo Qing chu Zhongguo wenhua sixiang de guanxi" 文化互動與詮釋—《天主實義》與明末清初中國文化思想的關係 [Cultural Interaction and Hermeneutics: *Tianzhu shiyi* and the Chinese Intellectual Tradition] (a joint Ph.D. diss., Peking University and The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2002).

The historical occasion of the meeting of the two canons provides the platform for theoretical construction and hermeneutic deliberation. On that platform was staged a highly interactive drama of great significance. The redefinition of the canon and the creative reading strategy that eventually came to play in the cases described here occurred in the context of Chinese Christian endeavours to understand the two textual traditions. On the whole, these Chinese Christians affirmed both of the canons, but they had strong reservations about the texts and practices of Buddhism and Daoism. They made efforts to open up the boundaries raised between the two canons by pursuing questions which broke the absolute authority of either text. Yan Mo is a good example of this endeavour on the Christian text and Zhu Zongyuan can be cited as taking a similar approach to the Chinese Classics.

Another feature of the reading strategy is the segregation of canon and commentary. The Song interpretation has mostly been targeted for criticism.[76] Schemes are derived to accommodate the Classics and Chinese cultural tradition into the Christian framework of salvation with which special provision is made for the Chinese to attain fulfilment of their human nature. Qiu Sheng and Xia Dachang made some advance along this line. It can therefore be said that the cross-textual reading enables the Chinese Christians to bring the two texts into creative encounter for the enrichment of their Christian existence.

[76] Given the religious background of the Jesuits and Catholicism in Europe it is of great interest to investigate into the Jesuits' approach to separate the Chinese canon from commentarial tradition. The Protestant Reformation makes more or less the same challenge to Catholicism to return to the text and ancient interpretation and undermine the contemporary reading of the Bible. This issue has to be taken up in another article in the future.