Confucian and Christian Canons

The initial ideological encounter between Chinese and Europeans was carried out mainly by Christian missionaries. Merchants and politicians, with their profit and power orientation, cared little about cultural contacts. Only the educated Christian missionaries bridged the ideological gulf between the Oriental and the Occidental. These missionaries were following out one of the commands of their Lord:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commended you. . . . 1

Christian teachings had already carried missionaries and proselytes to almost every corner of the world. Since the Chinese comprise almost a quarter of the world's population, the territory of China represents one of the most important missionary areas on earth. Missionary efforts in a culturally advanced country such as China, however, are more complicated than in countries lacking highly-developed cultural identities.

In the history of Christianity's proselytizing activities in China, three groups of Christian missionaries came to the fore at three different times. In chronological order, they are the Nestorians, the Catholics, and the Protestants. The goals of this article will be to examine the accomplishments of each group in regard to making the Bible available to the Chinese on one hand, and Confucian canons to the West, on the other.

A. The Nestorians

The first group of Christian missionaries to reach the Middle Kingdom was the

1. Matthew 28:19–20. Scriptural references are usually to the King James Version, unless otherwise noted.
The Nestorians. The Nestorian missionaries, according to A.J. Toynbee, had spread and converted the nomad tribes in Central Asia, and possessed the potential for the creation of an Asiatic Christian civilization, had it not been for the rising of Islam which overcame them in the Middle Ages. Since the Nestorians often introduced Jesus Christ as the "Light of Life," and maintained that they themselves should also act like "the light of the world," the Chinese named the Nestorians (景教, Ch'ing-Chiao), which means "Luminous Religion."

The first major Nestorian missionary, Alopen, was received by Emperor T'ang T'ai-Tsung in A.D. 635. The Emperor had his prime minister issue a formal edict welcoming Alopen to China. Three years later, another edict was handed down declaring that the Nestorian texts could be translated into Chinese. Nestorian influence waned, however, after their first suppression in A.D. 841, and it eventually died completely, so that the historical existence of these Nestorian missionaries fell from awareness of both Chinese and Europeans until the discovery and examination of the Nestorian Monument at Hsi-an Fu in 1625.

The Monument attracted the attention of Jesuit missionaries in China, who brought it to the attention of Europeans and Chinese. The first publicizer of their discovery was the Jesuit, Father Trigault, who inspected the Monument and translated the inscription into Latin. In 1625, a Chinese Christian, Dr. Leon Li (李之藻) wrote a work entitled

7. Saeki, p.456. See also the Chinese original T'ang-hui-yao, Vol.49.
8. Trigault probably made a Latin translation of the tablet (Pelliot thinks it is the work of Jacques Rho and not of Trigault), and Semedo made an Italian version. A more nearly complete Latin version by Michel Boym was published by Arhannus Kircher in his Prodomus Coptus; sive Aegypticus (1636). The best translations are to be found in Henri Harvet, La Stele chrétiennede Si-ngan-fou (Shanghai, 1897). Saeki, The Nestorian Monument in China, and a translation by A. Wylie, in Paul Carus, The Nestorian Monument (Chicago, 1909). See also James Legge, The Nestorian Monument of Hsi-an Fu in Shen-Hsi, China (London: Trubner & Co., 1888; rpt. New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1966), and Heller, Das Nestorianische Denkmal in Siganfu. Pauthier also translated the inscription into French, and Neumann into German.
"On Reading the Nestorian Inscription" ("讀景教碑書後"). Another Jesuit Father, Emmanuel Diaz Junior included these documents in his Chinese book on the Nestorian Inscription entitled 唐景教碑頌正詮 published in 1644. Another Jesuit, Fr. Semedo, translated the Nestorian Inscription in 1655 into English in his History of China. Since then, the discovery of the Nestorian Inscription has been recorded in many books. Nevertheless, prior to the nineteenth century, such personages as Voltaire in France, La Croze (1661-1739) in Germany, Bishop Horne in England, and others contended that the Monument was "a Jesuit forgery," and that there had been no Christian presence in China prior to the seventeenth century.

Historical evidence, however, clearly refutes these allegations of fraud. The Chinese imperial edict of A.D. 638 mentioned above already referred to the Nestorians in T'ang-hui-yao. The same historical record also indicated another imperial edict of the Emperor Hsuan-Tsung conferring the official name of "The Ta-ch'in Monastery" on the "The Persian Monastery" in A.D. 745. Another Chinese document showed that the Emperor Kublai received Nestorians at the Yuan court. Furthermore, Paul Pelliot and Sir Aurel Stein found various T'ang and Yuan dynasty Nestorian sutras and documents at Tun-huang in 1907. Since there is no longer any question of their existence in China during the period from 635 to 1368, the questions become: 1) What happened to these Nestorian Christians after the 841 suppression of them during the T'ang dynasty? and; 2) What happened to them after the fall of the Yuan dynasty in 1368? The answers could

9. Saeki, op. cit., pp. 78-79, gives a list of translations and annotations of the inscription by various authors since the discovery of the Monument.

10. Alvarez Semedo, Imperio de la China (Madrid, 1642). French editions of Semedo's book appeared in 1642 (Paris) and 1667 (Lyons); a Latin edition appeared in 1645. Semedo, a native of Portugal, was born in 1585. He arrived in Nanking in 1613, worked at Hangchow, Kia T'ing, Shanghai, and Sianfu. He was the first European to see the Nestorian tablet at Sianfu. He visited Rome from 1642-1644 and spent the last years of his life at Canton. He died in 1658.


not be found in any important historical books until the discovery of the Nestorian Inscription in the seventeenth century. The reasons will be discussed below.

In his work, *China and Cross*, Cary-Elwes maintained that with the infusion of Buddhist and Taoist ideas the group lost its separate Nestorian identity. After his examination of the inscription of the Nestorian Stele, Fr. Harvet felt that every line was reminiscent of some great work, not least the *Five Classics* of the Confucian canon, and that more than thirty of those expressions were borrowed from the *Book of Changes* alone. Almost as many came from the *Book of Poetry*; twenty or so from the *Annals*. The Confucian canonical books furnished a total of about 150 allusions. Actually, the author of the Nestorian Inscription, Ching-ching (景淨, Adam) was not translating Christian Scripture, but translating Buddhist sutras. The Buddhist monks undoubtedly ridiculed Adam's translation. The Nestorians did not translate Confucian works into European languages, nor did they translate any Christian works into Chinese. The only Nestorian documents found other than the famous inscription comprise about thirty relatively unimportant Nestorian sutras, which are all highly syncretic. Since the Nestorian canon comprised only such syncretic works, Nestorianism failed as a movement. As a result, the Nestorians left no significant impact on the history of cultural contacts between the East and the West.

B. The Roman Catholics

Following the T'ang dynasty, Franciscan priests were received at the Mongol court during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, while Jesuit priests were received at the Manchu court in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Both the Mongols and Marchus were known in Europe as the Tartars. The Franciscans travelled across the overland silk route from the Middle East through Turkistan to western China, while the Jesuits arrived by the sea route from Europe through Lisbon to Macao and finally China.

Since these Catholic missionary activities lasted for centuries, the following discussion will be confined to the attitudes of these two orders toward the Confucian and


15. See Saeki's translation, pp. 466–470, "大唐貞元續開元釋教錄"("What the Buddhist Priest Yuan-Chao Wrote About the Nestorian Bishop, Adam.")
Christian canons, i.e., the *Four Books* and *Five Classics*, and *The Bible*.

1. The Franciscans

Like the Nestorians, the Franciscans failed to convert significant numbers of Chinese to Christianity. Recognizing the rapid success of the Mongols' bids for world supremacy, Pope Innocent IV ordered a Franciscan to deliver a letter to the Mongol court. This missionary, Friar Giovanni (John) of Pian di Carpini, was one of the first disciples of St. Francis of Assisi to visit China and one of the first Europeans to describe the Chinese. In a letter to a friend, he reported that:

> The men of Cathay are pagans, having a special kind of writing by themselves, and as it is said, the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. They have also recorded in histories the lives of their forefathers; and they have monks and certain houses made like our churches. They say that they have many saints also, and they worship one God. They adore and reverence Christ Jesus our Lord, and believe the article of eternal life, but are not baptized. They also do honourably esteem and reverence our Scriptures.

Having accomplished his task as a messenger, Friar Giovanni went back to Europe and delivered a message from the Khan to the Pope. Friar Giovanni also whetted the interest of Marco Polo and a swarm of merchants, and paved the way for future Franciscan missionaries, as well.

Guillaume (William) of Rubruck, a Franciscan like his predecessor, was chosen by Louis IX of France as a messenger to the Mongols. On April 5, 1254, he arrived at the capital, where he was received by the emperor. He found Nestorian descendants both in Central Asia and in China. To Friar William, these Christian Nestorians were the greatest obstacles to the Catholic missionaries:

---

16. There is a certain confusion in this passage between Buddhist and Christian practices and belief. There were still some Nestorians in China. Friar Giovanni might also have been confusing Manicheans for Christians.

17. Manuel Komroff, *Contemporaries of Marco Polo: Consisting of the Travel Records to the Eastern Parts of the World of William of Rubruck (1253-1255); the Journal of John of Pian di Carpini (1245-1247); and the Journal of Friar Oderic (1318-1330)* (London, 1929), Ch. vii (p.37).
Among them there are Nestorians and Saracens who are considered as foreigners in Cathay. There are Nestorians in fifteen cities of Cathay and in a city called Hsianfu there is a Bishop.... If it is necessary to believe what I have heard, there are also hermits who live ascetic lives in the woods. Yet they recite their prayers and have their holy books in Syrian, and they do not understand them. The consequence is that they chant as do the monks in our country who are unversed in grammar. They are above all usurers, drunkards and some live with the Tartars and have like them several wives.... Those among them who educate the young noble Mongols, while teaching them the Gospel and the Faith, succeed in alienating them from the practice of Christian virtue, through the bad example of their lives. 18

The Mongol emperor in turn sent Friar William back to Europe as a messenger; he seemed to have carried out no proselytizing activities while in China.

Not only did missionaries from Europe come to Peking but Christians from China also visited Rome. Rabban Sauma, the Nestorian Christian priest whose home was Peking, arrived in Rome in 1287, and went to Paris and Bordeaux to thank the clergy who had conducted missionary activities among the Mongols, Turks, and Chinese. He reported that many of the children of the Mongol kings and queens had been converted. 19 In Paris, Sauma spoke with Philip the Fair. At Bordeaux, he met King Edward I of England. 20 Sauma then returned to Rome in the spring of 1288. This time, he was welcomed by the newly elected Franciscan Pope, Nicholas IV, who sent John of Montecorvino to China the following year.

The third major Italian Franciscan messenger, Giovanni (John) da Montecorvino, was sent to the Mongol emperor by Pope Nicholas IV, the first Franciscan to be elected Pope. Unlike his two predecessors, John of Montecorvino stayed in China, and devoted the rest of his life to the Chinese. He died in the Middle Kingdom in 1328 at the age of eighty-one. Like the later Jesuit supervisors Ricci and Verbiest, he continuously implored the Pope to send more missionaries to China. When Pope Clement V received

18. Cary-Elwes, China, p.46. In his note he said, "There certainly were Nestorian anchorites, as was proved visually to astonished Rome and Western Europe when a few years later one of them, Rabban Sauma, appeared having travelled from Peking, as will be recorded in its due place."
his appeal for help, he commended the Minister-General of the Franciscans to choose seven brothers, zealous and learned in Holy Scriptures, to be made bishops. Only three reached Peking, in 1308. Friar John of Montecorvino, who had been awaiting them for fourteen years, was consecrated the first Archbishop of Peking. Over the next twenty years, Friar John converted a great many persons. Although the Nestorians severely impeded his efforts, he was venerated as a saint, and buried in Peking with great honor by the Chinese. He was the first Franciscan missionary who had consecrated his whole life to the China mission.

Five years elapsed before the news of Friar John's death reached the Pope. In 1333, Pope John XXII appointed his successor to Peking, to be accompanied by twenty other friars and six laymen. By 1338, however, they had only reached Turkistan; a letter written by Pope Benedict XI referred to this group, building and repairing churches there.\(^2\) Meanwhile, an embassy appeared in 1338 from the Chinese emperor with a letter requesting the Pope to set up frequent exchanges of messengers.\(^2\)

When John of Montecorvino died in 1328, however, Mongol Franciscan missionary efforts in China died out at the same time. One of the major causes for the failure was the lack of deep mutual understanding between the European and the Chinese. The Chinese, naturally, could read neither the Persian translation of the Bible nor the Vulgate edition without long training. When Friar William entered the court for the first time, he chanted the following:

\[
\begin{align*}
A \text{ solis ortu cardine} \\
\text{et usque terre limitem} \\
\text{Christum canamus principem} \\
\text{Natum Maria Virgine.}\(^2\)
\end{align*}
\]

Rather than receiving the welcome he perhaps expected, he was searched for knives. Moreover, there were many difficulties in translating the conversations between the two parties. John of Montecorvino, on the other hand, was luckier and was allowed to build a church in Peking, and later to build one by the gates of palace, so that the Emperor could hear the chanting of the choir. Unfortunately, the Emperor appeared interested only in


\(^2\) Manuel Komroff, *Contemporaries of Marco Polo*, p.146.
the melodic value of the chants. As a result, Friar John was frustrated in his attempts to act as a true missionary. He described his activities in a letter as follows:

Also, I have gradually brought one hundred and fifty boys, . . . who had never learnt any religion. These boys I have baptized, and I have taught them Greek and Latin after our manner. . . . His Majesty the Emperor, moreover delights much to hear them chanting. I have the bells rung at all the canonical hours, and with my congregation of babes and sucklings I perform the divine service, and the chanting we do by ear, because I have no service book with the notes. 24

Friar John could only teach a few children to chant in Latin; he could never teach millions of Chinese to understand the Latin canons. Latin ritual could not be brought into an harmonious relationship with Chinese thought. Once the Latin master passed away, the babes and sucklings were lost in the masses. Since Christian Scripture was not translated into Chinese, 25 the Chinese could not read the Latin Scripture themselves. Conversely, since the missionaries did not pay any attention to Chinese culture, the Confucian canon was not introduced to the Europeans. Therefore, the Franciscan missionaries to China failed to make any significant impact.

The differences between the Christian groups also hindered their proselytizing activities. The Nestorians did all they could to defeat the Franciscan missionary attempt. A similar situation would recur later in the conflicts between the Franciscans and the Jesuits.

The fall of the Mongol dynasty and the rise of Islam brought about the end of the Franciscan missionary efforts. The Franciscans remained only a "foreign mission" in China, a church for visiting European merchants who came in the wake of the Mongol conquerors. 26 Due to the large number of such persons, I shall discuss only the Polo family.

---

On their return from China to Rome in 1269, Marco Polo's uncles Maffeo and his father Nicolo Polo told the Pope that Kublai Khan, who in 1257 had styled himself Emperor of China, had requested one hundred missionaries for China. The Pope, Tedaldo Visconti, paid little attention to their request, but sent off the Polos with merely two Dominicans and letters for Kublai Khan. Later the two Dominicans gave up their attempt to get to China. The three Polos continued their journey, and were welcomed by the Kublai Khan again at Peking and at Xanadu in 1275. They stayed in China about eighteen years altogether. Marco Polo's adventures in China became the basis for his description of China, which in turn fascinated many Europeans, including Christopher Columbus.

Although Marco Polo paid little attention to the moral and religious tenets of Taoism or Confucianism, he did mention some Buddhist practices and enlist Buddha as a saint in the company of the Lord Jesus Christ. Besides, in his narrative, there were references to 700,000 Christian families in the southeast of China. They still had the Psalter in their possession. Cary-Elwes, in China and the Cross, maintained that these families were descendants of the Manicheans. The history of these groups was uncovered by the Jesuits in the seventeenth century.

2. The Jesuits

The history of the Jesuits in China can be viewed as having been bounded by either of two different sets of dates: from Francis Xavier's arrival in 1552 to the disbanding of

---

27. Concerning the two Polo brothers' first trip to China the time they left the Crimea after 1260 and followed the trade routes to Peking, see A. C. Moule and P. Pelliot, *Marco Polo: The Description of the World* (London, 1938), I, 22-28.

28. In 1264, Kublai Khan extended the Mongolian empire into China south of the Great Wall, and took up his capital at "Cambuluc" (Peking) and set up "Xanadu" (上都, Shang-tu), a summer retreat, in the hills northwest of the capital. See Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1965), I, Bk. I (pp. 34-35). Xanadu later was mythically described in Mandeville's *Travels* and Coleridge's "Kubla Khan."


the Jesuits in 1773,\textsuperscript{32} or; from Matteo Ricci's reception in 1600 at the Chinese court to the death in 1814 of the last Jesuit in Peking (Father de Poirot). In addition to setting up missionary activities among the people as had the Franciscans, the Jesuits also set about exploring classical Chinese thought. This chapter will be confined to a discussion of key Jesuit figures and their influence on Jesuit interpretations of the Chinese canonical works. Naturally, the Jesuits' main reason for studying these works was to aid in their missionary activities. As a result, most of the Jesuits used and interpreted the Confucian classics as their catechetical supplements to Christian doctrines.

a. Catechetical Interpretations of the Confucian Four Books

Francis Xavier, one of the ten founding fathers of the Jesuits, visited India and Japan. While preaching in Japan, he learned that China was the center of Asian civilization. He then left Japan for China, but died on the island of 両川 (Shang-Chuan), off the coast of China. Although he never reached mainland China, he is still honored as the father of the China mission, as well as the father of Jesuit missions in general. As the pioneer of Jesuit missionary activities, his policies became the models for Jesuit missionary work. His approach was radical at the time, based on the philosophy that Christianity must be expressed in the native languages using concepts derived from the indigenous culture. Since he stressed the importance of using the languages of the peoples to whom he preached, he would translate various prayers and the catechisms into the native language, and then memorize them. Furthermore, he emphasized acquiring an understanding of the core of the culture. He felt that missionaries could not proselytize effectively unless they were equipped with proper training in local language and philosophy.\textsuperscript{33}

Xavier believed in first converting the emperor and the intelligentsia, a resemblance to the Confucian concept of educating from the top of the social structure down towards the bottom. This approach was carried out by the later Jesuits in the Chinese court. In addition, Xavier felt that all Jesuit missionaries should report their activities

\textsuperscript{32} Pope Clement XIV disbanded the Jesuits in 1773 through an encyclical entitled "Dominus et Redemptor."

to their immediate superiors and to Rome. As will be seen later, the reports and other writings sent to Europe spurred secular and clerical controversies, and were major factors leading to the eventual disbanding of the Jesuits.

Alessandro Valignano, the second major Jesuit in the East Asian mission, successfully opened the China mission. In order to avoid Portuguese domination, he chose fellow Italian Jesuits, Michele Ruggieri, Francis Pasio, and Matteo Ricci, for the China mission. Like Xavier, he wanted his Italian Jesuits to learn the Chinese dialects and become adept in Chinese philosophy as well. Following Valignano’s directions, Ruggieri and Ricci garbed themselves in Buddhist habits. After they became more sensitive to the Chinese intellectuals’ Confucian orientation, they adopted Confucian robes. In order to understand the Chinese, Ruggieri and Ricci both studied Confucian classics diligently. These studies would enable them to teach succeeding Jesuit missionaries the complexities of Chinese culture, and also to send accounts of Confucianism back to Europe. Ruggieri was the first Jesuit to translate the Confucian *Four Books* into Latin; however, he was prohibited from publishing this work and his Chinese catechism 天主實錄 in Latin, because of the opposition of Valignano and Ricci. 34 Ruggieri’s Latin translation of the Confucian classics was only a by-product; his major concern was to make the Bible in some form available in Chinese. Toward this end, he published 天主實錄 (T’ien-chu shi-lu, True Record of the Lord of Heaven) in 1584. 35 The Chinese term for God in the title of this book, 天主 (T’ien-chu, Lord of Heaven) has remained the name for God in China and also the Chinese characters used for the Catholic religion.

The opposition from his co-workers and from his supervisors prevented Ruggieri from staying in China. Had he been allowed to stay, his impact on Jesuit policies undoubtedly would have been enormous.

Like Ruggieri, Ricci prepared a rough translation of the *Four Books*, known as the

---

34. Paul Rule, "Confucius or K‘ung-t‘zu," Diss. Australia, 1973, p. 87. He notes the manuscript of Ruggieri’s translation in the Biblioteca Vittoria Emanuele in Rome (Fondo Gesuitico 1195), and that it is dated 1591–92. See also note in Fonti Ricciane, I, 43.

Rule, "Confucius," p. 88. Rule noted there were two copies of this book in the Jesuit Archives in Rome (Rome: ASJ, Jap, Sin 1, 189 and 190). A modern edition of this work was printed in Taipei in 1966 under the title of 天主聖教實錄 in 天主教東傳文獻續篇 II, 755–838.
Tetrabiblio, at some time prior to November, 1593. Unfortunately, there is no trace of this work in any European archives. Ricci entered the title of this work in his Opere Storiche.

After Ricci's death in 1610 his friend Trigault translated Storiche into Latin and published it in 1615 in Rome in his Christiana Expeditione. This latter work was reprinted three times, and also went through three editions in French, and one each in German, Spanish, and Italian. In this book, Confucius was introduced to Europe as "the most renowned of all Chinese philosophers." In another passage, Confucius is described as "the Prince of Chinese Philosophers"; it is also indicated that he had "compiled four volumes of the works (Four Books) of more ancient philosophers and had written five books (Five Classics) of his own. These five are entitled 'The Doctrines.'" Here Ricci made a major error that influenced most of the Jesuits' understanding of the two-part Chinese canon. Actually, the Four Books are separate works whose grouping together was formalized as a result of the studies of Chu Hsi (A.D. 1130-1200). The authorship of three of these works is traditionally ascribed to Confucius, while the fourth is ascribed to Mencius, a fourth century B.C. Confucian. In regard to the Five Classics, Confucius is the author of only one of them. The separate works that comprise the Five Classics were brought together as a formal canon during the middle of the Han...

40. Ibid., p.33.
41. Following Ricci's discrimination, Du Halde termed the Five Classics as "Livres canoniques du premier ordre," while the Four Books as "Livres canoniques du seconde ordre."
42. The Four Books, entitled (Analects of Confucius), 中庸 (Doctrine of the Mean), 大學 (Great Learning), and 孟子 (Mencius).
43. Five Classics, under the titles 詩 (Poetry), 書 (Historical Records), 易 (Changes), 禮 (Rites), 春秋 (Annals of Spring and Autumn). "The Five Classics," as Lin Yu-tang has pointed out, "formed the body of historical learning edited, taught and handed down by Confucius himself, while the Four Books on the whole represented the works of his followers, their records of Confucius' savings and their interpretation or developments of Confucius' thoughts." (Lin Yu-tang, The Wisdom of Confucius (New York, 1955), p.38.
dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). Most important, since Ricci felt that these books were mainly "directions for proper moral proceedings, in the light of human reason," he introduced them to the Jesuits for their ethical and social-political values. He also hoped that Christianity could take over Buddhism's position as China's most popular religion. He also felt that Christian teachings could supplant certain aspects of Confucianism with which he disagreed. In collaboration with the Chinese prime minister Hsu Kuang-ch'i, a Christian convert, Ricci arrived at the Chinese phrase that was to serve as the motto for the Jesuits' missionary activities "補儒易佛" (to "supplement Confucianism and replace Buddhism" (with Christianity)).

Ricci maintained that the Contemporary Chinese interpretations of Confucianism were too metaphysical, that emphasis should be placed on the pragmatic aspects of Chinese ethics and political organization. Ricci expressed this attitude in the 天主實義 (T'ien-chu shih-i, True Doctrine of the Lord of Heaven), which was published first in 1595, translated into Japanese in 1604 and into French by Fr. Jacques in Lettres édifiantes in 1818. Ricci himself described this book as a catechism. The Latin translation of the title of his book, De Deo Vera Disputatio, indicated its format as a debate or dialogue with a Western scholar. Ricci carefully explained at the beginning of the first chapter that he was concerned only with the general practices of the Catholics and not with matters of doctrine, Scriptures, or traditions. Ricci believed that T'ien-chu shih-i would enable the Chinese to interpret the classical concept "上帝" (Shang-ti, Supreme Ruler) as being the God in the Catholic Bible. If this initial idea were accepted, the Chinese could easily be brought to understand the Bible as divine revelation. His influence could be seen in the later Jesuit translations or paraphrases of the Four Books. Likewise, Sainte-Marie, in the Traite... mission de la Chine gave a concise description

44. Matthew Ricci, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.33.
45. Matthew Ricci, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.488. See also Hsu Kuang-ch'i (徐光啓) in the Preface to 泰西水法 quoted in Fang Hao's Fang Hao, II, 212.
46. Fang Hao,中國天主教史人物傳(Biography of Chinese Catholics), I, 78. See also Rowbotham, Missionary and Mandarin, p.254, who mentions the similarity of the Ricci's treatise with Nicolas Male-branche, Entretiens d'un philosophe chrétien et d'un philosophe chinois sur l'existence et la nature de Dieu (Paris, 1708).
47. In a letter accompanying the first edition sent to Rome in 1604. See Fonti Ricciiane, II, 293n.
of the Chinese classics. He compared the Chinese reverence toward the **Four Books** to the Christian respect for the Four Gospels, the essential canon in the Bible.

Prior to the publication of *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* in 1687, the Jesuit missionaries focused their efforts on formulating catechetical interpretations of Confucianism in Chinese. They studied the Confucian classics, and adopted Confucian sayings in their Christian publications. In addition to Ricci's and Ruggieri's two Chinese catechisms, Ricci wrote sixteen books in Chinese. Most of the other seventeenth century Jesuit missionaries in China were also competent in Chinese composition.

When the Jesuits faced difficulties in preaching to the Chinese, they retreated to their work on the translation of the Confucian classics. In 1662, the first Latin translation of the Confucian canon was published in China by Ignatio da Costa and Prospero Intorcetta. This Latin translation only included part of the *Analects* (Analects) and the *Great Learning* (Great Learning), two of the Confucian Four Books. In 1667, Intorcetta published part of one of the other Confucian canon, *Doctrine of the Mean* under the title of Sinarum Scientia Politico-Moralis. In 1669, an edition of this latter work, was published in Goa, to which was appended a preface and a "Life of Confucius." After Intorcetta returned to Europe in 1668, his books were reprinted in Paris in 1672 and translated into French in *Thevenot's* book in 1676. The rarity of the works in European libraries

demonstrates their limited circulation.

It was only with the publication of Confucius Sinarum Philosophus in 1687 that European scholars began noticing these works on China. This book represented the cumulative, collaborative result of the Jesuit interpretations of Chinese culture. In particular, it included translations of three of the Confucian canons: *Magnae Scientiae* (Great Learning, 大學), *Sinarum Scientia Politioo-Moralis* (Doctrine of the Mean, 中庸) and *Rationcinantium Sermones* (Analects, 論語). Since Ricci rejected Mencian interpretations of Confucian classics, the Mencius was not included. Ricci also excluded all of the commentaries by later Chinese scholars, which Chinese traditionally study along with the original texts. The titles given these works clearly show the missionary bias of their contents. They viewed Confucian classics only from the standpoint of political morality; the Confucian sayings were interpreted as rational sermons. Like the European catechism, these were Confucian moral sayings that would help people to understand the Scriptures. To sum up, there is a dual implication of the Jesuit emphasis on the "morality interpretation" of Confucianism, i.e., 1) Their interpretation would convince the Chinese that Confucianism did not contradict Christianity, and, 2) This kind of interpretation would also convince the Roman Catholic Church that the Chinese were true converts, even when they continued to practise ancestor worship and Confucian rituals.

Paul Rule has shown that these translations were not literal. He points out that the original sixteen-character text of the first passage translated is amplified into a paragraph in the translation, comprising a translation of a commentary by the famous scholar


56. Confucius Sinarum Philosophus; sive, Scientia Sinensis, Latine Exposita, Studio et opera Prosperi Intorcetta, Christiani Herdtrich, Francisci Rougemont, Philippi Couplet, Patrum Societatis Jesu, Parisiis Apud D. Horthemels, 1687. There are 18 copies in American libraries (see Union Catalog). Although the Mencius was actually the work of a third generation follower of Confucius, by the thirteenth century, the Chinese already viewed it as a part of the core Confucian canon.

57. In Ricci's 天主實義 Vol. II, p. 67, he criticized a saying in Mencius "There are three kinds of unfilial persons; the worst is the one who has no offspring." Since the Jesuits did not marry, they could not agree with this opinion.
Chu Hsi, together with a large amount of European moral philosophy. Also added was a paraphrase of a European devotional manual "Mirror of the Soul" referring to Aristotelian ethics, and to the "sumnum bonum" ("the highest good"), a Thomistic concept with theistic overtones. 58

The European interpretations of the Confucian classics in the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus touched off the Chinese Rites Controversy in Europe. This controversy grew out of Ricci's policy that the Chinese should be allowed to continue to perform public and private Confucian rites. Some Jesuits, among them his successor Nicholas Longobardi, opposed Ricci's liberal policies. This controversy was further stirred by the general debates among European intellectuals resulting from the Latin translations just mentioned.

b. Apologetical Interpretations of Confucian Classics

Aside from figuring in the introduction of Confucianism to Europe, Couplet was responsible for the arrival of the epoch of great activity in French translations of Chinese. In 1684, Couplet presented a young Chinese 沈福宗(Shen Fu-tsung) 59 at the court of Louis XIV. Couplet then induced Louis XIV to send some well-educated French Jesuits to China. In 1687, five French Jesuits arrived in China. The following year they were welcomed at court. Of the twenty Jesuits who translated the Confucian classics before 1687, none was French. All of the fourteen Jesuit translators following 1687 were French (See the appendix). Although the average length of their stay in China was over thirty-three years, their major concerns were in the Rites Controversy, especially among the Europeans around 1700. In this period the great majority of their arguments were published in French.

Louis Le Comte, one of the five French Jesuits sent by Louis XIV to the Chinese court, arrived in China in 1687. Due to the financial difficulties caused by the Portuguese, Le Comte was sent back to Paris in 1692. In 1696, his Nouveaux mémories sur l'état

59. Rule, "Confucius," p.327. See also Shou-yi Chen, "The Influence of China on English Culture during the Eighteenth Century," Diss. Univ. of Chicago 1928, p.24. Chen said, "In 1685, Shen Fo Chung (沈福宗) the first learned Chinese traveller to England, found himself at Oxford as the guest of Thomas Hyde, noted Orientalist and Bodley's Librarian."
This book incited the Chinese Rites Controversy among the French, the Portuguese, and the papal faction, together with a theological debate between the Jesuits and the Jansenists, and between the Missions Etrangeres and the Sorbonne. The Jesuits preaching in China and the representatives from Rome were heatedly debating whether Chinese Christians should be allowed to include Confucian rites in their worship, and how "God" should be translated into the Chinese language. Due to the rivalry between orders and nationalities, the Franciscans and Dominicans denounced various rites as idol worship. Among the Chinese, the Christian and non-Christian forces were in conflict. Even various Chinese emperors became involved in the controversy. Both in Europe and China, there were voluminous writings both for and against the Jesuit positions.

In Europe, these controversies led to the official condemnation of Chinese rites by the Sorbonne theologians in 1700 and a papal bull issued by Pope Clement XI in 1704.

Le Comte denied that he held the positions condemned. Besides, he predicted that the condemnation of Chinese as atheists would furnish ammunition to the free thinkers.


61. Antoine de Sainte-Marie, O. F. M. (利安當, Li An-tang), a Spaniard, published a treatise *T'ien Ju Yin, Christianity and Confucianism Compared* in 1664 that has been reprinted with an introduction in *T'ien-chu-chiao tung ch'uan wehsien su-pien* (Supplementary Volumes of Records of Christian Missionaries in the Far East), II, 981-1043. Rule, in his thesis, examined *Apoligia pro Decreto S. D. N. Alexandri VII... et Patrum Dominicanorum et Franciscorum Scriptis Concimnals* (Louvain, 1700) and reached the same conclusion that Dominicans and Franciscans criticized the Jesuit tolerance of Chinese rites.


Would it not be much more dangerous to condemn the line taken in my book, by saying that the ancient Chinese, as those of the present day, are atheists. For will not the free thinkers take advantage of what is presented to them, that in an empire so vast, so enlightened, established so solidly, and so flourishing, whether in the number of its inhabitants, or in the invention of almost all the arts, the divinity has never been acknowledged. What, then, will become of the reasoning of the Fathers of the Church who, to prove the existence of God, have drawn on the agreement of all peoples, arguing that Nature had impressed the idea on them so deeply that nothing can efface it?  

As Le Comte predicted, Bayle and Voltaire actually drew on the Jesuit reports for evidence supporting their own deistic positions. The judgment passed by the scholars at the Sorbonne was attacked by Le Comte and the philosophes. Louis XIV also provided Le Comte with indirect support by giving his works official approbation; various numbers of the Faculté de Paris also came out in favor of Le Comte. However, the condemnations by the Sorbonne in 1700 and by the Pope in 1704 were succeeded by subsequent papal bulls of 1710, 1715, and 1742, which prohibited Chinese Christians from practising the Confucian rituals.

The situation in China improved, but this improvement was short-lived. In 1692, the Chinese emperor, K'ang-hsi, issued an edict of toleration of Christianity, and in

---

65. Pinot, La Chine, pp. 314-329, demonstrates from a comparison of the first (1697) and second (1702) editions of Bayle's Dictionnaire, and an examination of his works after 1700, how Bayle made effective use of this argument in his developing critique of religion. Voltaire was also involved in this debate. See, for example, Ch. II of the Essai sur les Moeurs; Ch. xviii of La Philosophie d'histoire; the last chapter of Siècle de Louis XIV; and the articles on "Catechisme Chinois," "Chine" and "Philosophie" in the Dictionnaire philosophique.
1693 granted the Jesuits permission to build a house in Peking. In 1700, Emperor K'ang-hsi promulgated another edict stating that there was no conflict in a Chinese individual's practising both Confucian and Christian rituals. However, a year after coming to the throne, K'ang-hsi's son, Yung-cheng, issued an edict expelling all the missionaries to Macao, with the exception of some "useful" missionary scientists. Nevertheless, the Jesuit missionaries tried their best to preach and teach in China, and actually increased the quantity of their reports and correspondence back to Europe. Most of these letters were recorded in thirty-four volumes of *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* (1702–1776).

The Chinese Rites Controversy, meanwhile, only increased European interest in China. Du Halde, the editor of the *Lettres édifiantes* from 1711 to 1743, published a work of his own entitled *Description... de l'empire de la Chine*, even though he had


72. *Du Halde, Description geographique, historique, chronologique, politique de l'empire de la Chine...* (Paris: Chez P.G. Lemereier 1735, 4 vols. in folio. A second edition was published at La Haye, 1736. The English translation by Brooks appeared the same year in London, and the was a second translation published by Edward Cave in 1738–1741. A German translation was published in 1747–1749 and a partial Russian translation in 1774–1777.

never been to China. His Description was based on missionary sources, and was a summary of the scholarly work of twenty-seven China authorities. Of these twenty-seven, we have already mentioned Louis Le Comte, Philiope Couplet, and Ferdinand Verbiest, and we shall shortly discuss the Figurists: Joachim Bouvet, Jean-François Foucquet, and Joseph Henri de Prémare. Before doing so, however, it would be best to discuss François Noël's translation of the Confucian classics, which was one of the major works included in Du Halde's Description.

Noel, the first Jesuit to translate all of the Confucian Four Books, also wrote a work entitled Philosophia Sinica. Although Noel translated six Confucian classics into Latin in 1711, his translations were banned by the authorities both in Rome and in Germany. Because of Du Halde's laudatory acknowledgment of Noel's work in the Description, Noel exerted a great influence on German scholars such as Christian Wolff, Leibnitz and later Goethe and Schiller in the eighteenth century. Du Halde not only adopted Noel's translations of the Four Books, but also gave a summary and a commentary for each of the Confucian Five Classics as representing the primary body of the Chinese classical canon. About the principles in the Classics, he said.

...Il parait que le but de la doctrine des Livres Classiques a été de maintenir la paix & la tranquilité de l'Etat, par le règlement des moeurs & l'exacte observation des Loix; & que, pour y parvenir, les premiers Chinois jugerent que deux choses étaient nécessaires à observer, savoir, les devoirs de la Religion, & les regles du bon gouvernement... The goal of Confucian books is to provide the people practical instructions instead of abstract theology. His respect for Confucius was great than that for the Greek philosophers:

75. Du Halde considered the Five Classics as "Livres canoniques du Premier ordre." 76. Du Halde, Description, III, 2.
77. Du Halde, Description, II, 33.
Confucius naquit...551. ans avant l'Ere Chrétienne, deux ans avant la mort de Thales. Il étoit contemporain du fameux Pythagore, & Socrate parut peu de tems après la perte que la Chine fit de son Philosophe. Mais Confucius eut cent avantage sur ces trois sages, que sa gloire s'est accrué de plus en plus avec la suite des années, & qu'elle est parvenu au plus haut point, où la sagesse humaine puisse prétendre.78

Then he went on to honor Confucius and his humanitarian maxims:

Confucius, sans se mettre en peine de sonder les secrets impénétrables de la nature, & sans trop subtiliser sur les points de la créance commune, écu'il dangereux à la curiosité, se borne à parler du principe de tous les Étres; d'inspirer pour lui du respect, de la crainte, & de la reconnaissance; de publier que rien ne lui est caché, pas même les pensées les plus secrètes; qu'il ne laisse jamais la vertu sans récompense, ni le vice sans châtiment, dans quelque condition que se trouve l'un ou l'autre. Ce sont la les maximes répandues dans ses ouvrages; & c'est sur ces principes qu'il se régloît, & qu'il tâchoit de réformer les moeurs.79

Besides being the most comprehensive and systematic introduction to Confucianism, Du Halde's Description also included the first translations of Chinese drama, Tchao-chi-couell-ell: Le Petit orphelin de la maison de Tchao tragédie chinoise.80 Of the various translations and adaptations of this work, Voltaire viewed this play as a "Confucian sermon in five acts."81 Thomas Percy, the first translator of the Chinese novel Hau Kiou Chaom, also included Du Halde's "The Little Orphan of the House of Chao" in his Miscellaneous Pieces Relating to the Chinese. Percy's other various works on China frequently cited Du Halde's Description.82

Du Halde's Description served as the main depository of the Jesuit interpretations

---

78. Du Halde, Description, II, 319.
79. Du Halde, Description, II, 320.
80. Du Halde, Description, II, 341-378.
of Confucianism up to the early nineteenth century.83 "No single work on the Far East, before or since," said Rowbotham, "has had such a profound influence on European thought."84 Although Du Halde himself was not a Figurist,85 he accepted the Figurist theories that Confucius had prophesied the Messiah86 and that the Sons of Noah had founded the Chinese Empire.87 Like the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus of 1687, Du Halde's Description brought together Jesuit interpretations of Confucianism and touched off another school of interpretations.

c. Mythological Interpretations

Despite the sanctions against the Jesuits in Europe, the Chinese emperor was still acting as the patron of various Jesuits in their teaching of sciences and their relationship to the Chinese classics. The Jesuits, in turn, would use these studies to establish commonalities between Chinese history and the Judeo-Christian tradition. They attempted to interpret the Chinese Five Classics along the lines of the Pentateuch of Moses. They

83. Boswell asked Johnson if he should read Du Halde's China. "Why, yes, (said he) as one reads such a book, that is to say, consult it." Boswell's Life of Johnson (Oxford, 1934, spring 1768), II, 55. In addition to the two French editions (4 vols., Paris 1735, and The Hague 1736), there were also two English translations one in four volumes, The General History of China... (London, 1736 and 1741), rightly described by Cordier as 'une edition fort mal soignee' (Bibliotheca Sinica, IV, col. 37), and another folio edition in two volumes, A Description of the Empire of China (London, 1738-41). Some extracts from the Description, and from the Lettres Edifiantes, were included in Thomas Percy's Miscellaneous Pieces relating to the Chinese (London, 1762). See Cordier, Bibliotheca Sinica, cols. 926-941, for details.


85. According to the Dictionnaire de théologie catholique (V: 2, Paris 1924; art.: "Figurisme"), figurism is a system of interpretation of the Scriptures based on the multiplicity of meanings presented by the Biblical texts. The chief exponent of this system during the first half of the eighteenth century was the abbé d'Ethémare, a Jansenist priest in Paris who, according to Michaud (Biographie universelle), "saw everywhere figures of the defection of the Church, announced them in his writings, his lectures and his conversations, and became the head of a group which abandoned itself in this respect to extreme illusions, and it was these illusions which prepared and fomented the deplorable scenes of the convulsionnaires." When Fréret and others, therefore, looked for a term to apply to this group of Chinese scholars, it was not hard to find.

86. Du Halde, Description, II, 387.

87. Du Halde, Description, III, 2.
arrived at the conclusion that the mysteries of Christianity could be found, albeit concealed, in the Chinese classics.  

Ricci, with the majority of Jesuits in China, did not want to discuss the metaphysical or mythological elements in the Chinese classics, while the Figurists were interested in the correspondence between the "figures" of the Chinese Classics and the Old Testament. Among these Figurists, Bouvet was the most significant. His first publication, the Portrait historique de l'empereur de la Chine (1697), was imbued with the sentiment that the Chinese empire was blessed by God. Bouvet received support from the Chinese emperor and Louis XIV, as well as from Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz. In the same year, 1697, Leibnitz published Novissima Sinica (The Most Recent News from China), which advanced the theory that the binary system found in the Chinese I-Ching (Classic of Changes) was a universal language. Bouvet also stated that the Pa-kua (hexagrams) of the I-Ching contained the idea of the "Creation" and the "Trinity." Fang Hao, a modern Chinese Catholic scholar, noted that in addition to Bouvet's Generalis Doctrinae Libri I-King, there were fourteen manuscripts about the I-Ching written by missionaries in the Vatican Library. Bouvet wrote 古今敬天鑒 ( Ku-chi ching t'ien chien, On the Worship of Heaven in Ancient and Modern Times) in Chinese first to allege that the Chinese in their classics respected and practised "敬天".

89. For example, Couplet in the "Proemialis Declaration" to Confucius Sinarum Philosophus refers to I-Ching (Classic of Changes) as the source of the errors of the modern interpreters (p. xxxvii).
90. See Bouvet's letter of 24 October 1697, in which he tells Guibert, the French Assistant, that he wishes to refute Maigrot by giving public testimony to "the belief of this Prince in the divinity" a report of which his long and frequent access to the emperor qualified him to mention.
91. Bouvet dedicated Histoire de l'empereur de la Chine to Louis XIV.
93. Bouvet to Le Gobien, 8 November 1700, in Leibnitz, Opera Omnia, ed. Dutens IV 149.
94. Bouvet to Leibnitz, 4 November 1701, Paris: B. N. Fr. 17240, ff. 81-82 (三才) "Three stocks in I-Ching," and "three supremes" (三極), i.e.; a trinity in the supreme being.
At Bouvet's recommendation, the Emperor K'ang Hsi called Jean-Francois Foucquet to Peking in 1711 to study the I-Ching. Foucquet asserted that the I-Ching was the key to understanding the Chinese classics. In his study, he also mentioned the Taoist interpretations of Confucianism. Foucquet also maintained that Confucius taught an esoteric doctrine that went unrecorded as a result of its loss during the famous burning of the books during the Ch'in dynasty (221-206 B.C.).

Foucquet's only work printed during his lifetime, apart from a letter published in the Lettres édifiantes in 1705, was the Chronological Table of Chinese History published in Rome in 1729. Both Voltaire and Montesquieu met Foucquet, and were interested not so much in his mythological interpretations of Confucianism as in his discussion of the use of reason and law in Confucian governmental administration.

Another Figurist, Joseph Henri Prémare, also accepted the basic premise of a primitive revelation transmitted through the Chinese classics, the 'vestiges' of which were to be found there by those who knew what to look for. He attempted to reconcile sinology and theology by the ancient universal mythology. P. de Prémare, who lived in China from 1698 to his death in 1735, attracted wider attention than most his colleagues. Several of his works were published in Europe, notably his Recherches sur les tems antérieurs à ceux dont parle le "Chou-King" which appeared as an introduction.

---

96. Fang Hao, I, 236-237.
98. It was re-published in English translation in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society (London), 36 (1929-1930), 397-424.
99. Rowbotham, "Figurists," p.480. He states that "Foucquet was in Paris from 1721 to June, 1723 and Voltaire was in the capital during at least part of this period. We have the latter's word that the two men were acquainted. In his Essai sur les moeurs (Œuvres, ed. Moland, 11, 160), Voltaire says 'Le Père Foucquet...m'a dit plusieurs fois qu'il y avait à la Chine très peu de philosophes athées.' This suggests that Voltaire, like Montesquieu, may have been on several occasions the willing victim of the ex-missionary's loquacity." Voltaire seems to be guilty of inconsistency since he elsewhere used the argument that the Chinese were in the main atheists.
to De Guignes' edition of his fellow Jesuit Gaubil's translation of the Shu Ching (Classic of Records), which is one of the Five Classics. These significant studies of the Five Classics were generally neglected during the European Enlightenment. In eighteenth-century Europe, only a few European scholars, including Leibnitz and Matthew Tindal, paid any attention to their mythological studies.

To avoid entanglement in the Confucian Rites Controversy, Premare would only discuss the ancient Chinese classics. In addition, he studied Chinese belles-lettres and translated the Le Petit orphelin de la maison de Tchao tragédie chinoise included in Du Halde's Description. It was Premare's translation of this latter work that various European authors adopted. However, his voluminous writings in Chinese, 經傳議論 (Discourse on Classics) were never published, and were reserved only for the study of the emperors. According to Fang Hao's study, the Discourse on Classics comprised twelve volumes, dealing with different aspects of the Confucian Four Books and Five Classics, together with Han and Sung commentaries. Prémare's other Chinese compendium, 儒教實義 (The True Doctrine of Confucianism), was published in Taipei in 1970.

Although the Figurists wrote voluminously, little of their work on the Chinese classics was allowed to be published either in Europe or in China. There was, however, one exception, the work of Alexandre de la Charme, who stayed in China from 1728 to 1767. In 1733, he published his Hsing-li chen-chuan (性理真銓, True Explanation of Principles of Nature), which stood as the cumulative work of Jesuit metaphysical interpretations of Neo-Confucianism. He followed Ricci's distinction between the classics and their commentaries:

What did the earlier Confucians say? Believe in the classics, and do not believe in the commentary; discuss the classics, and do not discuss the small print (of the commentary). And what do the later Confucians say? Believe in the classics and also believe in the

102. Chou-King is another French romanization of Shu Ching (Classic of Records).
103. Rowbotham, "Figurists," p. 480. See also Matthew Tindal, Christianity as Old as the Creation (London, 1730).
commentary; discuss the classics, and also discuss the small print. 106

The 1742 prohibition of Chinese Christians from practising Confucian rituals made it dangerous to follow Ricci's interpretation of the Confucian canons, or to use the terms "上帝" (Shang-ti) or "天" (t'ien) for God in Chinese. De la Charme sought to solve this problem by inventing yet another term, "上主" (Shang-chu, the Lord above) which had overtones of both the classical "Shang-ti" and the Catholic "tien-chu." Where Ricci would have used "t'ien," de la Charme used "shang-chu." Apart from the translation of the I-Ching (Classic of Changes), de la Charme also prepared a translation of another book included in the Five Classics, the Shih-Ching (Book of Poetry). 107 However, his translation dropped from sight, until two centuries later Ezra Pound reemphasized and advocated Chinese Poetry. 108

The last cumulative work of the Peking Jesuit mission was the fifteen volume Mémoires concernant les Chinois, 109 which appeared in Paris between 1776 and 1791. In this work, the authors placed a new emphasis on indigenous Chinese Interpretations. In the preface to the Mémoires, the editor said "La Chine seul peut faire connoître la Chine." 110 Included in this work were translations of commentary on Confucian classics such as Claude Visdelou's "Notice du livre chinois nommé Y-King ou Livre canonique


107. Legge places this translation at around 1733, five years after de la Charme arrived in China. See Legge's "Preface" to The Chinese Classics I, v.


109. Mémoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les moeurs, les usages, etc. des Chinois. Par les Missionaires de Pekin, 13 vols. (Paris, 1777-1791). One additional volume was published in 1814.

110. Mémoires, I, 23.
des changemens (Classic of Changes), \(^{111}\) and the 書經 (Shu-King, Classic of Records). \(^{112}\)

Although most of the Memoires dealt with Confucianism, the major works on this subject are in the twelfth and thirteenth volumes, and were written by Father Amiot (assigned to China from 1750-1793). In his "Life of Confucius\(^ {113}\)" and "Brief Lives of the Principal Disciples of Confucius," \(^ {114}\) Amiot sought to present Confucius and his disciples exactly as they were depicted in the Chinese commentaries, and he used only Chinese sources. \(^ {115}\) However, these works came when European interests were shifting from those of the Enlightenment to Romanticism. \(^ {116}\) These Chinese works never caught the attention of the European Enlightenment.

d. Jesuit Shortcomings

It was natural that the Jesuits should strive to use the Confucian classics for their own missionary activities and that the Jesuit interpretations should undergo the changes described above. It seems unusual, however, that they never prepared complete translations of either the Confucian canon into any European language or of the Bible into Chinese.

In their treatment of the interpretations of Confucianism, they strove to avoid the contemporary Neo-Confucian interpretations, and tried to follow the ancient Chinese canonical texts. It was possible for them to avoid the intuitive interpretations of the Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529) school, \(^ {117}\) because there was a reaction against this school among the Chinese. \(^ {118}\) As a result, Europe remained totally ignorant of this school until

\(^{111}\) Memoires, I, 23.

\(^{112}\) Memoires, XII, 1786.

\(^{113}\) Le P. Amiot, "Vie de Confucius," Memoires, XII, 1786.

\(^{114}\) Memoires, XIII.

\(^{115}\) He attempts to justify himself in his introduction (Memoires, XII, 5) by listing the major sources and indicating that he is citing whenever he gives a quotation. Moreover, this attitude towards his sources is compounded by his remark, "since these books are of an almost equal authenticity." 'These books' range in date over at least 1500 years, and one wonders what Amiot's criteria for 'authenticity' could have been.


\(^{118}\) See the general introduction of 四庫全書 (Ssu-ku Chuan-shu, Encyclopedia). In the general preface, the editor said, "Wang's school split off." For details of this reaction, see my discussion in the next chapter.
Despite their desire to present the true meaning of the texts uncolored by later interpretations, the pervasiveness of Chu Hsi's interpretations in the contemporary Chinese intellectual milieu made it impossible for them to avoid Neo-Confucian influences altogether. We have already seen the influence of Chu Hsi on the Jesuit translations discussed earlier.

C. R. Boxer has studied the partnership between the Europeans and the Chinese and discovered some causes of the failure of the Catholic missionaries in China. Not only were they prohibited from translating the Latin Bible into Chinese, but the Catholic authorities also did not establish an indigenous clergy in China. Boxer cites the Jesuit Rougemon's case to prove his position. Rougemon, who took charge of translating Confucian Four Books into Latin (Confucius Sinarum Philosophus), complained of the problems of teaching Latin to the Chinese clergy and of using the Latin liturgy in the local Chinese church. He refers to the following difficulties:

...the impossibility of teaching Latin to Chinese boys of good family because their parents would not allow it; the impracticality of teaching Latin to boys of slaves or bondsmen because of the universal contempt with which they would be regarded by their compatriots on account of their origin. 120


In conclusion, none of the missionaries before the end of the eighteenth century had translated all of the Chinese canonical texts into any European language. Likewise, they had not translated their canonical works into any Chinese language. Indeed they had translated some selected passages with their own comments from the Bible or from Confucian canons. This neglect in the Jesuit transmission of both Christian and Confucian canons left their work incomplete and incorrect. The Jesuits in fact only paved the way for the Protestants to finish their work.

This deficiency in the extent of their translating activity was partially the result of their emphasis on trying to convert individual emperors. Their missionary efforts might have been better rewarded had they been able to provide potential converts with complete translations of the Bible. Instead, their missionary activities depended solely on their relationship to individual emperors, rather than on widespread, popular support. Similarly, since the Jesuits did not arrive at one body of translations of the Chinese canon or one interpretation of the canon, the Popes vacillated greatly in their acceptance and rejection of the Jesuit missionary activities.

The Protestants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries conducted their activities in a much different manner.

C. The Protestants

1. The First Chinese Bibles

Since the time of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into vernacular German in 1534,121 Protestants have emphasized the necessity for translating the Bible into vernacular languages. Luther also advocated the use of Scripture without any commentary appended. When he finished translating the Bible, he said:

Would that this one Book were in every language, in every hand, before the eyes, and in the ears and hearts of all men! Scripture without any comment is the sun where all teachers receive light.122

---

121. John Michael Reu, Luther's German Bible: A Historical Presentation Together with a Collection of Sources (Columbus: The Lutheran Book Concern, 1934), p. 211.

Believing that the light of the Scripture might penetrate where the preacher could not go, Joshua Marshman went to India in 1799 to translate the Bible into Chinese. With the help of two Chinese and Johannes Lassar, an Armenian who had been born in Macao, the entire Bible was translated into Chinese. In May, 1823, Marshman's son, John on behalf of his father, presented a complete copy of the Bible in Chinese to the British and Foreign Bible Society at their annual meeting. In the following year a new and equally complete translation was presented to the Society's annual meeting by the translator, Dr. Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China, who had arrived in Canton in 1807. With the help of the British Museum manuscript of the Chinese New Testament, he re-translated the New Testament into Chinese in 1813. Another Protestant missionary, William Milne, joined forces with Morrison, leading to the publication of their translation of the Bible in Malacca in 1823.

According to Garnier's study, there were sixty-eight editions of the Chinese Bible in different dialects in use between 1823 and 1867. The version of the Bible used in all Chinese churches during the present century was published in 1919. In contrast to these many Protestant editions, the Catholics never published a Chinese translation of the Bible until 1947.

2. The First English Chinese Canonical Texts

Marshman and Morrison also produced studies of Confucian classics. Morrison's publications included a Dictionary of Chinese and English in six volumes, a grammar of the Chinese language and a work entitled Horae Sinicae, comprised of translations of Chinese popular literature. Likewise, Marshman published his Clavis Sinica (Key to Chinese Language), or Grammar of the Chinese Language. In his Elements of Chinese Grammar (中國言法), he translated the complete Ta-Hyoh (大學, Great Learning) into

125. Fang Hao, a modern Catholic priest, said that it was a shame for the Catholics to use the Protestant translation of the Bible, Fang Hao, II, 2361.
The most important contribution was his translation of the *Analects* into English in 1809.129

A later scholar, James Legge, who was also a Protestant missionary, was assisted by the Chinese scholar, Wang T'ao, in translating the Delegates' version of the Chinese Bible.130 Legge's translation of the Four Books was the first complete translation in any European languages. He also translated all the Five Classics.131 Legge's translations formed the basis of twentieth century sinological studies. This activity contrasts with that of the Jesuits, who, while producing thousands of books or manuscripts on Confucianism in China and in Europe,132 some of which were published, did not undertake

---

129. J. Marshman, *The Works of Confucius*; contains the "Lun Yu" in Chinese, with romanized reading, and English translation, accompanied by commentary in English. (Serampore: Mission Press, 1809). Marshman in the postscript of the Works noted that the translation of "the Catholic Fathers is a free translation, and sometimes so diffuse, as to deserve the name of a paraphrase," p.727.
131. James Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics* (Hong Kong: London Missionary Society's Printing Office, 1861-72), 5 vols. Four Books: I. Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean, II. Mencius. Five Classics: III. Shoo King, or the Book of Historical Documents, IV. The She King, or the Book of Poetry. V. The Ch'ün Ts'ew, with the Tso chuen. As originally projected this collection was to embrace all the books in "the Thirteen Kings." The 6th and 7th and the supplementary volumes were never published. Fortunately, an English translation of the *Yih King* (易經) and *Li Ki* (禮記) appeared respectively as vol.16 (1882) and vols. 27-28 (1885) of the series *Sacred Books of the East*, ed. Fr. Max Müller (Oxford: Clarendon Press). A translation of the *Shu King*, *The Religious Portions of the Shih King*, *The Hsiao King*, appeared in vol.3 (1879) of the same series. The *Texts of Taoism and the Writings of Kwang-Zze* was in vols. 39-40 (1891).
to translate completely the Four Books or the Five Classics, nor the Bible. Their pioneer translations and interpretations, however, furnished the image of Confucius and Confucianism for the European Enlightenment. 133